

JOHN FROM BACK HOME: EPISODE 8, "THE LABYRINTH"

SFX: BEEP

MACHINE VOICE

Wednesday, May 13. 1:44 P.M.

SFX: BEEP

JOHN

OK, I am about... 100 feet down now. Just stopped to take a break. Uh, I knew this was gonna be a ways down, but holy shit. Still can't see the bottom. I don't even really understand how you could dig this far down in like... a residential neighborhood. Seems like you'd need an excavator or whatever those things are called. And like... this area can't possibly be zoned for that. Right? I don't know, I don't know what the fuck I'm talking about.

SFX: BEEP

MACHINE VOICE

Wednesday, May 13. 1:55 P.M.

SFX: BEEP

JOHN

About 150 feet down now. Still can't see the bottom. I'm just now realizing that however far I climb down, that's how far I'm gonna have to climb back *up*. Which is gonna be harder. Not gonna lie, there's a part of me that thinks I should turn back. I'm getting a little worried I'm in over my head. But then I'm like... well, what sense does it make to have just climbed down and up a ladder for half an hour? Climbing halfway into a giant hole in the ground is pointless. I'm already this far down, I might as well see what's at the bottom. And like, honestly, at this point? It better be fucking good. If it's just a dead end I'm gonna be pissed. I'm looking back up at the top of the ladder, but you can't see anything. That room is so dark. It's like... nothing above me, nothing below me. I'm just sort of... clinging to the wall inside an endless void. I read this book once about astronauts. And they said that when you're in zero g, your body sort of shorts out because without gravity it doesn't have any sense of which way is up and which way is down. That's kinda freaking me out actually, I need to stop thinking about that.

SFX: BEEP

MACHINE VOICE

Wednesday, May 13. 2:09 P.M.

SFX: BEEP

JOHN

Alright, I have reached the bottom of the ladder. Thank God. Those last few rungs it really felt like I was just gonna be climbing forever. Now that I'm on solid ground, it's kind of hard to walk. My knees feel like jelly. So, it looks like I am... 206 feet underground. I'm really glad I grabbed that extra rope. I guess I should describe where I am now. Um, OK. It's really cold. And really dark. The walls sort of... don't look like walls. They're not wood or brick or drywall. They're like... really smooth. And really black. Like some kind of stone, maybe. I'm in another small room. Kinda looks like the one where I started, behind the bathroom mirror. Except, in this room, there's the one wall with the ladder, and the other four all have open doorways. Again, can't see anything beyond the openings. Just more darkness. I'm gonna go ahead and guess there aren't exactly going to be any light switches down here. It kind of looks like... a maze? It's definitely not, like, a basement or a wine cellar. Uh, OK. I guess I should just pick a doorway and... explore it? Fuck. I don't know why this feels like such a big decision. Just don't want to fuck up and pick the murder door, you know? Uh, OK. Let's see. I guess I'll just go straight.

(pause)

And, uh... yeah it looks like. A long hallway. Um, pretty narrow. If I reach my arms out to the side I can just touch both the walls. And, uh, I think I'm about to reach the end of it here. And it looks like... yep. Fucking dead end. Cool. OK, that fucking sucks. At least I didn't choose the murder door I guess. Alright, I'm gonna head back out into the main room.

(pause)

Here we are. OK. Standing with my back to the ladder, and starting on my left I'm gonna call these door number one, door number two, and door number three. Door number two was a bust. So, fuck it. Door number one. Here we go.

(pause)

OK, yeah, right away, this is better. Ah, instead of a long hallway, this one has a whole bunch of twists and turns. All at... like... right angles. And, um. I'm just kinda moving through them. And we'll see where it goes. Uh, OK, I should probably conserve the battery power on my phone. So, I'll call back when I find something.

SFX: BEEP

MACHINE VOICE

Wednesday, May 13. 2:22 P.M.

SFX: BEEP

JOHN

Hey, here's something weird. My phone is basically a brick down here. I don't have service, I can't even see what time it is. The only thing I can do is call your answering machine. That's it. What's that about? I don't know, maybe I'm still, like on the network or something? But then, I should have service, that doesn't make any sense.

(pause)

Oh, uh, I'm still just... turning corners. By the way. I kinda feel like this whole thing is gonna end up being one big circle. Not really sure what the point of that would be... but then, I'm not really sure what the point of any of this is. I think we're beyond that. Also. It has definitely occurred to me by now that you wrote a comic book about a wizard who traps people in a maze and feeds them to a Minotaur. And now, I'm here two-hundred feet underneath your childhood home where there is, in fact, a fucking maze. So... you must have known this was here. Right? That's a hell of a coincidence, otherwise. I dunno.

SFX: BEEP

MACHINE VOICE

Wednesday, May 13. 2:27 P.M.

SFX: BEEP

JOHN

Remember I told you about that girl I dated back in college? Caroline? And how she and her friends were really into board games? Well, there was this one. I don't remember what it was called. You and all the other players were exploring, like, a haunted mansion. And you found all kinds of ghosts, and booby traps and shit. But the twist was, one of the players was secretly a traitor. They were like, possessed by the house or something. So they're trying to get all the other players killed. And the other players had to figure out which one is the traitor, before it's too late. It was really fun. But, you kinda have to know the people you're playing with. Because once you start making accusations things get kinda heated. And then it makes it really hard to like... work together to get through all the traps and stuff.

(a pause)

What the fuck? Hang on. Oh shit. Oh fuck me. Um. I'm out of rope. Um. Shit. I guess I should have sprung for the 500 foot reel. Goddamn. Well. OK. Huh. I mean, at this point, I can pretty much guess it's just a bunch of turns and corners and maybe a dead end. Not sure why there's a giant maze underneath a house in the middle of the fucking suburbs. But there you have it. That's the big secret. I mean, it's definitely creepy. But. I don't know. I think I was kinda hoping for something else? I don't know what. Something that made... more sense? Maybe? But. That's life, huh?

SFX: Man crying

JOHN

Oh shit. Do you hear that? Listen. That's the crying. That's... that's what I've been hearing in the walls. It sounds like it's just around this corner. Ah, fuck. If I had like... ten more feet of rope. Um. OK, I think it's actually fine if... I'm just gonna untie the rope and leave it here on the ground. Just to look around this corner, and then I'll come back for it. It'll be fine. Ah, there we go. Let's see. Hello? Hello? Is someone down here? Hello? OK, so... I walked around the corner, and I don't see anything. It sounds like the crying stopped too. Fuck. I swear to god, I heard it though. I don't know, maybe my brain is just... messing with me. Um. You know, I'm just gonna walk around this one last corner. And if I don't hear anything I'll go back. OK. Turning the corner. I don't... don't hear anything. So, I guess --

SFX: Footsteps

JOHN

Oh fuck! Hello! Hey! There's, um, there's a person. I just... hey, hello! I just saw someone walking around the corner. Excuse me! Hello? Fuck... hey! Hey wait! Shit, they're fucking fast. Wait up! I'm not... Are you lost? I wanna help you! Fuck, uh, I'll call you back.

SFX: BEEP

MACHINE VOICE

Wednesday, May 13. 2:35 P.M.

SFX: BEEP

JOHN

Well. OK. Shit. Um. So, there was this guy, right? I think it was a guy. Um, there was a person. I saw them going around the corner, and then I started following them. But, I couldn't quite catch up to them? It was like, every time I went around a new corner, they were already going around the next one. And it didn't matter if I sped up. Like, at the end I was just... sprinting down these halls. But every time, I would just barely turn the corner in time to see them ahead of me. And I was like, yelling. Um. I don't know if they were lost down here, or... but they wouldn't slow down. And then, finally, I came around a corner and there was just... a dead end. And no one was there. Which... I don't know how that's possible. It's like, I dunno, like they disappeared. I don't know man. But I think I've got enough inspiration for a while. This has been fucking nuts. I think it's time to get the fuck out of here.

SFX: BEEP

MACHINE VOICE

Wednesday, May 13. 2:52 P.M.

SFX: BEEP

JOHN

So, here's something interesting. Um... I can't find my rope. The one I untied from my waist. Uh, it shouldn't be hard to find. I mean, I know I went around a lot of corners, but there weren't any other doors or anything like that. I don't think, at least. I didn't see any. So, theoretically, all I should have to do is turn around and retrace my steps, and then I'll find the rope, and the other end of that rope is tied off to a metal hook that I screwed into the wall in your bathroom, and I can just grab that rope and let it lead me back out of here. But, I've been walking for like... ten, fifteen minutes, and... no fucking rope! Um. I definitely should have seen it by now. I don't know, maybe I'm... it's really hard to keep track of time down here. My phone isn't telling me, and it's so fucking dark. It's so dark. Um. OK, I'm gonna keep walking I guess. Even if I don't find the rope, I should at least work my way back to the ladder, and I can just climb up. So. Yeah. That's the plan. OK.

SFX: BEEP

MACHINE VOICE

Wednesday, May 13. 3:37 P.M.

SFX: BEEP

JOHN

What the fuck, man? What the fuck, this doesn't make any goddamn sense. Maybe somebody took it? That guy I saw walking around those corners? I don't know, I don't know why somebody would do that, but I can't fucking come up with any other reason. And where the fuck is the ladder? I've definitely been walking long enough that I should have run into it by now. Shit, maybe I took a wrong turn. But... no, fuck that, I didn't take any turns, I... I've just been following the same path. Unless there was a turnoff somewhere that I didn't see. I can't fucking see shit. I tried calling for help on my phone, but I still can't dial out. Unless it's to your fucking machine. Goddammit Wes, if there was ever a time for you to be hearing these messages, this would be it.

SFX: Growling, snorting

JOHN

The fuck was that? Do you hear that? Dude there's something down here... like... maybe a raccoon, or a dog, or... oh shit. Are those... its eyes? No, no, no, that is way too fucking big. What the fuck is -- ?

SFX: Roaring

JOHN

Oh fuck! Oh shit!

SFX: BEEP

MACHINE VOICE

Wednesday, May 13. 3:45 P.M.

JOHN

Dude, I... I don't know what the fuck that was, it... it was standing on two legs like a person, but it didn't... it wasn't... I mean, I know what I thought I saw but that... no, I'm not going crazy, man. I just got a little freaked out back there, a little claustrophobic, that's all. It was probably a raccoon or a possum, or... whatever. Uh, anyway, I took off running and I managed to find a door, which... that's pretty lucky. Um. Now I'm in this like, dark room. I gotta see if there's a way out of here. Uh. I'll call you back.

SFX: BEEP

MACHINE VOICE

Wednesday, May 13. 3:52 P.M.

SFX: Rain on house

JOHN

Um... so... I'm back in your house. Which... in theory is a good thing, but it doesn't... I don't... OK, so I was in that room... and I looked around the walls for, like, a door. And I found this hole, with something blocking it on the other side. And so I pushed through, and the thing that was blocking the hole was a mirror. In a bathroom. Do you understand what I'm saying? I ended up back in the room behind the bathroom mirror. Where I started. But that's... there's no way. I know for a fact that I climbed down two hundred feet of ladder. So how the fuck could I be back here without climbing back up? That doesn't make any sense! Whatever... I just need to get the fuck out of your house.

(pause)

God, it sounds like it's pouring outside. I can't really see out the windows.

SFX: Locked door rattling.

JOHN

Come on. No way. Fuck! The fucking door is jammed, or locked, or... hello? Who the fuck is there? I've got a fucking gun, motherfucker! Oh shit... no fucking way... is that --
?

SFX: BEEP