

THEY LEFT US HERE

A GHOST STORY BY DECLAN GRAVES

I shouldn't have followed him. I know that now.

Ben figured because I was in such a bad way, it was his moral obligation to get me jacked up on my 22nd birthday.

"This is your idea of being jacked up?" I sputtered around a mouthful of cheap beer.
"Where in the hell did you find this place?"

Ben flipped the high beams on his crappy beater and illuminated a field straight out of an Eli Roth snuff flick. Row upon row of abandoned double-wide trailers littered the area. I could make out giant red X's spray painted over the door of each trailer. A jagged line of molten lightning ripped the Louisiana sky wide open as a torrent of summer rain battered the windshield.

"It's a graveyard" Ben said, his face once a placid mask cracked into a rictus grin. "Come on, jackass!" Ben threw himself out of the car and into the torrential rain with a twelve barely holding together in his hands. I watched Ben splash through the mud and disappear into the first trailer before I could even get out a word about this being a really, bad idea.

"Happy F'ing Birthday to me." I threw myself into the rain with my jacket over my head and into the trailer. Slamming my sodden jacket on the floor, I yelled "what the hell Ben?" But Ben wasn't there.

"Come on Ben, this is actually my birthday and you promised to get me jacked up!" I yelled into the deserted double wide. The trailer felt deserted, but I swore I saw him run through the door. I looked down at soaking wet footprints mucking up the inch-thick dust on the floor leading into the back rooms. "Seriously Ben, what the hell are we doing here?"

The nagging thought that I actually didn't know this guy kept niggling at the back of my mind. We had just met at a bar on Bourbon while I was celebrating my 22nd birthday. I must have looked like a sad case drowning my sorrows alone in cheap booze that he sat down and ordered the next round. I told him my sob story. Came down here to celebrate with my girlfriend. She dumped me on Bourbon with the words "I never loved you," and pranced away with a stripper named Bambi. This all seemed like a great idea through my alcohol numbed pre-frontal cortex until about five seconds ago.

“Come on man, let’s get out of here!” The ideocracy of being stuck in a deserted trailer park in a strange city driven here in someone else’s car slammed into my quickly sobering up grey matter.

A drip, drip, drip cadenced off the walls in response. Not just the rain, but a steady patter from inside what must have been the back bedroom. I walked down the hall and opened the door. Ben was there, laying on a mold covered mattress, his hand hanging off the side of the bed, drip, drip, dripping.

“They left us here, you know. They just painted an X and never came back.” Ben said through lips that never moved. “I’m just so cold.”

I stared as Ben’s head flopped to the side, bloated and discolored. His distended hand reached out to me.

The last thing I remembered was the front door slamming open by a torrential wave of muddy ocean water.



It’s August in New Orleans and I am so very cold. I don’t know how long I’ll remember what happened to me.

What happened to me.

I’m sitting at the same bar on Bourbon nursing piss warm beer with Ben. My ex-girlfriend and that stripper Bambi just stumbled onto the patio.

I wonder if they want to get jacked up too.