

Return

By

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INT./ EXT. MUSCLE CAR DRIVES THROUGH WOODED COUNTRY ROADS - DAY

A black muscle car is scene from a bird's eye view as JOHN (29) talks on the phone.

JOHN

Yeah I picked it up on my way out of town. The guy selling it seemed really happy to be rid of it, practically paid me to take the thing. Yes and I brought that too. I don't think I'll need it but you never know. The coyotes have been getting pretty thick out here.

John continues to drive while conversing on the phone, at least until the phone cuts out.

JOHN

(CONT[PLEASEINSERT\PRERENDERUNICODE{ÅÅ}INTOPREAMBLE]'D)

I'm almost to the cabin now. I'm definitely looking forward to some peace and quiet. Even if I don't get much out of writing up here it'll at least be nice to escape for a little bit...you still there? Hello?

EXT. CABIN - DAY

John puts down the phone after the call drops and he pulls into the drive way of the cabin. He sits in his car for a brief moment and exhales in relief of having finally arrived. He shuts the car off and grabs his backpack from the front seat to take it in.

He approaches the door keys in hand. After he slides the key into the lock and turns it, he pauses and listens for a moment as if he heard something but wasn't quite sure. He shrugs it off as nothing, unlocks the cabin's front door, and steps inside.

INT. CABIN - DAY

With his backpack hanging off of one shoulder he stands just inside the doorway looking over the dusky cabin with a smile on his face. He sets his bag on the kitchen table. He goes back to his car and heads to the trunk.

INT. / EXT. MUSCLE CAR TRUNK

The trunk opens, John reaches in to pull out a vintage typewriter that had been laying in the trunk alone. While picking up the heavy machine John comments to himself.

JOHN

There's no school like the old school.

INT. CABIN - DAY

He slams the trunk and walks the typewriter into the cabin, placing it on the coffee table near the fireplace. He goes into the kitchen, places his keys on the kitchen table as he passes. He begins to brew a pot of coffee. In the background behind John, the keys briefly move across the table, as if pushed from an unseen force. John doesn't notice. He pours himself a cup of coffee and lights the fireplace. He sits down in front of his typewriter, his back to the kitchen. As he loads paper and sets it up, the keys on the kitchen table scoot across the table and fall to the floor catching John's attention. He looks over his shoulder and pauses as if waiting to see the person who must've knocked his keys off the table. He gets up and places the keys back on the table, quickly returning back to his seat.

He types the title of his story, "XXXXXXX". John's cell phone breaks the siinece with a startling loudness. The caller ID reveals the caller as his wife. John answers the phone but no one is on the other line.

JOHN

Hello? Hun? Are you there? I have terrible service out here, so if you can hear me I'll call you in a few days when I'm on my way home. Okay? Love you.

EXT. CABIN/WOODS - SUNSET

The sun sets behind the thick tree branches that scrape the fiery sky with their wicked finger-like branches, bare from the sudden shift toward a cold and unforgiving season.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

John has been working for some time and decided a break is in order. He rustles through his bag and pulls out a small box containing a cigar, cutter, and matches.

EXT. CABIN - NIGHT

John exits the front door, letting the screen door shut behind him. Lights from the cabin stretch across the old weathered porch. John strikes up his cigar. He looks out from beneath the awning, peering into the woods, studying the land looking for wildlife he wouldn't see back in the overcrowded city.

John's deep pondering and studious observing of the woods is interrupted when we hear the sound of a single typed key from inside the cabin. He snuffs the cigar in a dirty flea market ashtray left on the porch from his last visit and cautiously opens the screen door, stepping over the threshold with a slow and nervous gate.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

The cabin is silent and empty aside from an occasional groan from the resting structure and John's shifting weight upon the hardwood floor. We see John from behind the typewriter and over the paper loaded into the machine as he stands above the typewriter, brows furrowed and eyes locked on the single character he didn't type. On the page, a single letter.

JOHN

R?

A gust of wind blows against the screen door rattling it against the door jamb. At the same moment and indiscernible breathy voice speaks aloud for the first time. John stands in the middle of the cabin frozen. He calls out into the emptiness.

JOHN

Alright, who's out there?

He quickly glances at his bag on the table and then back to the door. After receiving no response he calls out again, this time with a threat.

JOHN

You come in this cabin and I'll shoot. Understand?

(CONTINUED)

John doesn't move for a few moments, eyes fixed on the darkness beyond the screen door. Again, he glances at his bag on the table and back to the door before moving to the kitchen table, not breaking his focus on the door. Reaching in his bag he pulls out a pistol, eyes still fixed to the doorway. He's startled by another gust of wind and indistinct whispering from behind him. He turns swiftly with a raised gun pointed where the sound had emitted, the doorway of one the cabin bedrooms. The door is ajar and is still swaying gently before it ceases its ominous creaking and rocking.

John sneaks to the door and pushes it open slowly with his left hand, gun pointed ahead and back to the typewriter. As the door creaks in its slow swing, John's face expresses he's mildly panicked and confused. The door stops as it reaches the wall behind it.

John's left hand finds its place back on the pistol. There is a pause. Then the door slams in his face and the typewriter begins typing the word "Run" over and over in a fury. Laughter is heard but it's not John's, it's dark and sinister. John rushes to exit the cabin, grabbing his keys from the table before leaving the cabin. He stands as the driver door of his car fumbling with his keys until he comes to the correct one. He puts the key up to the lock but pauses before it's inserted. He's stiff and frightened. John is somehow back in the cabin, key against the lock of the door which previously shut in his face.

Whispers are heard from the other side of the door, except this time it's much more present and clear.

VOICE 1

John, is that you?

John is confused because knows the voice to be that of his wife whom is at home several hours away.

JOHN

XXXXXX?

VOICE 1

John, I'm hurt. I need help.

John puts his gun in the back of his pants and tries the door handle but it's locked.

JOHN

Xxxxxx I'm here, I'm coming! Just hold tight, okay hun?

(CONTINUED)

The voice continues to call out for John as he attempts to open the door through means of brute force. Nothing seems to be working. He looks around the cabin for something to use when he notices the axe leaning against the wall near the front door. Grabbing the axe, John quickly returns back to the locked door with it clutched in his hands.

JOHN

Xxxxx if you can hear me, stay away
from the door, okay?

He swallows hard as he prepares himself to plunge the axe into the door. He raises the axe and begins the decent towards the door when he sees the door push open just enough to clear the catch from plate. He stops the axe just millimeters from the surface of the old door. He leans the axe against the wall outside of the bedroom and pushes the door open while stepping inside.

JOHN

Xxxxx?

The room is empty, dark, and cold enough to see John's breath. As he steps passed the bedroom door it slams behind him. He turns to grab the door knob but it is shaking violently while whispering can be heard murmuring he is trapped and there's no escape.

John grabs the door knob and flings the door open, running out of the room and out of the cabin to his car. He unlocks the car door and slams the keys into the ignition. Turning the key only forces the car to whine and whale into the night. John shakes the steering wheel in frustration and lays his head back against the headrest of the car seat, oblivious to the figure that sits in the back seat behind him. It's skin black as coal. It raises its head revealing its face only for a split second before John jolts forward with wide eyes. He's back in the cabin seated at the kitchen table, keys in hand, and the page from the typewriter in front of him riddled with the word "RUN".

John leans forward in the wooden chair to see what is written on the page for the first time. He glances up from the page and across the room at the typewriter which still sits alone on the table near the fire. Whispers come in waves to stifle the sounds of crackling logs in the flames. There are too many voices to make out much more than a word sporadically throughout each pulse of the phenomena.

John is terrified and confused. He stands up from the table and steps into the center of the living room, eyes fixed on the typewriter. He rubs his forehead in contemplation of his next move. Unbeknownst to John, the door which has been the

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center of most of the activity slowly begins to creep open from its already half-opened state. It pivots on its hinges revealing a dark empty room, just out of his line of sight. John notices the door out of his peripheral.

JOHN

Its not real. I'm just tired or
it's too much coffee or somethin'.

He slowly turns his head to look at the door. He stares into the void. A shadowy figure darts across the bedroom and John turns and runs out the front door as fast as he can only to run right back into the living room as if he came from the bedroom. He stops for a moment and hesitates but his determination to leave the cabin pushes him to try again...and again. He does this several more times in an endless loop until finally he stops in the center of the room. Winded and defeated he yells in frustration.

His cell phone rings, the screen displays its XXXXX and John scrambles to get to it from across the room. He answers in a panic.

JOHN

Hey! Hey. Xxxxxx are you there?!
Hun? Please be there. Please be
there.

John is only met with silence until the call drops. He tries desperately to call her back but the call won't go through. He grips the phone and presses it to his forehead while he vocalizes his despair, hopelessness, and frustration in groans through his teeth. Just then,

RRRRRRRRRRRR. The sound of something small and hard is heard hitting the floor in the bedroom followed by a sound not too dissimilar from that of a quarter rolling on its edge across a wooden table. We see the ominous doorway and out of the darkness rolls a single red glass marble, making its way toward John. John watches with a confused face as the marble gets closer and thunders loudly. It slows almost to a stop before touching John's shoe. Just as the marble touches his shoe the whispers erupt again, this time they come loud and strong with what sounds like a swarm of bees interwoven through the voices. It's deafening.

John grabs his ears and looks around for some sort of escape. He looks at the front door briefly before locking his eyes on the window beside it. He gets up from the floor and makes his way to the window in a slow but focused effort, almost as if the air was thick like molasses, restricting John's progress but not a force enough to freeze him in place. He reaches the window and takes his hands off of his ears to try lifting it open. It won't budge.

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He looks around again and this time sets his eyes in the small bathroom. He slowly fights through the thick atmosphere and arrives at the bathroom doorway. He steps into the bathroom and shuts the door as quickly as he's able to in the dense fluid like air. The whispers and buzzing muffle as the door is closed. He locks the door and plants himself on the toilet. He stares at the door in fear. After a few moments the muffled whispers and swarm fade out.

Silence overcomes the scene. John continues to stare at the door, the only thing separating him from the madness on the other side. Black Death like fingers curl under the door a half a moment before the lights go out. John grabs his phone from his pocket in a panic and turns on the screen in an effort to see what's going on. Footsteps and the pitter patter of what seems like childrens' feet can be heard coming from the other side of the bathroom door. Shadows dart back and forth in the light that's peeking under the door. The door knob, barely lit by the phone screen begin to turn slowly. From John's POV we then see the door open up slowly, spilling light from the rest of the cabin into the dark bathroom he sits in. A single key is heard pressed on the typewriter. John reluctantly steps out of the bathroom and into the living room.

JOHN

What? What do you want? Huh?

John hears the typewriter again and notices no paper loaded. He grabs a sheet of paper and loads the machine with a nervous but hasty demeanor, talking aloud.

JOHN

Okay, you want to talk? Then let's talk.

John sits down in a chair he's pushed in front of the typewriter and types as he speaks his question.

JOHN

Who are you?

He waits anxiously for a response. Then the keys begin typing on their own.

WHISPERS

U

JOHN

Let's try this again. Who are you?

(CONTINUED)

WHISPERS

John

JOHN

What do you want?

John waits for a reply. Several moments go by before his anticipation pushes him to repeat the question.

JOHN

I said...what...do...you... wa-

CLONG! The clock tones a heavy and foreboding chime interrupting John. The typewriter begins to uncontrollably type the word "Run" over and over in a flurry. His body immediately becomes rigid as he tosses his head backward and his body tremors and strains in agony. His veins turn black around his neck as the entity takes control of his body.

Flashes depict a story of the old owner of the typewriter being associated with the occult, the machine being used as a blunt instrument of death, and blood seeping from under the typewriter as it sits alone in any empty room.

The clock tolls again, the face indicating a large amount of time has passed. John falls from the chair to the floor where he is now foaming at the mouth, his head to the side facing the bedroom. He sees a figure in the doorway, but everything is blurry as he is recovering from the attack. He rubs his eyes and wipes his mouth before looking back over to see the figure has vanished.

He stands up and takes himself into the kitchen to splash some water in his face. He finishes up at the sink and dries his hands and blots his face with a hand towel in a calm and casual manner. He wads up the towel and leaves it on the counter. In a flash, he rips open the kitchen drawer and pulls out a larger knife. John snaps the blade close to his face to admire it more closely at the same time speaking in a quick raspy and gnarled voice.

JOHN (POSSESSED)

Go ahead Johnny boy, why don't you
run this blade deep into your
throat...

John (possessed) jerks the knife to his forearm running the blade down its soft underside while pushing the point into his skin hard enough to dimple the skin but not to draw blood.

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JOHN (POSSESSED)
...or take it down the street for a
little walk.

John snaps out if it, dropping the knife in terror while backing away frantically. The axe that was leaned against the wall near the bedroom falls to the floor and quickly slides across the cabin just before John trips and falls backwards to the floor. He moans in pain but is taken over again in a split second. His head snaps to look at the axe next to him. It's facing blade-up just in inches from his head.

JOHN (POSSESSED)
Damn. So close.

John stands back up rubbing his hands over his head and through his hair

JOHN
Get out of my head!

He snaps back into possession.

JOHN (POSSESSED)
If you want me out of your head
you'll have to force me out
yourself.

John (possessed) grabs the gun.

JOHN (POSSESSED)
This will do quite nicely. So
thoughtful of you to bring it.

He presses the gun against his temple with force.

JOHN (POSSESSED)
Well go on John. Pull that trigger
if you want me out so bad.

A brief moment goes by as John looks out the window seeing the sun is rising.

JOHN (POSSESSED)
I guess I'm going to have to do
this myself then.

John (possessed) racks the slide and brings it back to his temple as he speaks.

(CONTINUED)

JOHN (POSSESSED)

See you real soon, Johnny!

The scene goes silent and seems slow motion. We hear his heart pounding. John's eyes tightly shut. His finger begins to squeeze the trigger. His eyes open wide. SHRRRRRRRR! The silence is broken by the sound of a car pulling up to the house through the gravel road.

John stands facing the front door with golden sunlight spilling on him and the rest of the cabin. He has his hand to the side of his head as if he is holding a gun. The pistol has vanished and the cabin is back to the way it was before he arrived the day before. He looks at the sink to see the hand towel is dry, folded in half, and hanging on its rack. Even the kitchen table is empty, his belongings have disappeared. He glances over to the coffee table to see the typewriter has also vanished and the axe is resting against the wall near the front door.

He hurries to the door but the door is locked and won't budge, even after turning the lock mechanism on the handle. He side steps to look out of the window for the car driving up the gravel road. To his disbelief, it's his car. He looks over to the driveway and sees it's empty. The car passes the yard and turns into the drive and parks. John stares at the his own car from inside the cabin. The car door opens and a pair of feet hit the ground. John is climbing out of the car in the exact same way as he did just the morning before.

John inside the cabin starts pounding on the window frame and screaming at his other self outside to turn around and run. His other self walks up to the patio to unlock the door. Keys slide into the lock. The John on the inside of the cabin is pulled back in a snap to the bedroom and the bedroom door slams just before his other self opens the front door. His other self sets his bag in the table just as before and steps back outside to his car.

The trunk opens. John reaches in to pull out the typewriter. While picking up the heavy machine John comments to himself.

JOHN

There's no school like the old school.

He closes the trunk.

End.