

CHAPTER ONE: IN THE BEGINNING

DAY 1

Another bad night of sleep. This time I woke up on the floor. My back is killing me.



I must have hit pretty hard because I think I near bit thru my tongue. Oxi-Clean; great for cleaning up blood. Good thing Rodney spent the night at his girls'; otherwise I would be hearing about this for a while.

Classes are getting easier. I think the profs care less and less as more people drop. Midterms are in two weeks. We'll see how that goes.

Met a girl. She'd been sitting next to me in History for the last two weeks. I came thru in the clutch when she needed a scan-tron. She reminds me of April, but with better teeth.

Haven't seen her out of class, which is odd. She looks athletic, figured I would have caught her at the gym by now. She has the sexiest tattoo on the inside of her wrist. Like a half moon, but with some initials overlapping. Hopefully it's not a boyfriend's brand.

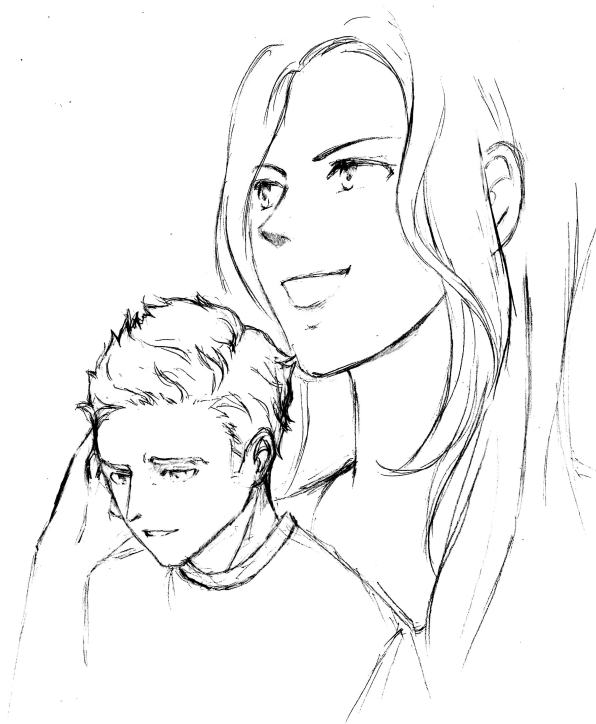
Still looking for this part time job. Got an interview Friday with the communications department. Helping splice together student congress videos. At six bucks an hour it shouldn't be too bad. Rodney's girl works there, she said she has a lot of free time. It should give me a chance to knock out some studying.

In the mean time, heard about a plasma clinic around a corner. Easy way to make forty bucks a week. Stopping in after class in the morning.

Gonna try and get some rest. The migraines are back. May need a doc to up the meds.

DAY 3

I must admit.... I like me some Nikki. Not talking wedding bells, but.... just sayin. We kicked it for a good twenty minutes today after class. She's cool, funny, and fine. What more could a man ask for. Now, just gotta get around to asking about her man, or lack there of. The initials on the tattoo are MM.



Marilyn Manson? Michael Myers? Is she crazy? Hmmm.

First thing first. Need some money. Can't ask anyone out broke. It looks like this video

job is gonna workout. And that's a good thing being that the plasma deal was an epic fail. Or to quote them, "I am not a suitable candidate to donate plasma." What does that even mean? Just my luck, I probably got sickle cell or something and the lady just didn't have the heart to tell me.

Spoke to mom. Told her about the migraines. She said she would call Dr. Peters and see if he can just prescribe me something stronger. Hopefully something that will put me to sleep. When I finally did fall asleep last night, I woke up an hour later drenched in sweat. No dream. Just sweat.

Oh, and mom got around to telling me about her boyfriend of the month. Steve. Sounds like a douche. Running thru men the way she does, it's no wonder she can't even remember my dad's name. Mom.

Head is killing me. I'm out.

Note to self – Remember, you can't cure syphilis.

DAY 6

Get this.... I think someone is following me.
Been noticing the same guy around all the
time. At class. At the gym. In the lobby.



Same dude. Never kicking it with anyone.
Just... lingering. That's messed up right?

I asked Nikki about the "man" situation.
Thought my stalker might be an ex, or worse, a present. She said she's got nobody, and hasn't for a while. Which, might I add, was the perfect icebreaker on the way to a night when we got a bit drunk and your boy here, rounded second base. She's a B cup. Immediately changed my Facebook status to In A Relationship.

Not much new with the job situation. It's simple enough. Show up. Help out. Do a bit of editing. That's about it.

New pills from mom should be arriving tomorrow, even though the migraines have been tapering off a bit. Same for the night sweats. Did have an odd dream though.

Nothing sexy, I was stuck in a coffin. Complete darkness, but I could feel the walls around me. I could hear people outside, but couldn't make out what they

were saying. Sounded like an argument. I screamed and shouted, but nothing. I remember the voices becoming faint, then a loud explosion and that was it.

Hopefully the next time I have one, it'll feature Halle Berry.

DAY 8

Gonna make this short, because my hand hurts like crazy! Got into a fight this morning. First one since like, 5th grade.

Long story short, some jerk had a problem with me on the court. Dude must of just flunked a test or something, because he gets all in my face after I called his double dribble. The last time I checked you can't dribble, pick the ball up, take two freaking steps, and then dribble again, idiot!

He shoved me. I shoved him back. He swung, missed, I snapped, then I swung back.



I connected pretty good I guess, because he went down hard. They kicked us out, and that was that. He must have bit his tongue or something because there was a lot of blood coming from his mouth.

Anyways, after that I skipped out the rest of my classes, and work too. Been in the room catching up on Dragon Ball Z episodes. Just one of those days.

I'm out. Nikki is waiting in the lobby.

P.S.

Just got back in. John sent me a text. He said he heard that guy from the gym has a separated jaw and three missing teeth. The bone went thru his cheek. Wow. I actually feel bad. The kid in fifth grade only got a broken nose. Maybe I should join the iron fist tournament.

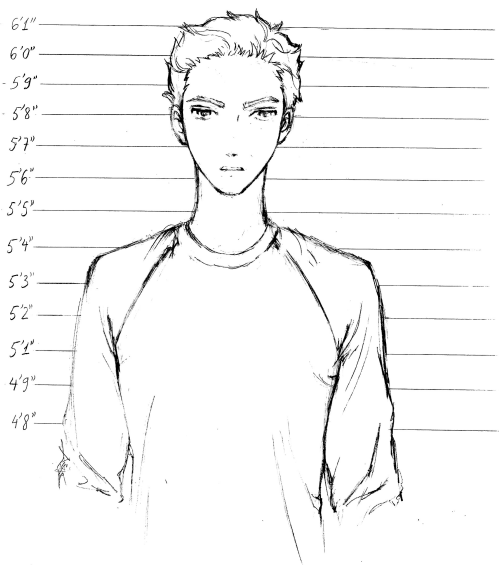
DAY 9

I could have really used a dad today. I guess separating someone's jaw is a more serious offense than I thought.

I woke up this morning to the gentle sound of Campus Police knocking on my door. The guy from the gym was pressing charges,

so... I had to be taken to jail. What ever happened to the good old days when a guy got beat up, he just got his buddies to come after you with a baseball bat. Or even better, transferred schools in shame. But I digress.

So. They take my mug shot, steal my fingerprints, and throw me in with last night's drunks.



First time in jail. Not as bad as you might think. That stuff you hear about getting one phone call. Not true. Call as much as you want, it's just on your dime.

First call. Nikki. Told her what was up. Not looking to get bailed out, just wanted her to know. The second was to Rodney, now I am looking to get bailed out. Donate some plasma, rob a liquor store, just get me outta here. He hung up saying he would see what he could do, which means, get comfortable, you ain't going anywhere anytime soon.

Could have called mom. But, we know how that would have ended. "What do you want me to do? I have two jobs, bills stacking up, and I am strapped for cash as it is!" Better to just sleep it off than hear that crap. Could have really used my pills. Head was killing me. Worst than before.

I was in and out of sleep for a couple of hours. Sweating like a pig. I could hear my partners in crime being released. Must be nice to have a father.

Then something funny happened. They came and told me I was free to go. Charges had been dropped. Freakin sweet right?

Here is the thing. When they gave me my stuff back. In my coat pocket, was a card. A simple black and white card. It has a phone number on one side, and Moto #5 on the other.

DAY 10



I taped this card to my monitor. I'm thinking about calling it. Nikki says I should. She's pretty adamant about it.

I think it probably got into my pocket by accident. Probably just some scamming ambulance chaser lawyer who's in with the cops to have his card snuck in to every kid who needs a bailout.

So. My stint in the "pokey" cost me my job. I guess the fine print says you can't get into any trouble on campus. Need a new gig.

Been hanging around the gym a lot. Actually hoping to find the guy whose face I crushed to apologize and thank him for dropping the charges. Haven't seen him. Rumor is, no one has. Not since he went to the hospital. Maybe it's for the best. A guy like that, I probably would have to watch my back everyday. I can't lie though. Punching him felt good.

What is Moto #5 anyway? Did this idiot mean to say motto. It's probably some sort

of church group, thinking I need Jesus. Motto #5 is gonna be in reference to some bible verse. That's how they hook you, when you are down. Then, after a few "talks", that's when they ask for the check! Or even worse, get you to join the cult, and drink the Kool-Aid.

Forget it. I need a good laugh.

DAY 13

First off. Bud Ice. Best beer around. Just saying. All righty. Here is what went down. Got bored yesterday. So, I dialed that number.

It rings. Rings. Third ring, someone picks up. No "Hello", but someone picked up. I waited a few seconds, then I said Hello. Nothing. Said Hello again. Again nothing. So I hung up. Figured it was some sort of telemarketing scam or something.

Anyway, I am about to jump in the shower, when my phone starts ringing. I check the

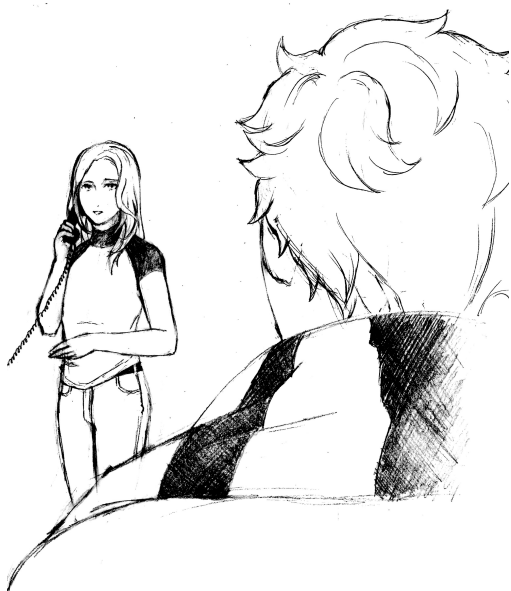
caller ID; UNKNOWN. I pick up. "Hello?" I hear breathing.

The first thing that comes to my mind, that stalker. That loser, some sick loser, who probably wants to rape me. "Hello!" Still nothing. Forget it. I'm done. If this is someone's idea of a joke, then their tour should be canceled.

Second thought comes to mind. M.C. Swole from the gym, out for revenge. Now, this could be a problem, cuz that dude might be crazy.

Phone rings again! I snatch it up, "HELLO!"

Oops. Nikki was in the lobby. I tell her to have Max check her in and come up because I still gotta take a shower. I jump in the shower. Wash up. When I come out, I see Nikki, on the phone, on my phone? She mutters something, then hangs up.



“What was that?”

She says it was nothing. But I could tell she was acting funny. Is she cheating? Forget it. I let it go. We went and hung out.

Now, here is what led me to drinking these here beers tonight. After I got back, I

Googled the number on the card. Nothing. Unlisted.

I say screw it, and dial the number again. It rings. Rings. Someone picks up. “Who is this!”

I hear some deep voice say, “How are the migraines?”

What the...? How does this guy know about my migraines? And is this who Nikki was talking to? “Who...is...THIS!”

The chump hangs up. Bout an hour later, I get a text. It’s an address, followed by Tuesday 10:30 am. I’m going.

DAY 14

Let me be very clear. I am not making this up. I hope someday this all makes sense.

I went to 2418 Monarch. 10:30. Downtown. Small building. Single Door. With a buzzer.

I pushed it and waited. Waited some more.
Turned around to scope out the scenery,
and the next thing I know, I am being tazed,
and I'm unconscious.

Don't know where the dude came from, all I
can remember is a jolt, then black, that's it.
When I opened my eyes I was in a small
room, had to be about 20×20. Walls looked
to be made of glass. Sitting in a small metal
chair.

I kid you not, "BOY!" booms into the room.
It's so loud, that there must have been
speakers above, but it was too dark for me
to make out. "Stand up boy!"

I'm still woozy, but I manage to rise to my
feet. "What is this? Who are you and where
am I?"

Right then, it felt like God himself hit me
square in my chest. I was lifted off the
ground, and flung about ten feet into the
wall. I don't know how my chest didn't cave
in and surely didn't know how I was still

alive. I fell to the ground and curled up into a ball. My eyes watered up. Call me a pansy, I don't care. I had no clue what I had gotten my self into, and worst, what in the world just hit me. No one was in the room.

Suddenly, I felt the weight of the world start pressing on my back. Flattened me like a pancake. I did my best to get my arms underneath me, but couldn't. I still couldn't see anything. What was going on? "Stop!"

Yelling didn't help. My ribs were killing me. This is how it ends. I didn't even tell anyone I was coming here. They won't even find my body.

That life or death moment was in front of me. I closed my eyes, and let my fear become anger. I used what I thought was my last breath to muster up enough strength to belt out "ENOUGH!"

The floor shook. The wall next to me shattered. Fractured glass everywhere. The pressure on my back was gone.



Before I passed out, I looked to my left and could make out three figures behind the glass. The tall one said, "He'll do."

Woke up about an hour ago in my room.
Went and asked downstairs, no one saw me
come up. What's happening to me?

DAY 15

You would think that someone who went
thru what I just went thru would get
sympathy galore from his girlfriend. She'd
be here, trying to help me figure this out.
Who these people were, what they want,
you know... the typical girlfriend stuff.

Well, you know what. I haven't seen her. She
hasn't called, hasn't sent a text. Nothing.
What a great girlfriend.

I haven't told anyone about what happened
yesterday. They wouldn't believe me if I did.

I went back to the building today. Same
door. Buzzed. No one came out. I walked
around to the side and peered in a window.
Nothing. Looks like the place has been
abandoned for a while.



They must have taken me somewhere else.
Most of the offices around are empty, so I
doubt anyone saw what happened to me.

I need to talk to Nikki.

DAY 17



Well. I caught up to Nikki.

Her body was found late last night on the steps of the library. The cause of death has yet to be determined.

The funeral is Monday.

