

"It's Nothing Fancy...."

We had looked forward to this one since we first heard about it, and the time had finally fell upon us. It was our second night back after a short vacation, and our spirits were good. It was a warm Friday evening when we arrived; we entered the bar and smiled, as the crowd was bouncy and alive. We had done a few gigs in Chicago over the years, but playing the Cubby Bear after Reds/Cubs game was something we always wanted to experience. And what an experience it was.

The night went by rather quickly, a good solid show with a good solid crowd. We planned on staying over, and since it was his job, Jimi had set us up with some rooms near by, some place we had never heard of. Looking back, how we wished it had stayed that way. Our first chore was to figure out how to get to this place of mystery. We began by asking some of the bar help if they had ever heard of it. Their sudden pale skin, small stream of tears, and comforting hugs should have tipped us that this might not be a great place, but we had a few belts in us, and perhaps our judgment was impaired. We finally piled in the van, although Jimi remained, said he was staying somewhere else. Strange, we thought to ourselves, but not entirely unusual for him. We proceeded to drive, still happy from the show, through unknown streets of Chicago. A few blocks later, we turned left and saw our destination. Looking back now, we should have recognized some tell tale signs that this place was not for us. The broken windows, the corpse on the lawn, the screams from inside, little things like this should have given us ample warning to turn around, but as mentioned, we had been drinking. Tim and John staggered through the crime tape and entered the front door, while Stephen and Spike remained in the van.

"What the fuck's taking so long?" Spike asked aloud, hobbling from the van to investigate.

As he entered the kingdom of hell, the burned, velvet carpet squished beneath his feet. John and Tim were wiping their hands as they turned towards him.

"They need hair samples and fingerprints" John slurred.

Finally after a myriad of forms to sign, the large, black man slid us our keys. We hoisted our bags back on our shoulders and prepared to walk.

"Can ya point us in the right direction, ol'pal?" Tim questioned.

"I'm sorry can you repeat that", the bulletproof glass muffling the man's reply.

"I think he said up to the second floor, down the ramp, between the ice machine and the sniper tower" Spike quipped.

A few scary moments later we arrived at our rooms, eyeballs peering from the doors surrounding ours.

Stephen entered his room first and rushed back out, a few years older it appeared.

"I don't think so" were his only words, a trembling in his voice as he spoke.

"Pretty bad, Steve?" Spike asked the guitar player, his rosary now in hand.

Spike and Tim entered their room, walked down a strangely lit hallway, and then turned into the smallest most disgusting room they had ever seen (and remember, these guys have been in a band for 18 years.)

They peered around speechless for a few seconds, inhaling the pleasant smell of urine, in total awe of their present situation.

"That's nice," Tim said, admiring the roaches racing up the torn wallpaper.

About the same time we heard the gunshots, John raced into the room, obviously just seeing his, and screamed "There ain't no fucking way I'm staying here!" his usual neat hair disheveled with fear.

"I'll drive the whole way" speaking of the 7 hour drive we had to Jackson, OH.

"Deal!" the rest of us screamed in unison.

Minutes later we piled in the van, very tired now, all wanting Jimi next to us so we could beat him repeatedly. From the cell phone in the van, we planned to call the number he had given us of where he was staying. We noticed it was written on a piece of stationary with "The Westin Hotel" embroidered on top.

"Should we call him and cuss him out?" we all wondered, the original urge to kill now subsiding.

"Yeah, but let's wait till his morning massage is over. We wouldn't want to inconvenience him" Spike replied, the sarcasm flowing freely.

We all smiled and said nothing, our thoughts now wandering in all directions. John continued to press on into the early morning sun, as we listened to Stephen snoring as we drove.