

The smoke stacks were always there. Even if your back was to them, even if you weren't thinking about them they were there. They stuck right up strait into the sky. There were four of them. Typical paint job of faded red stripes. They, like everything else in the neighborhood looked warn and ugly, if you could even call it a neighborhood.

Johnny hated this place. He had only lived here two weeks but he hated it. He knew he'd hate it even before he got here. And now that he was here and knew something about this new home he really hated it. For starters there were no more kids besides him and his brother in the small trailer park. After that was the fact that there was nothing outside the trailer park except an industrial area and what looked like truck stops. Nowhere fun to go hang out, not like where he used to live. And the absolute worse is that he wasn't allowed to wonder far because his Uncle had told his mom it was dangerous with the fast passing trucks and Commuter trains.

Johnny really hated those trains. Sure the neighborhood they used to live in was kind of noisy. With the other families living in the apartments next door and the guy who would come every morning and honk the horn trying to sell fruit. But this was a different kind of noise here. For starters it was almost too quite for Johnny. It was kind of creepy. He would never let on to his brother, as not to be teased any more than normal but it was much more dark out here on the outskirts of the city and the silence was something Johnny wasn't used to. And the times right when he thought he was about to fall asleep one of those damn trains would come cutting through the night. Sometimes it would even shake the trailer from the ground up.

His brother didn't seem to mind the new neighborhood as much. Maybe it was because he was a little bit older. Johnny was twelve now and his brother was fourteen. Johnny would lay awake in his sleeping bag and look over to his brother whenever one of those damn trains would come through late at night. His brother would sleep right through it. Their last house was the first one Johnny could remember living in. His brother would talk about a house they lived in when Johnny was just a little kid. Maybe that was part of the reason that he brother didn't mind the new home he was getting used to this moving around.

Johnny's mom had made the decision to get away from the man she was living with. She caught him one too many times doing things he shouldn't. Johnny couldn't really understand everything that was going on but knew the arguments were fierce behind the closed doors. His mom would always close the door before she really got into an argument with her boyfriend. Later she would tell Johnny and his brother that she didn't want them to have any kind of bad example on how a man should treat a woman and that's why the door would be closed. She would tell them that she wanted them to grow up and be good boys and that they weren't going to learn that from the loser she was dating.

Anyway, after a really big fight about something, Johnny's mom came out from behind the closed door with tears in her eyes and informed him and his brother they would all be going to live with his Uncle for a while until she could get her own place. And that was it.

Not that Los Angeles proper was the cleanest place. Even at the age he was Johnny knew he lived in a large dirty city. But it just didn't compare to how dirty he thought where he was living was. Across the train tracks from them was a big power plant. Crowding the sky from it were those damn smoke stacks. Somewhere in the area was some kind of feedlot and its smell wasn't the best.

It took forever to get from where they were living to their school. Johnny's mother or Uncle would give them a ride to school in the mornings and usually his mom would pick them up in the afternoon. The ride two and from school was a real drag for the past two weeks. Johnny never got to sit in the front and was quite partial to getting carsick. His brother never let him sit in the front seat. And sometimes his brother would sit in the back seat just to torment him on the ride home.

School itself was no fun. All of his friends were disappointed that he left the old neighborhood. They just didn't understand why he left. And the times they did listen they teased him for being "all po and ghetto like dat" having to move in with his Uncle. They weren't bad guys though. Johnny missed getting to hang out with them after school. He tried to talk his mom into letting some of the guys come visit but she said she didn't want to put his uncle out like that. She also said that he and his brother should do their best to keep the trailer clean to show appreciation to their for the place to stay.

The power lines and electrical boxes looked black with the sunset sky behind them. It was a Friday and they just got home from school. Johnny's brother borrowed some kind of new game from a friend at school to this Friday night was starting to shape up. Johnny followed his mom outside to say goodbye to her as she prepared to get in her car and leave for work. Ever since they moved out from their old place she had been putting in extra hours at her old waitress job. Johnny waved and she drove away.

He didn't feel just like going into the cramped trailer just yet. He just hung around outside by the curb looking at the sunset. The colors were really vivid behind all of those damn power lines. Those wires, poles, and boxes littered the whole skyline. Still, the colors looked magic behind the entanglement of wires. Johnny stood there for a long few moments. He leaned up against an old telephone pole and just felt then last heat of the setting sun soaking in to his dark skinny arm.

Then he heard something. A loud metal clang and then some voices of some men. It was coming from behind the fence. Johnny knew that on the other side of the fence was an old motel and diner that was painted all crazy. When they first moved in he was excited thinking that the pool that belonged to the motel actually belonged to the trailer park. He was wrong of course. But, right now that didn't matter. Right now he was more intrigued with what these men were doing.

Johnny carefully made his way through some bushes and under one of the other trailers. He crawled halfway up the old wooden fence so he could see the other side. On the other side there was a large white truck and pick up with a black trailer. The men were unloading some kind of lights and a generator from the truck.

Like many young kids growing up in Los Angeles Johnny knew what these men were doing. They were here to make a movie or TV show. This Friday night was really shaping up he thought to himself. Johnny hung on the fence and continued to watch. They were unloading power cables and big metal stands. Then something emerged from the black trailer. Slowly some kind of hot rod came down the ramp and onto the ground.

How exciting! Johnny was beginning to think that nothing cool or exciting ever went on out this far from the city. He decided to go find his brother. He thought to himself, "There's no way he's going to believe this."

It took Johnny a while to coax his brother away from the TV and the newly borrowed video game. His brother was very into his video games, maybe that's why he didn't mind the recent move as much as Johnny. His head was always in the video games. What strategy guides did he need, what cheat codes, how many ways can he beat a certain game. With all of those concerns maybe he didn't have room for others such as where they were living.

Johnny's brother got to a point where he could pause and save the game and then they were out the front door. Johnny didn't know if they were supposed to even go as far as the Motel but knew that with his brother and the clout that came with his two more years of age that they would be fine.

The look of excitement didn't exactly jump up onto his brother's face as he'd hoped it would. Johnny couldn't believe it. The lights, the cool car, the entire environment was exciting. His brother must have had a screw loose or something. Maybe he burned his brain out on the video game.

Johnny was determined to find out what was going on over that fence. He made the decision to go around. He wanted a closer look. What could they be making? An episode of one of his favorite shows, maybe a big blockbuster of a movie? Maybe one of his favorite movie stars was just moments away from an arrival in a limo or something.

His brother caught up to him and then moved forward to lead the way. He wasn't about to let Johnny get the credit for any great discovery's they might find. As they came around the corner they found more people who were working in the front of the diner. Now his brother's face finally lit up with some excitement. Sitting in front of them was a beautiful woman. She looked like some big movie star sitting there cuddled up in her big white robe smoking a cigarette. A man was applying make-up to her face and she was having a conversation with some other woman who was sitting there. The group looked up at Johnny and his brother.

They couldn't have had a better luck. The beautiful woman wasn't anyone famous (They found that out after asking her). She was just a model. And it wasn't some big blockbuster of a film it was just some magazine that was shooting pictures. So no car stunts, no explosions, super and or action heroes, just a magazine shoot.

It didn't matter though because the beautiful woman also happened to be nice, and so did the other people working on the job. After a few questions asked of Johnny and his brother about where they were from they were invited over to some kind of food table and offered some really good chocolate cake and a soda. The sun was now down and Johnny and his brother had to get back to the trailer quickly before they got in any trouble. They took one last look at the car and beautiful girl and were on their way.

The two boys got back into their cramped little home without any problems. Their Uncle had fallen asleep and their mother was still at work. Planted in front of the TV and the video game they just played for a while conversing rather politely to each other about the car they had just seen and all.

Then the two boys got an idea, they made an agreement not to mention the motel or the photo shoot they had just seen. They would wait until later, way later and sneak back out to watch some more through the fence. This was the only exciting thing they've

seen out here in the past two weeks and they just weren't going to pass without fully taking advantage.

The video game helped pass some of the time. But it just didn't hold the same merit it had before they knew of the photo shoot going on behind the trailer park. Johnny's brother kept going on and on about how pretty the girl was and how he would bet that she would some day be really famous and then they would brag to all of their friends of how they saw her in person.

Johnny would go on and agree with all of the things his brother was saying about her, even though he was a couple of years younger and probably didn't understand all of it.

Their mother came home earlier than usual. This was good. They hoped she would in turn go to sleep a little more early than usual as well. Their Uncle had left the house a couple of hours before. He told them he was going to go have a drink with some friends from work. He then teased them that he was going to a strip bar and they could come along if they like. They both liked their uncle sometimes.

It seemed like he was always in a bad mood right after work but for the most part was pretty nice to them. He even offered to take them to a movie or something some weekend.

They were in luck and they weren't. Their mom did fall asleep early which was good. The bad part is that she was so tired that she fell asleep in the front room in front of the television wearing a waitress uniform and all.

They agreed they would have to use some stealth. They loved using that word. They had learned it from the stealth bomber and whenever applying it to themselves felt cool. Both of the boys put on their hooded sweatshirts. The shirts were dark navy blue and had hoods in case they got cold.

First the older brother peeked around the corner to see if their mother was still asleep. She was. It was now or never they thought. They would head out just for a little bit and then come back before anyone could get worried. Slowly they made their way for the door. Johnny's brother very carefully moved the handle to its side. Good. No noise from turning the old thing. As Johnny moved up close behind him he slowly opened the door. It made a loud CREAK as only an old metal piece of junk would.

Both of their heads jerked toward their sleeping mother in unison to make sure if they were busted or not. She moved slightly. With that they both went as fast as they could out the front door and down the makeshift steps. Damn door. The important thing is that they were out. Maybe the noise from the TV inside helped them out.

Their neighborhood seemed dirty and desolate even at night. The air had a snap of cold to it and an orange tint hung in the low clouds from the lights at the power plant near them. The black of the sky was so orange that Johnny could still see the power lines in front of it as well.

It was dark out here. For a brief second Johnny was creeped out. He knew they weren't supposed to be out. He felt exposed in this unfamiliar area. It didn't smell like the city and it didn't sound like the city. The only welcoming sounds were those of the men on the other side of the fence working.

As the two brothers approached the fence the bright lights behind seemed more prominent. Only now they could also see hints of neon that were lighting up the old diner as well.

They were as silent and careful as they could be coming up on the old fence. They searched the fencing for an area that had some good knotholes to look through. They didn't want to get caught from climbing up on top. The voices of the people working seemed to just be feet away. They were having no luck finding a good knothole. The voices of the crew working continued as Johnny and his brother searched for a view. The voices were pleasant. These men sounded like they were enjoying their work.

Johnny and his brother silently agreed they would have to look over the fence very carefully and quietly. They found where they thought the best view would be and they prepared to look over. Every now and then the area would flash from one of the photographers big camera flashes.

Johnny and his brother put one foot each on the middle plank of the fence stretching their young arms the top plank. Then stretching their small fingers on the plank they pulled themselves up. Johnny's head peeked over the top and he couldn't believe what he saw. It was such a shock that he actually fell off the fence backward into the brush barely catching himself.

That beautiful girl from before was now completely naked. She was posing in front of the car and she was naked. Johnny's brother looked as though he were about to squeal of burst.

Johnny stood there for a moment with the vivid image of that naked girl flashing through his head. He had never seen a naked girl before. And especially one like that. He didn't know what to do. He felt half excited and intrigued and half like he was about to cry. It was kind of a shock. Kind of like a small part of his innocence just went away.

Another flash illuminated the area. Johnny and his brother were shielded from view by the fence. Johnny looked up at his brother who was still watching intently. Johnny couldn't believe this. A real live naked girl. He had seen girls in bikini's at the beach before but this was different. And that girl was so beautiful. He decided to climb back up on that fence and get one more look. He planted his foot, pulled his arms, and popped his head up one more time.

There she was still there. Still naked. Her body ever so slightly illuminated by the lights the men had set up. Johnny got a real good look at her, her legs, her chest, he had never seen anything like it. His heart raced and he felt guilty and sick all at the same time.

Another flash went off. It was enough to scare him and his brother down from the fence for a second. As they got to the ground Johnny's brother grabbed him by the arms shaking him with excitement and trying to hold back laughter. In turn Johnny was now trying to hold back his own laughter.

They couldn't believe it, these people were shooting some kind of naked magazine and now Johnny and his brother got to see it. Maybe this was better than some big blockbuster movie or TV show.

Johnny and his brother sat a few moments in the dark and got up the nerve to crawl back up on the fence. The girl now had her robe on and was standing in front of some kind of gas heater. She looked more familiar in that robe and Johnny felt kind of guilty for having seen her naked. He couldn't believe it he had seen her naked.

The two boys hung out for a while longer while the men continued shooting. Johnny didn't crawl back up on the fence. Part of it was out of him trying to be respectful to the young model, the other part was out of him trying to preserve that first image he had seen of her. He'd never forget it.

The men broke down the lights and started packing everything up. The Motel, the diner, and the trailer park seemed much darker once they and their lights were gone. Johnny and his brother sat on top of the fence and reminisced to each other about what they had just seen. His brother boasted to him that not even his older friends had ever seen anything like that and now Johnny as well as him were more manly than any of their friends.

Johnny was now a little more past his initial shock and slightly proud himself. He looked out at the power plant and smoke stacks that loomed in the distance. They haunted the night sky even now. Slowly and silently red lights blinked at the top of each column. None of the guys in the old neighborhood would ever believe they saw something like this. He continued watching those smokestacks. Maybe this wasn't going to be such a bad place for them to live after all...