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Into. To College Writing

25 September 2009

### When the Water Turned Red

The trucks were full and the trailer was loaded down with camping supplies, food, alcohol, and canoes. Five buddies headed for the border where the Elk River and a promising good time meet. Shawn, Cody, Kyle, Trey, and I spent the night at a local campsite and woke up early the next morning eager to get on the water and make the most of the long day ahead of us. How long that day would be was the ultimate surprise we never saw coming.

After driving one of the trucks twelve miles down the river so we could shuttle ourselves, we launched our canoes and kayak off the rocky edge of Macie's Beach. Loaded down with ice chest full of beer, liquor, and the occasional bottles of water we set off on our long journey. The river was already crowded when we arrived and the sound of cans cracking open echoed down the river bouncing from bluff to bluff. It was going to be a great day. We floated for several hours enjoying the water and soaking up the sun, making a day out of it. Despite how much fun we were having we had stopped drinking, knowing we had to drive, and were ready to head home. Our legs were burnt, our bodies were drained, and we were in dire need of some food. We had already drove back and picked up the other truck from the drop-off point with the trailer and started to load up. I was strapping down the

canoe and kayak that we had already carried to the trailer while Kyle and Trey were down at the water's edge getting the last canoe. I heard Trey holler "Shawn!" as my head turned to look towards the embankment. Shawn and I both stand at over six foot, weigh over two hundred pounds, have tattoos, and bench press 350 pounds. We are not exactly the kind of people that get messed with often. Kyle and Trey however are about five and half feet tall, and 150 pounds. As Shawn's name echoed through the pine trees he left me and started walking toward the water. I looked down there and saw many people standing all along the water's edge being very quiet with obvious directed attention. I knew something was wrong. I was about fifty yards away when I started following Shawn to see what was going on when it happened. A thirty year old man that stood over six foot and weighed around 250 pounds head butted Kyle in the nose. With blood trickling from his face the man yelled

"You been talking shit?"

"What are you talking about?!" Kyle screams back in anger.

Then the man picked up an oar and cracked Kyle's head open with the blade of it! His entire face and chest was covered in blood as it fused from his head and bleached the muddy water below him dark red. Then the rest is all one big blur as I took off sprinting. After the initial blow with the oar, they never got another swing. These tough drunk men thought they were picking an easy fight, but they were wrong. They had no idea that Trey was a boxer, but the man found out very fast when he started throwing hands so fast he didn't even have a chance. Then the man with the oar's, whom had initiated the fight, buddies tried to jump in and didn't see

me and Shawn coming until it was too late for them as well. We finished off four of them as the rest of their friends stood back hurling rocks the size of softballs at us. As we tried to walk away, cop cars came flying in from every direction. I thought the guys that started the fight would all get arrested and we would walk away, but that was not the case. They had over twenty people with them and claimed we had jumped them. As the cops looked at their swollen and cut up faces, and back to our clean shaved chins with no scratches except the ones splitting our sore knuckles wide open he decided we had started it. I can still hear the words, "You're under arrest," as the sound of cuffs zipping my wrists together so tightly that it pinched a nerve. We were all told to sit on the ground as the real criminals walked freely cursing us, calling us cowards, and even spitting blood on us with the cops standing two feet away doing nothing about it. The man that started it all even had to have a gun drawn on him by a young police officer to put down the oar in which he replied, "What are you going to do? Shoot me? Go ahead!" Despite all the commotion they made, we were still the ones in handcuffs. We were all taken to jail except for one of my friends who didn't fight. The long ride there was one of discomfort, anger, and confusion.

We arrived at the county jail around six o'clock and were getting booked in. The cop there had told us that we would probably get a ticket and walk; however, that's not how it played out. The arresting officer walked in, "Second degree assault," a felony in Missouri, "Bail set at 7,500 dollars," echoed through the tiny concrete room. Shawn was taken away, and while I was getting booked he came back dressed in full orange. That's when it really hit me. Seeing your best friend dressed in that

attire is something no one should ever have to see. Soon after, I was in the same room he had been in getting strip searched like a cold-hearted criminal. As I walked through the small hallway I then entered the two-story jail cell. There were about thirty men in the room and the sight of Shawn's face in the back gave me the most satisfying relief. Given only a mat, blanket and a metal bunk I settled in beside Shawn. The thought of not knowing how long you are going to be there is the scariest part. Amongst real criminals, most of which were waiting for court to see how long they were going to prison for, we laid down discussing the long day. Kyle was treated and never actually went to jail, and Trey was in there with us shortly after I arrived. The old worn-out bed mat had to be rolled up and used as a pillow too, so half of my body was on the cold metal bunk. My stomach was growling and the pants were rubbing my burnt legs. Finding out that we just missed the last meal of the day was utterly disappointing. We had been in there for several hours talking to the other guys and watching television when we decided that we were going to be there for at least one night. Despite the discomfort, we drifted off to sleep exhausted from the long day.

I was startled when someone yelled my name over an intercom, waking me up. It was after midnight and we were finally getting bailed out. It felt like I had died and someone had just revived me as I gathered my mat and blankets thinking about nothing but the comfort of my own bed. Leaving the jail cell itself was like entering a flea market in a third world country as the men surrounded us wanting to trade us for our clean blankets and mats. After paying 750 dollars a piece and working out all the details with our bail bondsman, we were finally free to leave. Our day set aside

for fun and good memories had turned into the longest day of our lives as we trudged into our hometown at three in the morning.

As of right now, I have not received a summons to go to court, but the charges may stand for up to two years before prosecution is carried out. In the midst of the greatest moments of life, I learned that disaster can strip it all away in the blink of an eye leaving you with nothing but bad memories and an empty wallet. I knew the trip with my buddies would be one to remember, but the fact that those memories would last a lifetime is something I never saw coming. We will never forget the day when the water turned red.