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Point Park University: ENGL 254

James Sidel

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**Got a vacancy? (Word#1223)**

Hello, my name is Ralf. Well...for this story that is simply something I'm going to use to keep my real name as well as the subject of matter a secret. In fact, most of the areas, places, and people will be anonymous. Here's the story...

I finished my freshman year of college about eight months ago give or take and my sophomore year was literally just starting that same fall. Unfortunately, all of the available dorms at the time were booked. I go to a Predominately White Institute (PWI) so the first idea me and my mother had was, "that they had to get their precious little white students in first and we black folks later." We shared a big laugh while applying for available living quarters. Finding available rooms was quite tedious and a major pain in the ass. I had to find an available room on craigslist around the area that my college was located at. Craigslist wouldn't be my first choice for anything, but I've already missed a whole week worth of class so I kind of had no other solution. On top of having to apply for a job to pay rent for a possible apartment only made it even more frustrating, I am stuck between a rock and hard spot. After flushing around some obvious serial killers, kidnappers, bribers, Pedophiles,

human traffickers, drug dealers, and single women looking for a quick ride and god knows what else. Eventually, I came to one earnest and promising home-seller (or at least at the time I thought he was.) offered me a reasonable room. He was a landlord who went by the name ...Jeff. Me and Jeff contacted over via text message on his second phone (An instant red flag) on the priorities and responsibilities that were going to be appointed as soon as I'd bought the space. Everything at first was quite peachy. He ebulliently responded to the questionnaire I gave him and the next day he even gave me views of the bathroom, bedroom, and kitchen. The interior looked more like a hoity toity styled hotel then of house. But later on, things started to get peculiar. Jeff for at least these three days kept me company by asking how my days were, when I was going to get there, and how I felt about the appliances he built in the rooms. The over puckering landlord left me replying back questioning text messages regarding the circumstances and his odd and moral compass. He simply replied to them constantly with "Do you love it". In the back of my head, I simply passed them of as him desperately trying to make a penny for this house, but it felt disturbingly overwhelming then extravagant. With this question the creep finally broke the ice,

"When you get to see it, you would love it more. And the bed is an orthopedic bed."

This statement had me scratching my head. We continued on with our arrangement deal. He asked if I knew what an orthopedic bed was. I replied "yes". With these replies alone I felt my heart stopped.

"Okay good. Its good for sex! Makes it easy", "And good to relax with. You are an adult I think I can tell you right?"

I was utterly shocked! I quickly wrote back “Awkward!” Instead of Jeff acknowledging I wasn’t interested he persistently asked if I had a girlfriend, asked for my age, how’s my day been going and applying that it was big enough for a full family.

I thought to myself, “What is this freaky fuck planning to do with a whole family?” He then replied back, “I have to go now Ralf; I will get back to you as soon as my lawyer is done with the tenancy Lease agreement document.”

This was given to me at approximately 9 o’clock A.M. Around twelve thirty-eight P.M. he came back. This time he talked about a Tenancy Lease Agreement and wanted to send the document to my email. I felt like I was going to end up in one of those horror YouTube stories if I went on further with his request. So, I did the most mature and manly approach to this dilemma .....I told him to “fuck off you pervert! I’m not interested” and quickly deleted his number of my phone, trace by trace. It may’ve been lady luck because I quickly stormed to call my university and demanded them to find me a room. And they immediately gave me one. Might’ve been out of pity. Ehh...go figure. It wasn’t soon when I got back to the city where my college was located. The neighborhood of the city itself is pretty liberal so there weren’t many times someone would show their ass out, so it was pretty safe. The outer rim of it wasn’t much too speak of, all types of bull came out of there, weed men, stragglers, junkies you name it. All the stuff that your mama would tell you not to grow up as. When I returned to my college, I was greeted by one of my drinking pals, Nolan. He was flabbergasted that I came back after I text to him that I might not be returning due to my past dilemma. During lunch and dinner, we would talk for hours on just about everything, we were so much alike in terms of personality and both wanting dorms for ourselves. Nolan in particular despised his unruly roommate and eventual

decided he wanted to move out but instead of getting a different dorm he called a home seller to rent out a room space. Usually when dinner ends, me and Nolan part ways for the day or take a stroll. Nolan eventually was called by the landlord to take a look of the room, so he had to leave dinner early. As soon as he relayed this to me, I became a bit cautious of this visit for some odd reason and I ask if I could come with him. Nolan gave me a weird look, but he was willing to let me tag along with. That's what friends are for, I guess. Once we arrived at the place a sudden chill ran down my back. It seemed as I was here before by looking at the front door alone. There was just no way I could explain it.

“Hey! Hey! Ralf!” Shouted Nolan.

I snapped back to reality and out of my cloud of thoughts. “Hey dude. You all right?”

“Yeah man. I'm just...in my own head.” I replied.

We proceeded to enter the house. When we opened the door that same cold sweat feeling I had earlier resurfaced, the entrance of the house looked like the exact same one Jeff showed me! The only difference was the color of the interior being red instead of pearl white and a few of the furniture being organized differently, with different bedspreads, cushions and everything but it was still recognizable. In my gut I was ready to tell Nolan to get out but before I could say anything, a man suddenly rolled from the corner. He was a middle-aged Caucasian man with short strangely but neat hair and a patchy beard. He also appeared to have a beer gut that wasn't hard to miss. Complete with a full suit, with no tie, and wrinkly long john. Superficiality aside, it seemed preposterous for someone like this guy to run such a nice house. He kindly greeted us both. His compassion was almost too welcoming. He was so fast to give an introduction that I

couldn't remember his name. It was almost as if he was in a hurry. He let us both tour the house while he went to call his boss pertaining to the purchasing of the room. While me and Nolan were walking up the steps to explore where he would be staying, I glanced at the home seller and he starred back like as if two companions have just met after years of being part. I eventually trotted up the steps as if nothing happened. We entered the room Nolan might be staying in...to the right of the room stood an orthopedic bed, the exact same one. Everything became clear when I saw it. I felt as if my heart was about to stop.

"Na na Nolan? What was is the name of this guy?" I decrepity asked.

"J-j-j Jeff." Replied Nolan

I slowly turned my head to Nolan. It felt as it was glued to my neck. As soon as I saw Nolan I gasped softly. There he was holding out a fuzzy, worn out and undone rope. It looked as if it was tied around something. His eyes were focused on the rope.

"I got this out the closet! I wanted to see the interior of it and the first thing I saw was this." Said Nolan, fearfully.

"The closet?" I answered. There I remembered in one the images, it was this exact same room that showed a open closet with clothing in it. I don't remember the rope though it might've been put in there later. We were both froze with fear and utter disbelief and most of all, we may've been standing in the middle of crime scene. Then suddenly we heard thumps escalating the staircase. We both instantly turn towards the sounds. With each step, we became more frighten. It could've been Jeff and his "boss" coming to us next. Before they reached the last step, we quickly slipped out the window. (Which wasn't too high. In fact, the ground was

literally 20 inches below.) Then we quickly turned around and sprinted away from the house and back to our university. We were dog tired and any passing students who saw us we played it off as if we were jogging. After all, we were gym rats and were always seen wearing compression shirts and sweatpants. So, it was pretty convincing. Later that dinner we talk about in deep secret, decided not to call the police or snitch. Nolan had to accept living with his roommate and that was all we ever said about the incident. At times I still feel like shit for not telling Nolan earlier. We wouldn't have look like complete jackasses if I did. Or maybe I'm just beating myself up. That's how guilt works, when it comes it hits but eventually it passes.

The scary part is I still own the phone we had our negotiation on. Yeah, I deleted his number and blocked him, but who to say he's got even more ...detailed information of me and Nolan. He could be watching my every move even. God knows and most of all god forbid. I do own a ten-pound dumbbell and I believe my phone is going to meet its secret admirer. A choice I might consider if my paranoia gets the better of me. Just something to think about. A passing thought if you will. I don't know if Jeff was any of the above, I've described that usually hangs around in craigslist, but I do know craigslist is not something I would suggest to any homeless schnook. But admittedly, his awkwardness sure did save me from a monthly three-hundred-dollar room and a possible tense job that would interfere with my classes and pay me minimal wage that would barely make up half the rent. Hard to tell.