

I am the captian of this ship

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When I moved to Austin from North Caroina, I took a Greyhound bus for half the journey. The hijinks of this two day journey is the subject of this short story.

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I am the Captain of this Ship!

“ I am the captain of this ship and the master of your fates” yelled the middle aged huge black man driving the bus. Why was he yelling this to the passengers you might ask. It is in response to some of the behavior of people on the bus. It started with the bus driver sitting in his seat waiting for the clock to strike the time to set sail. One of the passengers suddenly jumped up out of his seat and ran to the front of the bus pushing the button that opens the door. This really set off the captain. He abandoned his ship and tried to chase the renegade down. “ Do that one more time and you are off this ship he yelled as the passenger boarded the bus again. Finally after thoroughly explaining that he was the captain of this ship, and going over all the maritime laws in great detail, he set said. Why was I on this ship? Why was I finding myself downtown Atlanta on the greyhound bus? Like most great stories it starts in my teenage years.

As I sit on the bus, I find myself having flashbacks and recollections about the events that led up to the present moment. It all started when I was sixteen. My parents were divorced, and like all weight challenged teenagers high school was an absolute hell. This was the first. It was the first breakdown that would lead to a long narrow road of destruction. I started with self-mutilation at that point in time. As a result of that my mom thought that a psychiatric hospitalization was necessary. This action was a big mistake. But then again I came to expect nothing more than that from her, because she was one of those crazy far out there non-denominational religion freaks. She claimed that all of the things that were wrong with me, that I was demon possessed. Hell I don’t know, maybe I am. Anyway, I was hospitalized a couple times that year, ultimately leading to the diagnosis of bi polar and the setting up of a therapist and a doctor.

Honestly I did some research on bi polar and I never really thought I was. But what can I say; doctors today are so quick to label people as bi polar. So as the years passed, my life went down and down. But ironically the number of hospitalizations went up and up. I tried several years in college, but it never seemed to click. I tried to work, but in the end I had to file for disability. I felt that my life was out of control. I was hurting and pushing away the ones that cared about me. I eventually ended up jumping between group homes. Over the course of eight years, I had over fifty psychiatric hospitalizations. I had tried all of the types of therapy that were available. I have also tried all the types of medications that were available to me.

What really acted as a turning point was the time period between January 2012 and July 2012. This was I refer to as the year of the hospitals. I ended up going to the state hospital in January 2012. I was there for three months. You would think that in that period of time they would be able to set up a solid outpatient plan, but no. After just about a month I ended back in the state hospital, only to repeat the same thing that happened the last time. This year I can honestly say that I was in the hospital for the entire year except for about a month. In mid-June I went to the worst hospital that I have ever been in. Long story short, they were going to discharge me to a homeless shelter. This is what set this whole journey into motion. I told my Grandma and Dad what they had said, and they came up with a great plan. I was going to take a bus to Tennessee and then have my grandma pick me up there and take me to the Texas border. At that point, I

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would be passed on like contraband, and smuggled the rest of the way to Austin Texas. The plan then was to stay with my dad until I find an apartment and get set up. It was a little hard to be positive though because Texas has very unfertile grass.

One of the nice nurses was the one to walk me out. It was about six oâ€ clock on Friday. I didnâ€™t have a suitcase for my stuff, so I had to throw everything into a green mesh a bag. I was a little disappointed because I had to leave behind my books, and some of my clothes. I was surprised that this nurse gave me half a pack of cigs for the journey. At about six thirty the taxi pulled up to get me. Of course he was your typical taxi driver. The ride from the hospital was pretty uneventful, which was a good thing compared to what I experienced on the rest of my flight to freedom.

I arrived at the bus depot at about seven. My bus was not going to leave until about nine. I didnâ€™t know what to expect So, I check in at the desk, and he prints off my ticket. I then go to sit down and wait. I quickly learned that as if the people on the bus were not enough to have to deal with, the had to make the boarding process very hard. They really must love numbers on this bus line because they had three of them involved in the boarding process. First they have the bus number. Then they have the trip number. Then on top of that they have the gate number that your bus leaves from. After sitting there for about two hours listening to all the typical passengers and all their shit, I boarded the bus. I did luck out because I got the very back seat which was three seats put together so that I could spread out. The bus set off about ten oâ€ clock in route to charlotte. One thing that really concerned me was the driver was enclosed in a locked bullet proof glass cage. I guess that seeing that confirmed that society has reached the climax of post nine eleven terrorist bull shit. I finally made it to a land of sleep.

When I woke up it was about one thirty in the morning. I was at the bus station for charlotte. I had just enough time to get off the bus and smoke a cigarette. When I got back on the bus, I got the same seat, however this time I could not fall asleep. Because I was going to be making a transfer in a couple of hours, I declined taking my night time meds. The rest of the trip to charlotte passed without further incident. When I arrived at the bus stop in Atlanta, I knew that this was going to be the time period of the trip where I was truly going to have fun. Note the sarcasm there.

I got off the bus at about five in the morning. It was still dark. I could say that when I got off this bus and had a good look around, I was honestly scared for my life. First thing I did was walk over to the lighted area in front of the main door and lit up a smoke. While I was puffing away, I took a moment to take in my environment. There was a cop or two walking around the main door. There were very sketchy people walking around everywhere. There were taxi cabs lined up and down the street looking for fares. I jumped back into reality when all of a sudden I felt someone tapping me on my shoulder. I look in the direction from which it came and it was a cop. â€ You canâ€™t smoke here son, you have to go down the dark scary street, and smoke in the corner, where there are more shady people, and absolutely no police presence.â€ Great I thought to myself. If the cigs are not going to kill me, maybe I will get killed trying to smoke one here. I also made the mistake of giving a cig to someone that asked. I should have remembered that story called â€ If you give a mouse a cookie.â€ Sure enough, as soon as I gave one to him, I was swarmed by people.

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So anyway, about an hour later, I was outside smoking again, and a young looking teenager came up to me. Oh by the way I forgot to mention that sense I was switching busses, I had to lug around this green see through mesh bag around with me until I got on the next bus. So anyway, this kid comes up to me and says welcome home. I had no clue what he was talking about until it sunk in that he saw my bag, and assumed that I had just gotten out of jail. I politely told him that this was not the case. He then proceeded to ask me if I was on probation. Chuckling to myself I replied that I was not. The next word out of his mouth did not surprise me at all. He asked straight out if I had any rolling papers. I said no, and started to walk away. As I was leaving through the corner of my eye, I saw him blatantly right there on the sidewalk sell some weed to someone else.

Believe me when I say that the fun didnât end there. It was about seven thirty, and I decided that I would go up to the desk and ask the attendant what station my bus was going to be leaving from. In front of me was a very intoxicated man, and he started cussing out the women behind the counter. He said that he was going to fucking rape her, and called her a cunt, and on and on again. To my delight and everyone elseâs, and officer came up to him and escorted him out. After that, I found out what gate my bus was going to be leaving from, and about ten minutes later, it was going to be time to line up. When I got in line, a security officer came up and wanded me, and my bag. This was a surprise because the other two bus stations didnât have any sort of security. After thinking about it for a while, it made sense to me because of the type of people I saw here.

I managed to make it on the bus. While I was waiting in line, I did get a fabulous view of the baggage handlers throwing halfheartedly the baggage to the bottom of the bus. This is when I awoke from my day dream to the present situation I was in. â I am the captain of this shipâ the large black bus driver was yelling. This sharp noise brought me back into the present moment. I listened casually to the startup announcements that are made. The one that stuck out in my mind was the one that not only said that smoking is not allowed on this bus, but went into detail about not smoking in the bathrooms.

About an hour later, the black captain of the ship had another announcement. He proceeded to make it very clear that smoking in the bathroom was not allowed on this ship. He said that if he catches anyone smoking in the bathroom, he will ask them to get off the bus. He also went on to say that if the person refuses to get off the bus that he would call the cops. I thought this was a little odd that he would repeat this message, but then again after everything I have witnessed I didnât read too much into it. Maybe fifteen minutes later, the bus starts to get off an exit. I thought this was odd, because we were not due for a stop yet. He pulls into a gas station, exits his bullet proof cage, and walks to the bathroom. He knocks on the door, and someone was in there. The man finally exited the bathroom, and from the smell it was obvious that he had been smoking in there. To my surprise he escorted this man off the bus, and gave him his bag, then got back on the bus and continued on. I guess this is one maritime law that the captain of the ship is not willing to bend on.

Our next stop was at about ten thirty. This is in the town of Chattanooga. This was another fifteen minuet stop. I got off the bus and smoked a couple cigs, and then went into the station to buy something to drink. I waited in line for about five minutes only to be told that they donât accept credit or debit for food or drink. Great, thanks I thought to myself. I went to get back on the bus, and we left this stop without any more incident. About noon, we arrived at Nashville Tennessee. I called my grandma and was told that they were

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about an hour away. I went to get some lunch, and waited for them to show up. She picked me up about forty five minutes later, and we headed out. At Memphis we stopped for the day.

The next day, we started again. I quickly remembered what it was like to travel with the grandparents. My grandma was a major passenger seat driver. She insisted religiously that she was in the suicide seat. I also forgot how much she liked to talk. My god, I made the mistake of asking how the Harry Potter amusement park was. I spent the next hour, reliving a moment by moment account of the park. Anyway, we finally made it to the border of Texas to meet my dad. Driving back with my dad was a lot better. I made it to his apartment about nine oâ€ clock.

I have done really well here. I have had urges to go to the hospital, but I havenâ€ t acted on them. I got my laptop back, I got appointments set up, I found an apartment, I am learning out to be independant and ride the bus. I move into my new apartment in a week, and I honestly believe that this time I will be able to successfully maneuver the waters of this next life challenge. After all â€ I am the captain of this ship, and the master of my own destiny.â€

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