

Dressed in the Forest

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All characters and works within are described as historically accurate as possible. Any resemblance to real-life people or events is purely intentional.

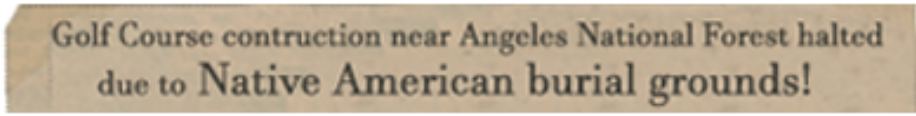
Chapter 1

A Wet Approach

A Spittering downfall echoes down the dark folds of the cold, wet pine forest. The only things visible are my panting breaths turning to fog behind my lantern. My Coleman Premium Powerhouse Dual Fuel Lantern carries on through the wind and the rain. Providing just enough light to keep me on the trail while also partially blinding me.

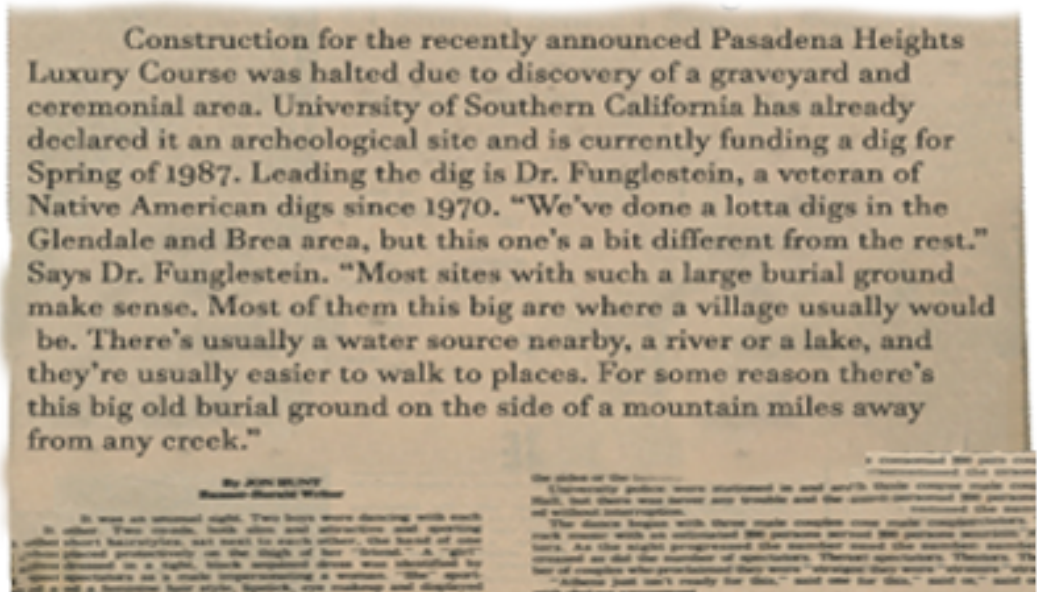
The prize for this journey would mean the end of my suffering, the end of these sleepless nights, the end of my.. Ridicule .. Or so I thought up until now. What would I truly find here? I only knew the coordinates to this cabin on Google Maps. No clue if it burnt down. Or if it was still abandoned. The only things I knew for sure about this spot was that it was listed in a newspaper clipping on my father's refrigerator.

The more I thought about it, there it was on my father's desk. Old Xerox copies of that newspaper article. Staked to his pinboard, or stuffed in his wallet. The more I cleared out his belongings. There it was on his bedside table and another one in the drawer. Two more in his glove box and stuffed in his tattered copy of Dianetics. Every letter of every line has been melted into my consciousness.



Golf Course construction near Angeles National Forest halted
due to Native American burial grounds!

So straightforward yet so misleading. The news at the time was so naive to the true value of the finding.



What later became of this dig seemed to be lost to time. Countless hours were spent trying to find what had happened to the finding there. Gradually as the surrounding valley became suburbanized everyone else seemed to forget the story all together. An obituary entry to Dr. Funglestein was published December 29th 1970. A nondescript, but kind portrait of his life was written, but few hints as to how he passed. A chronic illness that had worn him down followed by a stroke was all that could be gathered.

A timeline of satellite photos shows that the area had been later the site of a cabin and an above ground pool from 1995 to 2003, but the following years showed the area to be gradually reclaimed by the forest canopy.

The area today is designated as part of the Angeles National Forest and only one trail goes within a few miles of it. It would take at least a day to hike out from the road and find where the trail ends. No clue how long it could take to find a ruined cabin in the dark rain that was beating me down. I'm not sure how long I can take the chill of the wind, but I've got enough fuel for a few more hours before I need to change the tank on my lantern.

A deep crack of thunder rings through my chest as the ground suddenly feels a lot more soggy. The gravel trail starts thinning out giving loose to the grass and mud. This must be where the park trail ends. Luckily there's still a semblance of the trail remaining in a narrow animal path. Surely there won't be any wolves or bears right? Just a deer that will run away from me, I have nothing to fear. Just keep walking.

This trail will take me to that sacred place, it just has to. An hour passes up and down this winding trail in the rain. I don't think I ever saw 10 feet in front of me without a wall of fog, but surprisingly the narrow trail kept me on course. Just the thought of what

I'll find there was the only thing keeping me going. Why was my father so obsessed with that news story? What was in this site that he found such an intrigue that he would dedicate the last years of his life to?

Not that he had much life in those last few years. His earlier lifestyle of drinking and indulgent food, paired with his stressful life of running the church had run down his pudgy body. But he still seemed so desperate for something. Xenu. Only him and a few of the highest members of the church knew the tale of Xenu, but they humored the idea as a legend, not a piece of history. But scribbled on the newspaper clippings everytime, over and over "Xenu" was written.

1986 my father died in a similar way to Dr. Funglestein, a cerebral vascular accident is how it was written on his death certificate. The last entry in his journal read



2pm, woke up on the floor of the kitchen.
I can't recall it, but it looks like I had found
the X site last night in my drunken daze.
I circled it on that brochure of Mt. Wilson.
As soon as I can get my head clear I'm
going to drive out there and find Xenu.

I always thought his stories were bullshit. Science Fiction from a Science Fiction author, but hardly science at all. He just needed something to sell to keep the church in business. But Xenu was a secret up until recently. So many former members of the church over the years have spilled the secret story that my father told them and made a mockery of the whole organization. It was vindicating to see other people share my ideas of the ridiculousness of the church, but it wasn't enough. I needed closure for my father. I need to do this while I'm still able bodied enough for this trek.

Another hour seems to pass through the rain. I'm completely soaked and getting tired. Just a few more steps. Just need to keep moving.. Before I know it I slip and land on my ass. The cold wet ground strangely feels smooth like plastic. I open my eyes and

see a blue tarp crumpled on the ground. It's the pool from the satellite photo! I wave the lantern around to see if there's anything else. A reflection hits my eyes and I approach.

Glass windows, still in place at the front door to the cabin. It's remarkably well preserved and clean. I walk up the porch steps and scrub my feet on the welcome mat. For the first moment in hours I can rest without the rain hitting my head. The quaintness of the cabin is surreal. Could there be someone here? How else would it be so well maintained? I knock on the door and wait... Nothing. I knock again and yell "Hello! Is anybody there?". A cold chill runs through my back, but nothing responds. After waiting a bit longer I grab the door handle and it twists in my hand. Without my effort the door opens..