

3. September 10, 2015

On September 10, 2015, Cary Dressler finds solace and a moment of relaxation on Drive-In Rock, a secluded rocky outcrop in Deerfield Park. Drawing comfort from his routine of inhaling good-quality marijuana, Cary spends his evening post-work unwinding as he indulges in watching "Raiders of the Lost Ark" from the Magic City Drive-In, albeit without sound, a minor inconvenience bypassed by his familiarity with the film. This spot offers an escape not just from the confines of his job at Strike Em Out Lanes, but from the conventional cinema experience, trading Dolby sounds for the freedom to smoke and the ambience of the outdoor setting.

As Cary settles into his routine, choosing between joints and planning the small pleasures of his evening, the calmness of his isolation is pierced by an unexpected voice. The momentary paranoia gives way to curiosity, revealing a scene unfolding on Red Bank Avenue, a part of the city marked by its dilapidation and the encroaching wilderness of the Thickets. Cary witnesses an elderly woman in a wheelchair and a man, presumably accompanying her, stranded by a van with a dead battery, their conversation floating up to his vantage point. While the man's dead phone halts their chance of immediate rescue, Cary's distraction with their predicament doesn't prompt him into action.

This chapter encapsulates a moment in Cary Dressler's life, painting a vivid picture of his youthful carelessness, tinged with a hint of solitude he seems to both cherish and, momentarily, question. The juxtaposition of Cary's laid-back, recreational pursuit with the sudden intrusion of the reality faced by the stranded pair opens a narrative of contrasts - between youth and age, carefreeness and responsibility, isolation and the unseen connections between strangers in the city. Cary's decision to remain a distant observer, rather than an intervener, sets a tone of introspection and missed opportunities that may echo throughout the unfolding story.