

Camp Counsellor Catastrophe

by James Cowtan, aged 17

Have you ever been somewhere to have the time of your life, but it all went horribly wrong? Well I have. It was the summer of 1989. Back then, we didn't get the luxuries of the internet so me and my friends Louis, Jeff, Winston, Jake, Lawrence, Mitch and Cort had this idea of going to an American summer camp as camp counsellors; we had nothing else to do in the summer so we went through the whole process of asking our parents, going to the interview and paying the three hundred pounds to go. But little did we know that this summer camp paradise would take a nasty, grisly turn...

It was the day of our flight. My mum went through the whole speech of how she was going to miss me and that I stayed safe which I just nodded my head every time she said something. I threw my luggage in the boot of the car, hopped in and then I was on my way to the airport. When I arrived, my father helped me get my luggage out the back and waved me off as I wandered off to my flight, met all of my friends; it was safe to say all of us were excited but nervous at the same time, as none of us had left our parents for this amount of time, and if something goes wrong there on the other side of the world... I sat next to Louis on the flight; he's like a brother to me - he's one of those friends who you can mess around with, but you can also hold a serious conversation with him about issues and things. But anyway, back to the story... nothing really happened from the landing to our journey to our hotel, but I guess I could say that we found out that our camp was located at Blairstown, New Jersey (so just outside the monstrous New York).

The next day, each counsellor went to find their buses because there are several camps around America... Houston, Philadelphia, Boston. And so on. Me and my friends had to catch the Blairstown NJ - not only were we on the bus, but there was also a flock of giggling, flirty girls that would be staying at our camp. On the way there, we all chatted and interacted with the other counsellors as we were going to be spending three months with them; we thought we might as well get along with them! I particularly got on with this girl called Tina who was one half of a pair of twins, who was also on the trip.

Finally, we got to the camp and we were put into groups of three by Paul (the head of camp) and each group would be taking care of a certain age group. I got grouped with Louis and Tina - which I was very pleased about - and we also got told that we would be looking after the thirteen to fifteen year olds, which I was also pleased about as I didn't have to endure the pain of looking after little five year old rats. The kids arrived and the three weeks went fast as we went out yachting and playing football and basketball. I was also getting along well with Tina, which was very odd. It's safe to say I was having the time of my life then the kids got sent home and we had to wait for another batch of kids the following week. This is when everything went wrong...

It all started when we were in the camp counsellor cabin, just chatting before we went to bed. Suddenly, we heard something outside... We were the only people on camp; Paul said it should just be a deer or something which we all believed at the time - then we heard another noise which Paul again dismissed as a deer. He even went outside to go and scare it

away as it would make a mess around camp if we left it, but we all thought surely it doesn't take more than ten minutes to scare off a deer? So, we all decided to go outside looking for him as we thought he was playing a prank on us; we split up and looked for him then, all of a sudden, I heard this blood curdling scream! All of us ran to the scream - when we got there we found Tina's twin sister Tiffany pointing at something next to the fire - it was Paul, but something was lodged in his mouth. A fire poker! Someone had lodged it down his throat and into his stomach. Winston threw up, I nearly threw up, but I didn't. I couldn't. I was frozen on the spot.

"We should all head back to the counsellor cabin NOW!" Mitch shouted. We all agreed and barricaded the door, but we realised there was no way of going to get help. This was 1989. No internet. No phones. Nothing.

"I'm going to get in the caravan and drive down to the village," Cort said; I could tell he didn't want to but we both knew he had to. We helped him unbarricade the door, watched him head to the caravan and drive off down the road - but all of a sudden, the CV flipped onto its side. We ran while screaming for Cort, we got to the CV and found Cort but with a hunting knife in his head... We were terrified. As me and my friends grieved for our dead friend, the CV started with a fire and BANG!!!!....

I woke up and I saw bodies around me of my friends and fellow counsellors. I could hear the screaming of all of them in my head. I looked down at my hands which were now so covered in blood that all the world's oceans could not clean my hands. I fainted again; I woke up in a hospital bed. The next thing I remember was being told that I was the only one that survived the tragedy; I just sat there. And cried...

My mum and Dad came over from England to collect me. "I miss my friends!" I kept yelling at the top of my lungs. Now I'm scarred for the rest of my life. How could a holiday of my dreams turn into a holiday from hell?