

Bullets

He picked his head up off the bar. Cracked his neck and looked around, wiping the sleep from his eyes.

Alone.

In front of him, a cocktail napkin.

The Oceanic Trench: Where Fantastic Friends Meet

He flipped it over.

412-555-0897 - *call when you wake up.*

He reached for his phone, but it wasn't around.

"Hello? Anyone here?"

He came up with #TrenchieTuesdays in what he punningly called "a last ditch effort" to save face.

He stood up from the stool. Arched his back and looked up, stretching the aches from his bones.

Inhaled the metallic air.

On the ceiling, marooned handrail netting holding the shells she had handpicked.

The wall to the right, soaked and clotted.

He walked to the phone on the wall, and dialed.

Ring. Ring. Ring. Hi, this is you, leave a message at the beep.

"Uh, not sure what I'm supposed to say."

He only promoted #TrenchieTuesdays once on the bar's social page the Sunday before. Along with the hashtag, he captioned an image of a Bloody Mary with "All you can drink for a buck. Come get lost in the abyss with us this Tuesday!"

He tripped over one of them. Caught his balance and carried on, jeans mopping the horror from his mind.

Not alone.

A long, narrow row of friends and strangers lined the front's inside wall.

He heard his cell beep, it laid on the corner of the bar. Smear.

Two voicemails.

"It was you."

"Uh, not sure what I'm supposed to say."

He welcomed new faces and old. It was the busiest he had been since they bought the place. She had been the natural, the easy talker who listened. That's what they came in for, a good ear. He was the idea man. The Giant Tube Worm was their signature cocktail - half a dozen gummy worms in a Tom Collins glass encased in rye whiskey. A decade had passed since his last pour. People just wanted a cheap place with WiFi to get sloppy in, the art of the drink had died with her.

He went live on the social page. Flipped the camera and panned the bar, filming the grief of his emptiness.

Viral.

No clue The Oceanic Trench was still open.

Who's posting this?

Oh my fucking God.

Prayers.

Is anyone calling the cops?

He sat the phone down, camera face up.

Some say that if you slow the video speed, a speck of blood crosses the frame at the exact sound of the hiss. Others say that is impossible, at the snap maybe, but not the hiss of his last act passing through the air. The others, though, never took the time to slow the speed, to investigate. There was no reason to, they were not personally affected.