

Ghost Town

Arystan Jurgens

Date of Report (mm/dd/yyyy) 10/15/2019	Time of Report 9:23 AM	Date(s) of Incident (mm/dd/yyyy) 10/14/2019	Time of Incident From 10PM To 12:53AM
Last Name Clarison	First Name Jane	Middle Name Vera	
Any Aliases N/A	Sex M or <input type="checkbox"/> F	Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy) 12/5/1999	Height 5'4" Weight 122.6 lbs.
Telephone: home (415) 385-2948	Work N/A	Cell (712) 829-4729	Email jane.clarison@eryxuniversity.edu
Emergency contact Sharon Clarison	Emergency contact telephone (712) 482-4893	Best way to safely contact victim Home phone #	
Victim demeanor observed at time of interview (select all that apply)			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Afraid/Fearful <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Confused <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Shaking/Trembling <input type="checkbox"/> Other (describe) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Angry <input type="checkbox"/> Flat Affect <input type="checkbox"/> Tearful/Crying <input type="checkbox"/> Calm/Controlled <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nervous/Agitated <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn/Quiet			
Are there any injuries? (If yes, detail in narrative)			<input type="checkbox"/> Y or N
Does the victim report pain? (If yes, detail in narrative)			<input type="checkbox"/> Y or N
Were weapons used to hurt/injure/threaten? (If yes, detail in narrative)			Y or <input type="checkbox"/> N
Does the victim believe she/he may have been drugged? (If yes or unsure, detail in narrative)			<input type="checkbox"/> Y or N
Did the victim consume alcohol within 24 hours of incident? (If yes, detail in narrative)			Y or <input type="checkbox"/> N
Did the victim voluntarily take other controlled substances within 96 hours of incident? (If yes, detail in narrative)			Y or <input type="checkbox"/> N
Has sexual abuse by suspect been ongoing? If yes, how long?			Y or <input type="checkbox"/> N
Any other known or possibly victims? If yes, list names and contact information			Y or N unsure

I. Grandma

“Mom?”

My daughter stood in the kitchen, hair falling out of her bun. Tears stained her face and her legs trembled so hard the floor creaked.

“Jane,” I gasped. I had not seen my daughter in two weeks since coming home from the hospital. I felt my own eyes fill with tears as I jumped up from the couch. I wanted to hug her, to protect her from this nightmare. She flinched when I reached for her.

“I...I...think I might be...”

“No, this can’t be happening...this can’t be happening!” Jane cried. She didn’t want to take a pregnancy test right away when she told me. Now, she held the little white stick in her hand, the plus sign outlined in blue on the screen. I stood in the doorway, unable to control the tears pouring from my eyes as Jane shouted, “Why? Why me? Why!”

Jane angrily threw the stick across the room, watching it clink onto the tile floor. She took fistfuls of her hair and pulled, throwing herself to the floor. I watched, not knowing what to do. I had never seen Jane so angry. She screamed at him, at the coffee shop, at the barista, at herself.

“Jane...Jane...” I whispered as I lowered myself to the ground. I took Jane into my arms as she shook and trembled. She screamed at the ceiling, rattling the light fixture above us and sending searing pain to my own eardrums. We sat like that for hours. I just held my little girl, letting her cry and scream and shake, for as long as she wanted.

* * *

<i>Birth Certificate</i>
This is to certify that <i>Jackson Arthur Clarison</i>
Weighing <u>7</u> lbs. <u>3</u> oz. was born
On the <u>21st</u> day of <u>July</u> in <u>2020</u> at <u>2:46 PM</u>
To <i>Jane Vera Clarison</i> and _____

II. Younger Jackson

“You’re nothing like that *beast*, Jackson. Nothing like him,” my grandmother used to say to me. When my mother was still alive, I used to believe her.

When I was a baby, Mom was different. She held me and talked to me. I remember when she did my hair and sang songs to me. Mom and I would go to the park on sunny days, watch movies inside on rainy ones. She let me sit on her lap and hold her hand. I always slept in my mom’s room with her, under a light blue comforter and her teddy bear snuggling next to me. She looked past my emerald eyes and my cheesy smile that reminded her of *him*. She saw herself in me, in my blond curls and on the little blob of tan skin on my left arm, identical to hers. My mom wanted to save that part of me, and not the ghost of *him*.

That all changed when *he* was released.

“Good behavior,” my ass.

I was five years old when my mom started drinking. I didn’t understand back then. I didn’t understand why it was bad, the colored liquid in various glass bottles seemed to make her happy. “It’s just one,” she would say. Over the

next year, one a night would turn into two, and two would turn into three. Grandma Sharon would have to take me to school after nights Mom drank.

By the time I was eight, Jane had turned 'one' into 'too many' as Grandma would say. Grandma told her she couldn't drink in front of me anymore and then Jane locked herself away. She didn't let me sleep with her anymore. Tears stained my bed sheets the very first night I lied alone in my room. Grey walls and no teddy bears to comfort me, I transferred to the prison where she wanted to keep *his* part of me.

After a couple of weeks, Jane started going out at night to drink. Grandma Sharon couldn't stop her from leaving the house to drink. Jane would come back late every night, stumbling blindly around the house, usually with a bottle in hand. Sometimes she would come back yelling gibberish and collapse on the living room floor.

"Why does Mommy sleep on the floor?" I asked the first time I woke in the morning to Jane on the floor with a broken glass bottle next to her.

Grandma sat me down at the table, "Remember how I told you something bad happened to your mother before she had you?"

I nodded.

"That bad thing, it makes her sad sometimes and she goes out to try and make the sadness go away. When she comes home, sometimes she forgets where her bed is, so she sleeps on the floor," Grandma tried to explain. I was twelve. It didn't make perfect sense, but it was easy for my young mind to grasp.

* * *

Luhula County Court Report

Disposed 3/12/2032 - 3/18/2032

Drug & Alcohol offense: Jane Clarison, public intoxication, \$120.50; Gordon Matthews, possession with intent to distribute, Jeffrey Cunningham, possession of a controlled substance, Hudson O'Brien, driving under the influence - third offense, \$1291.50

Speeding: Vernon Howard, \$117.50; Rylee Decker, \$117.50; Billy-Joe Sheldon, \$117.50; Gabrielle Rasmussen, \$117.50; Kerry Hines, \$117.50

Seatbelt violation (\$25): Everly Barclay, Leyton Ibarra, Ted Gardner, Bobby Milner, Rita Travers

Overweight on axle (\$196.82): Keith Robbins, Caitlyn Boone, Adam Ryan

III. Jackson

“Grandma, what does ‘drunk’ mean?” I came home and asked her one day. She sighed, looking down at the floor. She sat me down and brought out a police report. She explained what really happened to Jane. Grandma then told me that she drank alcohol to deal with the memories. When she told me that I felt all the air in my lungs disappear.

She wanted to forget the memories of him, but in turn she was also getting rid of ours.

From that moment on, I tried to make her happy. Although, she made it hard. She continued to drink and lock herself away, not even saying ‘hello’ when she would stum-

ble out from her room in the morning to make coffee. When I was fourteen, I got into an argument with her.

"You should really come to one of my games, I scored 23 points in the last one!" I excitedly told her. She held a bottle a vodka in hand, eyes barely open.

"Yeah, yeah...s-sure buddy," she slurred. I frowned, my excitement draining from my face.

"But you can't come to the school drunk, Mom," I nervously said. It had been so long since she had talked to me.

"Well then, I'm...n-not coming," she stuttered. She rocked back and forth on her feet, trying to keep herself from falling over.

"Not even for one game?" I pleaded.

"No," she answered quickly.

"Come on! It's one game, Mom!" I groaned

"No! I d-don't...h-have to do anything," she slurred, taking another long drink from the bottle.

"Why do you always have to be drunk! I wish I wasn't your son!" I angrily shouted at her.

"You aren't! I am not your mom!" she shouted back, "You are...not...my son! You, you are the...spawn of the...d-devil!"

Jane swung the glass bottle around and hit the corner of the kitchen countertop. The bottle shattered and vodka splashed on the tile floor. Grandma came running.

"What is going on?!" she exclaimed

That!" Jane shouted, pointing at me with the bottle neck still in her hand, "Is not my son! He will never be."

Jane huffed and stumbled out the front door. I looked at Grandma with wide eyes. Then I knew that she was talking to him. His emerald eyes, his cheesy grin, and his stocky build; all the things he passed to me. No matter what I did, she would always see him. I was the ghost of the monster that hurt my mother.

Jane locked herself away for a week after our fight. She didn't even come out to make coffee or leave to drink more. The house grew quiet as Grandma and I continued living

our lives. When she finally came out in the middle of the night a week later, she decided it would be her final night.

I didn't cry when I found out. I didn't say anything about her at the funeral. I watched as women in black dresses and men in suits mourned. I didn't feel anything. I stared blankly at the wall behind her casket, a dull orange. Like her yellow room at home, something inside of me said that color was Jane's way of telling me she was at peace. Before I left the funeral, I slipped a note into Jane's casket. Something I never got to tell her.

~~Jane~~
Mom,

*I'm sorry.
I'm sorry your world was so dark,
And I'm sorry I didn't make it better.
That I couldn't make it better.
Maybe loving me was the reason you couldn't love yourself.
I hope you find happiness, wherever you are.
I'm left here alone and afraid to say, maybe you'd be happier
with someone else.
Maybe you would've had a better life with a child you actually
wanted.
I'm sorry I wasn't that child.
I still love you*

Second place winner, 2023 Anita (Sarkees) Bahr Award for Student Creative Writing