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About 2,183 words

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NO CAUSE

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Story Premise

No Cause is a story about the effects of neglect and abandonment. The main character Marquis is abandoned by his father before the story and neglected by his community when he has a mental crisis. The setting of Baltimore is known for crime-ridden streets and properties that are decaying to the point of disarray because of both themes. Treatment of the African American community in Baltimore and the pleas of the mentally disabled citizens who are deemed less than by society causes shifts in the trajectory of good people's lives.



Historical Background and Timeline Information

My story takes place in 2006 Baltimore, Maryland. The city is seeing a surge in opioid use and crime rates are increasing because of vacancies in the African American neighborhoods. The poverty in most of the neighborhoods is at an all-time high and the import of heroin into the city is causing much of the citizens to become victims of violent crimes.

The Drug Abuse Treatment Act was passed in the year 2000 and most of the citizens of Baltimore, Maryland, are now resigned to send their mentally disturbed or drug addicted citizens to treatment centers out of their neighborhoods. West Baltimore has it the worst with most of their citizens being incarcerated, killed, or rehabilitated in counties not their own.

The city of Baltimore has nearly 30,000 vacant homes. High levels of vacancies are because of the number of low-income households where African Americans live. The surge in the crime rate originated back in the 1950s and show a disproportion in the communities of color from where Baltimore city's population was supposed to be.

The disparities between the white and black communities in Baltimore are at increased levels, with the social service departments completely swaying to the whites. Whites make up only 28% in Baltimore but see greater benefits economically through education and through the justice system. The Black community, especially in West Baltimore, has seen a wave of crime like no other and has become the 5th highest murder capital in the US.

Incarceration is also at a high for African Americans in the state of Baltimore, with 60% of the African Americans being the population and 85% of inmates being African American. This has affected the unemployment rate and the housing rate, which places single parents in

household with children who barely graduate high school. The challenges and hurdles for the Black community in the city of Baltimore stretches all the way back to the 1900s and still presents challenges that cause an imbalance in their way of life in the city till this day.



Main Character: Marquis “Lor Quis” Lewis



Marquis Lewis is 15 years old and the youngest of three children in West Baltimore, Maryland. He grew up poor, moving from house to house under the care of his single mother, Patricia Lewis, and her older brother, Charles. Marquis gets his nickname “Lor Quis” from his father’s name and Baltimore slang, meaning little. When Marquis’ father left the household, the three children had to take on certain aspects of their father, Marquis Lewis Sr, to make up for his absence. Marquis’ older brother became a corner boy and later a full-blown operator in the Cherry Hill projects, making him the earner. Marquis’ sister Shanice fulfilled the baby role and the hope for the future, leaving Marquis to be the level head amongst the chaos. His best friends, Wallace, and Ilene, aid him with keeping his head focus on escaping to better surroundings.

Marquis is a tall young man with wild, natural, unkempt hair and dark black skin. He always appears to be daydreaming or slouching over people to avoid eye contact. Marquis is skinny and lacks the talent to be an athlete. He has scars along his hands and wrists from a

captivity that happened because of his brother's illegal activities. The scars are a reminder to fear the place that he calls home and to be aware of lengths of depravity in the neighborhood he has known all his life. This traumatic experience has left him with chronic panic attacks and night terrors that cause friction within his house.

Marquis enjoys talking to his friends and has a deep instilled fear of public speaking. Marquis exists in a bubble, one that protects and shelters him from the outside world's influence. He has witnessed horrors but never has let them define his characteristics. He is book smart and street smart enough to know when and how to act in those types of situations. Marquis has a naturally kind demeanor and even though he may be afraid must get involved when someone is in distress. He loves puzzles, has never done drugs and keeps a scrapbook of all the future goals he wishes to accomplish after his time in high school.

Supporting Characters



Deidre Wilkins is an 18-year-old mental patient who started her stay in Lutherville voluntarily, but they involuntarily committed her because of her increasingly dangerous behaviors. She is a young mother who has a child that is being given up for adoption. They diagnosed her with depression and bi-polar disorder. She's constantly placed on medications that alter the intent of her words. Deidre is a beautiful girl with short natural hair, caramel skin complex, and short, buxom stature. She could not complete her high school senior year because of her pregnancy, which caused her mother to throw her out of the house. She has a loudmouth and a commanding presence when she speaks. Deidre is self-reliant and displays a hopeful front, even when things are at their most bleak.



Antwan Washington aka Big Wash is a 38-year-old black man who ran drugs through Cherry Hill projects and is now serving 6 years in prison for arm robbery. He has hypertension and is never out of the way of an argument. He has anger issues, drug addiction, and while incarcerated, attempted to hang himself in his jail cell. Big Wash is known for being a giant who smashes people's faces in who disagree with him. He is short in stature but muscular. He is a patient in Lutherville for a temporary stay for drug rehabilitation. His hopes are to escape from the facility and hide back out in the vacants before his inevitable return to Farmington Correctional Facility.



Doctor Meredith Holly is a middle-aged Lutherville resident physician who took over the Lutherville Mental Health Facility. She is sharp with her words and a no-nonsense person with dealing with the mentally ill. She oversees both adult patients and youths but treats everyone the same with a firm grip in pharmacology and in dictatorial discipline. Doctor Holly appears fragile and loving on the outside, but on the inside is just as cold and clinical as the drugs she shoves down the throats of her patients. Holly is unmarried, barren, and her job is her life.

LOCATIONS

West Baltimore



The city of Baltimore, Maryland, is known for its crime rate and the 17,000 abandoned row houses which have caused a homeless epidemic in its state. The city is closed in with troubling neighborhoods and full of abandoned row houses with boards for windows. West Baltimore became known for its 63% African American community. West Baltimore has the 5th highest murder rate and nearly doubles the line of poverty in the city of Baltimore as a whole. Dead things surround the city from the bodies in the vacant houses, the leafless trees, and the policies enforced by law enforcement in the area.

Lutherville



The city of Lutherville, Maryland, is in Baltimore County, about 10 minutes either way from Baltimore city. Lutherville is predominantly white and has a rural atmosphere which differs from the closed in streets of Baltimore city. The city is also known for its state fairgrounds and

for the oldest section dating back to 1852. The historic district holds many Victorian houses and peach berry farms that give the location a unique look when contrasted next to Baltimore city.

Lutherville's light rail station has a more open, welcoming environment, with two lanes going in opposite directions.

Lutherville Behavioral Health Facility



Lutherville Mental Health Facility is on the outskirts of Lutherville. The complex is a large medical building surrounded by a nice enough gravel walkway and opening. The inside of the facility has meeting rooms, visitation, counseling groups, and bedding for over 150 patients. It acts as a facility for long-term care patients to residents of Baltimore County, which means it receives its share of undesirables. Lutherville has open walkways and bars over the patient's room windows. The large white hallways lead into a dispensary room full of prescription medications where drug companies can test their products on otherwise unaware human test subjects. They do not dress Lutherville Mental Health facility as a prison, but the place resembles one.

Additional World Information

The light rail system that connects the three locations in Baltimore County is known as the MTA. There are suicides by the light rail system because of its availability to both classes of

citizens in Maryland. The stops get travelers from Hunt Valley to downtown Baltimore with few stops in between and is a recurring element of the story in getting characters from A to B.

Forest Haven Mental Asylum was opened in 1925 in Fort Meade, Maryland. The institution was closed in 1991 because of the deaths and neglect of patients and the growing concerns for the care and treatment of the mentally disabled.



Story Synopsis

Marquis Lewis is abducted from school stemming from an incident involving drug money his brother owes. This causes him to have panic attacks and a fear of his neighborhood. His Uncle Charles promises to remove him from his household and the neighborhood as soon as he gets a better job. Before this happens, Marquis believes a man is trying to abduct him again and mercilessly beats him out of fear. Marquis, never having done wrong in his life, is sent to Lutherville Behavioral Health Facility involuntarily. There, he is mistreated and abused by prescription drugs and other adult mental patients. Through his torment, he finds a friend in a bipolar girl named Deidre. He along with her plan to escape with a prisoner being treated for drug addiction name Big Wash. Wash manages an escape plan by overdosing a mentally disabled man, which doesn't sit well with Marquis. Marquis uses his knowledge of the facility to his advantage and locks Wash in a cell while he and Deidre escape. Deidre and Marquis board the MTA light rail after escaping the facility. They run through the peaceful city of Lutherville and grow closer to one another. They eventually decide to board a train out of Baltimore. On the train, Deidre has a panic attack and becomes afraid for her life of the white passengers. She, in a fit of insanity, jumps off the train before it stops, and is killed by a passing train. Marquis leaves the train and considers returning home but opts to stay in one of the abandoned row houses instead.

Story Excerpt

Fractured light came in from the barred windows over top of my bed. I could smell the breakfast cart being trotted out, passing from room to room. It was morning again in the Lutherville Mental Health Facility. The rock-hard pillows and soft sheets provided adequate sleep, but I still missed my bed in the house I had back in Baltimore.

I hoisted myself upright and dangled on my long legs over the bed. It was the first time I sat up that high since I was a child. Sleeping on a mattress, not on the floorboards, did, however, feel nice.

“Rooms B through H in the dining area 15 minutes,” shouted the nurse traveling behind the cart.

I could not contemplate what the hell they ate at a mental facility. I slipped on my laceless Chuck Taylors and went to go find out. My baggy clothing from my time outside drooped down to my ankles when I stood. An Orderly at arrival offered me something more constricting, but I turned him down. I hooped one hand in my jeans’ belt loops and proceeded to my door. I wanted to say I looked crazy, but then I approached the always bright hallway and my mind returned to me. I was not crazy; they were crazy.

The rows of twenty zombies slowly migrated through the hallways. Their mouths open, their eyes sunk into their disturbed heads, and a stench came from a few I was sure messed themselves the night before. I did not want to be judgmental, but this was so far removed from Towson High School and the cute girls with juicy print bottoms that I couldn’t help but point out

the change. I witnessed a man slobbering before he came out of his room and that was the closest to juicy, I would get all day.

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