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Review 1 of “Can you make it out alive?’ Investigating Penal Imaginaries at Forts, Sanitariums, Asylums, and Segregated Schools”

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Vote: Publish pending minor changes

[For votes to count, referees must reasonably explain why they voted as they did. Thus, please explain your vote. If you voted to publish pending minor changes, specify each change, why it is needed, and, possibly, how it should/could be done.]

I am not a native English speaker, so it is difficult for me to evaluate the quality of the style. However, I find the article well-written and easy to follow. As a whole, the article relies on a very interesting and innovative research. It is well-informed and it offers a stimulating analysis of fright nights. It definitely fills a gap in the study of "penal tourism" and "dark tourism". The article will be of interest for researchers - and, hopefully, for practitioners. However, I have several comments or suggestions for the authors (see below).

[Please put additional info below, as/if you see fit.]

1. Literature section: There is a growing literature on escape rooms tourism (and its recent development) and it might be interesting to see how this literature intersects with "penal spectatorship" field.
2. Can the authors make an estimate on how many fright night events exist (or mention how common this kind of events are in Northern America)? In the first step of the research (when 88 stories were found), was the search exhaustive? It might be worth mentioning that not all fright night events are advertised on the Internet.
3. I think it would be interesting that the authors reflect on the type of data they analyze: the way an event is advertised says how the event organizer expect to attract visitors - it does not always say a lot about the event itself; reviews from the public on the Internet do not always reflect well their feelings (perhaps only the most educated people will post a review, or the younger ones...)
4. I think the authors should elaborate on how they selected the four "representative" sites - what do they really mean by "representative"?
5. Regarding forts and the history of colonization, I think some readers might appreciate if authors would be a bit more specific about dates (when forts were constructed?). The article refers to Treaty n. 1 and it assumes readers knows what it refers to and when it was signed.
6. Talking about Fort Garry and colonization, I think it would be worth mentioning the name of the Nation whose land was occupied by the fort's construction and how they refer to their land right now.

7. Regarding the "Trap house": There are a lot of similarities (in terms of purpose and public expectations) with Scared Straight. I just found that interesting!
8. I'm not comfortable with the use of the picture of "a prisoner". I see why it might be of interest to share such a picture, but I feel that, at the end, it contributes to reproduce what the article itself criticizes. The image legend ("a real prisoner") is a bit problematic, even if we assume that the person on the picture gave his consent to be photographed – but did he give his consent to be included in this publication? I would suggest at least to explain why you use this picture and to provide some critical perspective.
9. On the same vein, I think it would be of interest to have screenshots of websites advertising for fright night events or pictures of advertising materials (since your topics are "how the events are advertised" and "what tourists say about them" – rather than of the events themselves).
10. "Police involvement is relevant, as police provide a sense of authenticity and legitimacy." => I agree, and based on what I have observed, I would also say that it's a way for police institutions to engage with kids and teenagers – like police museums do.