

Chapter 2

A second bullet burst through the window. Then a third. Then all hell broke loose and a rain of lead began to pepper my office. By this time I had hit the floor and figured out that I was probably being shot at. Either that or I had offended a box or two of rogue ammunition to the point that they were committing mass suicide in my general direction.

Now I'm a fairly reasonable guy, and I have a pretty high tolerance with regards to other people's rights, but I have to say that getting shot at really pisses me off. Come to think of it, lots of things piss me off, so scratch that whole touchy-feely "pretty high tolerance" thing I just mentioned. That was a load of crap.

And if getting shot at wasn't enough justification to be upset, I also swallowed my gum. Nothing gets my hives up like getting shot at and swallowing a perfectly good piece of Wrigleys.

I looked around the floor for my cigarette and saw it smoldering a few feet away. With glass dropping all around, I stretched out, picked it up, and hit it a few times. Already wasted a perfectly good piece of gum; wasn't going to allow this to go down the drain too. The earth loving environmentalist inside me was satisfied.

Bullets kept coming through the window and I thought two things as I watched the smoke curl towards the ceiling, unaffected: One, this guy had a lot of ammo, and two, what the hell was the stupid bastard shooting at? I'd been on the floor and out of his line of sight since his first couple of pops. Oh, I also thought about how much plastic wood it was going to take to patch all of the holes in the paneling – this guy was making a fucking mess – so make that three things I thought of. Not to mention who was going to sweep all this shit up (but I didn't actually think of that till later).

A box of animal crackers suddenly got pelted off my desk and landed beside me. I was going to eat a few until I realized that that would probably be pretty stupid. Instead, I pulled out my gun, pretended to flick off the safety that I had actually filed off a long time ago, and racked a round into the chamber.

Lock and load.

Speaking of which, what the hell does "lock and load" really mean? Wouldn't you load first? And why lock the damn thing at all? Maybe it's just me, but I prefer my weapon to be *unlocked* if I intend on firing it. How's the thing gonna work if it's locked? Lock and load my ass. Stupid. Try this:

Load and fire.

So I did.

The thing about my gun is that it doesn't fuck around. I know a lot of people like those Magnum things; you know, the .357 Magnum or the .44 Magnum. Clint Eastwood made a big deal about how big and powerful they are. Right. My gun makes those guns pee in their pants and run to their mommies. It's really nothing radical - just a basic revolver at heart - but it's been bored out to accept standard Army issue .50 Caliber rounds.

Like I said, it doesn't play.

In one sweeping motion that would have looked very cool had anyone been there to see it, I stood up and leveled the business end at the window. From there it was poetry in motion.

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BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!
BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!***

In case you didn't recognize it, that was a little Robert Frost, from "Stopping By Woods On A Snowy Evening". Here's a limerick:

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BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!
BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!***

Aaaaand, a haiku:

***BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!
BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!
BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!***

By the way, my gun also holds a ridiculous amount of ammunition. One of the few belt fed revolvers in existence. Okay, it's a little more radical than I previously let on. So I lied. Sue me.

At this point I noticed a substantial lack of bullets being fired back at me, but just in case the sniper was still alive and possibly thinking of taking me up on my offer to sue me (and just because I liked doing it), I ripped off a few more.

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

I don't believe in smokeless powder so by this point my office was fairly obscured by a gray cordite fog when I finally let up. No big deal though. The recent modifications made to the room's ventilation system by the shooter were allowing the air to clear faster than normal. Of course, my office usually isn't filled with gunsmoke so I'm making a rather generalized statement, not really knowing what "normal" is like in this case, but it's an educated guess.

I walked slowly towards the window and looked out. The street was pretty quiet. A few of the braver pedestrians were slowly peeking out from their shelters of opportunity, brushing the glass and rubble from their hair. The building directly across from mine was pretty much a smoking hole in the ground. No doubt some city commissioner with nothing else better to do was going to have an issue with it. Tourists and all.

I dropped my pistol on what was left of my desk, sat down, and ate a couple of turkey and Swiss sandwiches that I'd brought from home. Knocked 'em back with a cold Coors. Nothing like pulling a trigger to give a man an appetite.

With my stomach full, I leaned back, kicked my feet up, and pulled the brim of my fedora over my eyes. Good time for a nap. Lulled by the sound of approaching sirens, I was soon fast asleep.

Other than that, it was just another run-of-the-mill, gorgeous blue sky Orlando day.