

A Specialty Service

My Life Behind the Gun

Neo-Nazi Bikers of Lodi

I was on a beach in Southern California when I got the call I've been waiting for. My father has been battling throat cancer for a while now. Today he lost the battle. I was on the beach watching the surf when the call came in. He was diagnosed about three years ago. About a year ago they had to have his larynx removed due to cancer. His last words to me were "*I don't know why you came.*" This was nothing new. He and I have never had that all-American father-son relationship from the movies or television. I had a better relationship with my grandfather. I had to tell my sister I couldn't come right away, but I would be there as soon as I could. I had another surgery in the morning on my hand scheduled. I was shot while on a job in Canada and required four surgeries to fix my right hand. It also required spending days on the beach and plenty of drinks. She said she understood and she wouldn't touch the house until I got there. I was the oldest, but Ruth lived nearby. She lived in Uniontown Ohio about 5 minutes from dad's house. It would be a week before I could go back to Ohio.

I was born in Akron, Ohio but my family lived in Springfield township. This is different from the Springfield near Cincinnati. My hometown was just south of Akron. My parents had a small home with a small stretch of land backing up onto a semi-private pond. We lived here, but for the first twelve years, I really lived on my grandfather's farm in Lodi. For those who don't know Lodi is known for three things, an outlet mall, the Amish, and corn. We were not storeowners or Amish. I have a Rabbi uncle who could attest to this. My grandfather was a corn farmer. As a young man, my grandfather had escaped Germany just before the war. My grandmother wasn't so lucky. She spent the war in a work camp. When the war was over, he went back to find her. About three months into the search he found her in a hospital. They moved to Ohio and became citizens. Their farm was part of a group of farms owned and operated by Jewish families. They wanted new lives away from the cities and violence. Living among the Amish would provide this. I would work the farm and learn from my grandfather what it all meant. When I was eight, he gave me a lever action 22-caliber rifle. I had to keep it on the farm because my father didn't want guns in the house. I knew he had a Smith & Wesson police special on a nightstand, but I also knew better than to call him on it. My grandfather taught me how to shoot with that gun. Most importantly he taught me that gun ownership is a responsibility, not just a right and that every action has a consequence. By the time I was twelve I was using a lever

action 1895 Marlin. I was becoming a good shot with the large caliber rifle. One day he said he had a job for us.

The coyote population was on the rise in Ohio. One was spotted on the farm a few days ago. The Coyote had killed some chickens. It seemed that it had made its home in the drying corn. I grabbed my new rifle, and we were off. We tracked it to a tree line used as a windbreak where it had just killed a mother rabbit and was eating its babies. The coyote was fast before I could aim it had killed all the young rabbits. I took aim and fired. The shot went about three feet above its head. The coyote looked around then went back to its lunch. Grampa put his hand on my shoulder and said, "*steady and aim true.*" My next shot hit it in the head. It felt right and wrong all at once. I had killed rats in the corn, but I never killed something so dog-like. It was doing what nature intended it to do. We buried it and the rabbits in the windbreak.

On the way back, we saw a bunch of motorcycles coming up the driveway along with a pickup truck. The truck belonged to a neighbor to the south named Pascal. The bikes were a mystery to me but not my grandpa. Over the last couple of weeks, a group of bikers was intimidating the locals trying to get them to sell. There had to be at least eight of them. Most had swastika tattoos. We approached from behind the barn. Inside he handed me a box. In it was a Beretta M9. He said, "*I was going to give this to you tonight.*" He instructed me to go into the hayloft and take aim. He said, "*don't fire unless they start something.*" I asked, "*how will I know?*" He said, "*you'll know.*" With that, he strapped his old Colt 1911 on his hip and went out to meet the thugs.

He walked up to Mr. Pascal, and the two started to argue. I couldn't tell what was being said. My heart was beating so loud I could see it in the rise and fall of my gun. Mr. Pascal had some papers in his hand. As he spoke the bikers dismounted and started to box my grandpa in. Without warning, Mr. Pascal dropped the papers, pulled out a revolver and shot my grandfather twice. He took a step back then fell backward. My heart stopped, and the picture became clear. I took aim. In my sightline, the bikers became paper targets. I rattled off three shots before the

bikers could react. The rest scattered firing wildly in the air. Five shots later all the bikers were dead. Mr. Pascal had ducked behind the house. I jumped down from the loft and made it to my grandfather. He said, “run.” From around the house, I saw Mr. Pascal, and I took a shot at him. I couldn’t hit him, but I could hit the house. The shots sent shrapnel into his face. As I shot, I could hear more motorcycles coming up the drive. They had reinforcements. I looked back to my grandfather only to see he had died.

I had three options. The house, the barn, and the corn. The house and barn were a death trap. I could hear more bikes coming up the driveway, so I had to run, now. I grabbed the Colt 1911 and ran for the corn. As I hit the field, I could hear shots being fired. They followed me into the corn. City people following a boy raised in the corn, dumbasses. I had one chance if I could make it to the neighbor to the north we could beat these neo-Nazis back. Mr. Kline was a survivor of Auschwitz and had no love for the Nazis. I zigged and zagged in the corn to throw off my trail. At one point, I came to a stop. One of the bikers was just above me. He looked down and hesitated. A big mistake. I shot him in the foot than in the head through the lower jaw. The Colt 1911 had a kick, and it turned the man into a blood fountain as he fell.

I searched him finding a radio and a cheap automatic of some kind. I had no use for such a gun, but the radio was a win. Just behind me, a man fired a twelve gauge. I would have been cut in half, but he had cut it down to hide it on his bike. The barrel was most likely rifled spreading the shot wildly. I was hit with a couple of shot in the shoulder. I had no time to think about it, so I ran. As I approached the border of the farm, I heard Mr. Pascal over the radio. He was calling some of the guys back to deal with my grandmother and sister when they came back from town. He was going to kill them then try and make it look like my grandfather did it. Time was running out.

On the way, I could hear them searching. One finally said, “*the tracker on the radio is working fine.*” The radio was a tracker. I was near a stream. With the fall rains, the stream was moving fast. I put the radio in a plastic bag I had in my back pocket and tried to fill it with air.

Then I sent it down the stream so they could track it. By the time they found the radio, I was at Mr. Kline's house. I first found one of Mr. Kline's sons working on a tractor. He saw the blood and called for his father. He knew my family and me. I told him what happened and that they were waiting to kill my grandmother and sister. He said, "*no, not today. Never again.*" He and his three sons grabbed their rifles and followed me back. He had lost his first wife and three children to the Nazis. His second wife said I should stay and have my shoulder looked at, but he said, "*no this is his fight.*" Like that we were off to kill the Nazis, the Neo-Nazi bikers of Lodi.

Nearly a half a mile out we could see them searching for me. Six men all armed with the same cheap guns except for the guy with the shotgun. From that point, the four men took aim. I didn't think they could hit anyone from there but within second's four of the men were dead. I took aim and fired. After three shots, I hit one of them. Mr. Kline said, "*you didn't kill that one yet.*" We found him trying to hide in the corn. I hit him in the shoulder, and the round had dislocated it. Mr. Kline took aim. I said, "*no. I need some information.*" He looked at me and smiled. I walked up to the guy and put my foot on his dislocated arm, and he screamed. He told us that they were hired to intimidate the Jews into selling.

Mr. Pascal was trying to buy all the land because of a report that a new tire plant would be built there in Lodi. Anyone with the land would be rich. Also, these farmers wouldn't sell. I took my Beretta and shot him in both feet. I said to him, "*wait right here.*" We left him to be found by the police later. He would take a plea deal and tell how Mr. Pascal killed my grandfather and tried to kill me. His whole plan. Pascal was convicted and sentenced to two life terms. That lasted about a week. The Arian-brotherhood didn't like having their members killed like that. I would tell you what they did, but it's better just not to think about it.

We reached the farm. The bikers were piling their dead onto a truck. The plan to frame my grandfather was being made. They all stopped working and looked up. It was almost cartoonish how they reacted. They reacted just a little too slow as we opened fire. The deer rifles were an asset in the field, but by the house, my lever action ruled. I handed the Colt 1911 to Mr.

Kline, and he shot the last of them. Mr. Pascal was gone. He had a face full of wood shrapnel. About ten minutes later the police arrived. All the police that came were in some way related to Mr. Kline.

The police confiscated my guns as well as my grandfather's 1911. It didn't matter. My father wouldn't let me keep them anyway. I knew that from now on my life would change, but I had no idea how much. About six months after the shootout my mother left. I heard her say on the phone how she just couldn't live with him anymore. I blamed dad for driving my mother away. It wouldn't be for years until I found out it was me she couldn't live with anymore. She told me this on the day I joined the Army. I went from being her son to a monster in a day. By then the wall between dad and me was too thick too high too strong. That night I went to a hotel and settled in. My sister gave me a letter my dad left me. I wasn't sure I wanted to read it. We left things, so final that giving him the last word just felt wrong. But I had to know. In the envelope was a key to a storage locker. Also, a hand-written note.

Jack, I wish I was a stronger man. I wish I could have been a better father or had the guts to say this to you when I could say anything. I was weak and petty. I blamed you for her leaving when it was her and me to blame. I could see my father in your eyes and his strength. You are a better man than either of us. The last time I saw you I tried to tell you I was proud of you and you needed to be out there helping people but somehow all I could do is question you. Even now as I write this I know, I won't be around to answer for my neglect. One more act of a coward. I try and follow you and what you have accomplished with your company. Your partner TC sent me some information on your deeds. It makes me think that I may have done one thing good, but how can I take credit for your actions. All I can say is I am sorry, and I hope one day you can forgive me.

The next day I went to the storage locker. Inside was some furniture, both of my lever action rifles, my Beretta M9 and my grandfather's 1911. Later I stopped by the graves and

placed a stone from Africa on my Grandfather's grave and one on my grandmother's grave. I placed a stone on my father's grave and said I wish I were strong enough to say I love you.

P.S. The tire plant was built in Mexico.