The Jimmy Stories

A Private Global War Story

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A citizenry of One

James John Daniels sat in the treehouse he and his father built six years ago with his father’s rifle next to him watching for the coyote that was killing their chickens. This was his current excuse for staying away from the family. It had been three weeks since his father, E5 Sargent John James Daniels was killed in a training accident and two weeks since the funeral. His father was a sniper with the Army in Afghanistan for two years before taking a stateside position as a trainer. A week before he could get home, he was killed in a helicopter crash. Jimmy had a hard time finding the sense in his father’s senseless death. What he did know was that when the wind was right, he could smell his father in the treehouse, see his handiwork in the mortise and tenon joinery, the metal roof made from hundreds of license plates, he could sense his presence and his words with every hour he committed to the job.

Jimmy had his father’s Ruger Mini-14 300 AAC blackout tactical rifle along with all the ammunition he could carry up the tree. The rifle was off-limits to him, but his father was never coming back to tell him to put it away. From an early age, Jimmy was taught to respect guns. His father showed him and his sister Barbara or Barb how to not only shoot but how to maintain a firearm. When he turned ten, his father gave him a Ruger 22caliper rifle. Two years later he was given a Henry lever-action 30-30 with the understanding that he would only have access to the rifle when his father was home. The rifle was in his mother’s room. He looked in once and saw her there lying with her eyes open and his father’s uniform stretched across his side of the bed. She was talking to it, but he couldn’t hear what she was saying. The week before what would be his last time deployed, John took Jimmy hunting for the first time. Two days of stalking deer netted them nothing but the memories that now kept Jimmy awake. He was fourteen, and his sister was turning ten soon, but without their father, she would never get the gun he promised, their mother just didn’t approve.

Off in the tree line, a form walked out. Jimmy looked and saw what looked like a mangy dog, but this was no dog. Two weeks ago, something got into one of the chicken coops and made a meal of the chickens along with their chicks. A local game warden seeing the carnage said it
had to be a coyote. They did their best to protect the remaining chickens, but somehow the killer found its way into another coop belonging to a neighbor. They lived on a farm out in the middle of nowhere near Lodi, Ohio in the small farming community of Hinesburg, Ohio. His mother, Anastasia or Anna worked as a store manager at the Ohio Station Outlets and with his father deployed, they rented their farmable land to a neighbor who grew fields of corn.

Jimmy had his father’s eyes and could see there was something wrong with the coyote. Something was smeared all over its side. The coyote took a few more steps then a large ten-point buck stepped out of the trees and skewered the coyote. It yelped as the deer picked it up and tossed it into the air. Another larger buck came out of the woods and waited for the coyote to drop. When it hit the second deer drove a hoof into its head. Jimmy had heard that deer can be dangerous, but he never heard of such behavior. His relief in the coyote’s death faded as two than six more deer stepped out of the woods. To his eyes, some of the deer looked identical from the coats to the antler shapes. The largest of the bucks had something blinking on it like a tracker, a little red blinking light. The line of trees seemed to shift as the eight deer became twenty, then fifty until he lost count.

His neighbor, Owen Spears, was out on his ATV riding the open area between the rows when he came upon the herd. Jimmy figured they would bolt, but instead, they went for Owen. Jimmy checked his rifle and went to the side of the treehouse to see better. Owen went for the rifle mounted on the ATV, but the deer were quicker as they knocked him down, stomping him flat. Jimmy could see many of the deer were covered in what had to be blood and not just Owen’s or the coyote’s blood. He took aim at the lead deer, and it looked back at him. He could swear it had hatred in its eyes. Like a flock of birds, the herd shifted and came his way moving as a group. The herd was heading to their house. Jimmy took aim and fired. With so many deer, it was almost impossible to miss. He emptied the first magazine, loaded the next and did the same thing. The herd shifted with the shots turning away from the house and to him, but the treehouse was just out of reach for the deer.
On his seventeenth or nineteenth shot, a spark flew from the head of the deer he hit. The deer herd stopped with the one sparking deer as it fell. From the back, another large deer with a blinking red light jumped past the fallen deer, and the herd was on the move again. Jimmy dropped the magazine and loaded his next. He had ten magazines, two-hundred rounds. It seemed like overkill before the deer came out of the woods. As he fired, the herd grew larger as more came out of the woods. Forty became sixty then eighty shots with no end in sight. He had killed at least seventy deer, but the count was well over six-thousand and growing. Jimmy kept firing, and the deer kept falling with a few showing the strange sparks when hit. Twenty minutes after the first deer appeared, the last of the deer stepped out.

Jimmy stopped firing only to hear more gunfire from the house. He turned and saw his mother leaning out the window with his Marlin shooting into the herd. Down at the door, Jimmy could see the large buck from before trying to bust its way into the house. Jimmy took aim and fired, sending a shower of sparks across the side of the house. His mother shot the rest of the deer near the door. Jimmy turned back and fired his gun dry. He dropped the magazine and went for another only to find he fired his last round. His mother told him to stay there, and she would get to him as soon as she could. Jimmy saw something in his mother’s eyes that made him think of his father. Anna fell forward, dropping the rifle out the window. She looked at Jimmy then down as a red blotch appeared in her pajamas, then an antler. She fell out the window followed by a large eight-point buck. The deer crashed into her body, breaking its own neck when it hit the ground. Anna twitched then nothing.

Off in the distance, he could see lights coming on and hear gunfire. News about the chicken-eating coyote had all of Jimmy’s neighbors ready for a fight. He couldn’t see what was happening from the treehouse and there were deer still below. At one time there was a crow’s nest planned for the treehouse. His mother put a stop to that, but the beginnings of the platform were still up there. Jimmy carefully slipped out the window and up the tree to where the nest should have been. Up there, he could see the town, the flames, and flashes of gunfire. Shotgun blasts gave way to the staccato sounds of the AK-47 and the sounds of the AR-15. Somewhere around the police station, he could see the rapid-fire from a rumored 50caliber machine gun the
police confiscated. Just behind the gunfire, he could hear the screams and breaking glass. The deer swarmed into the town like a wave crashing against the rocks. The deer kept going with the tail end of the herd reaching town ten minutes after they started. The herd shifted again and went in the direction of Lodi.

Jimmy slipped off the supports and nearly out of the tree. He caught a branch and turned his body toward the treehouse. He hit the floor and rolled, trying to keep from falling out. In the fall he found one unfired round. Jimmy popped the round in and was ready for one more kill as he heard another sound. Someone said his name. Jimmy looked down and saw his nine-year-old sister Barb standing at the base of the tree with four deer nearby. He tried to signal her to get up, but Barb was afraid of the treehouse. In a loud stern tone, she yelled, “NO.” Jimmy looked over, and the deer looked back.

He told her to run, but it was too late. A large deer took hold of her with its antlers and pushed her to the side of the house holding her in place. Another deer walked over to his sister turning its head going back and forth between her and him almost saying they would trade his life for her. Jimmy took aim. The deer stepped forward, almost mocking him. Jimmy aimed at the deer holding Barb. The mocking deer almost seemed to smile. Aiming for the heart so he wouldn’t hit Barb, Jimmy squeezed the trigger and nothing. The round was a dud. Barb looked at Jimmy shivering and pleading for her life. The mocking deer turned and drove its antlers into her chest, pinning her against the wall breaking its antlers off in the process. Jimmy watched as Barb took her last breath.

The deer stopped in their place and watched Jimmy knowing he would eventually have to come down. The mocking buck twitched its nose and looked over to the south just as a shot went off and its head cracked open like an egg. The remaining deer ran for the tree line only to be cut down by gunfire. Five men came around the house, scanning the yard. One of them was the sheriff. Greg Augustus was a friend of Jimmy’s father and would regularly check in on his family when Jimmy’s father was out on deployment. Greg saw Jimmy’s mother lying next to the
dead buck nearly cut in half. Jimmy watched as two of the men broke the antlers away to free Barb. Jimmy shifted, and a spent shell rolled out of the treehouse. The men aimed for the tree. Greg called out Jimmy’s name, and he came out of the tree. One of the men climbed up and saw the spent shells and the deer count. Between him and his mother, they had shot and killed over two-hundred deer. The man came back down with Jimmy’s father’s rifle and handed it to him. The six of them walked back to a town being barricaded with makeshift walls.

Inside the walled city, the sheriff gave Jimmy a box of the 300 Blackout his rifle fired and told him to find a place to rest, but rest was the last thing on his mind. He walked around, watching the others. There were maybe sixty of the seven-hundred or so people that lived in the town left. Behind the supermarket, Jimmy found a team of men butchering deer. Part of his hunting training involved field dressing as well as butchering. With little said, he joined in and helped them dress the deer. As he cut, he noticed something strange. Many of the deer had clean insides like their digestive tracks had never been used. The unusable deer were piled and set on fire, all except the metal deer. Later that night, they piled the metal deer and using Semtex and other explosives they eradicated them.

Before the light show, the town decided to have a party to celebrate their victory against the deer, as well as the new wall. To no one’s surprise, deer was on the menu. More than a few people praised Jimmy for his early morning gunfire. One gave him a bottle of whiskey saying he was old enough now. Jimmy wasn’t hungry and didn’t want the praise. All he could see was the faces of his mother and sister. The sheriff gave him ammo, but the magazines were back in the treehouse. He left the walled city and made his way to the tree where he climbed up to find himself back where it all started. He took a sip of the whiskey and spit it out. Over the next hour, he loaded the magazines while staring at the place where his sister died. Off in the distance, he could hear the survivors celebrating.

Jimmy woke the next morning after a night of nightmares and memories of things past to find himself in the tree, smelling like rotten meat. He got out of the tree with what was now his
rifle and loaded magazines and went inside for a shower. The house had a generator, and with power, the shower was hot, just not hot enough to wash his guilt away. Jimmy got dressed in his hunting gear and loaded a backpack with what he figured he would need. He accessed his father’s gun safe taking the Glock G19 with all the preloaded magazines he could find, the absurdly large Smith and Wesson 500 bear gun, a snub-nosed revolver that would most likely break his wrist if he tried to fire it, and plenty of socks and underwear. He would let the sheriff know about the generator and offer him the bear gun.

Jimmy made his way back to the wall only to find the gate open and no one on guard. He walked inside and found the place feeling deserted. It wasn’t until he came upon the cookout that what really happened came out. There were bodies everywhere. People folded over in what looked like severe pain surrounded by bubbly pink vomit. At the head of the table, Jimmy found the body of the sheriff. Written in blood was the warning, “deer poisonous, don’t eat.” Jimmy checked the town only to find he was the only one left. A citizenry of one. With nothing here for him, he decided to take a dirt bike and head north to Cleveland and see if the big city survived.
A man on a mission

Two deer stood by the side of the road. Behind them were another nine-hundred deer standing by waiting for something. Using the scope on his rifle, Jimmy counted the deer in his way as he tried to get to Cleveland, Ohio. An hour ago, James John Daniels or Jimmy left his hometown the small farming community of Hinesburg, Ohio. He was the last person alive after a mysterious wave of killer deer struck. Going this way wasn’t going to work. To the west was a forest and to the east was farms and open fields. The dirt bike he was on had about a half a tank of gas, and he wasn’t sure if he could get any more. When he runs out, he would be on foot, an easy target for whatever was coming next. The whole world seemed like it was coming undone or just coming to an end.

South was the last direction, so south was the way Jimmy decided to go. He wanted to bypass Hinesburg as well as Lodi. When he left, he didn’t do anything with the bodies, and he also didn’t want to see what he lost. Not wanting to alert the deer, he pushed the bike for about a mile. A farmer named Styles lived just outside of town with his own gas supply. Jimmy figured he could stop there, gas up and ride through the fields bypassing the city. He made it to the farm to find more bodies. Like many of the people in town, Farmer Styles and his family lived through the invasion only to die from poisoned deer meat. Jimmy checked the house and barn, but everyone was dead. With the key from the farmer, Jimmy went to the pump. The power was out, but the pump had a backup manual crank.

Just as he topped off his tank, a low flying plane went overhead. Jimmy thought of the movie Outbreak with the plane and the large bomb. The plane turned and headed for Hinesburg. He couldn’t see what it was doing, but something came out the back. A parachute opened, and a large something slowly descended as the plane flew away. The first thought was the movie again, but he quickly thought about how that was just a movie, and this was most likely some sort of aide. Maybe, when he was away, someone came to town. A flash of light came from town. A second or two later a thunderous cracking sound like an entire fireworks display going off at once. A surge of wind knocked him to the ground. Jimmy saw what looked like a
mushroom cloud overhead. He got up, and the town was gone. Another crack and another cloud hung over where Lodi should be.

Jimmy decided to skip the hills and go straight for route 71 south. The highway would take him to Columbus and if necessary further south. Jimmy remembered that somewhere in west Ohio was an infamous military base where his neighbor, Mr. Drake, said the government kept the alien bodies. He couldn’t remember the name, but if anyone were ready for a war, it would be the military. The first ten miles were uneventful. He passed a few cars and more dead people. Two highway patrol cars were on the side of the highway with their lights flashing, but the batteries were dying with the lights just a slow turning glimmer. All around the patrol cars were the bodies of deer and squirrels, but there were no officer’s bodies.

Ten miles out of Columbus, Jimmy came upon more bodies. Men, women, and children were laying in the road. Most of them had been shot rather than killed by the deer. The way the bodies were lined up reminded him of the movie Schindler’s List. Someone had pulled these people out of their cars and executed them for some reason only the gunman or men know. Among the dead was a child maybe two to three years old. In a ditch nearby, he saw a woman holding what looked like a baby. Most of the woman’s head was gone. He sat there, trying to understand how someone did something like this when the baby moved. The gunmen thought the baby was dead in all the mother’s gore. Either that or they just left the baby to die on its own. Jimmy emptied his backpack and put the small infant into it and the bag in the front so he could keep an eye on it as he moved.

The makeshift wall surrounding the central part of the city was visible from a distance. Jimmy slowed down as he approached a checkpoint controlled by what looked like the national guard and police. A long line of cars snaked its way through the checkpoint and to the wall. More than a few cars were off to the side of the road. A truck with dead bodies stacked like logs was also nearby. The truck’s gate was open and was covered in blood. A man in a dark blue suit tried to push past the checkpoint. A guardsman pushed the man back, and a police officer shot
him with a shotgun. The shot must have been some sort of hollow-point slug because the man’s head exploded into chunks as the shot expanded. Two men in hazmat suits put the body in the back of the truck.

In all the commotion, Jimmy slipped off the highway and into a wasteland of burning homes and the dead. Someone from the road was screaming and pointing at him. He turned to see a Humvee coming down the hill. The Humvee was no match for the dirt bike. He easily passed burning cars, and tight places, the Humvee had to push to get through until he had enough space between him and them to find somewhere to hide. Society had broken down in about twenty-four hours. In all this, the baby didn’t make a sound. Jimmy could hear the Humvee looking for them. A house door opened, and an older African American man waved Jimmy over to him. He opened his garage and let Jimmy in.

James Buchanan Jones was eighty-nine years old. He had watched his neighborhood turn from quiet families to drugs than to a wealthy suburb. He bought his house in 1949 for three-thousand dollars and just about a year ago someone offered him four-hundred thousand for it. He said, “I was the first black man in the neighborhood, and now I’m the last, but no one is taking this away from me, no rich people, police, feds, or fucking deer.” James was taking in anyone he could. He said, “the police or I don’t know men dressed as police were going around shooting deer than people. Anyone out at night was shot on sight. I know most of the police that patrol around here and none of them are around anymore.” Jimmy told him about the bodies and how the men dressed like national guard didn’t look right either. Something was off with the whole setup. As if on cue, the baby started to cry.

A woman with two small children offered to take care of the baby. Jimmy had no idea what to do, so he gave her to them. Whatever name she had died with her mother so on the spot they named her Abigail for James’s late wife. James filled Jimmy’s tank, and Jimmy gave him the snub-nosed Smith and Wesson 500 bear gun he was going to give to the sheriff before his town died. James took the gun and opened the wheel, looking at the five shots. Jimmy had ten
more rounds with him before he left, and he gave them to James, who put one in his shirt pocket. He said, “I’ll keep one close… one last shot because they aren’t taking me alive.” James gave Jimmy some protein bars and a couple of bottles of water. He said, “I suspect you won’t be here in the morning. A man traveling like you won’t stop until he gets to wherever he’s going wherever that is. A man on a mission is a man you don’t get in the way of. If you go, please tell someone what’s going on, if you stay, you’re welcome to stay, but I don’t think you’ll stay.” Jimmy wanted to say he had no such mission, but now he had two, or the two missions had him. About four in the morning, Jimmy left the house and made his way west, hoping he was going toward the military base with all the Aliens.
Veritable Rug of Living Things

A squirrel sat on the top of a car staring out onto the road. Its eyes seemed to dance to a sound it, and only it could hear. It looked around at the ground. Surrounding the car was an army of squirrels. A few of them had a strange red-light strip running down their tails going down the spine. Off in the distance was a solid black sphere seemingly made of stone hovering just off the road. A light pulsed just above the sphere that matched the light pulses of the squirrel tails. A boy on a dirt bike sat about three hundred feet away trying to see if there was a way around the rodents. Jimmy remembered his father calling them tree rats, but today they were something worse, they were in his way.

James John Daniels was born and lived all his fourteen years of life in the small town of Hinesburg, Ohio, near the town of Lodi pronounced like “low die.” He lived there with his mother, younger sister, and the ghost of his recently deceased father. His world was shaped by his father and was already fracturing with his death when the world ended. A wave of poisonous killer deer killed his town, making him the only survivor. Seeing no other way out, he left the only place he knew and went in search of help or someplace where he could belong. Along the way, he saw what looked like government planes firebombing his hometown as well as other smaller towns. His trip took him south to near Columbus where a group of men running a checkpoint killing people for some unknown reason. He was able to get away from the people running the checkpoint finding refuge with a man protecting travelers risking his own life in the process.

The sphere seemed to open from the bottom with a hexagon-shaped thing slowly dropping to the dirt. A group of the squirrels picked up the strange box and started to carry it down the road. The light above the sphere moved until it was below the sphere. The light grew as the sphere started to shake until it took off into the sky with such a velocity Jimmy couldn’t track its progress. Jimmy looked to the group of squirrels who seemed transfixed by the box. A few of the strange matching deer stepped out of the woods. Overhead a flock of Canada Geese flew in formation. Jimmy heard something just too his left. He turned and saw what had to be nine or ten
squirrels covering what looked like a body. One of the squirrels stopped biting and turned around, its face was dark with blood. The squirrel looked at Jimmy, and he looked back.

Jimmy jumped starting the bike as he moved away from the killer squirrels and toward the squirrels holding the hexagon box. He caught the animals by surprise running more than a few down and taking the box before any of them could take hold of him. The box was cold feeling like stone and heavier than it should have been for its size. At first, Jimmy thought he had a problem with the bike as he felt a vibration until he realized it was coming from the box. He slipped the box into his backpack and made the mistake of looking behind him, seeing a veritable wave of squirrels running his way. Among the squirrels were some deer trampling the squirrels trying to run after him, but the veritable rug of living things kept them from gaining traction.

Jimmy turned into some woods hoping to keep the geese off him, but after a mile, he realized the geese were staying out of the chase. His detour was slowing him down and helping the squirrels catch up. The bike didn’t have a gas gauge, and he wasn’t sure just how much he had, but he knew the deer would catch up long before he got to the military base. As he rode, he saw something all over the road. He jumped the curb and rode along the side. He made it past the dark things in the road as the first wave of squirrels hit the large traps someone set. Jimmy could hear the snaps of traps as well as squirrel backs. Some of the squirrels went around, but many fell to the traps on the road. A gunshot came out of the dark. Someone shot the lead deer stopping the others. A voice screamed, “run boy,........run.”

A sign on an entrance to the highway proclaimed Wright-Patterson was just two miles away. That was either the actual base or the exit for the base. Jimmy started up the ramp when his bike died…… out of gas. Upon the highway, he found more than a few abandoned cars. One was a truck belonging to some sort of lawn service with multiple gas cans in the back. Jimmy checked to make sure they were straight gas and not a mix with oil like the stuff used for smaller engines or diesel. He filled his tank and took a drink of water given to him by James back just outside of Columbus. The water was warm, and the energy bar was dry and grainy, but together
they made a mush that clung to his throat. A dog walked around the truck staring at him. Jimmy tossed the dog a strip of Jerky, and the dog caught it and almost seemed to swallow it all in one motion. Jimmy heard a clopping sound hit the road. He turned as the dog started to growl. Two deer stepped onto the road with what looked like an extra fur coat on their backs. The dog looked at Jimmy then down the road away from the deer. It almost seemed like the dog was saying run. The deer started to move, and the dog jumped up and ran to meet them. Jimmy felt the box’s vibration pickup. He spun the tire and left the dog to the deer knowing this dog was sacrificing itself for someone it didn’t know, and he had to make its sacrifice mean something.

A mile or two away, Jimmy was being followed again by the deer carrying squirrels on their backs. Along the way, he passed a few exits that were just too dark to be safe. The next exit had a sign saying Wright-Patterson with an arrow. He jumped down and into a field going across to a fence. The deer were close. He turned and went south, hoping to find a gate. He passed a sign saying minefield, but it was far too late to worry about that. On the other side of the fence, he saw two men in some sort of small Jeep racing alongside him. One man was small and dumpy with sunglasses, and the other one was as nondescript as a person could be. Three soldiers waved Jimmy over to a gatehouse. As he passed, he saw two men with what his favorite game called a couple of SAWs a Squad Automatic Weapons. They opened fire on the deer as Jimmy passed the gate. Just on the inside, someone knocked him off the bike.

Lights flashed on and off as blurry images moved about. Jimmy felt someone pulling off his clothes, searching for wounds. He started to say he wanted the pen he had on him, but he couldn’t talk. The pen was from a spy kit his father gave him with it being a camera. He used the camera pen to record the firebombing of Lodi as well as the events of Columbus and a message from James Buchanan Jones, the man that saved him from the blockade just outside of Columbus. A woman that looked just like the woman from the Guild and Supernatural only with straight black hair was here dressed like a doctor. Just as soon as this image came into focus, a short blond Marty Feldman walked in, kissed Felicia Day, and walked over to him. He said his name was Doctor Goody, but everyone called him just Goody, and he wanted to know where he
got the box. As he spoke the sounds of gunfire rattled the walls as well as the sounds of something thumping into the building.

Jimmy looked down, seeing he was naked in a room filled with people, including more than a few women. He turned to Goody and asked for something to wear. Goody said in a far too loud tone how he should be proud of what he had. A woman in a military uniform gave him a pair of sweatpants and a tank top while never turning her head away from his lower half. With that bit of weirdness out of the way, Jimmy told Goody about the camera pen and the box. He described the ball and how it dropped the box. He also mentioned how some of the deer were identical to the others and how many of them had clean insides like they had never eaten in their lives. The nondescript man gave him a glass of something clear that burned when he sipped it. He said his name was Bill and he asked Jimmy to tell them everything that happened beginning with the deer.

The glass of clear liquid was making him feel both warm and tired. A general came into the room and talked to him about his father. The general said he didn’t know him, but he knew his unit and knew he was a hero. Jimmy didn’t know if this was to comfort him or something, but all it did was put him back in the treehouse, thinking about his father way back before the world ended. The nurse that gave him the clothes showed Jimmy to a room with a bed and a sink. Along the way, she said her name was Jenny, and she was a volunteer at a local clinic when all this started, and she was sixteen. Jenny closed the door and walked over to Jimmy. She became the first girl he ever kissed or ever kissed him. She locked the door, turned around, taking her shirt off. For the first time since that night, Jimmy stopped thinking about his family. Thirty minutes later, the general came into the room pulling his daughter out and away from Jimmy…… ten minutes too late.
Sherman’s Drive to the Sea

Jimmy lay in bed naked next to this girl he just met a week ago thinking about his treehouse. Just a month ago, his world had seemed to end as they buried his father after he was killed in an accident on his way home. James “Jimmy” John Daniels was born in and lived all his fourteen years in the small town of Hinesburg, Ohio near the town of Lodi pronounced like Low die. He was just days away from turning fifteen, but that thought was miles away from where he was right there and then. Jenny was the first girl he ever kissed, and that kiss became something more. In the back of his mind, he could hear his mother’s disappointment in what Jenny, and he was doing, but he could also see how she died with an antler in her back. Her death paled in comparison to his sister Barbra. Barb was torn apart by a pair of smart deer. A month ago, he had a father, a week ago he had a family and now all he had was this girl and himself.

Jenny stirred in bed. She reached down and felt him and smiled. Jenny wasn’t shy about what she wanted. Her father was a General, and her mother was a doctor. When the world ended, they lost contact with her mother, who was the acting chief of medicine for a hospital in Huston. Days before the deer struck her father had sent is formal notice to the joint chiefs looking to retire so he could be with his wife in Texas. Jenny had just turned sixteen and was living with him, helping him to pack for the permanent move. She couldn’t remember a time when they lived as a whole family, and she knew it would only last until she went off to college or join the military. Jenny didn’t tell her parents she had already spoken to a recruiter about the Marines. Her air force father wouldn’t be happy about that, nor would her former Army mother.

Just outside their room, Jenny and Jimmy could hear something going on. They had a room without a window making the room feel like a jail cell or the closet it was. A thumping sound started. Jenny got out of bed and put on a long-sleeve shirt going to the door. She opened the door and saw that man whose name she couldn’t remember and Doctor Diana. Jimmy came up behind her, and together, they saw an apocalyptic sight. The sky was filled with Canada geese. Over the last few days, the air force base they were in was attacked by waves of geese, but this was so many geese that they almost blocked out the rising sun. Jenny went to the window
and saw the fences were being assaulted by thousands of deer. The deer were pushing the fences down and would be through them soon.

The two kids went into their room and got dressed. Jimmy grabbed his rifle, and Jenny went for the gun her father gave her. Jenny had an M4 straight from the armory. Unlike most of her friends, Jenny went hunting with her father from an early age. Jessie wanted his daughter to understand the totality of taking a life and why a gun isn’t a toy. He also wanted his daughter to be strong, but strength wasn’t something you can teach it had to come from within with experience and just maybe hardship. Jenny was ten when she shot her first deer. She was all business when she field dressed the deer and helped as her father carried it to their truck. That night far away from her father, she cried. It was the last time she cried after killing a deer even as she felt bad about killing something that seemed so majestic.

The geese started to commit suicide into the building smashing into the walls and glass. Jenny remembered the upper floors had bars on the windows, so they went up hoping to escape the geese. The man and Diana started to toss chairs into the stairwell. Jimmy started to push a vending machine over to the stairs and with the help of everyone, they pushed it into the stairwell blocking anything from getting up or down. A massive explosion sent off just outside. Then another. The group looked out and saw the buildings being used as labs were gone. The only reason Jenny’s father was keeping the base open was gone. A missile flew overhead and into a crowd of deer sending flames and chunks of deer into the air. A few more missiles struck the geese spreading flames across the sky.

A missile struck the ground sending more deer parts into the air. The wave of geese turned away, and toward the east, in the direction, the missiles were coming from. Four men with ancient-looking flamethrowers came around a corner shooting flames into the panicking deer. About fifteen minutes after the attack began, it was over. One of the flamethrower men put his gear down and took off his flame-retardant hood showing it was Jenny’s father. He waved them down, but the stairs were impassable. The man with Diana said there was a fire escape on the
other side of the building. They went down having to stop near the bottom to force the last part of the ladder down after years of non-use.

At the bottom, Jenny’s father gave her a set of keys with a small notebook. He told them he needed someone he could trust to go to a secret facility, and when it was time unlock the weapon. Jenny didn’t know what the weapon could be, but she could tell her father was serious and desperate. Jimmy was thinking about the end of the third terminator movie were the heroes were tricked by the good terminator into a fallout shelter just before the world ended. Jenny’s father assigned eight men to help them get to Atlanta, Georgia. He told them to go to the eastern gate where they should find a captain named Simon Sherman. He would oversee the operation, but he wasn’t to have the key. Jenny wasn’t sure if she would ever see her father again.

An hour later, they were in what Captain Sherman called an armored car. Jenny was a military brat, and she knew it was an M1117 armored security vehicle with twin fifty-caliber machine guns mounted in the turret, but she didn’t want to give this man more information than he needed. His first act before they left was to try and disarm her and Jimmy. He then tried to take the key away. The vehicle was built for eight plus two drivers, but after an hour, the body odor started to make the cabin foul. The captain laid out his map, pointing out places where they should be able to get the fuel the vehicle would need along with supplies. A corporal named Haskins called it Sherman’s march to the sea accept they wouldn’t be destroying everything they find along the way. The lack of military discipline shocked Jenny, but Jimmy was just happy they could keep their guns.

They passed a burning house with bodies on the ground nearby. On a hill overseeing the burning scene were two dogs. A dog that looked like a stubby Marmaduke and an oversized white puffball watched them as they drove southeast. To Jimmy, the dog looked like the one that sacrificed itself to save him, but that dog must have died. There was something otherworldly about the dogs, but Jimmy couldn’t put words to what he thought. Jimmy leaned over and kissed Jenny on the cheek. She turned back to him and wished him a happy birthday. Ten minutes later,
the vehicle was filled with the sounds of nine people singing happy birthday. The mood of the group changed turning the trip from a Baton death march to an adventure into the unknown. If the unknown had highways and road signs. A soldier asked where they really were going. The captain said they were going to Atlanta. The soldier looked back and said, “so this is Sherman’s drive to the sea.” The person behind the wheel replied, “I hope not, Atlanta isn’t near the water.”
I Guess We’re Alone

The personnel carrier bounced up and down with the sounds of something crunching just outside. Jimmy asked what the noise was. The driver said, “that’s the sounds of Bambi as we drive over him and all his woodland friends. They’re nothing but speed bumps to this thing.” Jenny said she didn’t want to know if he was joking or if they were leaving a path of blood in their wake. Captain Sherman said, “Hey, you missed a few of them.” The driver sat back up straight and said, “sorry, sir.” Jimmy found himself in an armored military carrier with a general’s daughter and eight soldiers on their way to Atlanta, Georgia. Jenny’s father gave her a key and instructions to operate what he called the weapon without saying what that weapon was.

Along with Captain Sherman, a corporal Liam Haskins, airmen Jane Ester and Drake Collins. The rest of the crew where marines named Jess Kent, Haden Fox, Grant Gunderson, and Scott Lance. Jimmy noticed that outside of the base away from the general, the marines didn’t show much in the way of respect to the captain. Private Lance spent much of that first four hours staring at Jenny. Something felt wrong about the four people. After four hours, they were to change drivers and get some fuel. For the second time, one of the soldiers tried to take Jimmy’s weapon. The plan was to drive all the way changing drivers every four hours with Jimmy and Jenny not taking turns. Under normal circumstance, the drive would only take about ten hours, but the world ended turning every deer between Wright-Patterson and Atlanta into enemy combatants.

Haskins stepped out of the vehicle and over to the Captain. Jimmy couldn’t tell what he was saying, but by the looks on the captain’s face, he could tell it wasn’t right. The four marines stood together, occasionally looking back at the other soldiers and the kids. The airmen were all business while the marines did as little as possible. Jenny whispered, “I don’t know who they are, but they’re not marines. Something is wrong here.” Jimmy, as casually as possible, walked over to the captain and asked, “who are these people, and where did they come from?” The Captain said, “I don’t know. They were assigned to me, but from what I know, they just showed up at a gate claiming to be marines on leave, but there’s just something wrong about them.”
The captain told Jimmy and Jenny to scout out the surroundings for anything unusual. He gave him a look that said, take your time we need to sort this out. The sun was up, and it was a beautiful sunny day. Behind the gas station were a hill and some woods. Between the station and the woods, they found three dead deer. At first, nothing seemed wrong if you looked past how they all looked like the same deer. Jimmy remembered how the clone deer looked like they never had eaten anything. Jenny said it was like they just dropped dead. They passed the deer and into the Woods where they found a pond with a dock.

Jenny looked to Jimmy and said, “what could be the most irresponsible thing we could do?” Jenny looked to the water then to Jimmy. She smiled and started to strip. Jimmy said, “what if the others come?” Jenny kissed him as she worked his belt open. She leaned back and said, “we’ll worry about that if it happens, but I don’t think any of them will do anything.” The two stripped and went into the water. For a short time, they were kids again playing in the water, skinny dipping and having fun. Jenny swam back to the dock and got out. Jimmy got out and sat next to her. They came face to face and kissed. They rolled over, and kissing started to become something a little more when they heard a sound just out in the woods.

Jimmy looked to his clothes while Jenny looked to their guns hooked up on the dock rails. A deer stepped out of the woods and approached the water. It seemed like it didn’t see them. Off in the distance, they could hear gunfire. The deer jumped and ran for the gunfire. Jimmy and Jenny went for their guns than their clothes. Dressed, they ran for the station. Gunfire ripped through the station from the vehicle. The smell of gas was in the air, along with copper and gun smoke. They hit the ground and worked around to behind the station. A deer jumped out of the woods and past them towards the gunfire.

Inside the station, they found the captain. He was on the floor bleeding from several wounds. He told them he confronted the others about their conduct only to find out they weren’t
marines; they had bought the uniforms before the world ended and in fact, were members of a militia looking to steal military equipment. They opened fire, killing the other airmen and wounding the captain. The gunfire attracted the deer. Jimmy looked out to see about twenty of the clone deer around the vehicle. Two of the fake marines were dead on the ground with what looked like a bunch of squirrels breaking them down. The captain asked, “did you two change into each other’s clothes?” Jimmy looked down and saw he was wearing Jenny’s shirt. They had mixed up their shirts in a rush to get dressed. They started to laugh when they realized the captain was gone.

Just outside, the vehicle exploded. The shockwave busted out the windows of the station spreading deer chunks into the woods. Flames spread across the ceiling and down the walls. They had to leave the body. They ran out the back and down into the woods away from the fire. Another massive explosion rocked the ground. The flames followed them into a valley filled with deer. The two of them stared at the deer, and the deer stared back. Jenny whispered, “I guess we’re alone in this.”
Smyth Farm and 1960s Actresses

Jimmy and Jenny went back to back as the deer surrounded them. While on their way to Atlanta, four of the men traveling with them turn on their team hoping to take the armored car and weapons back to their militia. They killed the others, but the gunfire acted like a signal to the deer who struck killing the fake marines. Jimmy said, “we aren’t alone......we have each other.” Jenny replied, “do you really want your last words to be so corny?” One of the deer looked to the sky, then another. The ground shook. A thunder-like cracking sound came from the east. The ground shook again, and the thunderous sound came closer. Jenny took Jimmy by the hand and yelled. “run.”

All hell broke loose as the sky seemed to catch fire, and the ground shook. The deer scattered as trees exploded and the very air seemed to burn. Jenny took hold of Jimmy’s hand and led him out of the fire. Something about how Jimmy reacted to the bombing felt wrong to Jenny. They made it about a quarter of a mile when Jimmy collapsed. She checked him, and he was burned on his back with something metallic sticking out. She knew she shouldn’t move whatever it was, but the flames were moving in, and it was either move the shard or die in flames. She knew she would never just leave him to die alone. She pulled a bandage from her first aid kit. The kit had a small bottle of alcohol as well as a onetime use syringe of some sort of pain medication. She injected him with the pain meds, dumped the alcohol on the wound, and pulled the metal from his back.

She was able to carry him out of the immediate danger and into what looked like a small community out in the middle of nowhere, Ohio. They passed bodies of both deer and people. Jimmy woke up with a scream of pain. Jenny helped him down, making sure he stayed off his back. Jimmy started to shake and was incoherent. She tried to calm him, but he was just past the ability to deal with the pain. He lay there and shook for ten minutes until he just stopped as quickly as he started. Off in the distance, Jenny saw something move. A deer stepped out of the woods, then a few more. She knew as soon as she opened fire, the deer would be on them, but either way, this was the end.
The lead deer turned just as an arrow struck it in the head. Another arrow struck another deer. The remaining deer scattered going back into the woods. Two figures came out of a house. Jenny couldn’t make out any details. From behind her, she felt something hard press into her neck. A voice said, “you seem smart, you knew not to shoot at the deer. Now keep acting smart and keep that gun down.” The voice seemed deep but feminine like a woman trying to sound like a man. Jenny put her hands up. She didn’t want to give any more information than was necessary. The person from behind her took in a breath and said, “oh my god, you two are just kids.” When Annette spoke again, she had dropped her attempts to sound male. Jenny told her they were on their way to Atlanta to her family. Instead of saying anything to Jenny, Annette waved the others over and together they moved Jimmy as gently as possible.

Annette was the oldest of five sisters, and together they were the remaining residents of the village of Hamm, Ohio near the border with West Virginia. She was thirty-two and had worked as a nurse with a traveling nurse service when the world ended. Together the women put Jimmy on a table, stripped his burned clothes away, and treated his burns. Annette removed some more of the metal fragments from his back, but she was worried he had more internal injuries. She checked Jenny and found she had also had first-degree burns as well as a nasty burn on her shoulder. Jenny didn’t feel the burn until it was pointed out to her. She tried to see the burn only to pass out.

Jenny woke to find herself in a bed with bandages on her arms. She was in intense pain coming from her shoulder. She turned her head slowly as she could. In a bed next to her was Jimmy. He was face down with his back exposed. The burn didn’t look as bad in the daylight, but he had several stitched wounds. She tried to search her memory, but she couldn’t remember how they got to this place or any of the people that helped them. Jenny realized they were both naked. She was without a top, and Jimmy’s bare ass was hanging out. A door opened, and Anette came in. She walked over to Jimmy and checked his wounds. Anette looked over at Jenny,
seeing she was awake. In an almost funny move, Anette covered Jimmy’s ass with a towel while never breaking eye contact with Jenny.

Anette introduced herself and told Jenny about how they found them on the outskirts of their farm. She told her about her burns and how her shoulder was dislocated. Jenny checked for the key, noticing how she didn’t feel its weight on her neck. Anette held up the chain with the key and asked, “are you looking for this?” She gave the key back to Jenny, saying, “I don’t know what that is for, but you fought us when we tried to take it from you.” Jenny asked, “we?” Anette told her they were on her family’s farm, and she had four other sisters ranging in ages from twenty-two to twelve. A girl of about fourteen came into the room. Anette pointed to her, saying her name was Julie. Their parents named them for actors from the 1960s. She was Anette Funicello Smyth, Julie was Julie Newmar Smyth, and their other sisters were named for Sandra Dee, Elizabeth Montgomery with the youngest being named for Tina Louise. Julie’s first act was to go over and pull the towel off Jimmy’s ass.

Anette asked what Jenny and her brother’s names were. Jenny didn’t like how Julie was staring at Jimmy’s ass. Jenny said, “my name is Jenny, and that’s Jimmy, my boyfriend.” Until that point, she had never said boyfriend to anyone, but it felt right. The two sisters looked at each other as Julie covered Jimmy’s ass back up with the towel. Jenny told them they were on a mission for her father and had to be in Atlanta as soon as they could. Anette sat on the bed next to Jenny. She put her hand on Jenny’s shoulder, making Jenny feel self-conscious about her being bare-chested. Anette told her they wouldn’t know until he was awake, but Jimmy could have some internal injuries, and his back might be broke. She said, “we won’t know the extent of the damage until he wakes up, but if he wakes up too soon, he will be in a lot of pain.”

She told Jenny there was a clinic nearby with a portable ultrasound. They also had an MRI in a truck, but she wasn’t sure if they could use it with the possibility of more metal fragments in his back. Jenny asked if they used the ultrasound could they remove the metal so they could use the MRI. Anette said, “I know somethings, but I’m no doctor.” Jenny said, “my
mom is a nurse and from what I know of her most nurses know just as much as any doctor.” Her mother was a doctor, but she wanted to instill confidence in her hoping she would help. Anette told her she thought she could, but the truck was all the way in town. Jenny said, “you just get ready and let me worry about that truck.”
Prepared Her for Life

When Jenny was ten years old, her father came home with a box of parts and the frame to a dirt bike. Together they built the bike from the ground up sparing no details. Her parents wanted to make sure she knew what she was doing and how everything worked. They wanted Jenny to be prepared for life, to be self-reliant. When they were done, she had a small bike she could run around on at a time when her peers were still on regular pedal bikes. When it was time, her mother didn’t give her the regular birds and bees talk, she showed her videos of live births and gave her graphic and anatomically accurate accounts of human sexuality and the possible consequences. Her mother told her she never wanted her to be a victim of false information, rumor, and speculation. On her thirteenth birthday, her father took her to a junkyard.

Jenny opened the hood of a truck that sat in the Smyths barn. She checked all the belts, the oil, and other fluids. Using a portable jump starter, she hooked up the battery and let it charge as she checked the tires looking for any visible problems. She could feel the youngest of the Smyth daughters Tina watch her work. Jenny was always surprised to meet people who didn’t take an active role in the basic functions of life. Her parents made sure she knew how everything worked and how not to panic when something went wrong. Here was a perfectly serviceable truck with a dead battery and instead of charging it they let it sit and remained stranded until their older sister Anette came home in her two-seat Miata. The jump starter was done, and she started the truck. After a quick test, she knew the alternator was good, and it was just a battery left too long in the cold.

Anette was far from incapable. She worked as a nurse for a county service seeing to people who couldn’t get out to see a doctor. In many ways, she acted like a doctor dispensing information rather than medication. As a nurse practitioner, she could prescribe medication, but with the rampant overuse of drugs, especially opioids, she was reluctant to do so. More than a few of her colleagues were being investigated by the DEA for overprescribing pain meds. She just never took an interest in auto mechanics. She said, “yeah, and I never learned how to weave my own cloth ether, but that doesn’t mean I don’t know how to dress myself.” Anette was going
to stay with Jimmy and tend to his wounds making sure he stayed asleep. The fourteen-year-old Julie and the youngest of the sisters Tina would go with Jenny on her trip into town for the portable MRI and ultrasound equipment.

Jenny’s father showed her around the junkyard, explaining what every part did and how everything was connected. Just when she thought this was just one of her father’s many field trips, they stopped in front of an old Jeep. It was a 1980 Jeep CJ-7 Laredo. Her father had bought it so they could strip it down and rebuild it from the tires up. The project would take years with him being deployed as often as he was. Her father, General Jessie James Jackson, was one of the highest-ranked officers in the Air Force and often away. Her mother, who was also named Jessie was a doctor working her way up the ladder at a hospital in Huston. Just before the world ended, her father was set to retire, and they would live as a family again. Together they sat and ordered the parts they would need to build what was to be her first vehicle.

Jenny got behind the wheel, happy to see it was a manual transmission. She could drive both, but she preferred stick and the feeling she had more control over how the vehicle operated. They would take the four-wheel-drive truck just in case they had to go off-road to evade any deer. The mammoth MRI truck they would be driving back wouldn’t have any problems mowing down herds of deer, but the Miata would be like trying to hit a fastball with a whiffle bat. Tina sat next to her, and like all that morning, she watched everything she did. Jenny wasn’t sure if this was just fascination or did Anette tell her to watch the stranger. Julie sat next to the door with an AR-15 with a suppressor taking up most of the barrel. She called it her father’s truck gun and said how it was most likely illegal. Jenny watched her noting how she knew how to hold the rifle.

Anette and her sisters were all named for female actors who became prominent in the 1960s. Julie told her how her parents had this plan. Their mother would name any girls and their father any boys. They never had any brothers, but that didn’t seem to bother their father. Much like Jenny, the sisters were raised to respect and understand the world around them. Their father
was a fifth-generation farmer working the land his great-great-grandfather cleared way back in the 1800s. The day-to-day operations of the farm were being run by the second oldest of the sisters Sandra Dee, and she was going to carry on her family’s legacy taking over the land with her wife, Jennifer. When the world ended, Jennifer went to town to help and never came back. They searched for her finding a note she left at the hospital saying she was sorry, but she had to go home to her family. Sandra Dee kept to herself and did her usual chores as if nothing had happened. Tina said how Sandy would spend hours in the barn talking to the horses, and she was convinced she heard the horses talking back.

The big day arrived. A new crate motor for the Jeep. It was the last component needed. They spent his last time home stripping the Jeep sending the body out to be bead-blasted stripping off the paint while they cleaned and accounted for every part. They wanted to save as much of the original parts as they could without risking her safety. The body didn’t have as much rust as they thought and only required a little bodywork, but that was the one thing her father let someone else do. He told her next car they would do it all. Together, they mounted the transmission and bolted it into the Jeep. By the end of the week, they started it for the first time. The engine was bright orange as well as the body. The interior was white and covered in a neoprene car seat for easy cleanup. At fourteen, her father started to teach her how to drive. She would drive around the base, staying away from the outside and her underage driving.

Along the way, Jenny showed Julie how to drive the truck. She did her best knowing Julie would be following her as she powered what was described as a massive truck with the MRI back acting as a linebacker clearing the path for the truck. Julie didn’t seem interested in the instruction watching the road rather than the gears. Tina watched everything, but Jenny didn’t think she was tall or strong enough at age twelve to work the clutch. They passed packs of deer that at first seemed to be asleep, but on passing were in fact dead. Many of them seemed to just drop dead with no visible wounds. In the distance, they could see smoke. The closer they got, the worse it all appeared. Much of the town was gone. A fire seemed to have gutted the town starting somewhere on the east side with the most ruins to the west with only some minimal damage.
Bad became worse, the hospital was nearly burned to the ground. The MRI truck was scorched, with flat tires and a cab burned to nothing. The machine was toast. They searched the rubble finding a way into the basement. Jenny went into the dark hole alone just in case there was something even more dangerous than an unsafe structure under a collapsed building. There she found a portable ultrasound as well as some medical supplies. She passed up the supplies and the machine to the others as they loaded the truck. On the way out of town, they stopped at every store and restaurant taking anything they could fit into the truck. Julie said, “I doubt we’re coming back to town any time soon.”

Somewhere just outside of town, Jenny switched seats with Julie, and she showed her how to drive the truck working the gears. Along the way, she wondered if this was how her father felt teaching her how to shift up and down. At first, she stalled the truck a few times, but by the time they got back to the farm, she was barely grinding the gears. Jenny thought about the look on her mother’s face when she got on the plane to go to what was supposed to be her father’s final tour and then the look on her father’s face when she drove away with the men supposed to guard them. They had prepared her for life in such a way that she should be able to take care of herself, but that didn’t stop her from missing them.

A few days later, Jimmy woke. He struggled against the restraints they put on him to keep him from moving and ripping the delicate stitches on his back. Annette did her best to remove any shrapnel, and from what she could tell, the damage was more superficial than anything else, but they wouldn’t know until he woke and moved. Jimmy looked around and saw Jenny sitting next to him. She leaned in and kissed his cheek. She said, “you’re right, we are together.” Jimmy asked how bad it was. Jenny reached under his blanket and took hold of him. Jimmy jumped against the restraints. Jenny said, “well I’m guessing you can feel that so it’s not as bad as we thought........ you might want to not go shirtless anymore.” Jimmy asked, “we?” Jenny smiled and said, “yes, me, Annette Funicello, Julie Newmar, Sandra Dee, Elizabeth Montgomery, and Tina Louise.” Jimmy turned his head and asked, “what?”