Lethal Injection

and Other Tales of the Gun

I decided to tell my tale. An amusing tale, really. I guess the best place to start is at the beginning.

It was a cold October. I was tired of waiting for the hammer to fall. So, I decided to take the easy way out. The "coward's" way out. It would not matter. I did not have to listen to anyone who would say that I took the coward's way out. I decided to do it.

I took my .45 and set it on the table. I took various implements of my cleaning kit and laid them around the gun on the table. I even spilled a dab of the cleaning solvent and moped it up with a cloth. I took the clip out and laid it amongst the tools.

And I left one round in the chamber.

My hope was that the police would believe that it was an accident while cleaning my gun. I know it's a cliché, but with no suicide involved, my insurance would have to pony up. There would be money for a nice funeral where people would say nice things about me. Even if they did mention how stupid I was while cleaning my gun. Hopefully, there would be a tidy sum to keep my wife and young son well off for a time.

If not, it does not matter. I cannot seem to do anything right and the stress is getting to be too much. The holidays were upon us and I cannot seem to get employment. Someone might take pity and give my wife a job. She might meet someone who would be nice to my boy.

Just, perhaps, they might remember me fondly.

I had just sat down and started to put the swab in the gun and prepare for the accidental shot when the door bell rang. This

is my life. The minute I start something important, someone interrupts.

I got up, of course, and answered the door. There was Fred. Freddie Calloway. My best friend since seventh grade. He was one of those “Adonis” figures. You know, the jutted jaw. Gentle, pale blue eyes. Well built, but thin at age 30. Not a touch of gray in his black hair. He had all of his teeth and should have been in a Crest (Registered Trademark) commercial.

I was similar, of course. I had hair. It was my own. Most of my teeth were still my own, as well. I don’t see myself as fat. That is, until I step onto those lying scales. They’re all made in China, now, so they read in Chinese pounds, you know.

Of course, it would have to be him. I knew he would try to talk me down, so I acted calm.

“Cleaning your gun?” he asked.

“Oh, yeah. Come on in.”

We went back to the kitchen table and sat down. I lowered the gun below the table and removed the chambered round in secret. I did not want it going off at the wrong time. I brought the weapon back into view and began cleaning it again. I decided to get all of the cleaning solvent off as the urge might just hit me to do myself. I smiled casually at Fred. He returned a strange gaze.

“You seem stressed about the whole situation,” he finally said.

Needless to say his bluntness shocked me. What did he mean by that? What did he know of my situation? It was his frankness that seemed to shock me into talking.
“Yeah. I am.”

“She is a beautiful woman,” he said.

“I know. I have a beautiful wife. I have a great son. You don’t have to tell me.”

“It’s not like that at all,” he replied.

“How do you know what it is like? How do you know anything about married life? You are single. Do you know what it is like to have a wife and child to care for and not the means?”

At this point, I angrily slammed in the magazine and chambered a round.

“It really doesn’t have to be this way, you know.”

“Ah, but it does, doesn’t it? When you apparently can’t give enough, anymore, it is time to take action.”

“It just happened,” he said nervously. “Would you please put down that gun.”

His statement made me realize that I was waving the gun around. I did not really care. He wanted to know so I was going to get it all out. Maybe it would relieve the stress enough that I would actually put the gun down and forget the whole thing.

“Everything just happens. The monthly mortgage just happens. But it comes just the same. The phone, electric and gas just happen every month. Natural gas prices rise when heating just happens to rise. Gasoline goes up because oil companies just happen to want to make more money. And when you don’t have the money to pay for it, you just happen to have to do something.

“After all. My wife thinks she deserves more and maybe she does. So, eventually, she’ll do what it takes to get it.”

“That’s not the way she is. And that’s not the way it happened. It just happened and it’s a one-time thing.”

“Can you guarantee that? Can you guarantee that things will

get better?”

“I can’t.”

Fred suddenly stopped talking and looked at me.

“Wait a minute,” he said. “What are you talking about?”

“What are you talking about?” I replied.

“My affair with your wife,” he said.

Fred had one fault after all. He did know when to keep his mouth shut. He had almost talked me out of killing myself. More accurately, he did talk me out of killing myself.

When the police arrived, I recited the exact conversation. I was guilty, there was no denying that fact. I might as well tell them everything. Of course, in my state, I forgot about the right to keep my mouth shut. They took the conversation as Fred had. They proved it was a premeditated act. I tried to explain that it was a spur-of-the-moment thing. I explained that I learned of my wife’s affair during the conversation, not before. The prosecutor was good, though, and proved premeditation.

So, here I sit on death row. I think it is tomorrow. I heard that there are people out there protesting my impending demise. Although I am a proponent of the death penalty, I am against my death at the hands of the state. I wanted to go out with a chance that my insurance would pay up my benefits. And I found out that they do not cover lethal injection.