

JUST BECAUSE

by Adam Sifre

It's been almost two years since I bought it. I couldn't tell you why if, well, if you held a gun to my head. Part of me wants to blame boredom. Sit by yourself long enough, and inactivity settles over you like a hair shirt, until you either scream or scratch. Know what I mean?

But another part of me insists I'm full of shit. Boredom? Ha! Who am I kidding? Watching TV shows about pawn shops and shooting alligators, sleeping through afternoons and jerking off to porn. I'll blame boredom all day long for that shit.

But buying the gun was different. I guess I bought it because I shouldn't have. Because I believe owning a gun only brings trouble. And because sometimes we do things simply because we tell ourselves we shouldn't. If you're sitting in your car, eating a greasy burger or taco while reading this, or if you're going to end up there sooner or later, you know what I mean.

It's a Smith & Wesson. The M&P series. You know it? It's a popular gun. I chose it because of the Dirty Harry movies I watched as a kid. You know, the old "we're not just going to let you walk out of here." The gun doesn't look like anything Clint ever used, but what the hell. It's a Smith & Wesson.

So, I got myself a Smith & Wesson because ...

Let me tell you a secret that few people know, but that's as plain as daylight. Nine out of ten times, anything that follows "because" is story. It's all just a bit of bullshit fiction to explain the truth of everything that comes before. "I hit my wife because I was drunk. I didn't see my kid because she's angry."

"I did it because" blah blah blah. Writers like me, we go broke or get rich filling in the blah blah blah, but it's all bullshit.

So, two years ago I bought a Smith & Wesson.

The guy who sold it to me knew I wasn't exactly Wyatt Earp. He took his time and explained the basics to me. Ammo, clips, safety.

How it was important to clean the gun because blah blah blah. We both knew I was forgetting what he said almost as fast as he said it.

But in this country, there's a lot you can do without knowing how to do it, and buying a gun is one of those things. He did give me a business card.

"RICK'S GUN RANGE AND INSTRUCTION." And under that, "Safety. Security. Country."

I thanked him. I left fully intending to take the class.

Safety. Security. Country.

I wasn't a big drinker then. I drink a bit more these days, I freely admit. Not enough to end up in a Lifetime movie or anything, but enough to take most of the chill out of my life, when I need it. These nights, I'm partial to Fireball Whiskey. You know it? Tastes like those red hot jawbreakers we used to get as kids. It tastes better over ice, but I take it warm because it reminds me of those jawbreakers more when it's warm. Or maybe I take it warm because I can't be bothered to keep the ice trays full.

Blah blah blah. I drink it warm, and there's no chill left in me tonight. That's enough for you.

Like I said, the guy who sold me the gun, he really knew his stuff, and good for him. And like I said, I wasn't paying too much attention to the instructions. After all, I had Rick's card. There was

something he didn't mention though. If he had, I'm pretty sure I would have remembered.

What does a gun and boredom have in common?

I'm rambling a bit, I know. When a writer rambles, we call it a draft. We put the rambling on paper, then we fix it up. We polish it until it shines like a story or a turd. This tale lacks the polish because blah blah blah. It's a shame, really, this being my last tale and all.

Last week, or two weeks maybe, someone posted a video of a memorial service for the victims of the Pulse nightclub down there in Florida. You remember? When that guy shot all those gays, and everyone talked about it for days and days. And then we moved on and hardly none of us remembered until the anniversary, because

blah blah blah.

I only had a quarter bottle of Fireball left tonight. A few weeks ago, when the bottle was fresh, I had myself some company and we both put a reckless weekend dent in it. You ever kiss a woman who tastes like a jawbreaker? I'm the last guy to give anyone advice, but if you're smart, you'll put that on your bucket list.

They itch after a while. A gun and boredom. They both start to itch after a while.

I imagine there are lots of people in this world who can go just about forever without scratching an itch that shouldn't be scratched.

Not me, though. Not me.

