I was an altar boy when I was a kid so I was well aware of God’s Fifth Commandment “Though Shalt Not Kill.” Times change. I changed. I changed a lot. I’m not an altar boy any more. I killed my first target and sent him straight to Hell over a decade ago. If God sees fit to send me there as well when my time comes, I will hunt that bastard down and kill him again. How many victims he hurt or killed is unknown but he raped and strangled the last one and was caught. She was 8 years old. In case a lawmaker is reading this, I’ll say it again. SHE WAS EIGHT YEARS OLD. Because of our failing court system, lawyers looking for their 15 minutes of fame and overcrowded prisons, the murderer was released back into society 7 very short years later. He got a deal. The lawyers got him a deal and the judge affixed his signature to the sentence, pitiful as it was, agreeing with the deal. I still think long and hard about that. The parents got no deal. Her brother and two sisters got no deal. Nobody else got a good deal that day.

I watched him carefully as he walked out of prison a free man. Probably from directions given during his exit brief, he turned right and walked a couple blocks, bringing him to an aging city bus pulling to a stop. He waited for a moment looking in all the windows on the bus and then, apparently satisfied, got on. I followed it as it pulled away from the curb. 8 stops and a half hour later I saw the bus stop and the side door slide open once again. There was no emotion on his face as he stepped down and walked toward a bricked house with a fading sign that read “New Path”. Probably where they all go at first. Shower. Shave. Start to feel like a real person again. I parked within sight of the entrance and opened my duffle bag to check my weapons. I went through a check list of how I hoped this would go down and waited in my car until he came back out a short time later, guessing correctly he would not take a lengthy nap. It was a hot, blustery day and the sun was preparing itself to set, leaving his soon to be last known address cast in a darkening shadow. I let him enjoy the wind on his face one final time and watched him soak up this new feeling of freedom as he jumped the last 3 steps to the sidewalk. He bent over and picked a blade of grass. Before he had a chance to perhaps recall a pleasant childhood memory by smelling its sweetness, I walked up behind him and blew his knee out with a shotgun. So much for checklists. He fell to the ground, his one remaining leg unable to keep him upright. More shocked than hurt, he tried to roll over to face me but couldn’t. He tried a second time and failed. I got some satisfaction that this probably wasn’t part of his plans for the evening. He tried to say something but I put my gloved hand over his mouth. I grabbed his hair to pull his head toward me. His panicked eyes met mine. I leaned in next to his ear and whispered the girls name that he’d defiled and then killed into it. Recognition or not, I then put the 9mm between his eyes and put him out of his misery.

He was the first and last target that I allowed the time to think before I killed them. Watching them suffer should not have been necessary. I was the executioner and couldn’t afford to be the judge as well. I was very new at this and that mistake was on me. Never give hope to someone who deserves none. Hope is for the living. I never let that happen again.

Sometimes, when you are doing something good for the world, others around you sense it and do good in turn. I was very lucky that day. Not one witness came forward and I left the city quickly with my guns hidden in the trunk and my future coming quickly on the horizon toward me. I would be much more careful from then on. I could have been caught because I wanted to inflict pain and watch it when all that was necessary was death and eradicating their stench from the earth instantly. Lesson learned.

2

John checked his weapon one last time to make sure it was loaded and the safety off. He holstered the gun inside his jacket and his other hand went to the door handle ready to get out of his car when he spotted a man walking across the street carrying a large bag. He let go and remained in the car as he watched this man pull what looked like a shot gun from the bag. Seconds later his baby sister’s murderer appeared on the doorstep of the halfway house and jumped missing all the steps as if playing some kind of children’s game. He bent over to pick something up off the ground when the man with the gun suddenly appeared and shot his leg clear off with the shotgun. The unexpected noise felt surprisingly soothing to him while he watched the incredible scene playing out before him. He then pulled another gun from the bag and shot him in the head. Without hesitation he put the guns back in the bag and walked calmly across the street to his car, started it, and drove off as if nothing had just happened. John could not remember the make, model or even the color of the car but for reasons known to no one, the license plate burned into his memory. He didn’t write it down but he knew he could never forget that number. He started his car and left just as the stranger did. He was exhausted and excited at the same time as he began the 3-hour drive home.