

Chapter 1: The Light

"QUICK! GET ME A DAMN MEDIC!"

I'm beginning to feel the chilling hand of death. It seems as if death would constantly pull my number out of turn. Yet, this time it was. The medics immediately race me to Maryland's Columbia, where an Air-Medic awaits my arrival to fly me to John Hopkins. My original birth place. Seems ironic enough to me. Mother Nature is quite vengeful, seeking my expiration. I must've passed out because when I awoke I'm rolling on a hospital bed with four doctors. Two on each side of me. They keep shouting for me to stay with them. Fading in and out of consciousness, my eyes take focus on the lights above me. The lights race above me as if they're eagerly leading me to another journey. Suddenly, a sharp chill slithers down my spine. The same sensation one feels in witnessing a ghastly act which can numb the mind and soul. This is what I felt. Death sadistically run its finger down my spine in mockery. It's only a matter of time before I'd expire. I'm afraid because my life isn't in order. The life I've led was horrific. Nothing I can say, or do can change the fact I'm going to die. I once heard many say, "Pray and He'll forgive." Or, "Let God into your heart and He'll set you free." However, God has given me numerous chances to change and I squandered each opportunity. His patience was spent from my foolish ways. On many occasions I shook my puny fist at Him in blasphemy. My soul had grown weary with the burden of my transgressions. The lights, to my life's stage, are dimming. The director's making His final print. The characters in my life are paying amish to a final individual. The one responsible for bringing this chaotic production together - me.

As the nurses shove me into an operating room, the surrounding doctors immediately tear away my shirt, exposing my wounds. In and out of consciousness I constantly fall. Faintly, as the four doctors hover over me. I hear one of my lungs have collapsed. No wonder my breathing has become shaky. Probably more so from shame and fear rather than physical pain.

The souls I've slain want reprisal. They adamantly sought out my vessel so I can experience the same discomfort I've put upon them. My collapsed lung presses against my rib cage, desiring freedom. This is when I see the light. As it breaks through my muck, I fight valiantly to retreat. Especially once dark figures emerge from the opposite end. As if the doctors sensed them coming for me, they wheel me to a recovery room then strap the rest of my fading life to a respirator. My demise came towards the end of a shift change because I heard one of the doctors mention their desire for lunch. I couldn't blame the lackadaisical attitude towards my life. I've done the same.

My chest and abdomen are now stitched. From what I gather, one of the bullets ricochet off one of my ribs, a millimeter from my heart. Only one doctor stays behind to devise an essential method retrieving of the bullet. In the distance, I can hear them search, yearn, for my soul. They can smell the stench of my rotten soul on my breathe. My filth drives them insane with anticipation as they snatch other souls as worthless as mine. And to feed upon my misery is their primary mission. Sad to say, I was in route of a better life. But, now no more time. And...it...vexes my soul...to no end. There are other people out there living their life who have done -- forget it. Forget it! I'll have my revenge. Wait and see...

All of my deeds are being presented before me. As weak as my spirit is from the many lost battles it waged against my flesh, I manage to muster enough strength to clinch my eyes. I try to purge out the horrid memories to no avail. Before my spirit fully departs, I hang on to say my farewells. War is my answer for all of my existing obstacles. What I cannot comprehend, I literally kill. This way I made certain it never resurface in my life. Now, I'm reaping the fruits of such actions. Time to descend. I make peace with my current loved ones and state my goodbyes to my future.

As I left this world guided by them, I saw fit to tell my story. However, I won't return in a fleshy form. As these words have been recorded by another soul seeking perfection in this world, my soul roars. Seeking other avenues to continuously destroy more lives. Since I'm not given another chance at redemption, your future will be plagued by me. My troubled being will stand among you daily. Look about you for I am there. Every murder. Every drug deal. Every war. Every cheater. Every dishonest leader, 'tis I stand, for I am the great puppet master. For this reason I will never experience defeat. Wait...Here comes the judgmental attribute of myself, whom I greatly loath. It wants to plant hope within you. Hope? Ha! Oh, now he's informing me I can change the world by choosing a scribe. A sincere one to bestow acts of love like - who? Christ? See, he always wants to spew religious antics. No one wants to hear that!

See that young boy, or girl on the corner? The ones throwing their lives away? This was I at one time. However, I wasn't dumb as they are. I'm worse for supplying them the reason to be there. Here's what I need you to do. Stop whatever you're doing and tenderly direct each child towards a proper path, a prosperous future. Make them shed their cloak of childhood by providing them a buffet of adult choices. Open your heart and guide the youth that have lost hope. It's in us, adults, where their hope and trust lies. Stop planting seeds of discouragement in their minds. It's your responsibility to uproot those weeds and plant a strong Redwood of Hope. It will behoove you to obey. Mock these words and there'll be millions of my likeness in every corner of the world. I was a menace to myself. I formed my hate into, The Blob and I devoured the city. No bullets, bats, or words could penetrate the impervious armor I wore... malice. Happiness is my prey. I'll constantly use the youth of tomorrow to keep my image falsely enlightened. False dreams are what I'll sell them, scornfully requesting their loyalty in return. I've bit my tongue so much it became forked. So there was treachery hidden beneath every word I utter. The City's chaotic and infested with my evil. At first I vaunt about it in a silent manner through my cocky attitude. But the City of Baltimore burns with my sin, but God has now put the same flame in my face.

I need to know why I feel so much pain. Instead, I lash out immaturely and took on a life I couldn't handle. I should've saved lives rather than subtract them. John Gotti, Charles Manson, or even Hitler could hold a candle to my wrath. They had reasons for acting so primitive. I didn't. I whined my way through life changing my sad song into a murderous one. My neck finally snaps, dropping the weight of excess souls upon my back. My focus was blurry from the contacts of hate I wore so I could see the world my way. My jaws clinch tightly. My teeth gnash as I view my treacherous life. I wish I can change the choices I've made. As I swoop into the realm of death, I see my shell as I descend.

Chapter 2: September 26, 1976

From here my past deeds have been brought to light. The day of my arrival into this world is as bad as my exit. My mother, Joyce, once stated I raise havoc on my incursion. This is apparent by my three-week early birth. In the living room, the telephone rings to which my father, Jesse, quickly answers. "Hello? My results came in...What in the hell do you mean I don't fit the profile? I've been a Baltimore City Policeman for nearly eight years...I don't want to hear that!...When you need someone to go undercover don't call me!" With that, my father slams the receiver on its base.

My mother, Joyce, sits in the kitchen reading James Redfield's, Tenth Insight, as she spoons Rocky Road ice cream from the gallon carton. My father storms into the kitchen.

"Can you believe the FBI turned me down? But they take Officer Wyse over me. Even with his fifteen citations and I.A. cases."

My mother, use to hearing the song and dance, continues to consume her ice cream, still reads, though giving my father thorough attention.

"Jesse, I don't think you should be concerned."

"Why shouldn't I be concerned?"

"Because you'll eventually get the opportunity you're looking for."

My father ponders the statement. "You're right."

My mother turns the page of the book, "I know."

"What are you reading now?" My mother responds by holding up the book's cover so my father can see it.

"I've read that already." He then walks to the dishwasher to retrieve a spoon, returns to the kitchen table. He tries to dig his spoon in, but my mother pushes his spoon away. My father acts as if he's going to walk away then playfully snatches the carton of ice cream away from my mother's clutches. Who by the way is barely eight months pregnant with moi in her womb.

"Jesse, give it back!"

Laughing, my father stabs his spoon into the ice cream carton when my mother suddenly stops her pursuit, drops her book and spoon to the floor. She then begins to hyperventilate. My father believes it's a hoax, so he ignores her. Once my mother grips the wall so hard, it squeaks beneath her strength, my father, leery, quizzes her.

"What's wrong, Joyce? Are you having contracts again," my father teases. My mother nods frantically.

"Jesse, I think it's time. Now!"

"Time for what," my father states, still believes my mother's joking.

"My water's broke!"

"Water? What are you..." Finally, common sense, which really isn't that common, flows through my father's brain as he now

throws the ice cream carton to the floor. "Woman, what are we standing there for? Let's go!"

My father was a cop who grew up in Georgia. The Decatur area, if I remember correctly. For some reason he decides to move us to Catonsville in Baltimore, Maryland. My mother was four months pregnant with me at the time. Now, here I am being trouble. As the ambulance arrives

outside our home, my father quickly runs outside, hops inside the ambulance, leaving my mother slowly waddling behind him. He's usually calm in most situations. But I'm his first and only child. To add to his excitement, I'm a boy. When the ambulance arrives at John Hopkins, my father leapt out, closes the door on my mother and the EMS workers. My mother says my father was a wreck the entire evening.

"Should I have a few detectives stand guard of your room?"
"I'm having a baby. Not an FBI secret pulled out of me, Agent Mullen."
"Don't spoil the moment by mentioning the FBI right now."
"Regardless. You're going to be late for work."
"So. My son is being born."

Though my mother's contractions informs my father to call Captain Ross to alert him that my birth will result in his tardiness. Fourteen hours later, a rather short birth, all the while agonizing, I nearly shatter John Hopkins's hospital windows with my entrance into this world. However, not aware of my existence, my wailing is induced by my umbilical cord coiled around my tiny neck. To add to my seemingly approaching departure, stool needs to be removed from my mouth, for I swallowed some while in my mother's womb. So at my beginning, I aim to cheat death.

And because of my escape, forms of death remain present in my life. I was allowed home three days later than my mother's release. Yet, my mother made occasional trips, for me, to the medical institution to ensure the stool would not cause future damage.

To help the process of my mother's recovery, my father hired a short-term nanny to look after us. From what I understand, at the impressionable age of five, my grandmother, on my mother's side, my father's parents had past on since before my birth, despised my father for this. My father says she never liked him from the beginning of my parents courtship. Moreover, he thought she stuck her nose into his house too often. He'd say, "A man must respectfully control his home at all cause."

His statement kindled my Grandma's anger so she'd roll her eyes, fix her oversized prescription eyeglasses, clear the resentment from her gutlet then storm out of our home to which suited my father quite fine. He'd stand at the front door, smile as wide as the door is opened and let Grandma exit. I believe he'd only voice his opinion once he grew exhausted of Grandma's annoying company. However, my mother never took sides. Probably for the reason of unresolved tribulations from their past.

Anyhow, our nanny, Thelma, worked for us nearly seven years. In the beginning, her position was to work all day, for three months, then resign when my mother's health improved. As I got older, Thelma, our nanny, worked part-time. I guess the bond between Thelma and my mother expanded over the first three months. In addition, I believe my mother enjoyed Thelma's company while I attended school. I'm not certain, but I believe Thelma hailed from Bermuda. And I had an enormous crush on Thelma. Thelma's what I refer to some females as abnormally gorgeous. A person so attractive it seems physically impossible. This was Thelma. She always smelled alluring, dressed well. And her island accent, I loved. However, Thelma disciplined without laying a hand on me. Her chilling stares made me uncomfortable enough to remain obedient. Thelma would prepare elaborate, spicy meals to which constantly gave my father terrible heartburn. Yet, he'd eat and even return for a second helping. In search of further memories, Thelma's age escapes me. It didn't matter anyway I couldn't have her. Though I had boyish daydreams of Thelma I couldn't act on them. So I kept my feelings where a young boy of my age should keep them...in dreams. Only dreams.

Mature, pristine clippings of relic cases Captain Ross has governed throughout his career, blankets the wall behind him. A photo of Captain Ross's German Shepard sits on the corner of his old metal desk. The bewildered expression on Captain Ross's face doesn't adequately state what currently torments his soul. The cheap cigar to which suspends from the corner of his mouth is merely inches from the chubby hand that supports one of his two chins. Captain Ross then releases the ashes off the end of his cigar into a coffee mug, which sits next to a mug shot of an African American male, who's notoriously known in the underbelly of Baltimore City as NY. Also known as Dwayne Smith as recorded by the government.

Captain Ross picks up the mug shot as he takes another toke of his cigar. "You really think you're big shit...Tarnishing my city." Captain Ross suddenly snatches the cigar from his mouth as if a thought comes to mind. He then extends his plump hand into an old beige rotary telephone. Captain Ross jabs one of his portly fingers into the number holes of the rotary telephone. After dialing three numbers, Captain Ross slowly returns the telephone onto the base as Detective Turner, a beautiful, yet tough Hispanic woman, enters his office. Detective Turner is currently trailed by what appears to be a Federal Agent.

Detective Turner stands in front of Captain Ross's desk. "Captain, This is agent..." Detective Turner looks to the Federal Agent as a gesture for the Federal Agent to introduce himself to which the Federal Agent condescendingly stares at Detective Turner.

"If I wanted you to know my name, I would've told you...Officer,"
In defense for his detective, Captain Ross barks, "Detective Turner deserves the same respect --"
The Federal Agent promptly turns his scopes to Captain Ross. "Are you a ventriloquist?"
Captain Ross looks to Detective Turner, who catches the hint but not before bumping shoulders with the Federal Agent as she exits. The Federal Agent chuckles to himself as he now waltzes around Captain Ross's office.

"And she wonders why she has an excessive force case pending." The Federal Agent glances at the clippings behind Captain Ross. "You've had one hell of a career, Captain."
Captain Ross takes a pull of his cigar, blows the smoke towards the Federal Agent. The Federal Agent responds by opening a window.

"See, how well the agency trains us? Not every action deserves brute force, Captain."
"Get to the damn point." The Federal Agent takes the photo of Captain Ross's German Shepard in hand.
"Is this your wife?" Captain Ross responds by snatching the photo from the Federal Agent.
"Respect a fallen officer. She was better than most two-legged authority figures I know. Present company included."
"So, she was your wife?" Seeing Captain Ross isn't in the mood for rude banter, the Federal Agent decides to get to the point of his visit. "Being that your precinct is under tough scrutiny by our agency and the state of Maryland, I'm here to offer a deal."
"What type of deal?"

"One that requires an officer, or detective from his department to become U.C." The Federal Agent now notices NY's mug shot.
"In fact, the operation will be against him."

"Him?"
"Isn't that what I said?"
"Every time someone gets close to him, they seem to become extinct. No body. No evidence. Seems to me, he has contacts much higher than our precinct."

"I'm going to ignore your subtle accusations and insist you cooperate with me in this operation." The Federal Agent walks to the door, places a hand on the knob. "This operation must be silent as a crab's fart. I don't care who you get, but make sure they understand every aspect of the briefing I'm conducting. There's no turning back once they opt to join."

Captain Ross replies, "When do you need them?"
"Yesterday." The Federal Agent then exits.

Around midnight, I feel my father's presence as he sits on the edge of my bed, lightly, but enough to disturb my slumber. I turn to him with a sleepy, slobbery grin.

"Hey, Pop. Going to work?"
"Of course. I have to make certain the streets remain safe for your future."
"Is that all you wanted to say?" I ask.
"No. I want to be the first to wish my boy a Happy Birthday."
"Thanks, Pop. But, you're coming to my party later, right?"