

IT STARTED WHEN I GOT SOME COWBOY GUNS FOR CHRISTMAS FROM A FAMILY FRIEND.

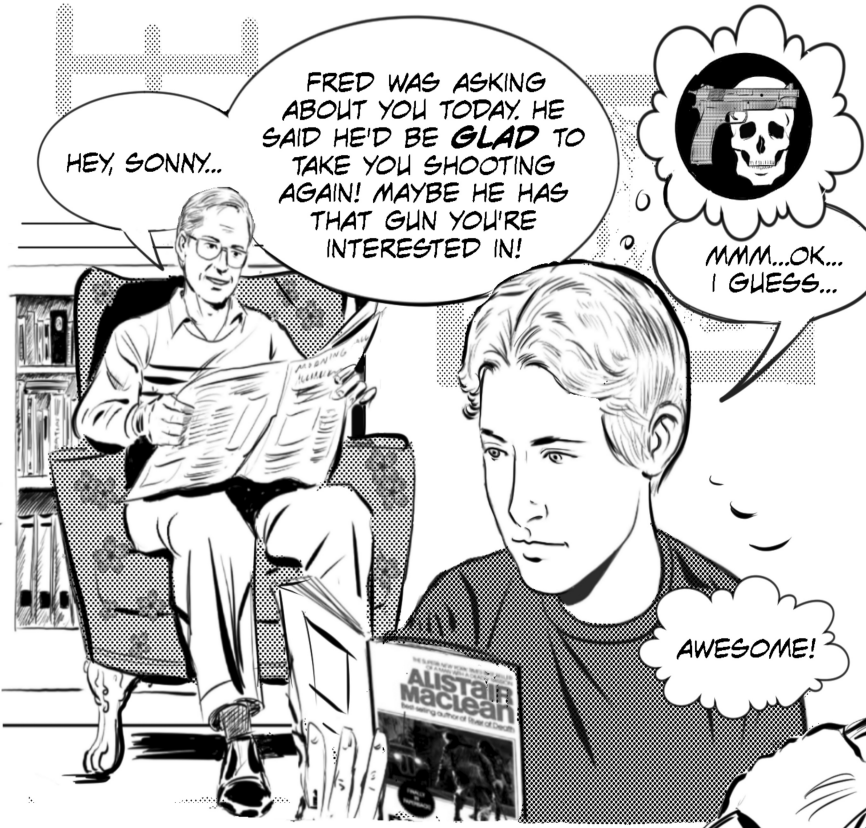


MY FEAR SOON CHANGED TO **FASCINATION**.

JAMES BOND COOLED GUNS FOR ME. I MEMORIZED THEIR BRANDS, PARTS, STATISTICS. I READ GUNS AND AMMO & SOLDIER OF FORTUNE. GUNS WERE PASSPORTS TO SELF-CONFIDENCE AND CERTAINTY. WHEN YOU HELD ONE YOU KNEW WHO YOU WERE! YOU WERE POWER ITSELF!



I HAD TO WAIT UNTIL EIGHTH GRADE TO **INDULGE** MY FANTASIES. THE INVITATION WAS INNOCUOUS ENOUGH...



I HAD READ ABOUT THE 1935 BROWNING AUTOMATIC IN A JAMES BOND BOOK AND GREW FASCINATED. THE OLD GUN SOMEHOW BECAME A PERSONAL **SYMBOL**, LINKING POP CULTURE'S FANTASY WORLD OF **PREDATORY** MASCULINITY AND THE MYTHIC STORY OF MY GRANDFATHER'S WAR.



SO IT WAS HARD TO RESIST FRED'S OFFER. STILL I HAD SOME VAGUE **MISGIVINGS**. A FEW YEARS BEFORE MY BROTHER AND I HAD GONE SHOOTING WITH HIM AT A GUN RANGE. THE DAY PASSED UNREMARKABLY UNTIL WE WENT BACK TO HIS HOUSE. HE SHOWED US HIS **CHAMELEON** IN THE KITCHEN AND THEN TOOK A PICTURE OF THE TWO OF US STANDING THERE. I THOUGHT IT WAS **STRANGE** THAT HE WOULD WANT A PHOTO OF RICK AND ME. AFTER ALL, HE BARELY KNEW US.

THE WHOLE INCIDENT MADE ME INEXPLICABLY **UNCOMFORTABLE**. I PUT IT OUT OF MY MIND.

