

Waupun Correctional Institution

Tom Kropp 193345

Sam's Son

The day Sam's son died was also his last day of freedom.

Sam's son Mat was ten years old and resembled his father with good looks and dark hair and eyes. He was a athletic boy in many sports. But his favorite hobby was fishing with his dad. Mat was on the sidewalk near his dad when a car swerved off the street and bulldozed into the boy with bone breaking ballistics. Sam scrambled to his son as he screamed in grief and disbelief at the mangled body of his boy.

"He came out of nowhere," the tall, burly, drunk driver complained.

Sam's mind snapped. He hadn't been in a fight since high school. He was a non-violent, 33 year old, computer programmer without a criminal record. He displayed no fighting finesse attacking in a frenzied flurry of fists flailing at the drunk's face. The big drunk guy was a brawler and bounced back from the blows to hammer haymakers into Sam, staggering him. The men grappled and exchanged a barrage of blows, holds, throws, and rolls as their bodies battled and limbs lashed. Suddenly Sam shoved the thug into the path of a passing motorcycle. The biker flipped over his handlebars flying face first to smash through a glass windshield. The biker was killed on impact, sprawled on the street amongst the glittering glass that shined bright like diamonds. It accented his blood spilled on the street. The drunk driver was paralyzed for life from the impact.

Cops and EMTs pulled Sam from his slain son. He was booked in jail for manslaughter of the innocent biker. Sam lived paycheck to paycheck like most Americans and couldn't afford to bail out or hire a good lawyer. He was stuck with a public defender that

filed a motion for a speedy jury trial within 90 days. Meanwhile Sam tried adjusting to jail for the first time, living off the couple hundred dollars he had in his pocket when arrested. He was very suicidal. Sam's second jail roommate was a violent sex predator. He woke up with the predator's shank at his throat warning him not to struggle or shout out. Sam wanted to die and fought back. He slugged the thug's eye and nailed his nose in a burst of blood. During the savage struggle the predator's crude knife sliced and spiked Sam in numerous places before Sam seized the shank and jabbed several stabs into his foe. The predator crumpled in the corner and died before EMTs arrived.

On trial morning Sam took a last minute deal pleading to one count of negligent manslaughter and one count of manslaughter. The judge sentenced him to 15 years due to the tragic circumstances. Ironically the drunk driver that killed his boy received the same sentence as Sam. I watched Sam try to adjust to prison life. He was my neighbor and a decent dude. But the tortured existence and the mental and emotional anguish over losing his boy was too much for Sam to live with. During his second year in prison the guards found him hanging dead in his cell. He'd escaped his hell on earth by suicide.

When his body was removed I prayed that his soul found his son's soul waiting for him in a better place.

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