

"The Interview"

Sitting across the table he looked much smaller than I thought he would behind those small square wire frames. Or maybe, the guard just made him look small. I put my pocket recorder on the table. "Do you mind if I record this?"

"No, that is why you're here, I asked for you. You gotta tell them the truth."

"What do you want to say?"

"He loved me, you know, my dad. He really loved me."

"Yes, you said that at the trial. Do you remember what it was like when they read the verdict? What did that feel like?"

"Yeah. It was like shock. I mean I didn't do it, you know. My guts felt like they were going to run out my ass. I was in shock, room was swirlin' around. Thought I was gonna' fall on the floor. Can't forget something like that. You never forget something like that."

"And the jury only deliberated for five hours?"

"I have always said that I did not do it, you know? They didn't understand. I didn't do it, he really loved me, you know. I am a good person and I love my dad, you know. You gotta tell them I didn't do it."

"The police found you at the scene, covered in his blood. You were just standing there with the murder weapon in your hand. That was pretty convincing to the jury that you did it, how do you explain that? I want to believe you, but the facts make it tough."

"I don't have a motive, I mean my dad loved me, you know. He taught me lots of things, like fishing. Can I get a cup of coffee?"

"Did you go fishing with him a lot? Tell me about that."

"Well, yeah, when I was a kid. He taught me how to fish for all kinds of things, you know."

"Like what?"

"Most anything, I 'spose. I remember when he taught me to fish for chipmunks, they look

like little squirrels, just little itty-bitty ones. He took this fish hook and put fish eggs on it and cast it at the bottom of a pine tree where the chipmunks were. When it ate the eggs, he reeled it in. That little chipmunk ran all over, we sat and laughed and when it got reeled all the way in he would cast that chipmunk back out and let me reel it in. Stupid chipmunk swallowed the hook."

"How old were you then?"

"I don't know. Maybe six or seven. He also showed me how to fish for ducks."

"How do you fish for ducks?"

"You get a rock and tie a hook and line on it. You put a minnow on the hook and put it out in the water so the minnow floats a few inches below the water. When the ducky eats the fish it drowns in the water. My dad loved us, you know. I am a good person and I love my dad, you know."

"Why did you kill him?"

"I didn't kill him, I loved him, you know. Don't say that. He was always working you know."

People liked him and because of us kids they would give him all kinds of stuff to bring home from work, you know."

"Did he have a lot of jobs?"

"Yes, times were hard you know. It was hard to find good jobs, but Dad always found jobs. We had to move a lot. One time he worked at some home improvement store and they gave him all kinds of stuff like a table saw and a refrigerator that he put beer in. He loved beer. When he worked as a janitor at the high school they let him bring home a Ping-Pong table for us. We had to move again that year. We moved a lot. He sacrificed a lot for us. He loved us, you know."

"What, exactly, did he sacrifice for you?"

"Well, he never left us unless he was looking for a new job, you know. Sometimes he would have to put cardboard in his shoes to cover the holes in the soles of his shoes when he went to work. Sometimes he would stay with me at night, because he loved me you know. Mom would leave us for awhile, it wasn't Dad's fault, you know. She was always screaming about something. I remember one time I told my sister he was a homo. She laughed, we both laughed."

"Was he gay?"

"Not really, you know. I mean when Mom wasn't there he would love me, it was not his

fault, it was Mom's fault. I love my Dad, you know, it didn't always hurt you know. Can I please have a cup of coffee?"

"If you didn't kill him, who did? Your wife?"

"No, no. She is a good person; she could never do anything like that. I love her. She is a good mom. No, she didn't do that. I really want some coffee."

"How do you explain, so that I can believe you, how your father was stabbed twenty-two times and you were found there with the murder weapon in your hand?"

"Look - I told you, I did not kill him, you know. He killed himself."

"How can you possibly expect me to believe he stabbed himself twenty-two times?"

"He loved my son - his own grandson. Where is my coffee? I want my motherfucking coffee!", he began smashing his chair against the wall.

I turned off the recorder and slipped it into my pocket.