

Chapter 3

A man sits in his pickup for a half hour watching customers come and go from the QuicMart gas station on South School Avenue. It is after eleven-thirty Saturday night in nineteen sixty-nine.

Finally, there is a break in the foot traffic. He quickly pulls down his ski mask and runs into the small store carrying an old WWII Walther-P38, 9mm semi-automatic pistol. His father had brought the German military gun back from the European Theater in nineteen forty-five.

At the age of eleven, twelve years earlier, Kenneth Walker's old man beat him for the last time. Young Ken went into the garage, pulled the P38 and a box of shells from an old water damaged cardboard box filled with war memorabilia that his father kept. He loaded the magazine with eight bullets.

The son returned to the house where his father dozed on the couch, too drunk on vodka to stay lucid. They were alone in the house, his mother working late at a market. Ken stood over his father for the longest time with tears streaming down his face. Hatred at a final point consumed his mind and his courage built to killing level.

The young boy shoved the barrel hard into the man's forehead.

Barely opening his blurry eyes, "What the hell are you doing?" screamed the dazed man.

Without a word, Ken pulled the trigger and exploded his father's brains all over the living room wall.

Splattered with blood he ran to the kitchen and wrapped the weapon in tin foil before burying the package behind a shrub in the backyard.

The blast shattered the still spring air and a neighbor immediately phoned the police. By the time the child returned to the living room, sirens were heard screaming up the street.

Ken spent the next ten years in juvenile hall before being released at the age of twenty-one. He spent the following year wandering the streets of Fayetteville looking for work. Unable to find a job he started selling marijuana and other illegal drugs for a local dealer on the campus of the University of Arkansas.

Desperate to get into the drug business on his own, this night Ken went to his old childhood home and snuck into the backyard digging up the ancient Walther.

"Get your hands up!" shrieks the robber.

The terrified young male convenience store clerk quickly complies, "Please don't shoot. You can take anything you want!"

"Empty the register into a bag! No sudden moves or I'll blow your head off!" speaking from experience.

Grabbing the brown paper bag containing two hundred and thirty dollars, the thief runs from the store and hastily drives away. A mile up the road, Ken turns right on Twenty-fourth Street and drives up the small mountain mound to the local country club where he sits in the parking lot counting his take.

"He thinks, "At this rate, I'll need to hit two or three more places."

After hearing the sirens blaring past down South School Avenue, Ken leaves the lot, following the short curvy road down to the main thoroughfare. He drives north to the smaller town of Springdale and robs another station.

Using the same modus operandi he pushes on West to the town of Lincoln for his last robbery of the night.

Back in his half-way house, he counts the bills; five hundred and eighty-seven dollars. It's enough to make a buy and get his own product to sell.

Randal Brown isn't pleased with his protégé going out on his own but concedes the white population of the university to him. Ken Walker is the newest drug dealer in Northwest Arkansas.

One night, a few weeks later, Ken wanders into a strip club and sees Lulu Love teasing a pole on center stage. Her long blonde hair flips from side to side to the steady beat of Creedence Clearwater Revival's *Bad Moon Rising*.

Over the next few months, Ken visits Kats often to memorialize the alluring young woman. During each visit, he stuffs every dollar bill he can muster into her bright pink g-string. Lulu never gives him a second thought.