

## THE END

Aaron Cosgrove ©2011.

The front door opened stiffly on its hinges with a groan like that heard from the dank interior of an old wooden gallon. “Honey, I’m home,” he called into the quietness of the small one bedroom apartment in his sad yet patronising tone. The dreary florescent light flickered to life further down the passage whilst he hung his battered coat on the dull hook which protruded from the flaking paint of the hallway wall. No answer returned to him from the grave like silence at the end of the hall; then again he hadn’t really expected one.

Samual White, a 32 years old divorced father of two, one of over ten thousand employees of a faceless corporation with whom he was at their beckon call as an over-worked and unpaid paper clerk. Tiredly he leant over the small corner table as he crossed the pitiful excuse for a lounge room and checked the old cassette tape answering machine. No light winked suggestively at him as if to say that someone somewhere had tried to reach out for him. He hadn’t heard from or seen his kids in over a month, then again the only time he heard from his ex-wife was to remind him that is alimony was late. It is said that people, like leopards can’t change their spots, well she must have been an exception to the rule or maybe she was a prime example of Darwinism, adapting one’s self for the best chances of prosperity and survival. She’d always been very loving and warm, though that had all changed with the birth of the children, she was now colder and more emotionally desolate towards him than a hungry polar bear to a brown-eyed baby harp seal.

‘Maliciously destructive,’ was a thought that came to mind as he shuffled the few letters which he’d collected from the post box slot on his way into the building. Bill, bill, a “have you found Jesus?” pamphlet, bill, discount medication flier, bill, increase your penis size and stamina junk mail and the usual random supermarket catalogues, it was just the usual pile of nothingness. The entire pile landed in the metal waste paper bin by the small corner table with a robust metallic ‘thunk’.

Meandering wearily into the small kitchen he couldn’t help but notice her sitting on the edge of the table peering at him questioningly, as if to say, ‘so, how was your day?’. To which he simply slung his ancient briefcase onto one empty chair instead of onto the table like he usually would have. Unenthusiastically he then proceeded to take the only other vacant chair in the room, which just so happened to lay closest to her edge of table.

“Hello . . . Col,” he greeted her callously.  
She sat silently without a sound, like a ghost, unresponsive.

“What do you want from me now Col?” he breathed jadedly.  
She didn’t reply, remaining as motionless as when he’d entered.  
He’d called her Col for as long as he’d known her, though he didn’t know her real name or where she had originated from, he suspected she’d had many names over the collective years of her life.

“What are you asking me for?”  
“Cause I thought that you might provide me a solution.”  
“You could kill someone?”  
“Murder?” he coughed surprised, “I don’t think I could do it . . . you know . . . pull the trigger . . . end a life.”  
“Pfft, it’s because you’re weak.”  
“No I’m not.”  
“Yeah you are. And if you can’t even handle the thought of ending a life I don’t know how you ever planned on closing a deal in your pitiful life.”  
“No . . . no, I’m not,” his tone edged with aggression.  
“Then do it. Open fire on a group of random people . . . or better yet, co-workers.”  
“But they are innocent.”  
“So,” her steel cold iris silently replied.  
“They haven’t done anything wrong Col,” he flustered.  
“Well then . . . kill yourself.”  
“What?”  
“You could end your own life.”  
“I could, but . . .” he sighed.  
“No buts, you can.”  
He sat silently and looked over her small hardened frame.  
“It’s not like you’d be missed.”  
“Dead end job, kids hate you . . .” he murmured out a short list of reasons.  
“Don’t forget the ex-wife still hold onto your testicles like a change purse while she’s out fucking other guys,” she added.  
Sadly he sighed again and a few tears run the length of his cheeks.  
“You know I hate to see you suffering like this,” she whispered to him.  
His eyes swimming with depression stared at the old grit imbedded checker patterned linoleum flooring of kitchen.  
“And I hate to let you see me like this.”  
They sat in silence for several moments, the only sound in the room coming from the leaking sink with its steady ‘drip drip drip,’ tempo.  
His eyes rose for the chessboard pattern and fell upon her again.  
“Then why not?”  
“I don’t know.”  
“Why not?” she pressed him again  
“The end, I just don’t think I’m ready.”  
“No one ever is.”  
“That and . . .”  
“Yes.”  
“I . . . I . . .”  
“You’re scared aren’t you?”

“Wouldn’t you be?”

“No.”

“Why not?”

“Cause it’s a stupid question.”

Again his eyes turned from her and back to the board game patterned flooring, though that didn’t stop him hearing her disembodied words.

“Because Sam, I have no desire to end my existence, that and I know I have many years left in me before I become just another antique or relic of some long forgotten lost cause, left to slowly appreciate in age or deteriorate in a home somewhere.”

“I guess.”

“Are you satisfied, can we get this show on the road?”

“I still don’t know.”

“What don’t you know? What?!” He felt her glaring angrily.

“I don’t know, I guess I don’t know how to.”

There it was; the truth, he didn’t know how to do it.

She smiled coldly, “I could do it for you . . . if you can’t.”

With that, he looked upon her again. She sat sexily on the table edge, almost mockingly. He reached out a hand to touch her; she didn’t flinch or shy away. His finger tips traced her cold hard exterior before sliding a hand under her butt and lifting her off of the table. Holding her close to him he put her to his lips, like her exterior she tasted cold and harsh. She rested her against his temple, the slight pressure was comforting.

“I can do it if you want me to, but you have to tell me.”

He nodded gently his understanding.

“Find a reason . . . find a reason . . . find a reason,” he chanted to himself.

‘You really like summer; you really like music . . . and reading,’ though each thought was as contemptible as the last.

“I can’t win when it’s me vs. me,” he muttered.

“This world is such a fucked up place, not to mention your mind is such a fucked up shape.”

They sat together in silence whilst he thought it over, ‘Could he? Should he? . . . Would he?’

“Okay Col, I’m ready,” he whispered.

He didn’t have to wait long at all, “Bang!” she barked in reply.

He sat upright for a moment, his arm flopped limply down by his side and she fell from his palm, stone cold she hit on the floor with a clatter. Lifeless. Then his body slumped and sank deeper into kitchen chair, where he sat.

An hour later the police would respond to a reported gunshot from a so called ‘concerned neighbour’ and after busting the lock on the apartment door they would find Samuel White in his kitchen. His head rolled to the side from the force of the bullet which had bored into his skull. Dead, a self inflicted gunshot wound to the face, alongside him on the floor a single spent bullet casing and a Colt .45 hand gun. The aged letters imbedded into the pistol’s slide were old and worn to the extent that a letter ‘T’ was missing. Marring it to now read, M-1911 A1-67 Auto loading pistol, Calibre 45 - US Army Model - **COL** .

**THE END**