

PROLOGUE

Returning home about 9 p.m., he looked out the window and saw that a light was on in his office. He walked across the gravel drive and into the small building that housed his business. There was a note on the desk left by his warehouse assistant. As he sat reading it, the sound of cars and trucks coming up his mile-long driveway got his attention. He looked out and saw the headlights of dozens of vehicles and realized something was wrong. He almost never had visitors, especially at night. Quickly putting out the lights, he waited in the dark office watching the ominous caravan approach.

An unruly gang of angry men jumped out of their trucks and ran to the cabin's front door, banging on it and yelling. One screamed over them, "Come out, you murdering bastard!"

He recognized the men from the bar he had just left. They were all shouting and cursing, but he couldn't understand why.

"Surround the house. Don't let him get away."

"Burn the fucking place down."

"He don't belong here."

Then someone threw a rock through his front window, followed by a gas can. In seconds his cabin was ablaze with the men cheering.

"Burn, you prick!"

"You deserve to die in hell!"

The incensed crowd, lubricated with beer and whiskey shots, were out of control. They started smashing the other windows and torching everything. He knew he was in mortal danger but had no idea what was happening. He quietly left through the back door of the building and ran down the driveway. Halfway to Rt. 28, he turned and saw the cabin, warehouse, and his Jeep all in a roaring inferno.

Once on the highway, he continued running towards town, jumping into the trees whenever a car passed. A side road brought him around the inhabited area of the town and back onto the highway.

Once past the town, he stepped into the woods and sat on a rock. There he labored to catch his breath as he tried to figure out what was happening to him. *Why are they trying to kill me? It doesn't make sense. I have to get as far away from here as I can.*

When he recovered his stamina, he continued running away from town down Rt. 28, not knowing where to go.