

# John's Adventure (For J.Z.)



**Gerry Reith**



John heard a scream and looked up only to see a body rushing toward him. He stepped out of the way just in time and nearly vomited when his face was spattered with blood. The impact was solid—one of the limbs flew off, and the entire skull flattened out like a vase might.

I have to get out of here, he thought. Looking up again, he was amazed to see that another person had jumped, or been pushed. He started to run. Ahead of him, at the next intersection, a man was walking out into the street even though the light was red. Before John could yell “Watch out!” a limousine plowed into the jaywalker, with startling force. Contorted into strange angles, the body flew up into the air and landed on the roof of the limo, bouncing off and finding rest behind the bumper.

The limo had stopped in a squeal of brakes. Now John heard another loud horn as a business van skidded, rocking back and forth, before the loud smack and grinding crunch as it struck the limo. The force of the van caused it to roll over, and another unlucky car served to absorb the momentum. A fire broke out, and there were shrieks and loud moans. Then a gas tank exploded and the whole intersection was a giant inferno. Cars continued to smash into each other in a parody of chaos. Sirens sounded in the distance, adding that peculiar edge of panicky glee to the scene.

“I’m not going to cross that street,” John said to himself. He decided to go into the bank to his right and watch from behind thick windows.

A shot rang out as soon as the door had closed behind him. Then another. A gruff voice yelled across the room. A woman begged for mercy. The robbers, evidently, were angry about the accident in the street because now their getaway route was cut off. They had decided to slay the occupants of the bank in retaliation for their bad luck, and were doing so with alacrity. John left the way he had entered, quickly.

Out on the street again, he walked back to the scene of the high jumps and pushed his way through the crowd. Now there were six

bodies in various states of explosion, and one more was on the way. Everyone around John was gasping, delighted and disgusted.

Freeing himself from the spectators, he walked on and managed to make headway for a few blocks. Across the street there was a roar and the sound of tinkling glass. A wave of hot air nearly knocked him off his feet and John started running when he saw that the bomb that exploded had also started a fire on the first floor and threatened to bring the entire building crumbling down. It was an old building, noted for the unusual tilt which a settling foundation had imparted upon it. The structural stress was too much, in fact, and John stopped and stared for a moment as the ancient brick walls gracefully dove into oblivion. The cloud of dust engulfed him as he turned and walked on.

A voice called to him from out of a darkened doorway. A woman was there, yelling for help, being raped by a large black man. The rapist looked dangerous so John moved on, figuring that rape prevention was of no consequence any more.

Pretty soon he got home. Sitting at his kitchen table, he glanced at the newspaper headlines. DISASTER STRIKES IN SMALL MIDWESTERN TOWN, said one. CANNIBALS APPREHENDED, STOCK MARKET CRASHES said another. All of a sudden the door was kicked in.

It was a policeman. "You are under arrest," the policeman said.

"What for?"

"Don't worry about that now, just come along with me"

John contemplated resisting, but it would be futile as the policeman was waving a gun in his face. As he stepped out into the hall, he saw that everyone in the building was being arrested.

"Look here," John said. "What's this all about?"

The policeman read him his rights and slapped a pair of handcuffs on his wrists. "You are under arrest for second degree complicity."

"Complicity in what?"

"Ask the judge, big mouth." The cop gave him a slap in the face. "And don't say another word."

Just then a machine gun opened fire from the direction of the elevators. John jumped on the floor and hid behind the body of his arresting officer. A bullet tore painfully into his shoulder.

Then it stopped, and John heard the old elevator start to rise. He lifted his head cautiously and saw that everyone except for one old wino was dead. The wino moaned piteously.

John rose as best he could. Wrestling with the body of the policeman, he found the keys to the handcuffs and managed to free himself. He took the gun and ammo belt just in case.

When he got to the elevator he pressed the button for down and heard a loud snapping noise and some yells, muffled, as if from behind a wall. He looked to see if someone was behind him. A policeman was moving,

"Die, pig!" he called out, firing a bullet. John smacked his lips in satisfaction at the clean hole in the man's head, the blood rushing out. Then he grew alarmed at a rushing sound and realized he would have to use the stairs.

Walking down he had to wade through festering mounds of offal. Children in the building made a habit of leaning over the rails to defecate, and anyone too tired to take the garbage downstairs just pitched it into the abyss.

Outside again, it was dark. He hailed a cab and shot the driver. Driving, he had fun running over a bicyclist and several tots who were playing a game on the sidewalk. He was going to see his former wife.

"Darling, I love you," she said when she opened the door. "Why do you have to keep pestering me?"

"I have a stomach virus, Why do you think?"

"Let's make love. I'm horny after all these years"

"No, Marlene, I'm tired of your games."

He drew his gun and saw her expression, stark terror. With a blank face he pulled the trigger until it simply clicked on empty chambers. The bullets sliced through her midsection, and the body fell to the ground.

Stooping over, he grabbed into the perforations and caught hold of a section of intestine. Giving 2 yank he began to pull out a string of soft warm tubing that he wrapped around himself like a flower at the maypole dances. Then he danced. He danced around the room, pulling a bookcase over, smashing the glasses in the pantry, clawing at the peeling paint on the walls. He turned the television set on and watched it for a while in silence.

Then he dragged the bloody remains of his sister all around the room. He made fingerprints with the blood, decorating the refrigerator, the washer/dryer, the broken windows, the Persian rug, the books. When he was satisfied by that he drew a big knife from a drawer and severed the poor woman's head, which he attached with a string to a little toy red cart. Some more string, and he had a comfortable handle.

Out in the hallway again, he knocked on several doors before one of them opened.

A grisly sight the occupant saw: an executive-type, in a three-piece, with intestines dangling from his shoulder and neck, pulling a little red cart that bore a bloody severed head.

"Come on in. I was just heating some coffee," said the man in the door.

"No, no, I was just stopping by, I thought I might tell you the news about your best friend, he died in the Congo of yellow fever last night."

"Oh, no!" The man put his hands up to cover his face, and John saw his opportunity. He raised his knife and plunged it into the man's shoulder. Then he disemboweled the body.

"At last," he said to no one. With that he removed his clothes and painted his body with blood squeezed from the meat on the floor.

"Now I can be respectable once again."

"Yes? Can I help you?" It was the cleaning lady.

"Give me that vacuum and beat it, you bitch!"

She dutifully handed over the rusting machine and left. John opened the window and tossed the vacuum out, not a second 100 late. The vacuum hit home, a windshield, with a loud crack, and John watched as the careening vehicle smashed into a bridge abutment under the railway crossing. He went to the next door down the hall and kicked it in.

"Hi, honey, how was your day at work?" She gazed at him appealingly.

"Oh, okay, I guess; John grunted.

He's always grouchy after the office, she reflected.

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*"Complicity in what?"*

*"Ask the judge, big mouth." The cop gave him a slap in the face. "And don't say another word."*

Suggested Further Reading:  
Night Market Noodles by Peter Lamborn Wilson

Taken from the book Neutron Gun Reloaded: A Gerry Reith Reader,  
also check out Neutron Gun by Gerry Reith

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