

What I told the police the morning after

by Michael Parker

Adam was my scoutmaster. I mowed his lawn, especially while he was in Iraq. He built homes. Lost his job a year ago. I hadn't seen him since his wife's funeral. She was having a baby. It came early. She was bleeding. The baby was a dead boy. She died on the living room floor.

I went to say goodbye. I had just got home from work. He was moving. I mean, they were kicking him out of his house. His money was gone.

When he opened the door, he looked like a skeleton with skin. Eyes bulging, looked like he had been crying for years.

It was dark and cold. He had candles for light.

He was drinking. Empty liquor bottles were everywhere.

He hadn't packed anything. It was all his wife's stuff — the wall mirror, the curtains she made for the windows, family photos, and her favorite painting of Jesus Christ calming the sea. In the half-light, it was creepy: the disciples' scared faces, Jesus' arms stretched into the darkness that surrounded them, like a giant mouth of a beast was about to eat them alive. Adam saw me looking at it. He laughed:

“Miracles don't happen to the poor.”

He bawled, said they were tearing him away from the “spirit of his wife.” She was there, he believed.

No, he didn't talk of plans.

No, he didn't talk about death.

Yes, I knew he owned guns. He loved guns.

