

Take Cover We are at War

Well, okay, it turns out we weren't exactly at war, but it sure sounded that way. It was early one Sunday morning when gunshots start going off in our basement. We were all sound asleep. My Daddy was a detective for the City of Atlanta School and Police Departments. He met my dates with a Smith & Wesson .38 holstered on his hip. I grew up thinking that it was normal to have a 6'4" man wearing a gun everywhere we went. Maybe most people didn't, but I did.

Daddy had a call that had taken him out during the night, and I don't think he had returned until around four or five in the morning. We were all blissfully asleep when the first shot sounded around six a.m. I think that is what woke me up. I know I was awake by the next couple of blasts. I ran to the basement door calling Puddles, our dog. Thankfully, Puddles was upstairs and not in the range of the gun fire.

Daddy came running down the hall in his T-shirt, Jockey shorts, and a .38. Mama was behind him saying "What is that? I've got the shotgun." Mama grew up on a farm. She could handle any firearm you gave her. I believe I was thinking, "Why don't I have a gun?"

In his loudest voice, Puddles was saying "Let me at 'em. I'll take care of my family".

About the time Daddy hit the turn in the steps going to the basement, a volley of shots rang out. And the stench. OH Lord, what had been killed in the basement and how long ago had it died? Even Puddles looked back like "What me? I might roll around in dead stuff, but this is just too awful!"

Back in the summer, Mama canned and frozen a lot of vegetables. One of our favorite things was her homemade vegetable soup. It had tomatoes, corn, cabbage, butterbeans, and some other vegetables. Apparently, the butterbeans fermented, and they exploded. Yes, thirty-four mason jars of vegetable soup had assaulted my family that peaceful morning.