

As if my life wasn't bad enough! My grades are plummeting I am the #1 dork in the 9th grade so I should be smart right? WRONG! I think 9th grade is so hard I only try to look smart which is hard to do. Especially when you have a name like James Renolds and your big macho father is chief of police, so any way, back to now.

Today my teacher Mrs. Livingston passed out the longest and hardest test I have ever taken in my entire life. I'm almost through with my test when the phone rings my teacher picks it up, a pause, then she says "James it's for you" she had a saddened look on her face. I stopped what I was doing got up and picked up the phone it was mom.

"Honey" she began a long pause was taken before she spoke again. "today there was an issue at dad's work today....a....a..bomb" mom's voice shook. "A bomb was set off at your father's work and dad is...is gone." we both, by then had tears in our eyes. There was a large sniffle on the other end and then, "Hon, I'm coming to get you. Get your stuff and be ready ok stay strong." I hung up sat back in my seat as I tried to process I slowly started packing everyone sitting and watching in silence. My teacher tried to say something but I couldn't hear her, my whole world frozen. All I could hear were my own thoughts. my only good friend no brother no sister and it wasn't the same with mom my one and only father had just died because some jerk had set off a bomb out of his own selfish hate. All I could think was why? Who? When? Why would you want to kill a 14 year olds dad anyway? I wanted to know who it was but, if I wanted to get more information I would have to do what everyone else in the Austin Texas police department area does wait till the evening news cast covers it.

I felt like a few days passed but in true time only 25 minutes had passed before my mom got to my classroom door. She was trying to smile. We sat in silence on the car ride home. No actual speaking but it seemed we had become psychics my thoughts were answered by hers. On the ride home someone was being pulled over on the side of the road. At first I thought it was dad but I soon realized it was not officer Bernard Renolds, like I had hoped.

With what happened fresh on my mind I attempted to do some homework. It was too difficult so I took a seat on the couch and turned on the TV. Of course it was the afternoon news cast! So as soon as mom heard the words "today in the police department" she jumped on the couch in the seat right next to me. We both listened as the news reporter spoke "A bomb went off at the Austin Texas police department at 2:35 p.m. killing Deputy Jim Lewis and chief of police Bernard Renolds amd injuring many others. Bernard Renolds was pronounced dead at the time medical staff arrived and Deputy Jim Lewis passed while in hospital care. Others escaped with minor cuts, some still in the hospital. More information will be released to those poor family members as the police investigation continues." Mom turned off the TV. We were thinking the same thing. There are NO police! That's when I thought I need to do something. During dinner, which was only a frozen pizza because mom isn't in a mood to cook, I formulated a plan. I had to go to the scene of the crime. I figured Mrs. Livingston would understand if I stayed home so I got dressed the next morning and instead of going to school like mom thought I went to the former police office. I ducked the police tape and started searching through the rubble. All I found was a picture of an old suspect believed to be the bomber of Thorny Brook Elementary School. Wait, this could be a clue! I need to give this to police. I saw a S.W.A.T investigator and went up to him. "Hey sir I

think this may help it's an old bombing suspect." I said. "Thanks for your help kid. You really may be on to something but it's dangerous for you here. Remnants of the bomb could still explode. It's best if you just go home. I decided to go home besides it was 4:00 anyway so I would be getting out of school around this time anyway. When I got home I turned on the TV it was the news again apparently evidence gets to them fast because as soon as they started covering the bombing they said. "Today we have news that a ceremony will be held for those lost on the 35th." which is only a week "It is to our understanding that police have found evidence that Bryon Sanders is responsible for this incident and after intense investigation he will be facing life in prison. " Yes!" wait they didn't even mention my help oh well I guess SWAT people are too important anyway. Strangely, I still feel someone else is involved with this situation. So I went online after school and researched Bryon Sanders. Apparently he had a partner in his crimes, Rick Anderson. Actually I had a teacher named Mr. Anderson and he wouldn't tell the class his background and he never talked about his family if he even had one. He always did hate my dad I don't know why for sure but my dad did arrest a Ricky Anderson when I was still a baby. Ricky Anderson was released when I was six years old. My mom came in and I turned off the computer and she said "I'm going to call Grandma Agnes to see if she would come by to pick you up. It's just until I can find a good job to support us. You can understand that, can't you James?" She said that really sweet, like everything would be alright but I knew how this worked. I knew that everything wouldn't go as planned and I would be staying more than a little while so I decided to go snoop around at Mr. Anderson's home before it was too late.

Now for his address, I clicked on his online profile which was easy for me to get into since I've had a phone since I was 8 and I've figured out most of the secrets of the internet. As it turned out he lived close to the grocery store which wasn't too far from my house so I snuck out, got my bike, and rode over. "This should be it... 23452 Jenna Baker ST." I went up near some bushes to see what was going on. Apparently Mr. Anderson was on the phone. He was talking to someone in what sounded like a very secret conversation so I had to get some proof. I got out my phone and started recording his conversation. I heard he was saying "yeah the bomb totally worked but the kid wasn't in the building like we thought turns out it wasn't bring your child to work day. What do we do boss?" Mr. Anderson had turned on speaker phone. "Well we find where the little brat lives and kid nap him and his blabber mouth mamma we can't risk her ratting us out!" Oh no! I had to tell someone, but who? Mom would think I'm just upset about dad and the police wouldn't believe a kid. Especially with today's technology, he could have just edited the recording. I needed more proof I took pictures and made sure they were in a secure file. Someone was coming good thing I parked my bike across the street. I ducked behind the bush also good that I was wearing green. Once the person was gone I snuck away and got my bike to ride home.

I walked in the door knowing we were in danger I still showed mom the video. She believed me. She locked the house door and she called the police so she could play them the video. The police went to Mr. Anderson's house to investigate. Mr. Anderson was on skype for a while with a big man with black hair and a long thick beard. The police listened in and apparently they were planning to not only kid nap us but to kill us! They did not want to arrest Mr. Anderson right away because it might tip off the big boss. So instead they took us to a safe hotel and assigned us each three body guards. Overnight

we moved only some stuff so they didn't think we caught on we took the car so they would think we went to a friend's house or a will reading or something.

Turns out Mr. Anderson tried to break in and the police surrounded the house and arrested him for good this time. They traced his skype call and found out that the big boss was working at an old chocolate factory down the road from the grocery store they said they would arrest him as soon as they were sure he was the last man of his crew. They sent me in undercover as a spy my cover was I'm training to be a villain in his crew but really I was there to help the police to get in and arrest him at the proper time. When the boss had went into a room with an escape I decided to call in the police. As soon as the boss realized they were here he opened a very very secret escape hatch even I didn't know about. He was gone. The police said they could not help me any more so I had to investigate to find him myself the only time I could call them was once I found and cornered him. So after they left I turned on the boss's computer. He left it behind and it had information on the place he would go to escape the police. His next stop was the ghost hotel. Wait that's where my mom and I are staying! I have to find what room he is staying in! Since I was good with computers I hacked the hotel website and located his room number. He had already told me his real name was Joseph Garcia. I switched the room he booked to the one next to ours so I could help catch him for the police. That night I told mom my plan. She helped me sneak in the room with a baseball bat. Mom was pretending to just be taking a walk in the halls but really she was looking out for Joseph. Joseph was coming... She started to sing to signal me. I hid right around the corner from the door. As he came in, before he turned on the lights, I jumped on him! During his surprise I was able to overpower him long enough to knock him on the head with the baseball bat. Mom called the police and they came as soon as they heard about me capturing the big boss a.k.a. Joseph Garcia. They arrested him and he served a life sentence. After court we went home and got ready for dad's ceremony. After the sad reminder of his death, we went out for dinner at IHOP, his favorite place. We were still sad so we ordered dad's favorite, the blue raspberry pancake stack and shared it with my friend who had been at the ceremony. He was Deputy Jim Lewis' son. My time came to go back to school. It was hard to focus but after a while I realized dad was always with me no matter what happened. He is the one who gave me the courage to stand up to the bad guys. So it was over... As it turns out, the #1 Dork in 9<sup>th</sup> grade helped stop major crime ring and send those criminals to jail for a lifetime. My life isn't so bad after all.

(In loving memory of Jim Lewis)