

# Amos Branson-Part 4-Relapse

The ride back into town was balefully quiet. Each of us editing and reediting the scenes of the past few hours in our minds as tempered by the contrast of the "*it wasn't even loaded*" chortle. That chortle felt to each of us like a rock in our shoes; grinding painfully with each mile back to town.

Finally, you look at me as I'm driving, grim faced, and burst out in guffaw's of laughter at both our discomiture. "What a couple of 'Maroons!' We fell for that hook, line, and sinker!" Your laughter starts grating on me after 5 minutes of stops and loud galed restarts.

"What if it actually was loaded and he just chickened out of shooting us? I'm going back." I say this with grim determination on a face which, just a few minutes ago was grinning like a Cheshire Cats. "I can't let this go."

Plain and simple for me to say but what was really bugging me was that smell. I didn't relate this to you but that smell was, I was pretty sure, death; or remians of same.

"Something is really wrong back there and I aim to find out what."

The look on your face was one as though I had just shit my pants. "You can't be serious? Tell me you're just joking around, right?" I nod over to you, my face set in stone.

"Well, do what you want but I'm not going back there! Not in a million years; or even tonight! That guy is a whack job born to rouse the devil. Leave me out of this".

That said, I sigh. "No, you're probably right. But I am going to call the cops and ask them to do something like a welfare check. That stinch was one of dying, not an old claustrophobic house. I've smelled dead animals but this was different. The

same, only different, I guess. It had a sick-sweet odor to it and I have heard that human decay has that difference in odor from other animals.

“You’re right though, I’m not built to challenge a situation like this.”

That settled, we got into town, went to our hotel and I called the police which, in this case, was the county Sheriff. They told me they would check this out today or tonight as they were already aware of Amos. The last thing the deputy said was, “it was just a matter of time.”