

Intellectually, Bill recognized that sirens were blaring, and that red and blue lights were reflecting onto his face from the rearview mirror. But he didn't feel he was truly hearing or seeing any of this. His world in this moment felt eerily quiet, dark, still, surreal. Time seemed to have been slowed down to a barely existent crawl—yet also seemed very much like it was about to give out. You can't run away anymore, he thought as the car continued barreling forward at over 100 miles per hour. They've got you. Either surrender, or fight.

He glanced over at the gun lying on the passenger seat and made a quick mental calculation. No—these folks were just doing their job and didn't deserve to get shot. Also, he would've been hopelessly outnumbered. Also, he'd never fired a gun, nor received any training on how to do so, in his entire life. Also he'd forgotten to buy ammunition.

Bill thought back over the insane events of the past few days, and all the people who'd died, some needlessly and many of whom he would've preferred hadn't. Laura and Mike. Amy and Jake. Gary and Scott. Francisco. Juice. Irene. Matt. Debbie. And, most tragic of all (and the one for which Bill felt most directly responsible), Yvonne. At least he was comforted by the knowledge that he'd been able to save his children, ushering them both into an escape pod just a moment before all of this afternoon's lunacy had exploded.

As Bill swallowed hard, reeling from the inevitable flood of emotion, and narrowed his eyes in an effort to focus on the here and now, he realized there was no longer any roadway—or any land of any sort—showing through his windshield. Only blue sky. The car had just careened off the edge of a several-hundred-foot-high cliff.

“Fuck,” he muttered. But then he thought, maybe this is for the best. Then everything went black.