

HOME INVADERS

248

By James Collins

It was a lovely Saturday afternoon in October and my in-laws had come for a visit. My wife and her mother were in the kitchen and my father-in-law and I were having a drink in the family room when the doorbell rang. I rose, went to the front door and opened it to see two men standing on my front step. My house was on a hill 40 or 50 feet from the street and raised 20 feet in altitude. Both were on the steps. The one who was nearest to the doorbell looked startled when I answer the door and they said, "We're looking for the Johnston's. I understand they live right around here in this neighborhood. Maybe you could give me directions as to how to get to their house." This was delivered with a drunken slur. It caused all the hairs on the back of my neck to rise. I knew this man was pretending to be drunk but was not.

"There is nobody with that name in this neighborhood and I have been here for many years. You're in the totally wrong neighborhood. I recommend you go look someplace else."

He backed off a little bit with a simulated stagger and started down the slight hill. I closed the door but watched them through the narrow windows on either side of the main frame. They both got into the car and drove diagonally across the intersection from my house to a ranch. This was the house of my friend John Rose and his wife Mary Ellen. I immediately rushed to my safe area withdrew an automatic pistol and two full clips. I slammed one into the butt of the gun and put the other clip in my pocket. I then placed the automatic behind me in my belt. My father-in-law, a retired New York police officer, heard the noise of the automatic being loaded and immediately knew what I was doing. He came running out to the foyer and said, "Jim, what the hell is going on?"

"Charlie, these two guys, making like they are drunk, came up to my front door asking directions. They were both startled to see a 200-pound guy over six feet tall answering the door. I think they were expecting a very slight woman. Both of them were right at the doorway and you don't need two people to get directions."

"But they're gone. Why do you need the gun?"

"I told them to get out of the neighborhood as there was nobody with that name anywhere around here. Instead, they got into a car and drove over to the Rose's house across the street. Mary Ellen may be there alone with the kids and I'm not sure if John has come home from work yet. If she answers the door alone, I'm not sure what those two guys are likely to do. I'm going over there to back her up. Watch me from here and if anything happens called police immediately."

I walked out my front door down the slight hill and across to the Rose's house. I was just in time to see the two suspicious characters again up on the steps immediately at the door. I came up behind them and below them and they never saw me arrive. Just then, the door opened and John Rose, another 6-foot 200-pound Irishman, seem to unnerve them. John was looking at them suspiciously and they gave him the same spiel they gave me. Then it was my turn to unnerve them. As I spoke they both spun around, but obviously, they were not drunk.

“John, these two strangers were just over at my house asking the same directions for a family who doesn't live anywhere around here. I told them that and I told them to leave the neighborhood. They don't belong here. They're feigning being drunk. They're acting together and I think they're up to no good. I've told them to leave and I've written down their license plate. My father-in-law Charlie, the ex-cop, is watching from my house and if they don't leave peacefully, the cops will be here in less than five minutes.”

“Mister, we're sorry. We're late and we have to be at the Johnstons in ten minutes. We're just looking for directions.”

“You're two suspicious individuals. You're not wanted here. Now get the hell out of here right now! V ”

They both got into their car, backed out of the driveway, and took off at high speed.

“Jim, weren't you taking a chance taking those two guys on by yourself?”

“John, I was concerned Mary Ellen was home alone and they would force themselves in through the door and overpower her. If you were here I figured an Irishman from Southie like you and an Irishman like me from Highbridge could handle those two characters with no trouble.”

“What if they were armed?”

I reached behind me and pulled out the automatic, which I held pointing up in the air.

“An armed American citizen is always at peace in his own home. A National Guard major like you should understand that.”

He laughed, patted me on the back and invited me in for a cup of coffee. I waved to my father-in-law and went in for my coffee.

THE END