

Bones

<http://nogoodsonofabitch.com>

## BONES' PET CONTROL

Hello, my name is Bones. I'm the founder and CEO of Bones' Pet Control, the country's foremost, and only, professional pet extermination service. "*The Bark Stops Here.*" Witty, no? I'm quite proud of that little tagline. Not that I have much need for a recognizable marketing blurb. I can't exactly go around with my logo emblazoned upon a company truck. You see, in my line of work, I rely on my *not* being recognized. Or even noticed. *Witnessed*, to be accurate.

But every entrepreneur has a touch of an ego, and he carries the tools of his trade like a badge of honor. Some sport a wallet full of business cards. Others wear an ever-vibrating Blackberry. And some of us carry a gun. We're all entrepreneurs, though. I know I am. Oh, I have no misgivings about what most folks might label me. Creep, maybe? Killer? Sadist? Murderer, even? But I'm an entrepreneur. I found a niche, a need, and I satisfied it. What the general public might think of me concerns me not. It's my clients that I care about, and I'm proud to boast a 100% satisfaction rate.

Well...

Well, I guess that perfect score remaining perfect very much depends upon how I handle this particular situation in which I now find myself. This, um, jam, if you'll pardon the pun.

But I'm getting ahead of myself, aren't I?

I suppose I should probably first provide a little backstory, a brief history of the company's origins, before jumping right into the here and now. I believe it would be in my favor to do so. I understand that it might be hard for someone to sympathize right at the get-go with a central

character who kills the beloved dogs, cats, rabbits, hamsters, of moms and dads, husbands and wives, sons and daughters, for profit.

The story starts as all the really meaty ones do - I was drunk...

I was drunk as all hell on a Saturday night. Whiskey-pissed and floored out of my gourd on some potent pot, courtesy of my inner-city buddy... Paul. Yeah, we'll call him Paul. These were in the early days, mind you. Before I'd found my calling. Before the biz. Once the work started flowing, the booze stopped. I'm a business man, and a good business man runs his business on a clear head. Especially in the field I'm in.

So, I stumbled into my low-rent, one bedroom apartment with the leaky faucet and all-day-all-night police siren soundtrack. The fridge was empty, save a bottle of squeezable ketchup and a pizza-less pizza box. The icebox - nothing but a freezer-burned brick of old ground beef. The cupboard held a half-tube of months-old Ritz, and as stoned and hungry as I was, pillow-soft stale crackers weren't going to cut it, and so I collapsed down on the skeletal thrift store bed and closed my eyes. Soon, the spinning slowed, and sleep made its slow crawl from my brain to my eyes, aiding my desperate attempts to end another pathetic day. And then...

*WOOF! WOOF! WOOF! WOOF! WOOF! WOOF! WOOF! WOOF! WOOF! WOOF!*  
*WOOF! WOOF! WOOF! WOOF! WOOF! WOOF! WOOF! WOOF! WOOF! WOOF!*  
*WOOF! WOOF! WOOF! WOOF! WOOF! WOOF! WOOF! WOOF! WOOF! WOOF!*

That dog. That evil dog. That horrid hound that barked throughout the night and into the morning, barking me to sleep and barking me awake. Barking through my drunken dreams, barking through my morning piss, my breakfast, my late night munchies, my mornings, my nights, my mornings, my nights, my mornings, my nights...

I don't remember the rest so well. I was really drunk and high, you understand. But I sat up in bed, eyed the baseball bat in the corner of the room - the one to protect me from my neighbors -

eyed the window that looked out over the woods behind the apartment where that dog lived and barked. That window where the bark came funneling through, a mind-splitting cone.

*woooOOF!!!!*

I got up out of bed. Picked up that bat, walked out the door and turned towards the direction of that barking.

I woke up the next morning to silence. Glorious silence. Of course, in my poor souls' apartment, my suicide shack, silence didn't exactly mean "the nonexistence of sound." It meant, "the non-existence of that *fucking* barking." Excuse my language. There were still the sirens and car horns, the clack clack clacking of the dying A/C and the scream-athon of the fat folk who ate and ate and fought on the other side of my kitchen wall. The white noise. But, oh it was silent, because for the first morning in my three years in that miserable apartment, I woke up on my own. And not by the dog alarm.

Because the dog was dead. Dead and buried. I don't remember killing it so well, which is probably a good thing, as I imagine it was quite brutal. Considering it was with a bat and all. But I remember burying it. Well, the digging anyway. I remember being down on my knees scooping up forest dirt and weeds with my hands and thinking about how much smaller they seem - dogs, I mean - when they're no longer propped up on all fours, barking so ridiculously. I had to make the hole *bigger* to fit the *bat*, believe it or not. A creature that could produce so much violent noise could fit in a hole that, lengthwise, couldn't hold a bat. This I remember, and it held a certain importance to me, although I'm afraid I can't remember why. I was drunk and stoned, understand. It was before the biz.

But it was, obviously, the beginnings of the biz. For, as I lay in bed on the gloriously silent Sunday morning, a strange understanding began to cook within my noodle. I felt absolutely no guilt for what I'd done. It wasn't denial. Oh, I was well aware of the brutal crime I had

committed. I had killed, or rather, *put down*, a dog - with a wooden baseball bat - for the sole reason that its natural tendency to make noise had kept me from sleep. Oh yes, I had killed it. And not in a non-committal, anonymous kind of way, like a gunshot. No, I used a bat. And I felt no guilt about it. In fact, I felt the opposite. I felt *peace*.

Problem, meet solution.

It occurred to me, as I lay there in bed, hungover but happy, that I was not the only person who had suffered from this particular ailment. How many others out there in the world have had their dreams interrupted by a barking dog with owners too stupid or selfish to take that thing inside and spare the neighbors its tortuous howls? How many husbands started their morning by stepping in a pile of cat shit on the way to the bathroom solely because their self-involved wife refused to put her 13 year old cataracted, wheeze-lunged, loose-assholed cat out of its misery? How many parents had to pry a hamster carcass from one of those colorful tubes with a butter knife while their daughter wailed in despair over the loss of an animal she loved and wasn't smart enough to understand that it didn't love her back? How many? Thousands? Millions? It had to be millions. For every disciplined, obedient canine that would fetch its master his slippers, there were another dozen lunatic lassies running back and forth behind a chain link fence, barking at every single car to drive by, absolutely oblivious to the headaches they were causing to a species more evolved than themselves.

There were millions of people out there suffering as I had suffered. Millions of people with a serious problem, and at the same time, a solution so close. So close, and so simple. But the solution was blocked by one major impediment - conscience. They couldn't resolve their misery by solving their problem because... well... I don't know because. The same middle-aged man who will chase a cockroach into the corner of the bathroom, slapping at it with a rolled-up *Better Living* magazine or the bottom of a shoe, crushing its exoskeleton, splattering its innards against the off-white molding, wouldn't dare do the same to a Shitzu.

Why? Because the Shitzu had more of a soul than that roach did?





No, it was because I was on a mission. I was a start-up business man out on the very first job of what would possibly become a very lucrative career. I was about to make my first professional kill. And for the first time in my whole life, I felt good. I felt energized. I felt... hopeful.

I walked down the dark shady streets, kicking up rainwater with my boots, cautiously peering about for potential witnesses. For two miles or so. I was fortunate that no one had decided to take an early morning rainy stroll, for a guy like myself would not go unnoticed in a place like this.

*woof woof woof WOOF WOOF WOOF*

The barking grew louder as I neared my target. I imagined what kind of dog I would find. Not a little thing like the wily bitch I'd buried just a week before, no doubt. This bark was the loud, violent kind, each outburst connected to the next by a low guttural growl. I hope it was chained up, for it had to be a rottweiler or a doberman or a...

Pitbull.

It was a pitbull. And it wasn't chained, but rather *tied* to a street lamp. One end of the heavy rope was knotted around its chain collar and the other end tied to the pole a good three or so feet behind it. I was grateful. It was a mean looking bastard. As thick as that rope was, it wouldn't stand a chance of restraining that dog if it really wanted to escape.

As I drew near, leaving 10 feet between us, it leered up at me. For a moment it was silent. And then it began its barking again. More ferocious this time, and directed right at me, furious that this stranger would have the gall to enter its territory. It was pissed, and it wanted me to know it.

Without taking my gaze from it, unfazed by its unholy battle cries, I pulled the gun from my breast pocket. I lifted my arm and pointed the pistol at the beast. It felt good - a welcome change to feel like the one in charge for once. Whether or not the pitbull knew it mattered not. I knew it.

I took a couple steps closer.

Only 8 feet between me and my mark.

A couple more.

6 feet.

4 feet.

2 feet.

At this point, the dog was enraged. Its natural instinct was to kill, and its prey stood right before it, mere feet from it. But it was constrained. And this angered the animal tremendously. Its two forelegs waved madly in the air as it lunged for me, straining the rope but not snapping it. I straightened my arm so that the gun was just inches from its face, and when the dog made one of its desperate leaps at me, I watched as snot from its nose splattered onto the barrel of the gun. I stood there for a moment, pointing my tool of destruction at the beast, and I looked at it. It had no idea how close it was to death. It knew nothing. I could see this in its eyes. Those black bulbs revealed nothing. Were windows to nothing. Just two circles atop a snout that was programmed to do two things - bark and eat. A human, in this situation, would be crawling at my feet, crying, begging for my mercy. But this meaningless creature just barked, and tried over and over and over to break its bonds so it could eat me.

*WOOF WOOF WOOF WOOF WOOF WOOF WOOF WOOF WOOF WOOF*

I pulled the trigger and its head exploded over the rain-soaked sidewalk.

Now, depending on your sense of humor, the next part of the story might come across as rather comical. With the later success of my practice, I'm confident enough that I can laugh at my early missteps.

See, with all my preparations for the kill, I had never stopped to consider the aftermath. I was just about to leave a very gruesome crime scene - one that contained an important piece of evidence. The spent bullet. The next person to stumble upon this sight would need not be a forensics expert to determine that this dog did not die of natural causes. What a fool I was! What a novice!

With the loud crack of the gunshot still ringing in my ears, the rain matting my hair to my forehead, I peered down at the body and understood that it would have to disappear. And making this happen was going to be unpleasant.

So I picked up the carcass. Removing it from the rope attached to its collar wasn't difficult, considering that its head was mostly gone. And I carried the 80 pound mass of blood and fur the full two miles back to the car. Oh, what a wreck I must have looked like when I finally had the corpse stuffed safely in the trunk! I was the psychopathic butcher from every B-movie slasher film. I was exhausted and worn, and still, the dog would need to be buried. I decided to dispose of it in the same piece of woods where I'd buried the other one. It took hours and wasn't nearly as easy as it was the last time when I was so wasted.

By the time the job was complete I was soaked, caked in blood and mud, and I was one tired cowboy! I fell asleep that night cursing myself for my poor performance, and vowed to never again allow my identity to be so easily pegged. There would be no more obvious crime scenes, no more evidence, no more bullets. From here on out, my kills would have to be creative.

And creative they were. Each forthcoming kill appeared less an actual kill than the one before. Like any other professional journeyman, I honed my skills through on-the-job training. With Paul as my de-facto agent, directing his clients to me when they would complain in between bong tokes of this damn cat or that damn dog and he'd reply, "Well, I know this guy..." , it wasn't

long before business was booming. Even I was surprised by the number of people out there harboring a bitter hatred of another's pet.

And like I said, each one of these creatures would need to be removed *creatively*...

A shrill middle-aged man could no longer stand the constant yapping of his live-in mother's Chihuahua. I spiked its doggie bowl with antifreeze. Price tag: \$850.

A young mother's daughter was bitten by the next door neighbor's collie. The daughter received a rabies shot. The collie received a shot of bleach. Price tag: \$1000.

A timid mid-twenties male hadn't realized his coffee and news ritual would be disturbed each morning by his recently moved-in girlfriend's canary. I guess I could have just opened the cage door and allowed it to fly away and have a chance at survival. But the contract called for a kill, and so the girlfriend's pet bird shortly thereafter had an unpleasant rendezvous with her pet cat. Price tag: \$700.

A couple had a rebellious teenage son with a pet snake, and it upset them to open the freezer door every day and be greeted by the snake's lunch - a frozen rat in a plastic bag. Apparently they lacked the authority to tell the kid to quit it with the damn rats, and so they came to me. I soaked one of the frozen rats in lighter fluid, and the snake's next meal was its last. Price tag: \$650.

A divorced father couldn't stand cleaning up after his daughter's pet bunny - a gift from her mother. This pathetic man was projecting his bitterness toward his ex-wife on his poor child's rabbit, and he wanted me to do his dirty work. Frankly, I felt that this sicko deserved to be exterminated before the bunny did, but as I've said, I'm not a murderer. I don't kill creatures with

souls, as weak as some of those souls may be. And it's not my business to make judgments. I did what he asked. But I charged him double. Price tag: \$600.

A troubled teen had an alcoholic, and if my hunch is correct, sexually abusive, father. This beast of a man treated his daughter like a serf and his pet cat like a queen. I killed it with the bottle of Vodka the old man had passed out next to. Price tag: On the house.

I'll be honest with you. After finishing the job with the cat, as I stood over the drunk, and likely perverted, old sadist snoring on the couch, I was visited by some very undesired childhood memories. Holding that half-empty bottle of Vodka by its neck, standing over that stinking sicko, the temptation to take him out in the same manner I did his cat - to smash his head in and send him to hell with all the other molesters and rapists and murderers... well, the temptation was strong, I tell you. But I resisted. I had to remind myself the difference between killing an animal and killing a man. Killing an animal wouldn't lead to any repercussions in the afterlife. How could it? We slaughter animals by the thousands every day, and we don't call it murder. We call it making dinner. But killing a man is different, right? Now matter how similar the actual action of killing this cat might be to killing its owner, the outcome is much different. Because of the soul involved. Again, no matter how weak it may be.

But it was hard to resist. With that bottle in my hand, the adrenaline from killing the cat still rushing through my veins, the memories of my little body cowering in the corner... It was hard. But I resisted. I'm a killer, but I'm not a murderer.

It was important that I recognized the difference.

...

As the months passed and my talent for creative pet extermination grew, so did my client numbers. And the money poured in. I was soon able to move out of my depressing shithole of an

apartment and into a new one in the good part of town. I killed another dozen or so dogs, an equal amount of cats, a couple of birds, rabbits, snakes, gerbils, an iguana, and soon I was driving a shiny new BMW. Now that I was a successful businessman with a profitable company and steady income (all of it tax-free - another benefit of my particular occupation), I started spending time at the higher-end establishments. Sure, canoodling with the fat-walletted, high-falutin muckey mucks wasn't exactly my preferred method of relaxation, but it was great for business. The bitterness of the rich and comfortable cannot be overstated, and their willingness to throw ridiculous amounts of money at their problems became a goldmine for me.

I even met a woman. A pretty blond thing with a delightful personality. She thought I was a stock trader. I felt bad lying to her, but what can I say? I'm not the first person in the world who's dishonest about his profession. And there are worse sins than lying, aren't there?

New house, new car, new girlfriend, profitable business. I had become a self-made man, a successful entrepreneur. Life was good. And my ability to sneak into people's homes and kill their pets, over and over again, never once arousing the suspicions of the authorities was a skill I was extremely proud of. It's a sad fact of reality, though, that all good streaks must eventually end. And my situation, sadly, is no exception. Which leads us to the here and now, where I find myself in a rather unfortunate predicament.

Trapped, bleeding, and forced to make a difficult decision.

It all started simple enough. Just another day at the office, if you will. A recently divorced man contacted me with a job offer. Bitter and scarred from a particularly nasty settlement, this guy was looking for a little payback. His ex-wife not only got the house, but she got the dog, too. He knew there was nothing he could do about the house, but if he couldn't have the dog, than no one could. The kill needed to occur on a particular day, as it was the only time he could be certain she would be away from the house. It just so happened that I had a date planned with the beautiful blond on the same night. But the job was run-of-the-mill - slip into backyard, kill dog, slip out - and I was efficient enough to do the deed and still have time for a quick shower before

dinner. I took the job. It was a rookie mistake, and I should have known better than to plan a project with a tight deadline. Over-confidence can lead to bad decision-making, can it not?

So the afternoon came and I traveled to the woman's house and quickly scouted the surroundings. The house was shaded by trees. Good. The backyard was covered by a privacy fence. Even better. In my left pocket was a bottle of prescription pills - today's kill method - and in my right pocket was the gun. The one that Paul had given me so many months ago. The one I'd used for my first professional, pathetic, kill. Although I pledged to never use it on a job, I still carried it with me every time as a safety net. A plan B, should the situation become desperate.

I could hear movement behind the fence. The dog. My objective was to hop the fence and deposit the pills in the dog bowl that would be outside on the back porch, and get out. Normally I would be patient and wait until I could no longer hear the dog before doing so, when I could safely assume it had fallen asleep or headed inside through one of those doggie doors. It was way too risky to enter the area with the dog present and open myself up to, at best, a barking dog, and at worst, a vicious territorial dog. But I was short on time, and it was much too early in my relationship with the blond to be late for dates, and so in my haste I made a disastrous choice. I decided that I'd hop the fence, throwing caution to the wind, and hope that the dog (what kind of dog was it? Had I even asked? Sloppy!) was a peaceful one.

And so I did just that. I scaled the fence and rolled over the top and left my fate up to chance.

Bad idea.

No sooner had I landed in a patch of dirt on the other side of the fence than I saw a most unwelcome sight. A large dog - a pit bull - charging at me full speed, teeth bared. It lunged. I instinctively raised my hands to protect my neck, and I toppled over onto my back as the pit bull slammed into me. I knew I was a goner. With me horizontal and the dog on top of me, I'd have no chance for escape. It would rip my lungs right out of my throat and leave my corpse to be discovered by the wife, who'd wonder who in the hell is this dead idiot robbing her house in the middle of the day.

But a strange thing happened. Instead of tearing me to shreds, the pit bull leapt off my chest and skittered backwards three or four steps. It then began shaking its head back and forth, gasping out a grotesque choking sound. And then I noticed the piercing pain coming from my left hand. I held it up to my face to make the gruesome discovery that my index and middle finger were gone. And in their place was a fountain of flowing blood.

*That fucking dog has just bitten off two of my fingers!!!*

*ack ack ack ack ack ack ack ack ack ack ack ack ack ack ack ack ack ack ack*  
*ack*

*And based on the sound its making, I do believe he is choking on them!*

Gasping and hacking as my two fingers prevented any airflow into or out of its lungs, the dog had quickly transitioned from attack mode to panic mode. And in its vulnerable state, it needed to escape to a spot where it felt safe. So it turned and fled. Across the yard. Over the porch. And through the large, pit bull-sized doggie door into the house.

Oh, this was bad. This was *real* bad.

I was in severe pain and bleeding. And by just standing here, my blood dripping onto the ground, I was making this place a crime scene. Worse, the dog now possessed two very incriminating pieces of evidence in its throat. I had not only left fingerprints, but the actual fingers attached to them!

I needed to do something. I needed to get that dog! This was a desperate situation! With my functional hand, I grabbed the gun from my pocket. If I had to use it, I would! If I had to shoot the dog in its house, I would! As long as I could remove the body from the premises, I'd have a chance of getting out of this.

The pain in my hand and the loss of blood and the stress of the situation made my already sloppy decision-making even sloppier. I charged towards the house. There would be no time for picking locks, and I had no strength for kicking down doors. I would have to get inside the same way the dog did - through the doggie door.

I practically dove through it. With my gun hand leading the way, pushing the black rubber flap up and into the interior of the house, I yanked myself into the pit bull-sized door...

Pit bulls are big dogs. And they require big doggie doors. Pit bulls are, however, still smaller in girth than humans. And, thus, so are their doggie doors.

Had I been clearer in thought, I might have considered this little piece of common logic prior to my diving right in, head first. But I didn't.

And now, here I am.

Stuck.

Half way in the house. Half way outside.

My fat belly lodged in the doorway, allowing me no way of going in any further, and no way of going back out. My functional hand clutching the gun inside the house. My mutilated hand on the outside. Bleeding all over the concrete.

And the dog? Well, it's dead. Lying over there on the kitchen floor, choked to death on my fingers.

Mission accomplished, Bones. Hardy har har.

I would pat myself on the back for a job well done if I could reach my back! This whole thing might be funny - the fact that I actually killed the dog with my bare hands, literally - if I weren't in such an unfortunate clusterfuck of a situation!

And that sound coming from the front door. The sound of a key unlocking a dead bolt from the outside could mean only one thing - that the lady has come home. And in a few seconds she'll open the door, walk into her home, and see her dog lying dead in the kitchen. And the man stuck in the doggie door. The man with the gun in his hand.

The man who now has to make a decision.

Does he just lie here and accept his fate? Accept that the cops will arrive, and upon looking into his history, discover that he is responsible for the contract killing of the beloved pets of countless husbands and wives, moms and dads, children? Or does he raise the gun up towards the poor woman who has no idea how bad her day is about to become, and pull the trigger?

Now is the time for me to make a decision. One life-changing, *afterlife*-changing, decision. It's time to choose a path. Do I pull the trigger and end an innocent person's life and allow myself one last chance for my own? Or do I restrain, and end my life?

I've killed more animals than I can remember. I've never felt a moment of guilt about it. Because they have no souls.

Right?

Right?

Or is it me? Am I the one with no soul?

And if so, doesn't that make *me* the animal?

I have rationalized my life by differentiating between killing and murder. Was I right? Or, when it all comes down to it, are they really the same thing? The taking of another life.

And if they are really the same, and all along I've been wrong... well...

Well...

What's one more, right?

Bones

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