

# Confession

By

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# *Chapter 1*

It was a peaceful and clear night with a beautiful full Moon in Phoenix, Arizona. It was July 1995. But it was not so peaceful for Sam Woods. Tonight Sam tossed and turned in a puddle of sweat in his bedsheets. He had a nightmare. This nightmare that had been haunting him for almost thirty years now.

It's Sam's nightmare.

The field crickets sang in the night in some woods located in the Deep South. It was a cool evening and felt like autumn weather.

Twigs and small branches cracked beneath Sam's shoes while he prowled between numerous tall pine trees.

The full Moon provided light for him to navigate without bumping into a tree, but he still used a flashlight.

Sam looked determined while he illuminated the trees in search of something. It was something he had been searching for over thirty years.

His flashlight finally found the object of his hunt. I

t was a beautiful young woman with shoulder-length blonde hair.

She was tied to the trunk of a pine tree.

She was naked and dead. Hundreds of flies buzzed around her rotting and stinking flesh.

Sam's eyes welled up while he slowly walked closer to her keeping her body illuminated with his flashlight.

"I'm so sorry!" he told the dead girl while stared at her closed eyes. He reached out and touched her cold cheek. The girl's eyes suddenly opened and gave Sam a

blank zombie stare. He jumped back startled almost tripping over a small tree branch in the dirt.

"Please forgive me!" Sam cried out with extreme guilt while he inched closer to the girl.

She gave Sam a loving smile.

He noticed that some blunt object had smashed in all of her front teeth.

She gave Sam a blank, lifeless stare.

She screamed a blood-curdling scream that echoed in the woods.

Sam jumped back, scared to death.

The woods were an eerie quiet.

She stared back at Sam. There were a few seconds of just a blank stare. Her eyes filled with tears. "Why didn't you catch him? It hurt so much. I can't rest until you catch him! You owe me!" the girl cried out then she sobbed.

She immediately stopped sobbing and stared at Sam with a zombie stare. Her head dropped down, and she remained motionless.

Her skin slowly dissolved along with all of her organs. She was nothing but a skeleton tied to the trunk of that tree.

Sam opened his mouth to speak.

Back to reality in Sam's bedroom, he bolted up in a panic from his bed. "I'm so sorry!" he screamed while beads of sweat poured down his face. He frantically looked around his room for the dead girl, but she was not in sight. He wanted to cry, knowing he had another nightmare.

He held back his tears while he glanced over at the bare spot where his wife once slept. He remembered those sweet days when he was married to Vicky. But that stopped eight years ago when she divorced him after twenty-eight years of marriage. His drinking and nightmares were intolerable, and she could not take it any longer.

He sat up on the edge of his bed and ran a hand through his salt and pepper hair. He silently prayed these nightmares would cease forever.

He reached over at the bedside table and grabbed an empty quarter bottle of Jack Daniels whiskey. As soon as the bottle was opened, he gulped down the booze then dropped the bottle to the floor.

Sam stood up and staggered to his bathroom at the other end of his bedroom.

When he was four feet from the bathroom door, his right foot rolled on another empty whiskey bottle on the floor. He started to tumble to the floor but quickly grabbed the dresser. He did not fall, but the dresser shook, knocking down a framed picture to the floor.

This picture was of his son Charles Woods, a Major in the U.S. Marine Corps Major, with wife Beth and eight-year-old daughter, Mindy. Sam was proud of Charles and his accomplishments in the Marine Corp.

He picked the picture off the floor and set it back on the top of the dresser.

He staggered into the bathroom.

After he shaved and took a hot shower, Sam ate his typical breakfast of Cocoa Krispies and coffee alone in his kitchen.

After he cleaned up his dishes, Sam got dressed his black suit, white shirt with a red tie.

The drive this morning through the streets of Phoenix was the drive Sam had dreamt about for years.

Sam entered the FBI building where he worked for the past twenty-eight years.

He walked through a maze of cubicles that was a beehive of activity with agents keeping America safe from criminals.

"Good morning, Sam. Are you happy this day finally arrived?" an FBI agent called out from his cubicle the second he spotted Sam.

"Yeah. It's hard to believe it's finally here," Sam replied while he walked past the agent.

Sam entered his cubicle and stared at it for a few seconds. On his one cubicle wall hung a few pictures of Sam, George Williams, and Peter Bronson during their annual fishing trips to northern California and some old pictures of a younger Sam and Charles.

Sam grabbed his coffee cup off his desk and left his cubicle.

He came back five minutes later and sat down. He kicked his shoes up on his desk and sipped his morning cup of Java.

Peter Bronson walked up to the entrance to Sam's cubicle. Peter was Sam's chief, but Sam remembered the day Peter first joined the agency back in the early 1970s.

"Sam, they're ready for you."

Sam got up with his coffee cup in hand and walked out of his cubicle with Peter.

He followed Peter through the maze of cubicles, and Sam rolled his eyes when he noticed the area was void of his fellow agents.

They walked by the coffee pot table where Sam quickly filled his cup.

They headed on down the hallway.

The conference room was packed with fifty agents.

On the one end of the room hung a "Happy Retirement Sam Woods" banner on the wall above a table. On the table was a cake decorated with a fishing boat in the water with "Good Luck Sam" above it.

At one end of the table stood, Harry Charles and Nick Wilson, who were the top dogs of the office.

"Is he on his way?" Harry asked Nick.

"I heard Peter is rounding him up."

Sam entered the room with Peter.

Everybody stood up and clapped to honor Sam.

Sam motioned hello at everybody with his coffee cup while he walked up to the table. He set his cup down by the cake and shook hands with Harry and Nick.

Nick motioned for everybody to sit down and be quiet. They obeyed.

"Thank you all for attending this special occasion, the retirement of one of the best agents the bureau has had the pleasure of paying. Mister Sam Woods," Nick addressed the crowd.

"And I would like to say that America has been a safer place with Sam out there putting criminals behind bars," Harry added.

Nick looked over at Sam. "And now if Sam would like to say a few words."

Sam reached down and picked up his coffee cup and took a sip and paused for a few seconds.

"I can't believe I started with the bureau forty years ago. It was a great ride. It was an interesting ride," he said, then took another sip of coffee and paused for a few seconds.

"Harry said that America was safer with me putting criminals behind bars." He took another sip of coffee and paused for a few seconds.

"That's true, but there was one criminal I couldn't place behind bars." Sam took another sip of coffee and paused for a few seconds.

"I have regrets over my failure with not catching this sicko," Sam finished then took a long drink of coffee and paused for a few seconds.

In the back of the conference room, Trevor rolled his eyes and leaned over to Wilfred. "I'm going to puke if I hear that nineteen sixties October Slayer sob story again," Trevor whispered.

"Tell me about it! That's all I heard during my first week here at the bureau. I never caught the killer, whine whine whine," Wilfred whispered back.

"I know. Sometimes killers getaway. Get over it," Trevor whispered back.

Wilfred nodded in agreement along with everybody around them who heard their whispering.

Sam looked ashamed while he remembered his past failure. "I promised someone I would solve that case. I broke that promise, and that frustrated me so much that it cost me a divorce." Sam looked remorseful. "And then Bo Smithson from the Atlanta took over the case," Sam added and looked pissed. "Why they stuck the dumbest agent in the history of the bureau on that case, I'll never know."

Everybody in the room was sick of hearing his whiny story again but was glad it would be for the last time.

"Thank you, Sam, now, if I could get someone to cut the cake, we can proceed," Nick asked the audience.

Laurie, an administrative assistant, walked up to the table from the other wall. "I'll cut it," she volunteered with a smile.

An hour later, and Sam's party was over. Sam was glad, as he hated being the center of attention. But he had to play the game since everybody who retired was thrown a party.

Sam poured another cup of coffee at the coffee table.

He walked back to his cubicle where Laurie previously placed a cardboard box on his desk.

He looked around to make sure eyes were not watching him. He leaned down and opened up a bottom desk drawer. He discreetly removed five folders that were rubber-banded together. They were copies of the case files on the five girls killed by the October Slayer. He quickly dropped the five folders into his box.

George Williamson entered Sam's cubicle and startled him.

"George, you scared me," said Sam while he glanced back at the box, making sure the file folders were safely tucked away.

"Sorry about that, my friend," George said while he watched Sam remove all the pictures off his cubicle wall. "Sorry I missed your retirement party. I was out checking a lead on a bank robbery case."

"I understand. So, when do you plan on retiring?" Sam replied while he dropped his pictures into his box.

"Hopefully, in two years. My bother-in-law said he could get me a job with security at Warner Brothers," George replied with a gleam in his eyes thinking about hanging around with famous movie stars.

"Warner Brothers? That sounds like a sweet gig."

"Oh, it is. What are your plans with retirement? Do you plan on getting another job?"

"I'm finished with working, so I plan to relax and fish," Sam replied with a smile.

"Good. Maybe if you finally let go of that old case, those nightmares will cease."

"I had another one last night."

"You need to find a sweet woman in Florida to take care of you in your golden years," George added with hopeful eyes.

Sam glanced down at his bare ring finger, thinking about Vicky. "That would be nice."

"Hey George, you have a call about that bank robbery," another FBI agent yelled out across the cubicles.

"I'll be there in a second," George yelled back.

"Well Sam, keep in touch, and maybe we can do some fishing out in the Atlantic this time."

"I would like that very much," Sam replied while they shook hands.

George rushed out of Sam's cubicle.

Peter entered Sam's cubicle.

"I guess this is it, Sam."

"Yep, the final day," Sam replied while he glanced around his cubicle.

"Listen, I'm working on a transfer to the Tampa office. If that happens, I'll let you know, and we can get together for some more fishing."

"That would be grand."

Peter stuck out his hand, and Sam shook it. "I'll be in touch soon."

Sam picked up his box and walked out of his cubicle for the last time.

Two months later, Sam packed up his house in Phoenix for his move to Florida to finish off his golden years.

Outside Sam's house, he was being stalked.

Billy Stein was stalking Sam and Billy was a bully of a man with a temper to match. He sat inside his brand new 1995 Chevy Impala, with Mississippi plates, a few houses down from Sam's house.

He watched while Sam chatted with the Allied moving men outside their van backed in Sam's driveway.

"It's about fucking time," Billy mumbled to himself, as he was relieved Sam finally retired from the FBI.

He waited and sipped on his third bottle of Budweiser while he eyed Sam's house. He lit up a Marlboro cigarette. He smoked and drank beer while he watched the moving men load Sam's furniture into the moving van.

Two hours later, the men closed and locked the rear doors of the Allied trailer.

They got inside the truck cab, started it up, and drove off down the street.

Billy started up his Impala and drove off after the moving van.

Then for some bizarre reason, Billy followed the moving van to Florida.

He drove back to Mississippi, as soon as he got  
Sam's new address in Daytona Beach.

## *Chapter 2*

Ten years had passed.

It was a lovely chilly morning in February across the southeast.

Allan Stein was Billy Stein's brother. Allan had gray hair, with a huge pot belly caused by years of bad diet, being lazy, smoking, and heavy drinking.

Allan lived in St. Cloud, Florida. He was a retired Army Lieutenant Colonel and spent his entire career with the Army Criminal Investigative Command (known as CID) up in Fort Gillem at Forest Park south of Atlanta. He retired from the Army twenty years ago after a successful thirty-year career, where he was one of their most respected CID Agents.

Allan picked St. Cloud for his retirement home since his daughter Becky Adams lived in nearby Kissimmee. Another reason was that Disney was close by, and Patrick Air Force Base was another hour to the east for any military needs. Also, he frequented the Daytona Beach area but stopped those travels five years ago.

Allan spent his golden years writing fiction murder mystery books, which was an idea born during the late 1960s. He decided to make it profitable, as he did not want all his CID experience to go to waste.

Allan sat inside his den where he had his Dell computer, lazy boy chair, television and a wooden cabinet locked with a padlock. On the one wall hung pictures of Allan, his wife, Beverly, and Becky.

Allan sat at his computer desk where his six murder mystery books rested on a shelf above him. The titles were; Die My Darling, Prison For Life, No Remorse, Mr. Kind, The Church Man, and The

Stalker. These books supplemented his Army retirement but never became best sellers.

Allan listened to a local country and western radio station with a Lucky Strike cigarette that dangled out of his mouth while he typed away on his new *Murder At Night* manuscript. He planned to send it to his editor, Rodney Burstein, in a couple of weeks.

"Dad, where are you?" Becky yelled from the living room the second she entered his house with her key.

"I'm in the den, darling," Allan responded then quickly smashed his Lucky Strike out in the ashtray on his desk. He opened up a desk drawer and hid the ashtray inside and tried to wave away the evidence.

Becky, with shoulder-length blonde hair, entered the den with a gym bag in hand. She sniffed the air and instantly knew he was smoking. But she gave up scolding him about that nasty habit since it only went in one ear and out the other side.

She dropped her gym bag on the floor, walked up to Allan, and gave him a loving kiss on his cheek. "How's the new manuscript coming along?" she asked while she curiously eyed the monitor.

"I'm tweaking the final draft now. I'll send it to Rodney in a couple of weeks," he answered.

"I'm ready to edit your manuscript when you're done."

"I'll give it to you in a couple of days. And Rodney is also talking about another book after this one."

"You should slow down and enjoy your golden years."

"No way. I love writing what I know best," he replied while he revised some dialogue then saved and closed the Word file.

Nancy, his seven-year-old granddaughter, and Michael, his nine-year-old grandson, ran into the den. "Grandpa!" they both cried out in unison, as they loved Allan.

"Nancy! Michael! Come give Grandpa a hug and kiss," he called out while he opened up his arms.

Nancy and Michael ran up to Allan, and they each gave him a loving hug and kissed on his cheek.

Becky sat down in the lazy boy chair, grabbed the remote and turned on the TV. She flipped through the channels and stopped on the Disney channel where a cartoon played.

Nancy and Michael ran over and sat in front of the TV. Then Nancy eyed the wooden cabinet over at the other wall, and she got curious again.

She jumped up and rushed to the cabinet. She fiddled with the padlock and tried to open it. "Grandpa, are you sure you don't have toys stashed in here?"

Allan got annoyed and rushed over to her. "I've told you before sweetie, please leave that cabinet alone!" he lightly scolded her while he removed her hands off the lock.

"Yes Nancy, grandpa doesn't want you to see his Army secrets," Becky said with a sarcastic tone.

Allan playfully stuck his tongue out at Becky while he walked Nancy back to his chair and plopped her on his lap.

"Like I've said a million times before, it's just a bunch of old Army stuff in there. No toys. Now, why don't I tell you a new story!" he offered with a wide grin.

Michael's eyes lit up with joy and ran over to them. He sat down on the floor.

Allan placed Nancy on the floor next to Michael.

"Okay, this is the story of Prince Luna from the planet Neileon. The story starts with six young animals that lived and were best friends at the Kennedy Space Center. They lived an hour from this house. There were a gator, skunk, rabbit, bobcat, a snake and a poodle that loved watching all the rocket launches," he told them.

"What were their names?" Michael curiously asked.

"Well, the gator was named Wally. The skunk was named Stinker."

Michael and Nancy snickered.

"The snake was named Slither, the bobcat was named Putty, and the rabbit was named Buggy."

"Just like Bugs Bunny," Nancy called out.

"Yes, just like Bugs Bunny. Let me see, oh yeah, and the poodle was named Touché," he added. "Then one day, Prince Luna flew his space ship to Earth but was shot down by some mean Aliens from his home planet. His spaceship crashed landed down at the Kennedy Space Center one night."

"Did he die?" Nancy asked, being concerned.

"Oh no, he was found by the six animals friends who called themselves the Dreamers."

"Whew! I'm glad," Michael said while he wiped his forehead being relieved.

"Why are they called the Dreamers?" Nancy curiously asked.

"Well, because they dreamed of being Astronauts and going on adventures in space."

"I'm a space dreamer!" Michael called out while he puffed out his chest.

Allan and Becky chuckled.

"See Dad, you should write kids books instead of books about murder," Becky praised Allan.

"With my thirty years of Army criminal investigative experience, I write what I know. It comforts me."

Becky rolled her eyes then she got up from the chair. "Whatever. I'm going to change then go jogging. Then we'll head out after I take a shower."

Allan continued with the story while Becky grabbed her gym bag and headed to the bathroom to change.

An hour passed, and Allan finished his story about Prince Luna and the Space Dreamers.

He went back to work on his new manuscript.  
Becky returned from jogging was taking a shower.  
Michael and Nancy sat on the floor and watched another Disney cartoon while Becky finished her shower and dried her hair.

A few minutes later, Becky entered the den.

"How was the story?" she asked Michael and Nancy.

"It was great!" Michael replied with a huge grin.

"Good," she said, then looked at Allan. "Are you ready to go?"

"Yeah, just let me save my Word file and shut down the computer."

Thirty minutes later, Becky drove them in her Toyota Sienna mini-van to the Heavenly Peace Cemetery in Orlando.

"I still don't understand why you choose this cemetery instead of one closer to home," she said while she drove her van into the entrance of the cemetery.

"This one felt right to me," Allan responded then coughed a little and cringed sharp pain shot through his chest.

Becky rolled her eyes while she pulled into the cemetery parking lot. Sometimes she never understood Alan's way of thinking but knew she could not change his stubborn mind.

After she parked the Sienna, Becky removed a hand trowel and a pot of Daisies they bought at Lowes.

They walked through the cemetery and stopped by a headstone.

"Beverly Stein, Loving, and Caring Mother. Born June 18, 1938, Died February 8, 2001" was carved in the white Granite headstone.

Becky knelt at the headstone and removed the dead Daisies. She used the trowel and planted the new Daisies.

"I don't remember Grandma that much," Michael said while he stared at the headstone.

"You were around five years old when she died. But she sure loved you and would always kiss your cheeks," Becky replied with a warm smile while she dropped the Daisies into the hole.

Allan walked away twenty feet and lit up a Lucky strike cigarette, as he could never fight off the addiction.

"Did she love and kiss me?" Nancy asked.

Becky frowned when she saw Allan while he smoked. "Of course. She loved you very much, and I can imagine she's blowing you kisses from heaven, right now," Becky said while she scooped up some nearby dirt to seal up the flowers.

Nancy blew kisses at the sky. "I love you, grandma," she said and blew some more kisses.

Michael rolled his eyes, thinking his sister was goofy.

Allan saw Nancy blowing kisses at the sky and smiled then took another drag on his cigarette. Then Allan went into a bad coughing fit and turned beat red. He coughed so hard he coughed up blood that dripped down his chin. Then he looked concerned and dropped to his knees and vomited. There was lots of blood involved.

Michael and Nancy moved away at the sight of the bloody barf in the grass.

Becky rushed over and got Allan to his feet. "We're going to the emergency room," she said then rushed him through the cemetery.

Nancy and Michael lagged behind afraid Allan might vomit at any given second.

Becky drove Allan to the Florida Hospital in east Orlando. During the drive, Allan had a few more coughing fits. Nancy and Michael cringed in the back seat afraid he would vomit again.

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