

update: i could kill



Written by bubba



It was a long day at work...which was 100 miles away yesterday...each way. I started early, ended late and came home to a house in chaos. After finally getting the kids to quiet down, eat a dissatisfying meal and say hello to my wife, I decided I was just punchy enough to call Dell tech support and see if I could scare up some interest in helping me remedy my defunct desktop. No need to weigh down this part of the story – it didn't happen. 90 minutes later 'Dave' and I had completely dismantled my Dell Optiplex and concluded, unanimously, that it was fucked up and should stay apart in bits and pieces until someone smarter than the two

of us could put it back together. *Thanks for that Dave.*

1am...annoyed and tired. It was time to go to bed. Time to wipe away today and replace it with tomorrow. But around 3:10 I was awoken by a growling from outside the room.

Listen – primal dog noises aren't foreign around this house. I've got three big dogs and every one of them has a strong opinion on everything...the mailman, squirrels, people riding their bikes by the house...all of it. It's not uncommon for them to erupt into a barking frenzy just because the setting sun cast a cat-like shadow on the couch. But something was different last night. They weren't barking. In fact, net of the single growl, it was still quiet in the house. *Unusual.* I decided to get out of bed and research what was going on.

There's a long hall that separates our bedroom from the entryway just inside our front door. And even though I can see the entryway from outside my bedroom, I can't see the front door because of the angle. Furthermore, because it was dark, I couldn't see much of anything...anything except the outline of my oldest dog, Chloe. She was sitting, statuesque and hyper-focused on the front door, which was about 10 feet in front of her. The other dogs were around too...but they weren't barking. They were silent, knowing that there were extraordinary events taking place and defaulting to their elder for directions on what to do next; Chloe had assumed her alpha position and they were waiting for their instructions.



When it became clear that she wasn't growling in her sleep and was instead focused on an area of the house that I couldn't see, I was glad I hadn't turned on the lights. My heart rate kicked up a few beats. I lightly stepped down the hall towards her and whispered "*Chloe...go to sleep!*" Nothing. She wasn't listening to me. I don't think she was listening to anything besides her primal radar which was locked on the front door and unwavering. My level of concern rose. *What was she looking at?* I inched up a little closer, close enough to look around the corner and, hopefully, see what she was

seeing.

In fact, that's exactly what happened. When I peeked around the hallway corner to see the front door, the first thing I could make out through the beveled glass was a red and white jersey. I must have still been a little groggy because it took me another second to realize that the jersey was on the body of a man, that man was on my porch, and that man on my porch was cupping his hands around the glass on my door and peering inside my house. I backed away and licked my lips, just before pressing them shut to make sure my heart wasn't going to jump out of my mouth. Then I looked at the dogs again. There is usually a familiar theme in their response to

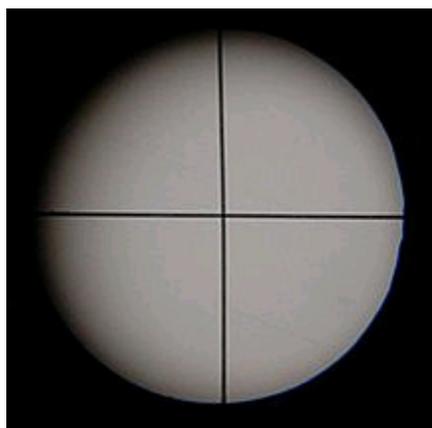


strangers. It's frenetic. It's chaotic and it sends a specific message –
"We're scary, we don't know you. Let us know you're not a threat and we'll be happy to stop all this yammering. Maybe we'll even hang out."



It was different last night. Only Chloe was sending a message and it wasn't that she was merely curious or would ever be interested in hanging out. The message was this: *"I see you. I'm stalking you. When you step inside this house, I am killing you."* The others sat quietly in agreement, equally poised, equally focused, following an unspoken hierarchy and waiting for their cue.

I looked again to make sure I wasn't dreaming, make sure that I wasn't letting the night hijack my mind in the name of exhaustion. He hadn't moved. The jersey was a little clearer – Atlanta Braves. I stepped back out of the line of vision even though I wasn't really at risk for being seen. There weren't any lights on in the house. The dogs seemed a little more comfortable that I was seeing what they were seeing...that I wasn't admonishing them to back down and that we were all on the same page about where our priorities were and what was going to happen next. Maybe what was going to happen next.



Some stirring behind me... "What's going on?" Rhonda asked. I whispered back, *"Someone is on the porch. Get the babies and stay quiet."* Then I put my back against the wall and took another deep breath...this time holding it. For a less than a second...less than a nanosecond I was calmed by a topic that usually causes me angst – explaining to my hippy dippy liberal friends why I have a gun (nay – guns) in the house. I was reminded that this is, in fact, the very rare but very specific reason. It was time to find out what this guy was doing on my porch.

But just as I made the decision in my head to take action, the silhouette backed away from the door. As a result, I stepped around the corner and moved closer. I watched him, walking backwards, step down from the porch and take a few cautionary steps down the path before turning a full circle and surveying the house again. I pulled away from the door so he couldn't see me. After several seconds he again turned his back and headed down the path.

Our driveway is long, maybe 50 yards. At the end, close to the street, I could see a parked car without the lights on. That's where he seemed headed. Did he hear me moving? Is it someone that knows we have dogs or did he hear Chloe? Maybe he was going to the car for a glass cutter or another tool. Maybe he was going for a weapon. Even though I hadn't yet called the police, even though I didn't have my gun and it made absolutely no sense...I hit the porch lights and swung the door open. They're bright lights and in the dead of 3am blackness, the flooding can be overwhelming. He put his hands up to shield his eyes from the light and spoke to me before I could speak to him...



"Hey...are you expecting a mother board?"

Tech support? Fucking TECH SUPPORT? My conversation with Dave from hours before came tumbling into the light.

"Sir, you have 4 hour expedited tech support."

"What the hell does that mean?"

"Well not much on a Thursday night in Lima Ohio."

Dave, you're fired.

Not only did it actually "mean much" to me and the guy who I almost capped and then fed to my dogs, I am pretty sure it meant a lot to the OTHER GUY that showed up at 6am to actually install the fucking thing. Yes, you read that correctly. Though excellent service, this was a massive breakdown for Dell tech support. They had the wrong information; I didn't want them at my house in the middle of the night. They had the wrong phone number; they were trying to reach me on my Los Angeles cell phone despite me giving them the correct number. And they explained the wrong situation to their people; both tech guys that came out were looking for a business...even though I said it was a residence when talking to Dave, the idiot.



So good for me in the long run. Not just because I had a new motherboard installed and functional within 6 hours of my initial claim. No, I learned something constructive about myself. See, people always ask each other, if not themselves, could they really shoot someone? Most say they could. I secretly think that most people think they couldn't, but how are you really supposed to answer that question? I mean, you are trying to justify having a firearm in the house, saying you couldn't shoot someone would mean that your gun and, er, idea is kind of, well, exactly pointless (not to mention that you are a big sissy WHICH ISN'T A BAD THING mind you. You're just not someone I'll hide behind when the Russians come looking for us again.

I'm not happy to report on this topic, but I have added a layer of personal clarity to my own self-image. If faced with eminent danger I am 100% certain that I could shoot someone. All I was worrying about during the entire sequence was where are my two little girls and wife? And, to go one step further, I wouldn't feel compelled to just knee cap an intruder and wait for the authorities either. If the guy on my porch Wednesday night would have come inside my house with the obvious intention of hurting my family, I would have shot him until he didn't move...ever.



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