



# Routes 1&9

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Part of a series of short stories “Routes 1&9” by Ivan Robertson. Produced by Tommy Weir of Janey Pictures.

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## Bluegrass

“I known you since you were a boy. I known your Daddy, too. But I’ll kill you dead just the same, and that’s the truth.”

Erasmus Jones sat out on his little cement porch and stared across his yard at Sheriff Frank North. He kept his shotgun across his lap and his heart was racing.

“Been enough of that today, Sir.”

Frank kept his right hand as far as he could from his holstered pistol. He had no doubts that this old man would shoot. He’d been scared to start off with and then he went and murdered the poor dumb tax-man.

“Just git.”

Frank looked down at the corpse of the tax-man. He was laying face up in the grass. His legs were splayed out and his right arm was thrown up high over him. His briefcase was sitting about a yard away from him and his hat was stuck in the grass. The wind kept playing with it, lifting it up a little and letting it go. That man was dead. He drove all the way down from Frankfort just to die.

“I can’t, sir. I can’t.”

That morning Frank was eating breakfast and watching his wife get dressed. She had her robe hanging open and her breasts hanging out. She knew he was watching her, but she

didn’t look back at him. He looked at the way the light crossed her belly. When she walked past him he ran his fingers along that trace of light. She slapped his hand away and finished getting dressed. He was eating eggs and drinking coffee. That was just a couple of hours ago.

It was a warm day but not hot. Frank heard some birds caw somewhere behind him. He saw a cloud of gnats swarming around each other in the sunshine. The wind picked up the tax-man’s hat and tossed it a few feet.

The tax-man was bald, and Frank could see the pink crown of his head. He could see the rise of his belly, just below the wound. Erasmus put a hole in the man’s chest big enough to put your head into. The old man’s dog sniffed around the tax man’s shoes before heading around the side of the house.

Frank heard the police radio in his car. He heard Lilly call out his name.

“Can I answer that?” he asked the old man. Erasmus just stared at him. “Might be best if I answer that.”

Frank moved, just shifted his weight, and Erasmus grabbed his gun up quick. Frank froze, palms open to the old man, and then eased back to where he was standing.

“No, sir. No. I’ll just let that be. That’s fine.”

After another minute Erasmus eased up on his gun and let it rest in his lap. He blinked a couple of times, but he stayed mute.

“We can sort this whole thing out, Erasmus. It’s not too late by a long ways. But right now I need you to put down that gun.”

Erasmus just stared back at him. His white hair stood straight up where it wasn’t shorn along the sides. He reminded Frank of a buzzard, sitting there. A frightened buzzard.

“Sir? How’s that sound?”

Frank fired and watched the porch’s wood beam crack and splinter a foot away from Erasmus’s chest. God damn, he thought. God damn. He saw Erasmus raise up his shotgun and aim. Then his mind went blank. He raised his pistol to fire again.

***Bluegrass*** from ***Routes 1&9*** collection of short stories

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