



# Routes 1&9

Ivan Robertson

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

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## Little Brother

The first time he was arrested he was fourteen years old. He was with a group of kids and older brothers, cruising the aisles of a Winn-Dixie down in Frankfort, Kentucky. One of the Hartlett brothers had snuck a bottle of “Old Fitzgerald” bourbon under his denim jacket. He had seen him steal the hooch and so did the manager, or one of the clerks. They ran, but before he cleared the parking lot one of the city’s black and whites rolled up. They arrested him and this kid Walter, who was too fat to run at all. Walter cried all the way to the station.

The second time he was arrested he was visiting a cousin out in San Gabriel. They were both drunk as skunks, he was sixteen and his cousin was two years older. They were siphoning gasoline out of some old guy’s International Harvester, just for shits and giggles. The old guy heard them giggling in his barn and he called the cops on them, but got impatient and unloaded a shotgun over their heads first. The roar was the loudest thing he’d ever heard, and he felt a wind on his face. By the time the cops showed up they were grateful, they had hit the grass after the shotgun blast and begged for their lives. They clung to the grass and begged.

The third time he was arrested was a summer night one year later. It was hot as hell. They were in a car lot, and right before the police came he was looking up at the sky. All he

saw were stars and plastic flags flapping in the July breeze. He could smell the alfalfa. His hands were bleeding, and they stitched them back up in the hospital. His shirt was covered in blood.

The fourth time was six months later. He was asking for it, though. That one was his own fucking fault.

The fifth time he was arrested was when he was twenty-one and an adult. Whole different ballgame. They found him in Blue Creek, passed out in somebody else’s Oldsmobile. Stupid, stupid, stupid. He got some real time for that one. Turns out the car’s owner knew his grandfather, they were both Kentucky Colonels or something. Some luck. His mother got real sick while he was inside but she pulled through.

When he got out he got married. Her name was Jenny and her dad ran a Southern States feed store out on 125. He managed to find work there, selling salt-licks and nails. Jenny got pregnant. They had a little girl.

The last time he got arrested it was all touch and go. They read him his rights in the back of the ambulance but he couldn’t tell one face from another. All he heard was the siren wailing and all he said was “Jesus. Oh, Jesus. Jesus.” All he saw was red. All he saw was one long face and then another.

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