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We were shooting cans with Grandpa

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Every now and again we’d head up to Iowa, the whole family would, up to Grandpa’s place on the farm. Wasn’t his farm, though

Grandma had been dead a couple of years, and Grandpa moved in with a friend quickly after the fact. That small house was too cramped, what with the memories and all that

I’d never shot a gun before, neither had my sister though three years my senior

Grandpa took us out to the pasture and set us up a group of cans on a stump some twenty yards away – Diet Mountain Dew

It was his favorite, and the empty cans always outnumbered the full.

We shot a little .22 rifle, perfect for my still developing frame and my very cautious parents.

Now I couldn’t hit the ground beneath my feet, and the Iowa wind proved better at knocking the cans over than me. The punishment for my less-than-novice marksmanship was to go set em back up

I don’t know why, maybe my sister was trigger happy, or maybe both her and my Grandpa just forgot about me, but my sister sent a round at the cans while I was bent over beneath the stump.

Luckily for me, she was dead on, and hit the top of the can-pyramid, missing me by a couple of feet.

We decided to stop for the day, and we didn’t tell our parents about the incident, though Grandpa was proud of my sister’s aim.

He died a couple of years later, and that was that.

I haven’t been shooting since.

Not on account of fear stemming from that event or any kind of principle against owning firearms. We just decided it would be best that I don’t own one myself.

I do think about the incident sometimes, memories conjured maybe by seeing a twelve pack of diet mountain dew or an old picture of Grandpa. It really does sound like the movies.

There’s a zip before the bang, even from just 20 yards out, but there wasn’t a clang when it hit. Just kinda went right through, and a can gently fell on my head.

I felt no shock, or excitement, or terror-

It was just unusual