

# Bullet

by Tom Smith

Then the inevitable happened...

18 months ago...

Council estates can be rough places. You don't know what's around the corner: drugs; assaults; muggings or worse. For Josh living on one was hard.

Josh was your average year 8 boy at his school. He was a small with long floppy blonde hair which he flicked to the side when it got in his eyes. Josh's brother, Sam, was a raging alcoholic and convicted drug user with no job to fund his addiction. The only way he got the money was by threatening their mum with violence until she gave him the money. As the family was on benefits they were already on the brink of starvation, and by giving this money away things could only get worse. But Josh's mother felt that she had no choice.

You may be wondering why Sam had no job? It isn't because of his age (he's 19) but here are the reasons: he failed most of his GCSEs' (quite literally getting 2 Ds' maths and design technology and Fs' in all the others); he was arrested 3 times for drug use and once for burglary (the earliest was when he was only 12) and to be honest he just couldn't be bothered getting one.

Josh **hated** growing up like this and did his best at school to get good grades but as he was not very clever at all, this was a serious challenge. He woke up every morning and went to school with a sick feeling in his stomach hoping that his mum would be alright when he got home later that day. The way that Sam treated his mum appalled Josh, and he wished he could do something to stop it, but Sam constantly beat Josh up and so he was scared of the consequences if he did anything to stop it.

Josh's best friend was Jack. He too lived on a council estate, in fact the same one. They both wanted a brighter, better future for themselves and when they were older, to move away from this horrible area into a nice area where houses were looked after and they would feel safe.

At school, Josh was bullied for his "serious lack of intelligence", and was regularly called "dumb-ass" as well as other rude words. The only person who was on his side was Jack, who compared to Josh was Einstein (although really he was just an average year 8 boy).

How it all started...

It was a normal Wednesday morning in October. It was a cold, crisp morning with sun rays peering through the clouds. Josh was about to leave for school and Sam had not been home since the night before. You may be wondering why their mum was not worrying, but this was an often occurrence and she was now used to this. For her it was a

relief, but little did she know what was to happen later that day.

At noon, she began to worry but it wasn't long after that Sam turned up. At this moment she thought all was good, but it was about to turn nasty. In her purse, she had not a penny, not a credit card but all there was, was a thin layer of dust. Sam came in demanding money. This time he was super serious. She tried to explain but Sam was having none of it. Out of his pocket he whipped a knife. She still said that she had no money. Sam held up the knife and pushed her against the wall, strangling her with the other hand. Usually she would have given him money now but she had nothing to give. Sam pushed harder and harder and harder until she collapsed on the floor. She was dead!

Josh had had an average day at school. Him and Jack were making plans to meet the next weekend but all of that was about to come to a grinding halt. He knocked on the door expecting his mum to answer but there was nothing. When Sam had left he had locked the door. Josh knocked again and again and again but still there was no answer. Josh was beginning to become worried about how he would get in, but then he remembered about the faulty front window (luckily they were on the bottom floor of flats). Josh prised open the window and climbed in. The shock of his life was before him. The window he has climbed through was the kitchen and that was where his mum had been brutally murdered. It was the

first and only thing he saw. No detective work was needed and Josh immediately knew who did this. He decided that he could not live with Sam and had to escape. Immediately he thought the only way was to live on the streets. With tears streaming down his face, he packed clothes, blankets and a small amount of food and ran as far as he could.

After running out of his food, he had no way to buy more. The muddy disused alleyway where he made his home was right next to a small shop which seemed easy to shoplift from without getting caught. It was called 'Rabi's Groceries & More'. Don't get me wrong, Josh had no intention of being a criminal, but to survive he had to. He didn't want to steal much, just enough to survive.

The nights were cold and hungry ones and Josh's future was going out of the window, not going to school meant that others would be excelling even further than him.

Days, weeks, months passed. Josh wasn't even sure but this specific day was going to change the way he lived!

Rabi, the shop owner, had realised items of food were going missing and had asked the police to find out who was taking them. Today was the day they would find out. Hidden cameras were set up all around the small store and two officers sat in an unmarked car outside the shop. At the usual time that Josh went in the camera caught him and the police officers came and arrested him.

As he was old enough to take legal responsibility, Josh was charged. Sam was his legal guardian, and had never been caught for his mum's murder, but did not do anything to defend his brother. Josh was sentenced to four months in juvenile detention and Sam fined £800.

4 months later...

Josh was released from juvenile detention and forced to live with Sam. The £800 had sent Sam in debt and he was seriously unhappy, and would almost definitely attack Josh.

After the officer had left, Josh knew that it would only take a minute before Sam attacked him. Josh seized the opportunity and escaped again.

Now that it was spring the past few weeks had been dry and all of Josh's stuff was still in the alleyway untouched. So that's where he went.

Rabi decided that no-one would ever steal from him again and not just left the cameras but purchased a gun.

Josh was on exactly the same routine as before: go in and take it. But little did he know Rabi saw it all on camera. He left it a few days before he did anything to Josh but wasn't going to let him go lightly.

Today was the day he would be caught. Rabi watched Josh enter from the counter and walked to the entrance the gun

behind his back. He let Josh collect what he wanted and waited for him to try and exit. When Josh tried to leave Rabi put his plan into place, making him drop all the goods with the gun to Josh's head... Then the inevitable happened...