

ETYMOLOGY OF:
MY SHOTGUN WEDDING

(How it all began)

[Most of these emails were sent in 2013. See the end of this post for the latest about Shotgun Wedding.]

Dear Rebecca,

I got stuck with all the options for my book on theology. I decided to step back from it. I pulled out a short story I wrote in 1962 that was declined by a "confession" magazine in 1963. So I hope to have a novel for youth and older consumption after a time.

In the mean time, I wondered if you liked my children's story and if you have thought about your affinity to elves and imps and angels?

No hurry. Just checking in.

Fondly,

Paul

Dear Linda,

Every once in a while, I wonder how you are doing. Maybe it's my age and reunions coming up. I went to my 50th High School

reunion this year. Did you go back to Greenville?

I wanted to drop you a line about my latest book. It is based on a short story I wrote during high school in 1962. I sent it to a Confession Magazine that year but it was rejected. This year, I pulled out the original MS on wide-ruled paper (Lots of room to correct errors or make changes) and expanded the story into a novel.

Do you remember the walk we took in Kentucky in the rain with all the other youth who went that year? Well, in part, that Kentucky walk and another trip I took to Kentucky with the youth as well inspired the short story.

I was bored in high school a lot and sometimes I would get an inspiration and write during every class I attended. My new book is now available on Amazon. It is entitled: MY SHOTGUN WEDDING.

Below is the link to it on Amazon.

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00F3BKEUW>

Quiz and Quill. Dr. Norman Chaney. Did you ever have him? I was remembering Creative Writing class and gave myself an assignment to describe a process when I was

stumped about something to write about. We had just moved into our new house and I had set up an office and everything was finally in place (two years after we moved in), and I sat down at the computer and decided to write something. That short essay turned into Summer, a novel now available on Amazon. The link to it is below.

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00BXQVY46>

Anyway, you didn't have an email so you get a letter.

Hope all is well with you and your family.

Shalom,
Paul

Dear Rebecca,

I wrote this story in 1962. A confession magazine rejected it in 1963.

This is about Curly or Marianne, a beautiful green-eyed girl about 5'2" with short naturally curly auburn hair. And Jimmy or James who is about 5'10" with blue eyes and brown hair.

Jimmy and Curly get to be best friends one summer in 1952 before Jimmy learns that

Curly is a girl. And they stay best friends the rest of their lives.

This is how the story begins:

“James Bennett, wilt thou have this woman to be thy wedded wife, to live together in the holy estate of matrimony? Wilt thou love her, comfort her, honor and keep her, in sickness and in health; and forsaking all other keep thee only unto her so long as ye both shall live? If so, say, ‘I will.’ ”

I didn’t answer right away. I was thinking of what the preacher asked.

The shotgun stabbing me in the small of my back forced the words out just a little sooner.

“I will,” I whispered hoarsely. Then I repeated myself, louder, in case I wasn’t heard the first time, “I will!”

I swallowed and then I tried to stay as calm as possible with the shotgun pressed against my back.

Now that he was sure that I would go through with the rest of the ceremony, Pa Duncan moved his shotgun away from me and pressed it against his daughter’s spine, forcing her to step forward and

stand next to me and in front of the preacher.

I remember six years ago when the Duncans moved into the old Townsend homestead in the hollow across the creek from us. They'd come in by mule, because there wasn't any road.

Now the passage I would like you to illustrate, picks up after the ceremony is over, in 1958:

Joe said, "Kiss the bride!"

Everyone else in the church repeated Joe, "Kiss the bride! Kiss the bride!"

If there was anything more the preacher was going to do, the uproar ended it.

The preacher himself finally said, "By all means, kiss the bride."

I was watching the tears streaming down Curly's face. She was looking into my eyes but she was in agony again.

Maybe she was wishing her mother were there to see this day.

Maybe she was wishing that we could have avoided getting married.

I hated to see Curly unhappy. Other times and places I would have simply pulled her to me and held her until her feelings changed and she wasn't crying anymore. So that's what I did.

I grabbed her hands and pulled her to me as I had so many times before, just to hold her until she felt better.

As she came into my arms, she went up on tiptoe and put her arms around me and put her face against me neck.

And I remembered that time in the cave when I felt her breath blowing down the collar of my shirt. And now her breath was blowing down the collar of my shirt again.

I brought my hands up to her face. I turned her head and I kissed her lips. It was our first kiss, our first kiss ever.

As I kissed her, I moved my hands down her back until I felt her buttocks.

I pulled her against my body. And I kissed her. I kissed her face. I kissed her eyes. I kissed away her tears. I kissed her mouth.

And she kissed me back. Kiss for kiss. Kiss for kiss. Kiss for kiss.

When I was kissing her ear for about the fourth time, I whispered, "Curly, I love

you. I love you so much.” And I was crying.

Curly’s lips were close to my ear at that moment. Curly whispered, “Truly, Jimmy, truly?”

I whispered back, “Absolutely.”

She whispered, “Oh, God. Oh, God. Jimmy. I’ve waited so long for you to tell me.”

And she kissed me on the mouth even more fervently than before, if that were at all possible. And then she put her hands on my chest and pushed away from me so she could look into my eyes. My arms were around her waist so she wasn’t going to fall backwards.

She was radiant. She wasn’t crying anymore. Her eyes sparkled like green diamonds. The auburn of her hair and the white of her gown made her face glow as if she were a goddess.

She pulled my head to her bosom. Since the white gown was a strapless, my face was in her cleavage. I kissed her there. I had never kissed any part of her body before. She pushed on my chest again so she could look into my eyes. And then she pulled my head into her cleavage

again. I kissed her there, again. She pushed me away from her again.

The look on her face was a look of pure joy. She pulled my head into her bosom again and again.

Joe was laughing. Mildred was crying tears of happiness.

Pa Duncan came over and put his shotgun between us the next time she pushed me away from her with her hands on my chest.

We looked over at him.

He said, "What in the hell is the matter with you two? You act as though you never kissed before."

What I would like you to illustrate is: Curly on the left, held in Jim's arms, pushing away from him with her hands so there is enough distance between them for the shot-gun to rest on Curly's breasts. Curly is in the white strapless, no veil, no train. Jim is in jeans and blue denim shirt, open one button. You don't need to show anyone holding the shotgun, hands only, maybe.

What do you think? Do you like the image?

Fondly,
Paul

Dear Rebecca,

A little more background of the story:
Joe is Curly's half-brother. Mildred is his wife, a nurse. When James was on his way to college, Mildred swore on a stack of bibles that Curly was a virgin. Pa Duncan swore if Curly turned up pregnant he would come back and burn the clinic down with Mildred inside. Curly really was still a virgin. And 3 years later, Curly still is a virgin at the time of the wedding, only Pa Duncan won't believe it.

Joe and Mildred have been doing their best to keep Pa Duncan from killing Curly outright and/or hanging James. So they are at the forced wedding, hoping for the best.

I probably should have included these few more paragraphs in what I sent you last time. My description is probably enough, but these few more paragraphs might help a little, especially the last one.

Pa Duncan said, "What in the hell is the matter with you two? You act as though you never kissed before."

Suddenly we were aware that there were other people in the church. We looked around at the stunned expressions on the faces of her other brothers and the Alabama crowd. Even the preacher looked aghast. He had never seen a bridal kiss like this.

Curly blushed scarlet. I had never seen her blush like that. She was gorgeous.

Mildred was standing with Joe by then. Pa Duncan could see them standing arm in arm next to the preacher through the space where his shotgun barrel lay on top of Curly's breasts.

It's a fun story. But I am having difficulty making it a novel. It originally ended after the wedding. But that was too short for novel.

Fondly,
Paul

Dear Rebecca,

I spent five hours writing from 3am to 8am. I think I finished Shotgun. I will need to

do at least two edits of the last half of the book. There are so many characters now. The original story is there, but now it goes from 1952 to 1986. Finished with the wedding of their first child. Time wise, the whole story with background, covers from 1937 to 1986. Some of the background affects everything that happened from 1952 forward.

Fondly,
Paul

Dear Paul,

Please find attached two different concepts for My Shotgun Wedding.

Both designs are interpretations of the scene you described for me. Your author's name is the same as on your other books. Otherwise, the concepts and layouts are unique to give you some options.

The first design shows a close-up view of the happy couple as they're being interrupted by a shotgun. The trees are flowering in the background and the scene has a rosy hue that allows the lighter title to stand out well against it. I did have trouble finding a gentleman in an unbuttoned denim shirt but the man is casual and the top buttoned is undone. Curly is in the

strapless dress, the look on her face is interesting and full of character. Overall the cover is suggestive and playful and it does have a sort of retro vibe to it that matches the feel of your other books.

Although the shotgun is the same on design two everything else is different. The scene above the title focuses on the shotgun pointed at our gentleman's chest but the the light effects are hazy and impressionistic giving the scene a mysterious and intriguing feel, almost like an old photograph. The border around the outer edge plays on this. The hue in this scene is blue and there is a shadow band across the center for the title making it easy to read. Overall the cover is evocative and provokes curiosity.

I'll be looking forward to hearing your thoughts, thanks!

Warmly,
Rebecca

Dear Rebecca,

The shotgun is wrong. It's a pump. You need a breech load. Breaks in half, fill it, close it up. If you can find one, good.

Curly is mulatto only no body says anything about it. Curly's mother had the auburn hair like Curly. It goes back a generation or two, an unknown black woman with red hair is the cause.

Curly's hair is not nappy. They are loose curls. Almost like Burt Reynolds had in evening shade, some of the time. (I think he wore a wig.) I mean the curl, not the color.

Curly has reddish brown, auburn hair with the naturally curly hair. When she combs it out after it dries, it loosens up a bit, but when she sweats the hair tightens up almost to nappy but more relaxed.

I also don't like the beard on the guy. This is not today when all the guys have beards (some of them any way). Jimmy shaves every day.

So, I like the rosy, but the couple is wrong and the shotgun is wrong.

I like the blue. You show the flesh but not the hair. It works, but the shotgun is still a pump shotgun. But if you can't find the older breech load type, we can use the blue.

What do you think?

Fondly,
Paul

Dear Paul,

I got your messages and I decided to work on revisions of both concepts, I hope you don't mind.

I did find a different shotgun, due to perspective there's no hand on it but I think it works well.

On the blue cover I took away the grainy photo effects, so everything is clear. On the red cover I changed Curly's hair, and found a different guy.

Let me know what you think!

Thanks!

Best and warmest,

Rebecca

Dear Rebecca,

When I was nine years old, maybe eight, I was in love with Karen. She was my age. She was my best friend one season in the Philippines. We played together every day. She had a big brother who paid no attention to us, except to torment us at times. We wrestled. We made nests in the pine needles and an Indian blanket. I never saw her again. Her parents moved back to the US. But she was in my dreams for years after.

Seeing your cover as you have it, I remembered her again. Thank you. Thank you. We will go with this.

Fondly,
Paul

August 9, 2019

Dear Reader,

After I published Shotgun Wedding, my brother asked me to send him a book that did not have a description of rape in it. As a favor to him, and to younger readers, I split the book into two parts. Before My Shotgun Wedding is for anyone over the age of twelve. After My Shotgun Wedding is for adult readers.