

# I Was A Teenage Zombie Apocalypse

By Steve Ruthenbeck

WEDNESDAY

A zombie wearing a red, white and blood letterman's jacket lurched across the lawn. Pimples still glowed on the pale face of the dead teenage boy.

Seventeen years old himself, Jeremy aimed a revolver out the upstairs window of his cookie cutter suburban home.

"All right, you rotter..."

Jeremy centered his sights on the zombie's forehead, pulled the trigger and missed.

"Frak!"

The undead goon shuffled in an aimless circle, perhaps confused by the gunshot's echo. The books said they followed noise.

Jeremy bit his lip, steadied his aim...and missed again.

"Double frak!"

The zombie reached Jeremy's house. Its moaning sounded like forlorn notes from an Australian didgeridoo.

That moaning was lost on Jeremy because the report from the pistol rang in his ears. Earplugs didn't appear in the movies. Characters simply performed coolly proficient headshots.

The zombie bumped into the house over and over again, apparently trying to walk through the wall.

"So stupid," Jeremy said, pleased to label someone else for once and shot the ghoul in the skull -- third time's the charm. No cool blood spray resulted, just red fluid bubbling up with no more pressure than from a drinking fountain. The creature collapsed in a lifeless heap. Well, a *more* lifeless heap.

Fictional characters often got sick after their first zombie kill.

Jeremy felt nothing but jazzy accomplishment. He assumed this made him stronger than the average zombie apocalypse survivor.

Holstering the revolver, Jeremy hurried downstairs. From then on the pistol must never leave his side. Close quarter combat against the undead was generally a bad idea, but the revolver would even the odds (a sword would make a cool weapon, too). If the odds grew too great, Jeremy would save the last round for himself -- standard end-of-civilization procedure.

Both garage stalls stood empty. Jeremy's parents worked at the hospital and he guessed they wouldn't return. Hospitals were always the first to go as zombie victims were brought in, turned and then attacked the medical staff. Jeremy's emotions fluctuated between vague sadness and vague guilt at the prospect. Sadness because he felt he should miss his parents and guilt because he didn't. For the last few years they'd looked upon the disaffected, black-clad, heavy metal/horror fan their son had become with a mixture of confusion, uneasiness and a perhaps even a dash of disdain.

Jeremy grabbed a crowbar from his father's tool rack. A regular handyman was Joe Mears. He'd built a birdhouse the previous spring and asked Jeremy to help. Jeremy said no and watched TV.

Jeremy climbed up on a chair and wedged the crowbar into a seam between the plywood boards of the garage ceiling. Each board was four feet wide and eight feet long. They were perfect for barricading the home's lower windows.

Sweat poured down Jeremy's face as he worked. He'd thought he was in decent shape. Sure, he wasn't as fit as the jocks, but he knew he could be as good as them. He didn't get a fair chance is all. He'd tried out for basketball in seventh grade and the coach stuck him at the end of bench. Finally, Jeremy got sick of it and quit.

While struggling to tear apart the ceiling, Jeremy realized he'd forgotten something.

*Water!*

Jeremy went to the kitchen, grabbed a bottle of bleach from under the sink and looked out the window.

Outside, a dozen zombies shuffled down the street. The ghouls swatted at SUVs and Hondas filled with accountants and soccer moms desperate to flee the city. An undead jaywalker hopped onto the hood of a Toyota and tried to chew through the hard shell of the windshield to get to the soft, gooey driver inside. A ghoul in a grocery store apron got clipped by the side-view mirror of a passing Accord. The impact spun him into the path of the Toyota, which hit the zombie dead center, causing the