

Janelle and Jayne, his adopted daughters convinced Derek to get involved with social media. They said, “It’s a way for you to keep up with your daughters.”

Despite his protests, Jayne and Janelle helped him and he set up an account on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. After Derek learned how to use the basic functions of the sites, he couldn’t believe how much he enjoyed seeing Celeste and Crisla’s pictures and reading their occasional posts.

Derek scrolled through Facebook and saw pictures of his twin daughters. They were stunning. He read the post. “Going to our senior prom.”

He sat in disbelief. His baby girls had grown into beautiful young women. While filled with pride, he also became angry and saddened. Neither Celeste nor Crisla called to tell him about the prom.

Once again, he would miss an important event in their lives. He swiped at a falling tear.

Over the years, his ex-wife, Heather had filled their daughters’ heads with so many lies and deprived him of seeing them on a regular basis. Once they entered middle school, he seldom saw them. He used to talk to them but even that had become a rarity.

Derek sat contemplating whether this was what he wanted to do. Rather than wipe the falling tears, he let them fall freely down his face. As he considered his heartache he also thought about Shaly.

He hated to think how much pain and disappointment he’d cause her with his decision. At least he would free her from having to deal with his inability to deal with the past and the constant onslaught of sadness.

He had a wonderful life with Shaly. He should be content and forget about Heather and how she denied him the opportunity of being his daughters’ father.

Since marrying Shaly, she kept him grounded, constantly reminding him that he couldn’t change the past or control Heather’s cunning antics. Almost daily, Shaly reassured him that everything that happened in his first marriage wasn’t his fault.

Logically, he understood, but he had difficulty not blaming himself for the demise of his marriage. It took him years to realize the role Heather played in influencing everything in his life.

During his marriage to Heather, she was untruthful, deceptive and manipulative.

Their divorce ended bitterly, resulting in her turning their daughters against him.

Derek admonished himself. “Forget about Heather and everything she’s done in the past.”

How could he after seeing his daughters’ photos on Facebook? It was a reminder of everything Heather did to stop him from being in their lives.

Time was up. Derek walked into the closet and reached for the lock box. He unlocked it and took out the 9 mm gun.

Afterwards, he strolled back to the chair in the bedroom, next to the window. He sat down, nervously holding the gun. It felt heavy and cold.

He had bought the weapon for protection and now he sat considering whether he should use it to kill himself. He closed his eyes, knowing how this would end his heartache. No more pain.

Derek held the gun up, ready to pull the trigger.