

## Put Away Malice

A couple of weeks ago, news outlets reported that a silly high school locker room stunt more than 50 years ago provoked a 73-year-old South Dakota man to fatally shoot his long-ago classmate. Carl Ericsson was sentenced to life in prison. Retired high school teacher and track coach Norman Johnson was shot twice in the face as he answered his front door.

Johnson was a high school sports star and Ericsson was a student manager. Beth Ribstein, Johnson's daughter, said her dad had not spoken to Ericsson for years and it was puzzling that he held onto the grudge for so long. "It was just goofing off in a locker room," Ribstein said after the sentencing. She added that Ericsson was envious of her father's success and standing in the community. "He was just jealous of Dad his whole life," she said.

Malice is vicious intention, or the desire to hurt someone, just like this sad case. Malice is characteristic of an ungodly life in opposition to God (Romans 1:29; Titus 3:3). An unforgiving spirit will eventually produce malice, so Christians are expected to forgive others (Matthew 6:14-15) and rid their lives of malice (Ephesians 4:31-32). If you bear a grudge, let go of it and forgive those who are willing to repent of any transgressions.

Kyle Campbell