

The Enemy
No-One Believes Exists

By
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Foreword

I wrote my first book “The Prisoner in Hell” in 2007 on my return from the State of Texas USA on the 15th of November 2016 which covered nine years and four months within the Texas Justice System; it also briefly includes the pursuit that followed.

This book covers the preceding events and basically is a brief insight to my life; I not only cover the preceding events but also more recent events up to 2016 and the death of a dear friend which was caused partly as a result of my past and the system, the odds are she would still be alive today.

I started my 2nd book after the death of my good friend, it has taken me three years on and off, I am not good at writing and I know both books still need a lot of work but they serve their purpose, and had to be written, I only write because I have a story to tell that I believe would be of service to others.

I was therefore surprised when Dorrance publishers gave such a good review to my first book and some readers have given it four stars.

This book is much easier to understand and not so thought provoking and hopefully better written, I have changed names in order to protect people’s identity and respect their privacy.

Chapter One

The Beginning

I was born August 1955 in Gulson road Hospital Coventry and already I was a pain in the butt, due to complications they had to contact my dad who was a bus driver and was out on his bus route, the had to get a relief driver and go out to where he was and take him off his bus, they rushed him to the hospital where they told him that I was not expected to live.

Apparently one of my blood cells was eating the other, I can't remember who was eating what, red or white? It's been a long time since my mother told me the story.

When he arrived at the hospital the priest was there to give me my last rites and so my dad had to come up with a name and he called me Peter, however when I lived he told my mother that he did not like the name Peter but that he would not take it off me for fear saint Peter may crown him when he got to the gates of heaven, but that he would never call me Peter, and so I was re-christened with the name Peter Gareth, I am the youngest of eight, I had four sisters and three brothers most of who are known by their middle name, but I am the only one christened twice, over time Gareth got shortened to Gary.

I lived in Coventry for most of my life; primarily in Coundon and Earlsdon however my first few years were in Hillfields which was not a bad area back in the 50s, Hillfields has a bad reputation in these days however there are still good people living there.

I have little memory of those days except nursery, it's amazing how some things just stay in your mind it is the only event I remember maybe because this is where I met my first girlfriend, I went to Fredrick Birds nursery we were in the playground and I was flirting with a young girl and she was flirting with me, we really liked each other, it was typical puppy love.

There was an upper level storage area where strong wooden boxes were stored we had a little chat as kids do and decided to ask a female member of staff if she could get one of the case's down for us, and she did, I guess she was wondering what we were going to do with it, she may of even asked questions but I don't remember all I know is that we got the box, then we surprised everyone when we turned it upside down and got inside.

The other kids were running and jumping on the box, they thought it was great fun and it was for us to, I do remember the staff members look of surprise when they got us out, again I can't remember what was said but we became famous in the kid world I was known as Jack in the Box, it was not so funny to her dad who was a detective in the police force; he was not a happy camper, but we were only kids for God's sake, it was puppy love, however it seems we were famous in the the adult world too, this is when I became a rich man's game, although I suspect it really began at my birth, this has always stayed with me, one of those memories that stick.

We then moved to Coundon were my first and only primary school was Christ the King I got along with the other kids, I remember we use to play kiss chase in the playground that was a very common game at the time.

One morning we were in assembly and some kids behind me were talking, when suddenly the head teacher pointed to me and told me to see him in his office after assembly.

When we met in his office he accused me of talking in assembly but I was the only one in his office so where was the person I was supposed to be talking to, was I talking to myself? I was innocent and I am sure he must have known it; however I got the cane anyway, six of the best.

I left his office, the school gates had not yet been locked so I ran out of the school and stayed away for the day, when I went home that evening my mum told me that the school had been in touch and she wanted to know what happened, and where I had been, I showed her my hands which were so swollen, I could not even hold a knife and fork to eat my dinner.

I am the youngest of eight children and we all have different experiences and memories of our parents, my mum was tough and had a sharp tongue, she was not always right, but she would stand her ground against man or beast. My mother was Irish through and through, she was a lovely lady who would do anything for anyone, give you her last penny, and she was well liked, however she was also a fiery dragon, she spoke her mind fend or please, you got it straight, I love her to bits.

The next morning she was up the school with me and we went to see the headmaster, boy were my eyes opened, she grabbed him by the scruff and said if you ever touch my son again you will deal with me, or words to that effect that was the first time I saw a guy shiver in his boots, don't mess with my mum...

I got on with other kids and always with the girls, I just enjoyed there company and still do, I never hid it and seen no harm in it, as I said we would play kiss chase in the playground, it was all innocent fun but I think some adults resented me and seemed to have some grievance towards me, at least that was the impression I got, I could never figure out what I was doing wrong, some thoughts for a young boy.

My mum and dad would buy a house then after some years sell it and buy another one; we lived in three houses in Coundon that I remember firstly was Batsford Road then Evenlode Crescent, ending at Browett Road, I guess they were upgrading which makes good sense, we left Coundon around 1969 which would make my age 14.

I used to play some football and cricket with my friends in the park just round the corner; I also had a sheath knife which we would use to play splits (splits is a game where you stand facing your opponent you throw the knife into the ground it must stick in, your opponent must spread there foot to where the knife is and pull it out then throw it back, the one still standing is the winner.)

I had a good sense of humour for a boy who was basically shy and quite because I had difficulty pronouncing words and I had to attend speech therapy at the hospital, this was a picking point for other kids.

The Christmas of 1962 was a bad time for the family especially my mum and dad, I lost my brother who was 11yers old who died December 1962 and my 23yer old sister who died January 1963. I cannot begin to imagine the pain of the loss of one child let alone two, it must have had an effect on my parents, the last memory of my sister was the present she gave me, it was a police set along with handcuffs, I guess she was telling me something.

My dad died in 1968 we were living in Browett road at the time he died at home, my mum was in a mess because she was still left with a mortgage to pay, she was a hard working woman and a strong woman, she also had her faith and loved her kids before anything or anyone, she would go without for her kids.

My mum was Irish my dad was Welsh, I was the only one born in England so my mum would call me the Coventry kid, the rest of my siblings were born either in Ireland or Wales. I was brought up Irish and knew many Irish songs, my mum sent me Irish dancing when I was knee high this was a big influence on my life regarding music and dancing.

I was a mixed up kid in one way, I remember my brother in-law taking me to a birthday party I had been invited to and I refused to get out the car, I could see the other kids through the window having fun, there was no way I was going in, I had problem saying words this was partly the cause I think, even in secondary school kids would ask me to say words just so they could take the mickey, this led to me being quite, and yet there were times I was a different person who just had fun, but I was also a loner to a degree and was always moving on, my friends were all short lived.

When I was knee high I went to the transport Christmas party, my dad was a bus driver and every year Coventry Transport would hold a party for the kids which consisted of a DJ, so I was

dancing away when I was called up onto the stage to do the twist, my mum had certainly set me off by sending me dancing.

When we lived in Browett Road I went to Saint John's first aid which was located on the Holyhead Road, I did some first aid there as did my brother, they also started a youth club which I attended with my friend, they were playing table tennis and other games, but something was missing? It was called music.

My mum had brought me an orange Alba record player; she also brought me my first LP which was Jim Reeves, I also had a mix of records as did my friend and so I asked permission to bring it down and play some music, they agreed and so I did a little deejaying with my bright orange record player, it worked well, I did say that I have a crazy streak and I was and still am spontaneous.

I have dabbled with musical instruments and always wanted to play something but never seemed to have the time, when we lived at Evenlode Crescent we had a piano I would try to play it, then we moved and left the piano so I tried a piano accordion which I somehow acquired and that also went, my dad was a brilliant singer and harmonica player my elder sister told me he even sang on the radio, my siblings know far more than I do, I was the late arrival, when dad died my mam gave me his harmonica, I guess I never had the dedication or time to learn, I must have been born with ants in my pants I never settled with myself. I have had at least three guitars in my life, even had Bert Weedon's play in a day, but now I'm getting ahead of myself.

I had moved schools and on failing my 11 plus I went to Ullathorne Secondary school, at first we were all boys school located in the middle of two other schools, to the left was the grammar school where the clever ones went and to the right was the girl's school where of course the girls went.

I think it was my second year at the school when they decided to merge us with the girl's school all three were to become comprehensive schools, therefor my school became middle school the grammar became upper and the girls became lower schools, I remained in the middle.

There was an element of excitement among the lads with regards to having the girls with us, the girls had previously shared the sports field with us and a certain amount of flirting had taken place between both sexes.

When the change took place some of us lads noticed one small flaw... there was a door leading from the showers to the playground which had been locked but it had a keyhole, this shower was now the girls shower, a group of us would gather and go through the keyhole, we were peeking at the girls in the shower until it was discovered, peeping Tom is famous in Coventry and so is Lady Godiva, we were youngsters having fun and if they never plugged the keyhole it was an open invitation, boys will be boys.

Those days were much more fun because it was more laid back but also much more strict, we had corporal punishment where we would be caned, one teacher even used a cricket bat, we had to bend over and whack, a female teacher used the edge of a ruler, hardly anyone escaped because when someone had done wrong and no-one owned up the whole class got it and I stood in line for the punishment a few times and so the innocent would knowingly be punished, the school was not a soft touch by any means, but then neither is life.

Chapter Two

The Shadow

There were only three of us kids living at home myself my brother Merlin and my sister Mindy, my elder siblings had branched out, we were reduced to six having lost a brother and sister. My brother Taffy was off doing his own thing, my sister Kate moved to South Africa and Rachel my other sister moved to the USA.

When we were kids every year we would go on holiday to Wales, Kiln park Tenby, I really liked Cliff Richards mum would have me sing “were all going on a summer holiday” my dad would be driving I enjoyed the journey there.

Kiln Park was great we had a caravan in walking distance over the dunes to the beach; I was an explorer and adventurer as were my brother and sister, and so we would go around the coast to Saundersfoot and Stepside exploring any old buildings, going over the cliffs.

We would go with dad and mum to see Gran who had a cottage in Glangwili Village, Carmarthen. She was a lovely little lady and I was always putty in the hands of a lady with a welsh accent, I just love it.

There was a good clubhouse on site as well so I didn't have far to go for a good night out, I went down to Tenby a couple of times with my mum since dad died; she took me to the Rugby Club and introduced me to people she knew, this is where I was introduced to Bill otherwise known as the king of the fishermen he was a friend of mum and dad so he invited me out fishing.

I had been out on fishing boats before because they ran fishing trips on bigger tourist type boats such as boat trips, this was going to be different Bill was retired so he only had a small boat, not a fishing boat, his friend came with us and so we were three men in a boat which was about right for the size of the boat which was more like a rowing boat with a motor, we headed out towards Caldey Island we were using single hook lines.

Caldey Island is a small island 0.6 miles off the coast near Tenby in Pembrokeshire, Wales. With a recorded history going back over 1,500 years, it is known as one of the holy islands of Britain I had been out there on a boat trip in the past, but now I was out to sea in a little boat.

We fished not far off the rocks and caught six dozen and two mackerel. I took six back to my mum and she passed them on to the neighbours the rest went to the patients on the heart ward of the local hospital so they had a mackerel dinner.

You can't have a fishing story without the one that got away; on our way out I cast my line in and had a fish which Bill said was a rare catch, however as it got near the boat it was off the line and gone, I cannot remember what type of fish he said it was.

My mother also took me to the farm which my uncle and auntie owned he was married to my auntie at least we always called them uncle and auntie and visited whenever we were down there but this was me and mum, the farm was near to the folly crossroad which was called the folly cross for short.

His name was Dave and he invited me to go down in the hay season to help him get the bales in, and I could bring a friend.

My mother myself and my friend returned to Tenby Kiln Park, my mum was cool, she was a great laugh, Dave would pick us up in the morning and we would get the hay in, sometimes I would be on the trailer while my friend threw up the bales then we would swap, then I would drive the tractor, we all rotated, I did take a corner a bit sharp and toppled some bales off including my friend, we had a blast and enjoyed working the farm, it was hard work, we really earned our money, Dave paid us every day and every evening we were in the club house making merry as one would say.

I was in school one day when I got into a conflict with a group of lads maybe four or five of them when someone I never knew came up to them and said "are you crazy, do you know who he is? He's Taffy Evans's brother" that is when I realised that I lived in the shadow of my elder brother.

Taffy was a hard guy with a reputation in the City, sadly he passed away in 2015, we had our disagreements but in his way he loved me and I loved him, a typical love hate relationship, however regardless of what others may think we were close, he would pull me close and tell me you're my brother and I love you, we have history and now he is dead, the one thing I realize is that despite his fearful reputation and all of our differences, he told me that he loved me, I never once told him that.

Being in his shadow had some good points but mainly bad ones, I had inherited a reputation that was not mine and which I was not capable of living up to, and I had no intention of trying to either.

We had moved from Coundon, my mum brought a house in Avondale Road Earlsdon some days I would walk to school up the Kenilworth road which was nice it's lined with trees and by the Memorial Park, the park had tennis courts and bowls green, I would go for a game of tennis with some friends, and would play bowls with my brother Merlin, who I would also play snooker with at Victoria Billiards Hall in town where they thought we were twins, we are similar build whereas Taffy was shorter and bigger build. We also played skittles at Rangers.

I got a part time job at the market on Les Phillips stall; Coventry Market is primarily an indoor market with some stalls round the outside Les Phillips was a big outside stall which took up the whole outside corner, I would be there for 6am and help set up, the storage was underground and there is an elevator inside the market however the goods trolley would have to be pulled up a slope, after setting up I would get the bus to school and be there for 9am, after school I would return and do some selling before packing up at the end of trade.

This day the fair came to town and so I went and enquired if they needed help setting up and I got some work with the fair, I also worked on the darts I would shout out over 45 wins any prize, I was quite good at it and got the punters in, the fair people liked me so much I had the offer to go other places which would have meant traveling which I had to decline, however I did do the carnival fair at the memorial park, apart from that I also helped out on the waltzers, that was much more fun than the darts, the more the girls screamed the more they got spun.

As I said I always enjoyed female company and gave equal respect but I would still give them a hard time but in a fun way and they would give just as much back, those were good days when you could make jokes about each other without being called sexist or racist, I think people know by how things are said if it is meant to be offensive or humorous, today things have gone way over the top in my opinion, it is so easy for someone like me to get in trouble, you have to watch everything you do and say.

I worked hard and I played just as hard or maybe a touch harder. I took the lads from the fair to the market tavern in town; we had some good times with no trouble, this is not to say life is trouble free we are living in the real world and this is a true story after all.

I left school summer of 1970 I would be 15 in August, I did pass the test to stay on a year but I had been accepted to go to technical college at the Butts Technical Collage for one year painting and decorating, they also had a bricklaying course among others.

I was into motorbikes although I never had a bike of my own my friends let me ride and borrow there's, I rode Triumph Tiger Cub and BSA Bantam, I was pretty much a rocker without the stigma, because I also rode Vespa and Lambretta scooters, I even did a wheelie down an entry on one of the scooters and ended up running flat into a fence, whoops.

There was a dispute in collage when a friend of mine had a problem with some brickies, I did intervene on behalf of my friend and I got expelled for fighting, I wouldn't call it a fight more a dispute, but the principle didn't see it that way.

I would often stand up for my friends because that's what friends are all about in my opinion, for example I was dating a girl and my friend was dating her sister they lived in Radford on this evening I had gone over to visit my girlfriend and instead I found my friend's girlfriend in tears, she had a lump and cut on her head, I enquired as to what had happened and was informed that her ex-boyfriend had hit her with a 2x4 piece of timber, so I enquired as to his whereabouts and was informed that he was in the Grapes pub, this was his pub and not my turf, she pleaded with me not to go in there it had a reputation as a rough pub.

I left and headed to the Grapes, I walked in and went to the bar to buy a pint, I noticed the looks and heard the murmurs and as would be expected I walked out in worse condition than I went in, I never even had chance to get a word out, it was quite dirty really, then could I really expect any better?

In them days in Coventry areas were governed by what some would call gangs but that may be too strong a word it was like mods and rockers and not criminal elements so I will just call them mobs for want of a better word, there was the Tile Hill Mob, Radford Mob, Canley Mob, Town Mob etc. the town were supposed to be the best, however as one would expect there are many from other mobs who would disagree.

I was known by the town because they were my friends, or maybe I just knew them because friends may be the wrong word I never actually ran with them I was always off and about doing my own thing and so I can't say I was a part of any fraction because I never committed myself but they were my friends, as I walked through town the guys saw the state of my face and they wanted to know who had done it, I just said I had a run in at the Grapes but never said details or names, they were going to go and take the Grapes down, my brother Taffy said he would burn the Grapes down, I told them all to back down, reprisals were not needed, instead I walked back in there with my other brother Merlin and had a drink, no-one messed with me, no-one could believe that I had the gall to go back in there, I was showing them I was not afraid, I could have taken reprisal, however no reprisals were taken against anyone, it could have been a totally different story.

Cafes also use to be a meeting place and hang outs, it was not all pubs and alcohol I use to go the Rosebud in Earlsdon, the Ponderosa in Coundon and Bob's Café on the A45, pinball machines were the game at that time.

I wore style of clothes that I liked and not to belong to any group, I enjoyed many types of music, I was into Motown, Reggie, Disco, Rock n Roll, Rock but not the real heavy metal stuff, I can never understand how rock gets tagged with rock n roll to me they are totally different.

I went to Saint John's Youth Club (not to be confused with the St John's ambulance brigade in Coundon) this was a church hall in Spon End opposite the Bowling Green Pub.

It was more of a dance than a youth club, if we wanted a pint we would go across the pub and I did like a drink, I had a girlfriend who I met there her name was Jane and so we hung about together.

Saint Johns was up some steps with an iron gate at the bottom, a girl was at the bottom talking to two guys I was at the top of the steps having a smoke when one of the guys swung the gate and hit the girl on the head, I instinctively flew down the steps and put the guy down, then turned to his buddy who just held his hands up and so I went back up the steps to check on the girl while he picked his friend up and helped him down the road, in the meantime the girl had run into the club in hysterics.

I had to explain my actions but I can't explain myself, there is no time for thought no planning I just responded instinctively, so don't go asking me why I did it, it is just what it is, I respond and face the consequences later, I am sure many people can relate to that and can probably explain better than I have, I feel that I was in the right anyway, he deserved it, and she was very thankful.

The elder brother of my friend also went to the dance, he had become a skinhead, and so had other lads who became his followers, he was a tough cookie but not my cup of tea; I knew the family I was also friends with his sister.

At the dance one evening my friend wasn't there but his brother was he and his followers were heading off somewhere and they asked me if I wanted to go along and so I figured why not and so I tagged along with them, we were walking down the street when they spotted a guy walking along on his own minding his own business they suddenly ran up and jumped on him knocking him to the floor before running off.

I went up to the guy and helped him up, and made sure he was alright, his watch had come off his wrist and was on the floor so I picked it up and handed it to him and said I am sorry, and then took off myself when I saw them spot a Pakistani guy walking on his own and they took off after him, he ran into a house at which point a group of Pakistani men ran out, the first carrying an iron bar in which he hit my friends brother across the ribs, he went down and the rest of his followers ran off.

These were the days of paki bashing which means by definition the activity of making vicious and unprovoked physical assaults upon Pakistani people or of Pakistani descent.

Something I have never been a part of but I had witnessed it, I judge people by who they are and not by their race or colour, I have told jokes such as Irish, Welsh, English and other nationalities with no malice or offence intended, I been the subject of jokes myself, but I am not racist in any shape or form and I never associated with them again.

Living in my brother's shadow was nothing I ever give any thought to but he was a criminal and therefor was known to the police and as a result I would be taken into doorways and searched they never had a pleasant attitude towards me, on one occasion I had a confrontation with the law I had come across an abandoned bike or so I thought it was and so I decided to ride it home it was faulty so I ditched it in an entry when I walked out of the entry the police showed up and arrested me for stealing it.

When I was in the interview room at the police station I was surprised when the officer pulled out a book and wanted me to admit to offences I knew nothing about; I went through hell until I ended up agreeing to whatever they said, I later retracted my statement apart from the bike which I never stole but I did ride and I was prepared to except the consequences for but everything else was a farce, I was sent to appear at Warwick Crown Court for a jury trial.

When the officer stood up to testify he was saying so many lies I couldn't believe it, and then suddenly he collapsed, he fell backwards as if pushed.

I did chuckle and I was taken down to the cells where the prosecuting barrister came to see me with my barrister, he was furious and told me he would put me away for three years if I didn't change my plea, and he stormed off in a rage, my defence barrister asked me what I wanted to do? I told him I was not guilty, we were to continue with the trial, he then left, I had chuckled when the officer went down because he was lying under oath, and deserved it.

I was alone in my cell totally boggled by the anger towards me; the officer was the one who was lying, why did they hate me so much?

I was then called back up to the court and the trial continued. My mother was called to take the stand the prosecutor twisted her words and tore my poor mum to pieces, I was gutted the police knew I was innocent, and I'm sure there Barrister knew it to, he kept playing with words and twisting everything she said.

I thought I was done for, I was seeing the system in its true light they wanted me to clear stuff off their books and they put my mum through hell to serve there corrupt purpose, I believed I was going away for three years, I went back down the cells while the jury made their decision, I can't say what was going through my mind but I understood why there was resentment towards the police, I couldn't be the only one they have done this to, no wonder so many innocent people are in prison.

This is when I saw an apparition, the face of a woman appeared on my cell door, she never spoke, she just smiled, in my mind I was down and yet I felt comforted by the lady on my door.

Time came to go back up for the verdict, the jury found me not guilty on everything including the bicycle, I felt so relieved, I never expected to walk out of the court, then on my way out I was faced with hostility by the police detective who came up to me and swore to get me. I could not understand

his attitude, he knew that I was innocent but I had dared to challenge him and his corrupt colleagues, and the truth prevailed.

My mum sold the house in Avondale Road and we went to a good rented house in Stevenage Walk, Walsgrave it was an Estate that my mum would call a concrete jungle, it was by the Hospital, although Walsgrave is a nice area it was miles from my friends which meant a long walk home at night.

My nephew and niece who lived in South Africa had been staying with for a short while; there were conflicts in South Africa at that time with apartheid, however it was time for them to return to South Africa and so I gave my nephew the orange record player to take with him, God bless my Alba ending it's days in Africa, as orange as it was.

Now it was just me and my mum as my brother Merlin and my sister Mindy had married and moved on.

Chapter Three

Music and Dancing

I loved music and dancing as I have said and I blame my mum or I should say I thank my mum for that, God bless her cotton socks. Although really I think it is in my genes because my dad sang on the radio according to my elder siblings, I don't recall ever hearing him sing, apparently he was very good, so with Irish and Welsh in my blood how could I go wrong?

My mum would have me sing on our summer holidays, and in front of her friends, she was an expert at embarrassing me, her friends would ruffle my hair and say how cute I was, I had curly hair which drove me mad because I could not grow it long because it would just bush out at the sides, I had tried everything to get it straight but to no avail, however women loved it, my sister even said she would love to have my hair, trust me if I could have given it her I would have and so I would get embarrassed but mother just didn't get it, I was her baby no matter how old I was and having all these women fussing with me, what the hell was I complaining about?

I expressed a lot with song, and I still do, I find you have to read between the lines and so if I don't have the words to say there is a song that will say it for you.

I frequented most of the clubs in town I use to go to the Antelope Club and the Tam O' Shanter, and the West End, I even got a job as a doorman at the Top Spot where there was a hatch in the door which we would open in order to speak to those wishing to gain entrance, it was discovered that I was underage and so the boss politely let me go.

What I loved the best was the Locarno otherwise known as the rock house, before becoming Tiffany's.

There would be three events a day on Saturday which I helped out with for a short while, the first one was in the morning which was for kids, we would oversee them and make sure they were safe, some of them kids could really lay it down on the dance floor, mainly they had fun and got some exercise while mum did her shopping, it was fulfilling plus there mum and dad had free time.

In the afternoon it was the teens turn, I was shown where to evict them to if any needed escorting out it was down the back stairs out the fire exit, because as you can imagine things can get out of hand with teenagers although I'm pleased to say that I never had to evict anyone.

Saturday night was my night it was over 21s, this is when I was free to enjoy myself, I was under 21 in fact I was a teenager but I fitted in well and after the event at 2am we would go up to Bobs Café on the A45 where we drank coffee and played the pinball machines.

Coventry was hot with dances in my day; I can't list the names of events and the youth clubs, we were a booming City.

I was spontaneous as I have said and so when asked by friends about a weekend down Skegness I was gone. Three of us set off with no pre-planning we slept in the car and made fire on the beach, and went clubbing where I met a girl and we shared the back of the car the next day when on the beach the girls wanted to go play in the sea I had no swimwear and so I went in in my jeans, no skinny dipping this was daylight, at night when the police would come around we would douse the fire, it was illegal to have a fire on the beach, the next day when heading home we went to visit my girl at work she was a waitress at a café, then we headed back to good old Cov.

After being expelled from college I worked for Mr G who had four Wimpy bars, three in Coventry and one in Nuneaton, I was general assistant/maintenance, this involved maintaining and supplying the Wimpy bars, I use to service Fairfax Street, Trinity Street and Ironmonger Row, I also visited Nuneaton, I would keep things running such as the gas for drinks machines the ice-cream machines, I would pull stock up on a cart from Fairfax St via the cobblestone steep hill to Trinity and Ironmonger.

I would also help out serving customer and even flipping burgers, and helping in the kitchen, I was surprised that the chips were in powder form called chip mix which you put it in a container pull the lever and it squeezed out the thin chips.

I was subject to female domination due to being the only male the manageress's would tell me what was needed and where they were short I was fulfilling the needs and requirements of them and the waitress's, I am not complaining, I enjoyed it.

I had friends who had rented a house in Bedford Street and they were hungry things were not good frankly they were above there means so while I stocktaking I also took food to feed my friends, what could I do? I know you would say it was there problem and it was no excuse for me to steal and you would be right, there is no justification.

I did leave the Wimpy Bars and started a decorating job with a one man firm we were decorating a new build estate and I was upstairs when I looked out the window overlooking a field where two girls were sitting, they just happened to be looking my way and so I waved and they waved back and so I waved them over I was showing them around the house when my boss returned, he was gobsmacked, but was also amused, he couldn't wait to tell his wife.

I did go to his house a few times and got to know his wife who was a lovely fun lady, she was also amused when he told her that he had found me with two girls.

He was a great guy to work with; I did glazing on a school, the exterior of flats on Earlsdon Avenue, a good variety of work, I learnt a lot from him and I was trusted to work alone for which I was very grateful, however it was time for me to move on and so with no reason I quit.

Back up in the concrete jungle the dad of Will my brother in law who was married to Kate my sister living South Africa came up for a visit, he got on well with my mum, they had both been to visit South Africa, he was a great guy and I loved him to bits, I was his drinking buddy when he came to Coventry, he was very unsteady on his feet and had a walking stick, he was of a good age and I showed him a good time even in concrete land there was life.

He was a cockney through and through and he loved a good old sing-a-long to the old cockney songs and so I took him up to the Mount Pleasant Pub at Walsgrave where they still had a piano, I had never learned to play but there was someone there who did and I had a word with him and he agreed to play the sing-a-long and so I announced we had a cockney visitor, and off we went, he was the attention of the pub and he loved it, and I can't thank the Mount Pleasant pub enough for giving him a good time and for making him welcome, Coventry has some fine people.

The other good thing about Walsgrave in them days was the Red Lion Pub which was my local and was also frequented by the nurses from the hospital they also had music it was fun and friendly and so not all was lost, being in the boonies had its frills and thrills.

There was a change coming in my life. I had been helping a woman nine years older than me called Ethel with two children in Wood End and we got into a relationship, I became what was known then as a Toy Boy.

It all started in innocents she was a divorcee twice married who I would visit and help her out with the kids and her elderly mum because when her dad died she gave up her house so she could be with her mum and look after her.

I would babysit and look after her mum because she had a part time evening waitressing job, I even cooked a Sunday dinner one day and I knew something was missing I just couldn't figure out what it was, her mum eat everything without a murmur, however when Ethel came in I got her dinner out the oven and the first thing she said was where's the gravy? Shit I knew something was missing, her mum was too polite to say anything, but she whispered to Ethel "dinner was lovely but there was no gravy" she eat it dry poor thing.

Her mum was welsh still with her accent and you know I'm putty to a welsh woman; Ethel was plain English though so she had no chance or though I thought, she was very hot and certainly drew attention.

We would have a drink in the house and play some music not too loud because kids and mum were upstairs in bed, yes this is the classic case of alcohol consumption and just like the Graduate I was seduced by the older woman.

I felt that I was in the wrong because I should have resisted, it was not right for many reasons, namely she was married but going through her divorce, she was a very hot sexy chick but I still had no intention of anything happening it just happened without warning or planning at least on my part, however she knew what she was doing and made all the plays, I just followed.

I felt guilty the next day, I was keeping it secret but she would call me on the phone and I would walk over from Walsgrave, me and the kids got on great, I was getting attached.

My mum knew I was visiting and was aware of the phone calls, she would tell me a little rhyme, "step into my parlour said the spider to the fly, it's the prettiest little parlour you ever did spy" my mum was very wise, the affair became known which did not go down well with my mum and family and rightly so. I had upset my mum, and was now hardly home and so I decided to enlist in the military which was something I had been considering before any of this took place, this made my mum both happy and proud.

Chapter Four

The Military

I went to Sutton Coldfield assessment centre for three days for assessment it was decided I would be suited for infantry and so I opted for the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers.

I went to Bassingbourn Barracks to start basic training where I met the lads I was to train with, we were called Chindit Platoon, I recently checked the name out of curiosity and this is what I found

“The Chindits, known officially as the Long Range Penetration Groups, were special operations units of the British and Indian armies, which saw action in 1943–1944, during the Burma Campaign of World War II. The creation of British Army Brigadier Orde Charles Wingate, the Chindits were formed for raiding operations against the Imperial Japanese Army, especially long-range penetration: attacking Japanese troops, facilities and lines of communication, deep behind Japanese lines.”

We were given a name to be proud of; we were also the only platoon on base that marched around singing, similar to the US Military which you see on TV.

The training obviously started with drill square bashing as it was known as and boot buffing I could buff my boots to a good shine and iron a mean crease in my dress uniform or number ones as it was called.

Then we had the long marching and running etc. with full pack then the assault course with a two inch zigzag catwalk over deep mud we had to run across and which I fell off, there was no assistance I had to pull myself back up onto it and continue on the course included all the normal stuff ending with a 12ft wall. Then it was the normal weapons training.

We went on boat training, it was a cold winter plenty of frost we were by a lake it was not canoes but larger metal boats, I don't know what they were made of only that they were heavy, four of us did the rowing, two on either side while the corporal stood giving his orders.

We set off down one side of the lake, there was an island in the middle where we got out the boat and carried it over land which was rough terrain to the other side then back into the water again with the corporal on board, as I was climbing into the boat he pulled me by the belt then when I had one leg over he promptly let go dropping me, not a pleasant experience, he thought it was funny then when we got to the end we then had to swim the width of the lake and run back along a bridge before we were done.

Another part of training was the boxing ring we were to be matched up according to size, I had to face a big guy I was 5ft 11in so I was tall and lean so there wasn't much of me in the way of body strength, he was a little taller and he was very well built and powerful, he caught me with a power punch right between the eyes and blood went everywhere, I had blurred vision, I could not focus or even see him, and so he stopped fighting but the corporal told him to keep hitting me but he refused, so the fight was over then while I was at the stand pipe rinsing the blood from my face the corporal came over and said to me “well done Evans it's not about winning, we only wanted to see how much of a beating you could take”

Then came the day it was time to face the gas chamber, we had to learn how to deal with gas and experience it's affects, CS gas will burn where you sweat wherever that may be. We entered the chamber with our gas masks on, and the first thing we had to do was build up a sweat and so we had to do a workout with gas masks on and then line up at which time the chamber is full of gas and we are burning all over, then one at a time we would take our mask off, the only way out was to say your name rank and number to the Commanding Officer.

The CO came up to me and spoke with me then punched me in the guts ensuring I took a good intake of gas; it is not so easy to talk when you're coughing, once let out of the chamber it was a matter

of letting the air do the job, if you rub your eyes or anywhere else that is irritating they will only get worse so leave them alone no matter how much you may want to, I had a good bunch of guys to train with, it was tough but it felt natural to me.

We were told that a dance night was being held and that some coaches were coming in with ladies all was not lost music and dancing was coming to me, on the night of the dance we were given a talk beforehand on how to behave, the billets were off limits and we were to greet the young ladies when they entered the hall and escort them to our table.

I escorted an oriental lady to my table she was so lovely and beautiful and so different, I got her something to eat, which ended up being half a chicken, we had a dance, she was not that long in the country which made her interesting, and so I took her for a walk to show her around and there were bodies everywhere I felt slightly embarrassed, I was keeping the stiff end up for the Brits, and I think I did okay, she agreed to meet me on the next dance so I guess I did my country proud.

Time passed and the next dance was coming up I am looking forward to seeing her again, or would she even show up? On the morning or it may have been the day before the dance we were lined up and the CO came in and asked for a volunteer, impulsive me steps forward as I do, I had volunteered for guard duty on the night of the dance, they do have a saying in the military "never volunteer" I pulled guard duty and I did my job and so I don't know if she showed or not, and as usual I had not asked her for her contact details.

Now my first leave was coming up, we passed off the square and were sent home in uniform, kit bag packed it was off for the train.

I headed off for Coventry my family knew that I was heading home, I arrived late when the pubs were closed, I had made arrangements with my brother to pick me up, I was to call him when I was ready, I told him that I wanted to go for a drink first, he was a night owl so time didn't matter and so I decided to go to Mr Georges which was a night club in town, on arrival the staff were very pleasant they took my kit bag and gave me free admission which I never expected.

Once inside it was a different story, the atmosphere was uncomfortable, I was getting bad looks from people, I went to the restroom where I was followed in by a plain clothes police officer, he showed me his identification then he told me that my safety could not be guaranteed the support for the Irish was so strong in there, I was on my own and he advised me to leave, I told him this was not an option for me and I was staying.

This was a surprise and a disappointment to me; it was okay for him he was unknown, I was in uniform and I stood for my Queen and Country there is no way I was leaving with my tail between I legs and so the disappointment turned to annoyance and defiance, if I was going down I was going in style, I had figured that I was in a dodgy situation but at least I knew I was on my own, I was not going to let it dampen my spirit there is always a silver lining.

I met a group of four people who would talk with me because one of the girls brother was also in the military, I had my dance partner for the night, I just ignored the ignorant people it was tense in there when I went to the bar people turned their backs, they made it clear I was not welcome but I didn't care it's my city and no-one will drive me from it, I had a real good night I only wish I had got her number.

I called my brother and told him I was ready for pick up but there may be a situation, the balcony where I had to walk out was jam packed but I just walked through, I looked anyone in the eye, all ended peacefully, now I knew the danger of wearing my uniform and declaring that I was in the military and that I would be on my own, however I was not going to hide who I was because I was not ashamed; and also now in defiance mode, I was going to go everywhere in uniform.

Northern Ireland as far as I was concerned we were invited there as peacekeepers because they were killing each other over religion, we were certainly not occupiers.

My mother would often tell me about her dad who was the editor of a Dundalk newspaper and was taken out from their home by the Black and Tans and shot, his only weapon was a pen, he refused to stop writing or reporting on the truth.

This is when the IRA were justified in fighting for freedom because the republic were being suppressed by England, but now it was Catholic against Protestant which means there is no freedom if you are denied the right to believe. United we stand divided we fall.

I continued to wear my uniform and while waiting to cross the road downtown the passenger of a car threw a punch out the window, and while I was walking in a country lane up Wood End a car tried to run me over, those are just two incidents which portray the feeling towards me in Coventry.

I was up Wood End to visit Ethel the woman I had the affair with, I ended up over staying my leave and so the police showed up, I went to the police station with them where we had a chat and they said if we let you go will you go back to your barracks and I told them I would.

I went and packed my kitbag and headed off to Bassingbourn I had decided to hitch hike in uniform and I got a ride in a Rolls Royce, I was very surprised when it pulled up, I got in the back with the owner who was an American, he told me he had only just brought the car and was testing it out, while we were going up the motorway he asked his driver how fast we were going and he said 120 mph, it felt like we were cruising, I went back in style.

On arrival at Bassingbourn I was arrested and put in the guardhouse, the next day I was to see the CO. I had thought about my situation, I knew I would have to do some time which would mean being back squadded, I still wanted to stay in but the decision would be made by the CO the next day.

In the morning I was taken before him, I told him nothing of my events I only apologised and requested to stay in, however there wasn't any second chance for me, I was to be discharged after I did some time in the guardhouse.

While in the guardhouse I was allowed two cigarettes a day which had to be smoked in front of the officer in charge, I small yard to walk around and the tower to complete daily, the tower was a construction I would have to climb with a lead weight on my shoulder which was housed elsewhere, I could be seen doing the tower by the other recruits.

My corporal came to see me and told me that I was a fool, and that I had been up for best recruit, I didn't say much we just shook hands, I don't think I was the best, there were fitter and stronger guys but it didn't matter now anyway, I knew I was a fool and that I had let everyone down my mum had great expectations and had always been proud of me.

I had been told I would have a chance with The Royal Canadian Mounties after my service which was now over. I had lost a lot; my life was now on another path.

On release I went to my locker where my personal property and kit had been locked up before I went on leave, it had been broken into, my personal effects and my kit were gone, this meant I would have to pay for the kit out of the little money I had saved, but the most important thing to me was a genuine buck hide wallet my sister had sent to me from South Africa, I am lost for words and so I am heading back to Coventry.

I arrived home and went to my mother at Walsgrave, I never told her or anyone else about my events or problems I simply let them assume whatever they wanted.

I went to see Ethel, she knew I was gutted about the military and felt responsible for me overstaying my leave which she partially was, she said she felt I would have been killed had I stayed in, I felt I was more at risk being at home, the day came when Ethel's mum passed away and Ethel was in pieces and so I stopped over she slept on the sofa because she could not face going upstairs and I was on the floor I looked after her and the kids, this brought us all closer and eventually I moved in, the kids would tell me of how both their dads had treated them and there mum which touched my heart

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