

Adam was born March 1967.

Adam was a normal little boy – a happy, outgoing, bright and energetic child. That is until his mother and father parted just after his eighth birthday. He was devastated losing interest in achievement at school and often being downright awkward and naughty. He developed the classic problem of distressed children and resorted to petty thieving and smoking. Most times he spent the money on food, i.e. sweets and cigarettes. He tried to buy popularity with sweets and finding this unproductive he became a quiet boy. All this sounds ominous but in fact by the time Adam had turned fourteen he realised that school time was running out. And then discovered just how far behind he was in his work. He was “left eyed” and right footed which is often a sign of dyslexia; this problem made catching up a formidable task which sad to say he ducked. Adam left school and left home when he was sixteen and went to London. There he worked as an hotel porter before moving to the West Country. Thereby achieving his undying dream of living near to, and knowing his father. For many reasons this did not work out and Adam soon found that “home” love and support were with his mother. This meant he had to alter his attitude and be prepared to compromise if he wanted to be at home. This Adam eventually did, joining me in 1986.

In July of that year he first met Jane; this was to alter his whole life. Jane was a lively local girl not very well educated the eldest of seven children and mightily unhappy about her father. She was not allowed to get a job to quote Jane, “My dad says I’m too good to work around here and not old enough to work away.” She did all the house work and had to be in or close to the house at four o’clock ready for when he returned from work. Adam was not worried about her lack of education. I suspect because she offered no challenge or criticism on the matter of his spelling and writing difficulties. Jane and Adam became sweethearts and soon were lovers. This caused many arguments at first and then I (mother) felt that the more opposed the more likely they were to continue seeing each other. I fully expected it to eventually fizzle out. I was unaware of the size of Jane’s fathers’ presence in the background. Jane appeared to be living in fear of his unpredictable humour and his possessiveness, always expecting a beating or thump. Though I must say, I did not see many black eyes and from time to time questioned Adam on the truth of Jane’s claims. Adam was obviously quite convinced and terribly worried I was frequently exasperated by his haunting the flat window looking out to the rear of Jane’s house for sight of her father’s car returning, causing him to wring his hands and gasp at this. He smoked constantly. When Jane was out of particular “danger” she sent a message via ?? Bruce could relax. I was constantly “talked AT” about what he could do to help her and why was I not prepared to help her. I do not respond to dramatics of this nature.

Soon there was talk of running away, marriage – escape. I did then, and still do feel that if Jane’s father had allowed his daughter to enjoy a simple and normal boy/girl relationship the two of them would have eventually moved on to have other experiences. Instead Jane became her father’s “princess in

an Ivory Tower,” and Adam put on his “White Armour”, climbed on his “White Charger” and set off to rescue his “Damsel in Distress.” (Strangely Counsel at his Trial used a similar analogy, quite independently of mine).

Finally a plan was reached and Adam began to tell me. I walked away not wanting to be involved quite certain that if an angry parent were on my doorstep I would tell all I knew. I also reminded Adam of the pain and distress when he left for London at sixteen without saying a word. I said that I could not be party to inflicting that sort of pain on anyone. The last I saw was Adam and Jane waiting at the bus stop. Adam had decided to inform the police of their intentions. Jane was old enough to make up her own choices and did not need police or parental protection. This all happened in the summer of 1987.

Jane became pregnant in the Spring of the following year. During this period they were living in a bed-sit on the second floor, sharing a kitchen, bath and toilet with a number of others; all in a very questionable part of The Old Kent Road.

Late Autumn Ben was born in the local hospital. I first saw him when he was three weeks old; they came and stayed that Christmas. Jane and Ben stayed for three weeks while Adam returned to work for a week before collecting them. It was about this time that they began to talk of putting their names on the Council List for a “Counsel Squat”. That is as soon as a property became vacant they were prepared to move in within twenty-four hours regardless of condition it was in. The Council made all services safe and working and windows and doors secure. The Council then do all repairs and work while they are in residence. This list is a great deal shorter than the conventional Housing List and prevents squatters moving in. I was appalled at this but they said they were prepared to do this as they were so desperate for a larger and more private home. I have always felt that if I had taken Jane up on her hints, as she would have lived here and insisted that Adam found a job nearby. But I didn't and that's all there is to it.

The three came down to stay in February, during which stay Ben was christened. Jane told her Grandmother who visited us before the Christening, it emerged that when Jane became pregnant she contacted her Grandmother. Tracy's father had nothing to do with his mother, blaming her for Jane's leaving, saying that she helped and encouraged them; this Adam, Jane and her Grandmother strongly denied; the Grandmother saying that she was not told of their plans at all. She did, like me allow them to meet and court in her home as Jane parents' home was not open to them. Jane's grandmother agreed to come to Ben's Christening. Between Jane's Grandmother and myself, we pressurised Jane into contacting her parents. This she did and slowly over the next few weeks Jane saw more of them as they began to thaw. On one occasion Jane went to stay with a relative and Adam borrowed a car to drive down and collect Jane and Ben. He got into trouble at work for starting late because he was delayed driving her to see other relatives. I pleaded patience with them, as I was worried that if Adam pushed too hard to be accepted the father could turn the other way again.

Adam telephoned me in March 1989 to wish me a Happy Easter, and to say he would be down at Easter visiting Jane's parents. At that time I did not know that the question of him staying with Jane and Ben was in the balance. He probably was too proud to admit it to me. I asked about the Squat List and he said that they had not heard anything much except that they were eighth from the top so it could begin to happen for them quite quickly. However in the meantime Jane's parents had visited them at the flat and her Grandmother had even stayed over. Adam sleeping on a chair on the floor. He did not appear to object. Jane's parents had bought up some paint suggesting that they decorate the flat to brighten things up.

During the week leading up to Easter Adam was on holiday Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, returning to work on Good Friday. On Maundy Thursday after an argument he went out. On returning he called on the girl in the flat below. He had Easter Eggs for Jane and Ben, he asked the girl to look after them for him so that they could be a surprise on Easter Sunday. While he had been out Jane had been down with this friend and boasted how well Adam was doing the decorating and invited the girl upstairs to see for herself. That night at about 11pm Adam went downstairs to the girl's flat; her boyfriend wanted them to go to another part of the building where some African tenants were making a great noise; to ask them to be quiet. Adam was expecting trouble as Jane had had a run in with some of the men some days earlier. She complained to Adam that they had called her a "slag". On asking them to stop the noise an argument ensued, but there was no fighting. The girls watched from the landing to make certain all was well. The men returned and they all went to bed. That was the last time that the girl in the flat down stairs was to see Jane alive.

Adam overslept, rose and left at 7.30 am, in a hurry kissing Jane and Ben, leaving them in bed. That was the last time Adam saw Jane alive.

On that Good Friday at the hotel Adam was asked by the manager to take the wages slips to the Rembrandt Hotel and if needed bring anything back. Mustafa told Adam when to go and timed him because he was fed up with Adam taking too much "French Leave" during working hours. After twenty minutes Mustafa rang the Rembrandt and was told that Adam had been and left ten minutes ago. Adam arrived back at the hotel ten minutes later to be told off by Mustafa for wasting his employer's time.

Adam had decided to call on Bill who lived nearby to see if he wanted to go to the cinema that evening. Bill was not certain and said that it depended on whether he could get some money. Adam gave him £5 and said that he would wait for Bill at the hotel at 8pm. If Bill did not make it he would understand. While talking Adam helped Bill fix the sights on his air rifle and also set up the target, firing the rifle five or six times.

During the rest of the morning Adam and Abdul were moving luggage around as a large party had arrived that day. During the moving of the luggage an expanded luggage spring snapped unhooked, one end of the hook caused a glancing blow between Adam's eyes. He was near Mustafa

who stated that he saw what happened. Adam insisted it was entered in the Hotel Accident Book, as it could have damaged his eyes. Adam spent time cleaning out the luggage room on Abdul's instructions, also hunting for a kettle lead that was known to be somewhere in the building; this he found and handed it over. Abdul and Adam had lunch together and the rest of the day was unexceptional. Adam was called to the phone by Mustafa to say that Sarah-Ann, a girl friend, wanted to speak to him that evening. Adam replied that he was going home to decorate, he said "good bye", and replaced the receiver. Adam stated later that he said this as the first excuse that came to him. This was during the afternoon.

At 8 pm Adam changed out of his one and only porter's uniform. He asked Abdul if he wanted to go to the cinema with him. Abdul said no that he was going to go to the Bell Boys Drink at the pub. Adam had forgotten about the party and also went for a short while.

Sometime before 10pm they left and caught a taxi dropping Abdul first and then going on to the Old Kent Road. Adam alighted from the taxi, crossed the road and looked up at the flat wondering briefly why Jane had not closed the curtains. He went to the Off Licence as was his habit to buy cigarettes and milk. A group of his noisy African neighbours were in the shop doorway, he expected trouble i.e. comments about the previous night but nothing was said. He had a brief chat with the shopkeeper who Adam liked. He left to go home. He let himself in the front door and went up to the bed-sit. Usually he knocked and called out to Jane and then she would open the door. Jane always locked the door from the inside as they had been broken into. On this night, between 10 and 10.30pm Adam went to knock on the bed-sit door but the door was slightly ajar, simultaneously he thought he heard a slight sound from baby Ben. Puzzled he moved forward saying, "Jane?" and pushed the door open. He then saw her. She had been stabbed nearly 60 times. Incoherent with grief he rushed downstairs to a neighbour's flat. He then dashed back to look for baby Ben. He found him covered with a blanket; he picked the baby up and rushed out again. He called the police.

Adam was taken in for routine questioning. Early on he was cleared of any involvement. I picked him up from the police station and drove to a nearby hotel. He was in a state of deep shock, barely able to speak and when he did it was to say how terrible Jane looked. I knew that I had to get Adam to say goodbye to Jane properly and change that last awful memory of her. I went with him to the mortuary. He told her he knew she wasn't in pain now, and that he would look after Ben.

I took Adam home with me. He was heart broken he wasn't sleeping or eating. Six days later when I first saw the police I thought that they had come to tell us that they had caught the person who did it, instead they arrested Adam. On the car journey up to London Adam is alleged to have made a confession to one of the policemen. Adam has always denied this. This confession was not recorded in the policeman's notebook.

During Jane's pregnancy Adam had been seeing another girl, Sarah-Ann when he tried to break it off, she would not accept their affair was over. The police questioned this girl. She said that Adam had wanted to leave Jane and that he had killed her. There was never anything to link him with the killing except for the word of Sarah-Ann. She gave evidence against Adam at his trial.

I just wanted to run away and hide. I was in a terrible state. I never got to the stage where I had to accept that Adam could have done it. But at the time the police were very convincing. And I did have to consider the blacker side of things. Every ounce of me knew that he hadn't done it; but I realised that I would not have been the first mother to be taken in. So every time I visited him in prison I took a list of questions with me. I knew he couldn't deceive me all the time. But his story never changed – whatever angle I took, his story was always consistent.

By the time it got to the trial I was confident that justice would be done. When the verdict of "Guilty" came in the judge said that we should appeal straight away. I just couldn't believe that the system had let my son down so badly.

By the time the Appeal was to be heard I had lost all faith in the law that I was determined not to get my hopes up and keep my feet firmly on the ground. At the Appeal Lord Chief Justice Lane made it quite clear that Adam had been completely vindicated, and should never have been charged in the first place.

Updated **15th March 2005**; please inform us of any errors at information@affected.org.uk.

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