

Know Thy City Well

by

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## Prologue

In this book Michael John Swain tells of being taken into care at the age of 7 and being sexually and physically abused over 2 years whilst in a children's home. It also tells of his resolve and determination to overcome those early years, and of his upbringing in a city of sin and how he coped with learning the facts of life.

This book is not for the faint hearted. It is a true and factual account of those years. The reader must, therefore, take into account the age of Michael at each turning point in his life.

"I came across this piece of text one day, which just about sums up my philosophy on life...

*I shall pass through this life but once. Any good, therefore, that I can do or any kindness I can show to any fellow creature, let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it. For I shall never pass this way again.*

Written by Quaker, Evangelist, and traveller, Etienne de Grellet (1773-1855). He fled from France to New York to escape the French Revolution, and changed his first name to Stephen.

## 1934 –Upper Boundary Road, Derby

My father died when I was very young; in fact, I was seven years old. But to me then, and even now, he was the best dad in the world. He was a really hard-working family man who loved my mother, my two brothers and me. My elder brother was four years older than me, and my younger brother was four years younger. We lived in a terraced house on Boundary Road in Derby. We didn't have much money in those days, but what we did have was a happy and stable life.

My father smoked, and I would slip to the corner shop for five *Woodbines* for him, they cost – tuppence. We would have our meals at the same time, my father would sit at the end of the dining table and I would sit next to him. My younger brother sat next to me, then my older brother and my mother would sit at the other end of the table. We would always say Grace ..

*“For what we are about to receive,  
may the Lord make us truly thankful.  
Amen.”*

Looking out of the window was a yard, and on the left-hand side was a large tin bath, suspended from a nail on the wall, almost opposite was our outside toilet. Straight ahead was my father's pride and joy – his lovely garden full of roses. In the summertime, my father had put a trellis arch, which we went under and into a little paradise. Just a little further on was an Air Raid shelter, set

well into the ground and sparsely decorated. Once inside, we would play Cowboys and Indians, and the shelter was supposed to be a wigwam for whoever played the Indians. We spent many a night in there listening to the 'doodlebugs' being dropped by the Germans, waiting for the 'all-clear' siren to go off.

My mother did outside cleaning jobs, and always looked like Hilda Ogden from *Coronation Street*, with her turban on. If I wasn't at school, I would go with her, and in the winter months we would always stay together doing jobs indoors. I went to school at the other end of Boundary Road, past the *Cosmos* Cinema. I used to wear little blue shorts, with braces on to hold them up. Mum and Dad made sure that we were always turned out nice and neat.

I can remember my father coming home from work one day, very upset. Apparently, two schoolgirls, aged about nine or ten, had run down Boundary Road in order to catch a bus to school. Along the bottom was the main road and in their hurry to catch their bus, they ran straight across the road into the path of another oncoming bus. Both girls died instantly, and my father said one of the girls still had her penny bus fare clutched in her hand.

Friday night was bath night, and after both my parents had used the tin bath, my elder brother was next, then me, and my younger brother last. By this time the water was beginning to turn cooler. My elder brother was sat in the bath as I put some boiling water in, which, by accident, went all over his chest, and he let out a terrific scream as I had scolded him. He was off school for weeks as the skin peeled off his chest. However, my brother was no angel, as he broke my nose three times, when we used to lark about.

Each afternoon, we would try to catch as many stray cats and dogs as we could. Then we would shut them up in our outside toilet. Back inside our house, we would sit and crouch behind the curtain and wait for Mum to walk into the toilet, her first stop on the way home from work. Once all the dogs and cats had been let out, we would make ourselves scarce.

When my father had his accident at work and was in hospital, my mother, with no husband for support, could not cope with three children and so we were taken into care by the local council authorities. What followed was two years of hell behind closed doors. I was sexually and physically abused and beaten. On the plus side, I was too young to know what was really going on, and now, having reached the ripe old age of 72, it's time to forget the past, and move my life on. But with so many bad memories, it can be difficult at times.

When I arrived at the home, I had no idea what I was in for. There would appear to have been ten to twenty children in the home, whose ages ranged from five to ten years. I was taken to an office by one of the care workers, and the lady in charge said that I would be living in the home for a while. She hoped I would adhere to a strict code of rules, and that I should do my best to try to get along with the other children and staff.

A lady called Miss Louise was to be my regular care worker, and she appeared to be very nice. Picking up my belongings, she led me along a wide passage and into a dormitory. She helped me unpack, then, picking up a towel from the rack by the bedside she said, "let's get you nice and clean for your tea." Once inside the bathroom she locked the door and switched on the light. Then she began undressing me. She lifted the toilet seat and told me to have a wee. All the time, she watched my every movement. She ran a bath of water, but only up to about twelve inches. Then she got hold of a sponge, soaped it well, and started bathing me. I was asked to stand up and this I did, first facing the wall, then turning to face Miss Louise, as I was instructed to call her. She took what seemed ages, as her eyes probed every nook and cranny of my small frame, and she sponged away, putting pressure on my body in places that suited her curiosity. Then she turned the hot water tap on in the bath, rinsed the sponge and rubbed me down, head to toe, at the same time taking the plug out of the bath. There was a slight gurgling as the water went anti-clockwise down the plughole. Miss Louise picked up a stool –like a milking stool – helped me

out of the bath, and on to it. I now stood slightly taller than Miss Louise. I was told to face the bathroom wall again as she patted my neck, shoulders and back with the towel. Then her hands wandered down to my bottom, which, for some reason unknown to me at the time, completely fascinated her, so much that I was almost sure I heard her catch her breath. Remember I was only seven years old, and in no way would my dear mother, bless her, have resorted to such gross indignity on a boy of my age. Miss Louise finished patting my legs, ankles and feet, and then asked me to turn and face her, which, with great reluctance, I forced myself to do. Starting with my shoulders and working down my body, she dried me off with the towel. When she got to my private area, she told me to place my feet slightly apart, which I had some difficulty in doing, given the width of the stool. She passed the towel between my legs, and told me to hold the end at the rear, while she held the front of the towel. Then I was told to gyrate my body in rhythm as the towel passed between my legs. I felt a slight tingling sensation between my legs as the towel eased back and forth, and I noticed a half-smile of satisfaction on Miss Louise's face. She dropped the towel and told me to get dressed. I sat down on the stool and began to put my socks on. I was almost on top of the toilet seat. Miss Louise, without batting an eyelid, hoisted up her skirt, pulled down her knickers, and let flow a stream of wee, like a jet plane coming out of the sound barrier. I was too transfixed to notice the smile on her face, because she had deliberately "spent a penny", knowing full well that I would get a bird's-eye view of her genitalia.

But why me? What was this weird fascination she had with my young body? Miss Louise washed her hands, combed my hair, and we made for the dining room. A couple of years later, I found out that she was deliberately procuring me to such an extent that I would be capable of having sex with the opposite sex.

I soon found out that the home was an unpleasant place to be in. If a child as young as five or six had wet the bed, he or she would have to wash their own sheets in a bucket of cold water,

outside in the yard, come rain or snow, in winter. Even if they cried, no-one bothered about them. In the summertime, I was given a bucket of potatoes to scrape, a simple task, however, I could not get the hang of it, so I peeled them instead. For that, my punishment was to eat a portion of dirty peelings with my meals every day until the bucket was empty.

Another task I had was to assist Miss Louise on a Friday night to bath the children. Anyone who had wet the bed was held under the water for a few seconds, with a bar of carbolic (red) soap stuck in their mouths.

Miss Louise would delight in doing this to the children. I was always the last one to have a bath, as it was my task to clean out the bath and mop up the floor. Miss Louise made sure of that. The same happened again, as on the previous Friday night, and I was getting used to having my body abused by this female paedophile.

I was caught talking in bed one night; the night care lady made me get dressed, then I was taken in the Air Raid shelter, which was cold and damp, and, without any bedding, I had to remain in there for the rest of the night, on a single bunk bed. That was the price I paid for disobeying one of the strict rules of the care home.

Friday was the worst day of the week, apart from the nightly bath rituals. We always had fish, which was covered in parsley sauce. I hated it. I was scraping off the sauce, when Miss Louise stopped by the table. "By the way," she said, "your Dad is dead."

I almost choked, as tears welled up in my eyes and streamed down my face, onto my meal. She had said it in such a casual, callous way, without any feeling or sympathy. That afternoon, I cried almost non-stop. Poor Dad; what harm had he done to anyone? And here I was in this hell-hole, which was supposed to be a care home for children in need. That night, as I was crying myself to sleep, Miss Louise came in, on the excuse to comfort and console me. That was the story she told around the home, where, in fact, it was her premeditated ploy to find an excuse to sexually abuse me, and satisfy her wicked sexual fantasies.

She had turned off the light on the landing. Then, having located

my bed, she moved in, one arm around my shoulder.

“Don’t upset yourself, Michael,” she said. “One day, you will be with your dad in heaven.”

Whilst she was whispering this in my ear, her other hand had sneaked down the bed and was undoing my pyjama cord. With one hand, she opened up my pyjamas and began playing with my private bits. It was hopeless to resist, what could I say? Besides, who would believe a seven-year-old child against the word of so-called respectable care nurse?

She contrived to try to console me whilst her hand stroked and caressed my intimate, private parts. I can’t recall how long this went on for, as I was far too upset and way past caring, on account of my poor dad. Miss Louise was an expert at covering her tracks and making out that she was a caring and responsible person. But if only one of those ‘Friday night kids’ were to come forward now, and relive that carbolic soap in the bath experience that took place all those years ago, and speak out about the other atrocities that also took place in that so-called ‘Children’s Home’, then, I’m afraid, it would paint a very, very different picture of care nurse Miss Louise.

While I was in the home, I was encouraged to be a choirboy at the local church, and each year, at Christmas-time, we received a silver sixpence. I received two altogether, so I must have been in care for at least two years. There were special times which I really did enjoy at church; Easter and the beginning of spring, the start of a new era. Harvest time, with all the fruit and flowers decorating the church altar; and, of course, Christmas, with so many families uniting and coming together in the true Christian spirit of love, thanks and devotion, to give thanks to our dear Lord at this special event in the calendar.

I was still being sexually abused by Miss Louise, even after two years in that awful place, but I was starting to understand, albeit only a little due to my tender young age, that she was grossly misusing her position as a care nurse to physically and sexually assault me whenever she wanted to. I had grown in height, put on

weight, and would soon be entering puberty. Heaven knows what Miss Louise would do to me once I had reached that stage in my young life. I tried hard not to think about it, and instead concentrated on a due visit by my mother, and someone I was to call Aunty May, whom I had never heard of or seen before. They were coming on Saturday to see me. Friday had arrived – bath night, and the usual ritual of carbolic soapings and duckings. How many more little tots were going to be subjected to this wicked torture by someone who was sick and mentally deranged, posing as a care nurse, when, in fact, her title should have been *Unstable Female Paedophile Monster*.

Today was Saturday, and all those children expecting a visit were told to wash well behind their ears and neck, and last, but not least, the face. Fingernails had to be cut, and no-one should be in need of a haircut. Lunch was over, and it was almost 2pm when Miss Louise came to take me to the visitors' room. My Mum's face lit up as I walked in the room and she immediately broke down crying, at the same time drowning me in uncontrollable kisses,

"Poor Michael, poor Michael." After a few minutes, my mother dried her eyes and said, "I want you to meet Aunty May, who has applied for permission to look after you."

Tears rolled down my face. Was I dreaming? Did Mum say they were taking me home? Aunty May, I guessed, was in her early forties. The visit was almost over when Aunty May went to the senior care officer and asked her to allow me to go home now, as they would gain nothing by keeping me in there any longer. But it was decided that the appropriate course of action was for the senior staff and management of the home to call an emergency meeting for my case to be discussed, and a vote would decide the outcome. Commonsense prevailed; it didn't need a vote, and I was given a resounding 'Yes' to leave.

There were tears all round as Miss Louise took me to the bathroom to get ready for the outside world. Meanwhile, Mum and Aunty May were enjoying free sandwiches, tea and cakes, laid on by the catering staff.

Once inside the bathroom, Miss Louise craftily made sure the door was locked, before she began undressing me. She stopped for a moment to turn on the taps and ran a bath for me. I was now naked, almost nine years old, and in the hands of an expert paedophile. Now what was I in for? Having tested the water, Miss Louise told me to get into the bath and start by bathing my feet first, which I did. Then I was in for the shock of my life, and totally unprepared for what happened next. Miss Louise had unbuttoned her dress, and was standing by the bath in just her green bra and cami-knickers. I felt utterly and completely ashamed, and blushed for all I was worth. "It's all right," she said, noticing my embarrassment. "I didn't mean to alarm you, but the laundry does not come back till Monday, and I didn't want my dress to get wet or dirty."

Miss Louise bent over, the bath sponge in one hand, soap in the other. She told me to kneel in the bath while she washed my back, then my front. Her cami-knickers were nylon and very flimsy, so much so that I could see the two buttons beneath the crotch holding them together. She caught me looking at her private area, and smiled in a lecherous manner, saying that in a couple of year's time I would be thinking about young girls. Miss Louise bade me stand up, and it was this that I was dreading. She let out a short gasp as I rose from the water, as I had reached the age where I was starting to get erections. My penis was tingling and now enlarged.

"My, what a lovely well-endowed young boy you have turned out to be," she gasped.

I had no idea what *endowed* meant, and it would be years later before I discovered the full meaning of that word. "What a lovely present for any young girl." As she spoke, she put the soapy sponge between my legs. It was completely out of control now, and I could do nothing to stop it. The sight of her breasts in the see-through green flimsy bra, and her hairy genitalia on display through her cami-knickers pushed me over the edge.

"You know, it's perfectly natural to feel the way you do," said

Miss Louise, “and you don’t need to be afraid.”

She finished sponging my lower half, and after a good rinse, told me to step out of the bath and on to a soft blue mat. She quickly dried my back then, sitting in a chair, made me stand in front of her while she dried my front. Miss Louise’s head was almost in line with my private area as she slowly passed the soft towel between my legs, at the same time pulling it gently through, back and forth. It was a few years later that I fully realised that she was trying to give me hand relief by massaging my privates.

“You won’t go short of any girlfriends, Michael,” she said, “in a few years time.”

Through her see-through bra, her nipples were almost bulging; I felt like I was bursting at the same time. Miss Louise deliberately let the towel fall to the floor in order to enjoy the sight of my young and innocent body in its exposed state.

“Now,” she said, “because you’ve been extra good, I’m going to give you a special treat. Call it a leaving present, if you wish. But on one condition: you must not tell anyone. Do you understand?”

I was speechless. A present, a special treat, what was all this about?

“Do you swear, Michael?” she enquired. I almost burst a vein.

“Yes,” I gulped out.

She asked me to sit on the stool. When she saw I was seated, she unclipped her bra and let it fall to the floor. Next, she eased her cami-knickers down, and they too fell to the floor. Then she faced me head on. “Well, Michael. What do you think?” It was almost beyond description. Miss Louise was about 5’ 4” tall, weight around eight stone; a youthful lithe body in good shape and form, with prominent cheek bones, brown eyes and fair hair. Her breasts were youthful, well-formed, and stood pointing straight ahead. Her nipples were thick and about half the size of a couple of cherries, their deep pink colour was striking. Her waist I would guess to be about 24”.

Miss Louise’s lower area was now in view; the most sought-

after area of the female body, I was to learn years later. Her pubic area had just a sprinkling of hair, and the outer lips of her genitalia were well-formed, and disappeared between her legs. Her belly was small, but stuck out slightly. I was speechless and, stuck on the stool, this must have been the best introduction to the female body that any boy, or man, could possibly have had. Whilst I was taking in this “special treat”, just for me, my control over my own body had completely gone and, without even looking, I knew that I had an erection which I could do absolutely nothing about. Miss Louise had noticed this too and, bending forward, she reached out and put her hand between my legs. I almost died.

Just nine years old, I was so confused and embarrassed. What was happening to me?

“I shall miss you, Michael,” she said. “You are a lovely boy, and very well-formed, for your age.”

Her hand continued to caress my privates. It was at this point that I had had enough of her sexual abuse of my body.

“Can I go, please, Miss Louise? My mother is waiting for me and it will be dark soon.”

Miss Louise lingered around my privates for a little longer then, withdrawing her hand, she said, “Of course you can, Michael. It was so selfish of me to keep you in here for so long.” With that, she clipped on her bra, pulled up her cami-knickers, and got dressed.

I was still in a state of semi-arousal. I need not have worried; Miss Louise helped me to dress, taking time over my lower regions.

Well, that was my first experience of seeing a female’s body in all its glory and, if I was honest with myself, I fully enjoyed the whole performance, because that’s what it was – a performance, and for a young boy, it was worth an Academy Award.

Then came the words I had been waiting for: “Come on then, Michael. Let’s go and find your mother and Auntie May.”

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