

Richard McNew

PART 1, CHAPTER 1

First Memories

“Let’s go, Ricky... WAKE UP!!!”

Looking at the clock and it’s 4:20 a.m. and Mom is waking me to go to the baby sitter’s.

“Momma, I don’t need no baby sitter... I’m five and a half, almost six years old, Momma... I’m not a baby.”

“Boy, get dressed so I can pick out your nappy head!”

“I can do it,” I say.

“No, you can’t... you never pick out the back. Feed the dog, too, and hurry before you make me late. Come on Lucky — breakfast!”

Three minutes later: “Ricky”

“Yes, Momma?”

“Are you dressed?”

“Not yet.”

“Boy, hurry. I got to clock in at 5 a.m. and you are making me late.”

“My clothes bite, Momma.”

“Boy, get over here.”

She dresses me and I take them off. “Skeeters, mommy, skeeters.”

She hits me and puts them back on as I yell “Skeeters, mommy, skeeters!!!” and take them off. She puts my clothes down and gets a belt and whips me but I still don’t put on those clothes. She puts on her blouse and less than a minute takes it back off. She looks in the washer and finds the cactus that I played with and it stuck me and for some reason I threw it in the washer (oops).

Memories vary at this time. My mom left her parents when she was a teenager, I guess sixteen years old or so, maybe younger. I don’t know my father and it’s around this time she starts dating Johnny (my first stepfather).

The babysitter, a female, used to hug and kiss a lot, like an aunt or something. On a few occasions, she played with my privates and my mom found out. Maybe I told, I don’t really remember, but my mom and her had a big fight.

My mom always had a bad temper. Her mom is Cherokee Indian and her dad is Irish. Note: They are my grandparents by blood, yet I never even met them so I can’t say Grandma or Grandpa.

I’m supposed to first tell you that met my “so called” father twice in my whole life. My name is Richard McNew, his first name and my mother’s maiden name. His name is Richard Hopkins and the first time I

met him was as a baby. My mom said he tried to kill me with a pillow in my crib (not fact). Mothers are protective of their young and even though my mom was abusive, she loved me to her fullest capacity [he used the word compatibility].

The second time me and my “so called” dad met was when I was sixteen years old to take a blood test. The results came back negative! I have his first name and he supposedly is not my father. So, who is? You could be if you are a man who is fifty or older in 2010. But I didn’t write this book for that reason for finding my long lost father. They say you can’t lose what you never had.

While hopping from new babysitters I had been burned by cigar, molested and neglected.

Johnny treated me so good though. He bought me toys, introduced me to family and friends and took me places. Next thing I know, Mom asked me, “Do you like Johnny?”

“Yes,” I say.

“Do you want him to be your daddy?”

I really didn’t know what a daddy was, or better yet ... I thought he was my father. So they got married and his family was our family. I had my first grandmother, God rest her soul. I loved her dearly. My first aunt and uncles. Life was wonderful and for my 7th birthday I had a ball.

Not to mention, several months later my first brother comes in the picture. But before he arrives we (my mom and I) find that Johnny can be abusive because they have a fight and Johnny kicks her in her stomach. My brother lives, yet his twin didn’t.

When Jay was born, the attention I got from Johnny was seemingly becoming less and less. I know you may think, “Oh, I know, you was a little jealous and missed having all the attention.” WRONG! I was happy to be a big brother that is no longer a baby. I wanted to be a big kid, doing big things, big allowance and more freedom. What I got was more kicks in the tail and an attitude that things were turning out wrong.

Johnny hated pets. No cats or dogs for Johnny. Lucky tried to get attention and got his eye poked out for licking him. Some time later he was found dead in my back yard. I knew he did it, but he played dumb. I was smart enough to know he couldn’t get a cracked skull and broken jaw by laying in the back yard where there is no traffic at all where he was found. I broke all toys that came from Johnny and he was kind of glad because I did not get many at all after that.

My mom got more abuse from him after the baby was born. He abused her, she abused me. He abused me, too, and I rebelled more. I started stealing my mom’s change to buy candy at school. I started playing hooky, I burned down a caboose of a train with flares I found kept inside. I got caught ... I got whipped with extension cords, race car tracks, belts, switches off trees, pabble, wiffle ball bats, and my last straw — my step dad asked my mom to take a walk so she would not interrupt my butt whipping session. So she left and I was tied to a bunk bed and gagged with a ball in my mouth and wetted with water, then beaten with an extension cord until I puked. I hated him ever since.

I ran away from home and was taken to Juvenile Hall. I found myself locked up around kids my age and we played ping pong. (my first time ever). I set up a domino rally and the reason I stayed this long was

because I wouldn't tell them my name. Eventually they found out and the truth came out. I would have to go home and my mom said she missed me and loved me ... so I went back.

I still rebelled, I still stole, I still played hooky and now when the abuse started again, soon after almost always I would take off on the run.

Sometimes it was good to be home because my babysitter became Johnny's sister, my aunt. She made me cookies and we played together a lot.

Some other boy was there and he was maybe a cousin or her boyfriend, I don't remember, but he used to be cool until he caught me asleep and slick legged me (slick leg is his definition of putting his penis in between my thighs on the higher region without penetration). So he said if I tell he would tell and I would get into trouble too, then said, "Besides, if I let you do me, I guarantee you will like it." So I was then introduced to slick legging. I passed it to my brother and years down the line he must have passed it to our baby brother which is getting way ahead of the story.

When I turned nine years old, my sex life progressed from "clothes burning" to actual intercourse. (Clothes burning is humping on females while clothes were still on.) I was having sex with two girls my age and one that was sixteen years old. Her father, I found out later by rumor that he molested her and her brother (not fact). I learn now that you have to believe none of what you hear and only half of what you see.

I was so abused and tired of hearing my mom's screams that I stayed a runaway even more until I ended up spending more of my young days in foster homes, group homes, youth service homes or on the run, as well as the Juvenile Detention Center — juvy hall.

When I was a home my mom had to take us on the run to get away from Johnny, and the women's shelter was more hurt than it was worth. She, Jay and I lived in fear and inconveniences that a child should not go through.

So my mom got back with Johnny and Easter came around. My grandmother, Ida Mae Brown (R.I.P) bought me a Big Tootsie Bank filled with Tootsie Rolls. My mom goes to work one weekend day and I am left with Johnny and Jay. I wake up hungry and he is asleep. My Tootsies was put on the icebox so I go get some and I was heard by Johnny, and he got out of bed buck naked and hit me so hard I fell trying to catch my breath. He then put boxers on and came with a belt and whipped me all over from the bottom of my feet to my head, face and ears. Only good that came from Johnny is my family and church.

CHAPTERS 2 AND 3

If anyone feels that “poor children” to live in foster care ... I assure you that most of those years were the best years of my life. Some group homes are when things get bad. I had a taste of both and it's a big difference Y.E.S. (Youth Emergency Service), Y.I.N. (Youth in Need), D.F.S. (Division of Family Services) are all better because they help find foster care and they help children up to the age of about 16, then it's D.Y.S. (Division of Youth Services). This is big kid programs that use children from around 13 to 16 or 17 to point out each other's problems with write-ups, group discussions and handle with restraining an intolerable member of the group.

I've been to Echo, Evangelico, Boys' Town of Missouri, four foster homes, Annie Malone, Y.I.N., Y.E.S., and two D.Y.S. placements: Home Seven and Babler State Park.

I got out of all this to come back home on a promise that Johnny is gone for good. So I came home, got enrolled in school and found myself doing what I'd been doing since the age of ten ... baby sit my brothers while we are home alone, because Mom is working twelve-hour shifts. I had to wake up at 6 a.m. and stay up to make sure that my brothers get to school and I get to school and I get out to pick them up ... on foot, of course. Make dinner, clean house and wait for Mom to come in after 7:15 p.m.

Well, this program started getting real old, real fast. I started sleeping when she left, woke up and walked them to school, then played hooky and tried having fun. This led to calls that finally got to my Mom's ears which caused her to come home early and catch me at home. After yelling, she did something I advise NO mother to do to a son or daughter at any age. I was fourteen and she said, “I wish you were never born,” and she spit in my face. Now as I said ... my Mom has been rejected, abused, neglected, broken and stressed to the max, and as I said, “Abuse goes down hill”. It passes and becomes a part of you that must be dealt with or it gets passed on.

Well, when she did that to me and left to go back to work, I took a range of sixty-three pills and two bottles of cough and cold syrup. Well, I planned to fall asleep and never wake up to grant her the wish she asked.

Well, God would not let me go out that easy. I had a pain so bad that I staggered to the store across the street since we had no phone and got taken in an ambulance. The doctor said if I didn't puke twice like I did before getting in to get my stomach pumped, I would have never made it. I only suffered a hole in my stomach and a burned out kidney that he said will replace itself since I'm so young.

So I did a few months in a psych ward, then I was put in an in-patient psych program for a couple months, then I went to out-treatment called Casa/Sale Program.

I moved back in with my Mom and everything was kind of good for a while. I'm fifteen years old and I was gone for about six and a half months. Now I think I'm grown and it's either my way or I'm on the highway attitude because I have an “I can't take no more” attitude.

Johnny is back even though he don't live there and he argues with my Mom and I told him, “You better not hit her,” and he and I had a stand-off. He pushed my head into the shelf and I grabbed a two-by-four, and he threw a hammer and I hit it out of the way and hit his back. He threw a chair and I went to get a knife. When I came in my Mom was on the with a bruise and I chased him out of the house.

The police was called so when he got to the corner of the street which is where we live, he was asked what was going and he said, "He hit me and I want to press charges." Talk about a baby and talk about the pot calling the kettle black. The officer went up to me and cuffed me. I'm sixteen now so I can go to jail instead of juvenile.

My Mom said, "He hit me and he hit him, too, so how you going to arrest my son?"

The officer said, "Is this true?"

"Yeah," I said, so they asked if he wants to change his statement or we both go to jail.

Well, he said, "I got to go to work... I don't want to press charges," but I said, "I don't... let's go to jail."

So they took us both to jail. He cried and I laughed. It was great! You see... my Mom had her teeth knocked out, one knocked loose, sprung neck, two or more broken noses, a ton of bloody nose incidents, and once he beat her so bad, when I came in the bathroom and saw my dear Mother in a bathtub covered in so much blood... that this was my time to shine... My vengeance was sweeter than brownie and ice cream combined. I teased him and I made sure he, as well as everyone else, heard me. When I got out of jail, Mom treated me as if I was grown. No curfews, no punishments and NO Johnny.

I met a girl named Kim. We hit it off pretty good for about five or six months but she broke up with me because I wouldn't hit her or yell at her... go figure. That's when I met Love. No, not in love or who knows... but no, a girl with the last name of Love. She has a niece named Truly Unique Love. Well, that relationship with Love didn't last long. I met another girl, or shall I say, a woman since I'm sixteen and she is thirty-two. She said, "OOOH girl, he is fine."

"I heard that," I said.

"It's not a secret, honey."

Well, that's how it started with Danielle. She was killed now so may she rest in peace, but if I didn't meet her, I may never got into the use of crack cocaine. We were in a relationship for almost a month before I got turned on to smoking crack. She blew some in my mouth as called a "shot gun", which is her inhaled smoke from a hit, then blown in my mouth ended with a kiss. A kiss that had me chasing after the Dragon for that one of a kind that I will never feel or have felt since that day.

Hitting crack cocaine is a rush, ear buzzing, numb feeling that has no pain, sorrow, boredom, noise or any other feelings that are despised by the human brain and body. If you are cut, your feet hurt, you're hungry, angry, lonely or depressed... it takes it away... for about seven minutes or so. What then? Why another hit, of course! That's what it's all about.

I used to steal change from my Mom's purse from nine to thirteen or so. But this new drug had me stealing from my Mom, brothers and anyone else who had some that I could get my hands on. I hustled on the streets and lived like I was homeless. Because of the stealing from my own brothers, when the high came down, to say I felt bad was an understatement.

I was getting paid by the State for major depression and even though they paid the bills, I hardly lived there because I was chasing the Dragon and that Dragon blew fire on all my money, furniture and time consumed by hustling... it went up in smoke.

All this went on nonstop from sixteen to twenty-one. And why did it stop at twenty-one you might ask? What willed me to quit? The Department of Corrections a.k.a. prison. I did a robbery on 5-13-94. My birthday was six days before on the 7th. I got sent to do seven years suspended as a 120-day shock. It's a program that is harder than hard. I didn't pass so I was off to do my seven years.

I did five and a half years flat on my first time down because of the continued aggression of proving I wasn't soft. Weakness was preyed upon in Missouri prisons.

CHAPTER 4

1999 October. I made it out but D.O.C. (Department of Corrections) had a sneaky plan for me. Instead of going home on straight parole out of prison, they sent me to a halfway house which is a release program to live in instead of going home. A place that charges you to stay where you don't want to be and on top of that ... it's a crack selling neighborhood. Doesn't that take the cake? I tried real hard and got a job my first day out. I worked hard and payed their rent and my dues for all but one month and I started back using, which led back to prison to finish my one and a half (years) but I came out free.

I tried to go straight by staying home and working where I could. My mom sells jewelry she makes by hand. The Hustle ended up being a trigger for me to get high. You see ... a trigger is something you see, do, smell, taste, hear, or any sense off anything that reminds you of using drugs and/or alcohol. So only time I did the hustle in my life was mainly for one reason ... to get money, to get high. So I left home to be away from family to get high without guilt.

I had an apartment from the State from S.S.I., Supportive Housing and Food Stamps, yet I lived as a homeless person would to get high as much as possible. I did my hustle for three days straight until my body stopped working and conked out — I would sleep for almost sixteen hours, eat, then do it again! I came out of prison weighing 228 pounds. After three weeks on the grind ... I think I lost 50 pounds. Eat your heart out, Jenny Craig! I'm not proud but I love to joke.

This was real. My life had little meaning and I didn't know what to do. My case manager I got through the SALE/CASA program for mental health issues, got me in a drug rehab center. I worked the Program for a while until I seen a few of them get high and like the crack monster I am ... it was over. I was back on the grind to get high. I did it all — begged, conned, sold roses I picked out of hotel or church yards, shined shoes, car and store windows I would wash. I would be rich if I go a week without crack and did my hustle. I was the youngest top notch street hustler in the downtown of St. Louis, Missouri. I got myself and others high off my work and I felt like the king of my "Get High Buddies".

This was ongoing for eight months out of prison. During this time I met a good Samaritan by the name of Jamaal Swoboda. He liked to help people in somewhat of my situation. He didn't see the whole picture. He feels that everyone on the streets is homeless because they can't do better even if they tried. That is true and false with me. True because I got turned on to drugs so young and had no will power

through my environment. False more, because when I got out free, I did not use all the trades of quitting drugs I learned through all the programs.

So some (a lot) of people (most) have a choice but choose the wrong choices as I did. I chose to get high and I can't explain why without saying it was my fault. But it was that lady who got you high. No, if I listened to Mom who told me to stay away from her. But if you was not abused. The acts of your parents shows and has an impact on our lives, yet a man or woman has the ability to choose for his or herself. I learned that too late in my life. I pointed the finger and blamed, yet in the end, the fingers when you point, goes back to self.

Anyway, I was being helped by Jamaal and he gave me money here and there. Once he told me to come out to where he stayed almost in the country, and me with no car or bike goes out to his place when he asked to meet. I get out there and he is not there, or so I heard (He didn't answer the door). I stayed out there stuck in U-City for about seven or eight hours, walking through the rain to his house, to and from a billiard place until it closed. Being out there from 1 p.m. until 8 or 9 p.m., I broke into his basement to sleep.

The next morning I knocked on his door and he still didn't answer. After doing this for almost an hour, I broke into his house and took food, coins, a walkman, an air gun and I left the real good stuff, feeling bad enough as it is, and got all but two blocks where I got stopped. I was arrested and even though, I was released almost fourteen or so hours later to come to court at a later date. I never appeared and when they caught me, it was the outcome of going back to prison.

Yet I was getting into God and praying hard for Him to show me He is Real with Real Power and I knew I would see a real Happening of Grace.

The judge said five years and Jamaal stood up and spoke on my behalf and the signed plea bargain for five years was changed to three years. No one has seen such thing in all their years of working in that county jail.

So off to prison again to get clean and get some weight back on my bones. I closed my file to do two years and go straight parole and not have to see a Parole Board. The two years ended pretty fast, yet did they have a surprise for me. Instead of being free on parole... I had to go to a locked up place called the Honor Center (St. Mary's) and get this... it's three blocks from downtown and even closer to the Dope House.

Can you guess what happened? Go ahead... Guess? CRACK MONSTER stayed asleep for a whole month. I tried...

Richard McNew

2010