

Foreword

My editor suggested that I write a Foreword for this book to inform people of the growing epidemic facing our youth on the effects of bullying, including suicide. The only thing I know to do is to write from my heart, especially on the things I know about. I did not want this Novella to be a summary of a police suicide report or a recap of a Medical Examiner's findings.

When I first thought about writing this fictional book based upon a kid that my daughter knows, I was hesitant about it. To be candid, this book is also inspired by my own story. There have been moments when I, myself, felt the same way, but had never acted upon it. God forbid, I actually talked about what I was considering back when I was a teenager.

This Novella might hit home for many people. It might seem like I just wrote about their life. Truth is—it was written about someone's life, though names and some circumstances have been changed or modified to protect their identity. It is based on my daughter's best friend and the battle he faced and still deals with every day.

Is there more we can do for people like Mick? Can we listen a little more, or a little longer? Give them a hug or even sit and talk to them, with them? Can we protect them from what the world hands us?

I'm not sure how to answer these questions. But I do know that there were a couple of times in my life when I didn't want to face another day. I didn't want to live one more moment. This may surprise some people, but why write a book about a boy being depressed if I haven't myself felt some of the things Mick has felt?

I deal with days that I have to *will* myself to get through. I'm not sure what causes these downfalls, but I make it through them and the next thing I know, it's been days or weeks that have gone by and I

feel great, but I also know that these thoughts will never completely go away. I can't explain the feelings that stir inside me, just as you probably can't explain what is going on inside yourself. Each person is different and we all deal with situations in our own way. Granted there are more programs and facilities out there now that can help people like us. Now it's just up to us to reach out and ask for HELP!

I did some research on local nonprofit organizations and websites that can help those of us who are thinking about ending our lives, or even self-injuring, such as what Mick was doing in this book. These websites have lists of hotlines for each state that include a free-bullying guide and suicide support groups where you can go and talk with people who are just like you and are going through something similar or as self-destructive. You're not the only one who might feel alone and is being bullied.

I honestly can't say that I wasn't surprised on how many different sites there are out there with just a click of a button. Something I didn't have back in the eighties when I was dealing with my depression and bullying. I didn't talk to anyone about what and how I was feeling; I just thought, I guess, it would be a better world without me in it.

Today, I'm more verbal about what I went through and what I felt. But, it was my daughter who brought that out of me because of her friends and what they are doing to themselves. I have several more books in this series to write. More stories to share about other teenage suicides happening each and every day. Although I don't know the whole story about what they're going through, I'm pretty sure I won't be too far off from the truth after writing it.

If you or someone you know needs guidance with what they're feeling or going through, and you don't want to talk to an adult in your household or an adult at your school, then I suggest turning to these websites for help. They are very resourceful and are there to help you understand and cope with depression and suicidal thoughts.

<http://www.suicide.org>

<http://www.helpguide.org>

<http://www.selfinjury.com>.

You can also call the numbers listed here when you're ready to get help, 1-800-SUICIDE or 1-800-273-TALK.

There are so many untold stories out there. So many that need told. I just want you to know that you're not alone, and that there are people out there that will listen and can help you.

I'm not a medical doctor or professional counselor, but I'm here if you need someone to just listen to whatever you need to talk about at dmzadunajsky@gmail.com Just reach out and ask for help. I'm also available to schools or other organizations for speaking out about suicide and bullying.

Mick

I think it's best that I start by introducing myself. Will it be important? I guess I'll leave that up to you in the end. I think introductions are the best so if I tell you who I am, then you'll at least know something about me, but then by the end of my story you'll know all about me. You'll know why I do what I do. Why I'm going to do what needs to be done. Should have been done...

My name is Mick, Mick Connors. I live in the south suburbs of Chicago. I'm thirteen years old, and I have two half siblings, a brother and a sister. I don't see them much, but in all reality, I don't care. They live with my mom a couple of towns away. I'm supposed to go to my mom's house every other weekend, but my dad lets me stay home. He doesn't force me to see her. She's the reason why they're not together anymore. It's one of the reasons why I live with my dad and not her! Well, if you haven't figured it out yet, I have given you two clues... Yep, that's right, the half siblings.

Their divorce caught me unexpectedly. I mean... they seemed so together. Like they knew what they were doing, but then—*Wham!* It was like I was sucker-punched in the gut when they broke the news to me.

Okay, so if I look back and think about some of their fights, yeah, I can see that they had their moments, but divorce? That's like—final. There's no, "I'm just kidding", or "We can always just rip up the papers and act like it never happened." No, divorce is

divorce. It means it's over and there's no going back. We tried, but I can't stand living with you anymore, so yeah, goodbye.

Seven months later, after my dad moved out, she was getting ready to give birth to my half brother and sister. I'm not sure what surprised me more—the divorce or the fact she cheated on my dad and got herself pregnant. I don't even want to think about it anymore.

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I hate everything about school. I hate getting up in the morning to go. I hate the classes they make me take. I hate all the teachers. I don't think I've ever liked any of my teachers in all the time I've been in school. But mostly, I hate the kids that go to the school. Well, at least the ones that are mean to me. The ones that bully me!

So now you know my parents are divorced and I live with my dad. You know I have two half siblings and that I hate school. One more thing, I used to live with my mom, but since the start of eighth grade, I've been living with my dad. They say it's for the best, you know, because of what happened to my best friend. Oh, I guess I haven't told you that part yet...