

1 The dilemma

This is the story of my life. It has not been fabricated, exaggerated, or embellished in any way. It's the raw truth and I'm not really sure why I'm writing it, but my therapist thinks it's a good idea, and I can understand her reasoning about that. Writing down my life's story might simply be a part of the healing process, so I can finally move on with my life and live it like a normal person.

All my life I've wished for nothing more than just to be normal, as I've looked around and envied other people's untroubled lives. At least that is how they appear on the surface. We can all be quite certain that most people harbor some secrets in their lives. Those secrets might be small things they regret or feel ashamed about. I wish people did not need to have secrets and live in fear and guilt about their lives, because most things people hide from are not worth the stress, but I guess I'm the same.

Maybe I should be able to shout from the rooftops, and tell the world I'm not afraid or ashamed of my life, but in my heart I know many people will stand in judgment of me. At the same time, I know deep down a lot of people would applaud my courage if I did so, even if their own fears prevented them from supporting me publicly. Therein lies the problem.

If you stand outside society's norm you stand alone, through social judgment and fear. Maybe I should just include it all in the category of fear, and leave judgment out of it, considering all judgment has its roots in fear.

Fear; the prime mover for almost every expression in our lives. What would it be like to be free of fear?

Everyone has their problems, and people go through a great deal of pain and suffering. I personally know people I would not trade places with for anything on earth. We are all plagued by similar

run-of-the-mill issues, such as marriage breakups, financial problems, health issues, and everything else that goes with living on this planet, as we try to coexist with a whole lot of people. With most of them we have almost nothing in common, except a pattern of similar reactions that maintain a reasonable level of “sanity” in society. And it is all bound in fear.

It doesn't sound like much of a way to live, but if you question people about their lives and propose the idea that they are living in fear, almost all of them will disagree. Some will even become angry, and possibly violent, if you dare to start a debate with them on the issue. The cruel irony is they won't see, even then, that their reaction to the idea of their lives being based on fear is in itself a fear-based reaction.

So why don't I tell people about my life? Why don't I stand up, step out of the shadows society creeps around in, and put my trust in people to accept my life?

Simple. People cannot be trusted. Everyone knows this because everyone has a secret. The only variable is the size of the secret, and mine would attract a massive excess baggage fee if I packed it in a suitcase and boarded a plane.

I've experienced, or still do to some degree, all those problems I spoke about: divorce, health, finance, and so on. I'm not saying my life is difficult in the main, and in fact I count myself lucky, giving thanks for my life and the many things I enjoy, because unlike some others, at least I have my health. I can walk, talk, eat, see, and hear. I also have a brain that works well enough, which gives me the opportunity to make something of myself, and do something with my life. I really cannot complain, so what makes my life so different my therapist thinks it's a good idea to write it down?

I don't think the aspect of my life in question is particularly

unusual, or different, from that of a large percentage of the population, so I guess it comes down to a question of degree and scope. When I consider those factors I can't help feeling my life has been a little unusual to say the least, and a *lot* unusual to "say the most".

There's no doubt my life could, and would, be summed up by a lot of people with words like sick, deviant, gross, pathetic, abhorrent, disgusting, depraved, and so on.

These words are not new to me. I've tarred myself with every one of them over the years, and nobody else could project the depth of feeling in them more strongly than I have against myself. That projection evoked feelings of shame, guilt, unworthiness, and self-loathing that cannot be imagined. Even if I told you it's impossible to imagine the things I've done, and then gave you a hint, you still would not guess at the depth and breadth of my life experience.

I've written about this in a way that tries to depict how I felt at the time and how I feel now, and can only use words or terms that make that possible. This book is not for the prudish or faint-hearted, so if you like your reality painted over and sugar-coated, then this is not for you, and I suggest you make a nice cup of tea and watch re-runs of *Days of Our Lives* instead.

I'm not complaining about my lot, and in some strange way I have even come to appreciate it after all this time. All I want now is to make some sense of it and possibly enrich the remainder of my life, and maybe even help someone else with theirs.

It all seemed to begin harmlessly enough as a young child in primary school but when I was a young teenager, an innocent conversation with my mother raised the idea in me that my turbulent, obsessive journey had actually begun when I was just a baby. I explore this in chapter 5.

In time I had no doubt about this, and it often led me to wonder whether it was some kind of karmic load I was unloading, or if I was building up a karmic load that would crush the life out of my soul.

This question would plague me throughout the decades to come, but whatever the explanation, I was powerless to do anything about it. All I could do was hang in, and hang on, as I plunged headlong through a chaotic world of sensory self-gratification.

Where do I even start to give someone an idea of the duality of the life I have lived for as long as I can remember? There is that old cliché about starting at the beginning, and it may be right, but let's just skip ahead for a moment, because honestly, if I'm going to write this down I don't have time for norms or clichés.

Skipping ahead will also give me a clear reminder of why I'm writing this, and what I'm writing about. I'll come back later and try to join some dots to give a clearer picture of what it always felt like to me: a life unlived. Is that too dramatic, to call it a life unlived? I lived something, didn't I?

We all have some notion of what life should be like, or what we wish it was like, but in my mind and heart my life never measured up to any of my wishes. It just never felt like living. It felt like I was trapped in some kind of time warp, or parallel universe, where I could only watch my life happening around me as though it was someone else's. But it is what it is.

Ooops, that sounds like a cliché.

2 1983

It was about 10.30 pm. My heart was racing as I walked along the street, brightly lit with open restaurants, street lighting, and passing

traffic. I had come out of the relative cover of the dimly lit back streets where I had parked my car.

A light rain was falling and the traffic speeding by made a swishing sound. I was grateful for the sound, as it gave me a sense that I was hiding in it. It was a main road with a steady stream of traffic, and the headlights of the passing cars were like spotlights, seeming to illuminate my every step, almost as if I was on a stage with nowhere to hide. I could imagine people in those cars, hidden behind the bright headlights, all looking at me and wondering what I was doing. With my rapid, shallow breathing, I was almost hyperventilating.

I tried to keep my head down in case someone who knew me drove past.

‘What are the odds,’ I thought, but although I had good cause for fear, I was riding an undertow of excitement about what I planned to do and I couldn’t have stopped even if I’d wanted to. This was not my first experience of being powerless against the overwhelming tide of urges in my body, but it was about to go to another level. If something could go wrong I was sure it would, and explaining my presence in this part of town, at this hour, would not be an easy task.

Over the years ahead, I would develop a phenomenal ability to lie under pressure. The lies I told would become my “truth” as I uttered the words, and I would morph into them as they fell from my lips. In the end I was able to believe what I was saying, so in a strange way it was as if I was telling the truth.

The incredible complexity of the human psyche makes this very possible, and in the end I just made my life up as I went along, stepping into it from one moment and one lie to the next. My very existence became lies upon lies as I built an entire life contrary to what my family, friends, work colleagues, or acquaintances knew

anything about.

The street was a mix of daytime business and old residential buildings, along with restaurants. While the businesses had closed for the day, there were a few people out and about at the restaurants. They didn't appear to be taking any notice of me, but my paranoia was running high. I felt they were all as aware of me as I was of them, and the slightest move out of place on my part would attract their immediate attention.

In time I would feel so at ease with these situations it would make me laugh, but for now all I felt was fear and paranoia. The people I could see were just going about their business, but I was sure they were all wondering what I was doing. I kept walking, with my head down, trying not to look conspicuous. As I walked, I looked for house numbers on doors and gates. I felt people would know exactly where I was going, and what I was going to do, if they saw me trying to identify a particular building. A frustrated urgency was building in my chest now.

Where the hell was number 614, for Chrissakes!

My mind was in turmoil as I tried to hold myself together, and I concentrated on taking long deep breaths to calm my nerves. I didn't want to look as if I was walking up and down trying to find an address. What if someone noticed my predicament and asked if they could help? I couldn't imagine what I would do if that happened. I finally found a number. It was 590, or something like that. I moved on, furtively glancing up at doorways for another number so I could get my bearings.

Five eighty-two...damn it! I was going the wrong way!

I walked a little further trying not to look lost and then casually turned around and retraced my steps. My heart was pumping wildly and I just wanted to get off the street, away from the lights and "prying" eyes.

Six hundred and ten, okay...612...614...there it was! Large silver numbers you couldn't miss, on a solid looking black timber door. Thank God!

I turned off the pavement and quickly mounted some steps to the dimly lit front porch of the building. There was an intercom on the wall, lit up with a small light over the "press" button. There were also some large pots with tall leafy plants on the porch, giving a little cover to the side of the front door. Trying to stand behind the plants as much as possible, and without stopping to think in case I changed my mind, I pushed the buzzer and waited, keeping my back to the street and shielding my face in the dark. After what felt like an eternity, a voice answered.

"Hello," is all they said.

"Hi, this is Josef," I replied, "I called just a while ago."

"Just a minute." Then silence.

Again I waited. I stood very still and almost stopped breathing, thinking it would make me less visible. In my current paranoid state, I felt that anyone who saw me would know what the building was, and what I was here for. I kept my face directly to the door, keeping it well out of sight of anyone who might pass by.

Finally, I heard footsteps inside as someone approached the door. It opened and a young woman invited me in. She was very polite and cheerful.

"Hi Josef, come with me," she said, smiling.

I got inside as fast as I could, and she led me down a short hallway before stopping at a large brown timber door. She opened it and ushered me inside, closing it softly behind us.

"Have a seat," she said, gesturing to a large brown leather lounge.

“ Thank you.”

“Are you here to see the mistresses?” she asked.

My heart was pounding in my chest.

“Yes,” I replied nervously through dry lips.

“Have you been here before?”

“No.” I cleared my throat. “ This is my first time.”

“Okay,” she said. “We have three mistresses available tonight. They will come one at a time to introduce themselves and have a talk with you. Just relax and let them know what kind of session you would like. After you’ve seen them all, I’ll come back and you can tell me which one you would like to see. Okay?”

“Sure,” I replied timidly, wondering what would happen after she left, and having no idea except that someone was going to come into the room.

“Can I get you a drink?” she asked.

I had already been drinking to get up the courage to come here in the first place, but I figured more wouldn’t hurt.

“Sure. Can I get a bourbon?” I asked politely.

“No problem, I’ll get that for you. With coke okay?”

“Sure, thanks.”

This was in the early days, when you could get alcohol at BDSM houses. (For anyone who hasn’t come across this term, it stands for Bondage and Discipline, Dominance and Submission, and Sadism and Masochism.) A lot has changed now, and the hardest drink you might be offered is a reconstituted orange juice.

Josef 's free tip # 1

Even after I became a regular at this house, there came a time when I couldn't get a bourbon anymore, so if you're a first-timer thinking of visiting a mistress (and I can recommend it) then let me give you a tip. If you want a drink, have it before you get there.

I later got in the habit of taking my hip ask with me and draining it in the car before going in.

The receptionist told me to wait and gave me a warm smile as she left the room. It was all so normal for her, but I sat on the edge of a great divide, trying to deal with the forbidden "abnormality" of it all.

I perched nervously on the edge of the lounge and looked around the large room. It had been built at a time when they used heavy timber, with high ceilings and ornate cornices. It was very clean and the smell of old timber and worn leather filled the room, giving it a very cozy, comfortable feel. It added to the depth of character and atmosphere, and to the sense of forbidden delight flowing through my being.

I sat back on the dark leather lounge and took in the rest of the room. There was a coffee table in the middle of the room with some adult magazines spread across it. A tray of mints sat invitingly on the coffee table and I wanted to reach out and take one, but for some reason I was too afraid.

The timber floor was mostly covered in a large thick rug. There was another door opposite the main entrance and I wondered where it might lead. Maybe the mistresses would enter through it.

I began to relax a little with the safety of being inside away from prying eyes. Now I could enjoy the relaxing effect of the alcohol I'd consumed earlier. Taking a deep breath, I studied the room and tried to put behind me the nerve-racking trip of getting here.

There was a leather armchair in the corner across from me, and next to it some kind of apparatus against the wall. I wasn't sure what it was but it looked like something you could use to restrain someone. It might be my first time here, but I knew where I was and had some idea of what went on, or at least I thought I did.

The thing against the wall was a large X-shaped timber structure, with small metal eye hooks attached at various points. It had a foreboding look, but at the same time I was excited and intrigued by it. I later learnt it was called a St Andrews cross and I would come to love the view from it, with my arms and legs spread, and my naked body shackled against it. But that would all come later, once I'd dived headlong into the exciting world of BDSM. For now, I felt like a country rube who had been dropped in the middle of Times Square.

There were other various loose items around the room, on shelves and hanging from the walls: masks, whips, and dildos. *Lots* of leather. I smiled to myself through my inebriated haze. What had I expected?

Even without visiting a dungeon, everyone who's ever thought about it has the stereotypical image of a mistress. Tall, dressed in tight leather outfits, long leather boots, and the mandatory leather whip. In reality, mistresses come in all shapes and sizes, and dress in all kinds of ways. But they're always sexy.

After a while I heard footsteps approach the door. It opened quietly and the receptionist came into the room with my drink.

"Here you are," she said, handing me the glass. "The mistresses won't be long now. Make yourself comfortable."

I thanked her as she left the room and I drank my bourbon, syphoning it through the ice she had put in the glass and draining it in a gulp. I remember thinking it was way too much ice, and made a mental note to pass on the coke next time.

I placed the glass on the table and stood up, wondering where I'd be most comfortable, and whether I should be sitting or standing when the mistresses came in. I decided to sit and went to the other side of the room and sat in the armchair, next to the St Andrews cross. It was directly facing the door I'd entered through, and diagonally opposite, and also gave me a clear view of the second door in case the mistresses came through that one.

I sat and waited. My mind was numb with anticipation... what was taking so long! It seemed time had gone into slow motion. I couldn't think anymore, wondering what was going to happen, and what it would be like, so I tried to sit quietly and waited.

More footsteps. Finally!

This time when the door opened, I got my first look at a mistress.

3 Serena

I had no idea what to expect and my eyes were glued to the door as it slowly opened. It was the same door I had come through and any thoughts about the second door, and where it might lead, instantly disappeared.

In a new situation such as this you can have all manner of thoughts about it, but for some reason it never seems to be what you imagined.