

Chapter 8

Paulsgrove Nights

David spent the rest of the afternoon in a pub getting extremely tanked up in preparation for the forthcoming evening's fun. He always enjoyed a good riot and those at Paulsgrove always seemed to be the most violent. There was always plenty of action, alcohol and drugs available. The locals always seemed to put on a good show. In reality they did not have much to smile about in the area, but these events were always a good way of forgetting their own troubles for at least few hours.

They had become almost festival like now. As usual the burger vans were out in force. There was always plenty to drink and it was rumoured that this time there would also be a disco.

It was seven in the evening when he arrived outside Maureen's house. Kat was waiting outside for him.

He smiled at her as he screeched to a halt and shouted.

"Get in yeh sexy little slapper."

Kat managed a small smile as she climbed in the car. David realised something was wrong.

"What's up?" he asked.

"It's Dad," she replied. "Fucking heart attack init."

"Fuck, when?"

“This afternoon. They saved him this time, but they say the next will kill him.”

“Shit,” muttered David.

“Apparently it is a matter of days now, that’s all.”

“And those cunts will not operate,” continued David.

“I know; bunch of fucking wankers they are. I know I said I did not care what happened, but I suppose he is me dad, init.”

David nodded, that was true and at least she knew where and who her father was.

Kat lit a cigarette.

“I need to get very drunk,” she said. “And then I need to get very laid. Then you need to do that cunt over there.”

She pointed across the road. David followed her finger.

“Why?” he asked.

“Cunt called you a fucking pedo, didn’t it?”

“What! Why?”

“He said cos I was under fifteen. I was a fucking child. So he called you a pedo.”

David stared over at the house. Only fat, balding men in their forties or older could be paedophiles. Geezers like him were not, no matter how young their girlfriend was. This was a very serious insult indeed that could not go unanswered; the matter would be dealt with later that night.

“Okay,” he said. “That cunt will get his later. First let’s get you fucking drunk and spunked up.”

He put the car into gear and screeched off down the road in his usual fashion.

First stop of the night was McDonald's in Cosham. David never used the word McDonalds, like most of his friends and family he used the term Maccy D's. He had heard somewhere that the name had originated from Northern Ireland and was now in common use around the country.

At this time of day, Maccy D's was full of teenagers who were looking for cheap, filling food to eat before starting on a night of drinking, smoking, fighting and smashing up shop windows. During the day the restaurant tended to be full of overweight, unemployed single mothers and their foul mouthed, hyperactive and uncontrolled children. These women spent most afternoons in the same place filling their kids with junk food while having their mobile phones permanently glued to their ears.

The evening crowd tended to be more male than female, but the general atmosphere was no better. Most of them were unemployed with little formal education, but they still took great pleasure out of treating the staff like some form of lower class humans.

A common saying in the area is; there is one thing worse than being unemployed and that is working. That was followed by the saying that the worst job going was in McDonald's.

When David and Kat walked into the restaurant it was very busy, noisy and extremely messy. David noticed the long queue and swore under his breath. He gave Kat twenty pounds.

"Get me two big Macs girl and whatever you fucking want, going for a fucking piss."

David pushed his way through the crowd and headed to the toilet area.

Inside the gents' toilets he watched a fifteen-year-old boy kick the hand dryer off the wall while laughing in an almost insane manner. It was a manic laugh almost like an excited hyena which would have kept a team of psychiatrists busy for months.

David stared at the boy who noticed his audience for the first time. He stopped kicking the dryer and snarled at it instead.

"It fucking dissed me," he said in a fake black rapper accent as he walked out.

David grinned and relieved himself on the floor; *it's already wetter than the urinals so why bother*, he thought.

Once finished, he strode back into the restaurant just as Kat was collecting the food. He walked up to the counter next to her and said in a loud voice, "Oi spotty."

The young man who had been serving Kat looked up at him. His face was indeed covered in spots. He smiled and said in a tired, disinterested but slightly nervous voice.

"Yes sir, can I help you?"

"Yeh, your fucking toilets are a fucking mess. You should get one of those lazy Asian cunts in the kitchen to clean it up."

This brought a loud cheer from the crowded restaurant.

David was referring to the two young ladies who were on floor duty. They spent as much time as possible hiding in the kitchen simply for the fact it was safer.

“Thank you, sir,” said the young man. “I will let the manager know about your complaint right away.”

Satisfied the member of staff had shown him the correct amount of due respect, David turned away and led Kat out to the car park.

“What’s up with the bog?” she asked.

“Fucking sink on floor. Dryer on floor and now my piss on the floor,” he replied through a mouthful of burger.

They both laughed as they walked to the car.

Five minutes later he was parking in the centre of Paulsgrove.

This northern area of Portsmouth was built around unused chalk pits in Portsdown Hill. The hill was on the western edge of the South Downs. The South Downs were a large collection of hills that spanned the south east of England. Most of the Downs were renowned for their beauty, apart from this area of course.

The locality of the area had given rise to the term ‘chalk pit dwellers’ and this term was not used as a compliment.

Paulsgrove was a large council estate which used to have a good collection of public bars. Gradually more and more of the houses had been purchased by their tenants, but the area was in general one of poverty, crime and violence.

Long before the smoking ban, all but two of the public houses had been closed, demolished and built upon with stunning speed. Just like the Buckland estate, the reasons had usually involved drugs, prostitution and underage drinking. As a result, a good living could be made from selling alcohol from a shop, provided that

you were able to stand up to the local gangs who would constantly try and steal your stock and takings.

David parked as close as he could to the centre of the action. The centre of attraction this evening was a small semi-detached house in a road very close to the main shopping area in Allaway Avenue.

Already the area was packed full of people eager for a night of alcohol filled destruction. The excitement, noise and violence were a distraction from their normal mundane lives. As David locked his car he noticed that the police were also about in force.

He nodded towards a large group and said to Kat.

“Fucking filth thinks they are going to stop us.”

“Wankers,” she replied.

The area was also packed with press from all the major newspapers and TV cameras were also visible. News of the event had spread far and wide.

There were also plenty of burger vans in attendance and kids were running through the crowd taking orders for alcohol. The burger vans were doing a brisk trade and the disco was being hastily assembled on a small patch of grass.

The drink orders were relayed back to gang members at the edge of the crowd who would either take the items from stock or send junior gang members into the shops to steal the required items. For some it was going to be a very lucrative night.

David and Kat pushed their way through the drunk, noisy and very aggressive crowd. Eventually they reached the front of the crowd. David turned to a middle aged woman and said.

“What he done then love?”

The woman took a mouthful of vodka from her bottle before replying.

“The old git molested a fifteen-year-old girl. Fucking police will do nothing, and his slut wife will not throw him out, so we are going to do it.”

David nodded. This pervert was going to get what he deserved.

In reality the targeted man had done nothing more than tell a fifteen-year-old to stop swearing in the street. This had quickly resulted in an argument between them. Upset and being disrespected by an old man, the young girl decided to get her own back by spreading lies about the supposed sexual assault. Tonight was the end result of these actions. In the house a very frightened family where cowering behind their curtains.

The husband was busily trying to convince his wife that he was innocent. The wife, while wanting to believe him, was also fearing for her life and that of their two children. She could not vent her anger at the crowd so she was venting it at him.

The two children were sitting under the kitchen table crying and simply wanting it all to end.

The truth that David was unable to recognise was that while the accused man was not a pervert, he in fact was. The man inside the house was forty-two. He had been married for fifteen years and had never been unfaithful to his wife. He would never dream of molesting a child. David on the other hand was twenty-three. His girlfriend was nearly fifteen and also his cousin. In the eyes of the law, David was a paedophile who should be on the Sex Offenders Register. However,

like hundreds of other young men in the crowd tonight, he did not consider it a crime for a geezer in his twenties to have sex with girls aged fourteen or fifteen.

At the front of the crowd, people were starting to throw stones and scream abuse at the house. The sound of smashing glass was the cue for the police to try and position themselves between the crowd and the house. They managed to push the crowd back a little, but the night was still young.

The noise level was rising as chants of ‘kill the pervert’ started to ring out.

David decided to move to the edge of the crowd, he knew the party would kick off fully in about an hour. The alcohol levels within the crowd were not quite high enough for the majority to have complete disregard for the police. He grabbed a courier, a young boy no more than ten years old. He gave the boy a twenty pound note and said.

“Bottle of whisky and a bottle of vodka kid.”

The boy nodded, took the money and ran off into the crowd.

What David had failed to notice was a television camera and a press photographer watching his every move. A reporter who was working with the photographer moved up next to Kat. He made sure that both the television camera and photographer was on them before speaking.

“Hello,” he said in a calm friendly voice.

Kat turned to the reporter and scowled. The reporter responded with a warm friendly smile.

“What?” she replied.

“I work for a national newspaper,” he replied. “We are here to get the true story about tonight. Can I ask your name please?”

“Kat, init.”

“Kat, is that short for anything?” asked the reporter, he was thinking Katherine or Katrina.

Kat was confused by the question. As far back as she could remember her name was Kat.

“No,” she replied after a slight hesitation, “it’s Kat, init.”

The reporter grinned. *Okay, he thought, got your level.*

“Thanks, Kat. So what do you think of the family in that house?”

“The pervert needs a good kickin’ init. Fuckin’ wife must be mank. Probably a lezza as well.”

The reporter took a moment to translate this in his mind.

“Yes, I hear the girl in question was fifteen.”

“Ye, poor bitch ain’t no skank.”

Again the reporter took a moment to realise what she had said.

“I am sure she was not,” he continued. “Poor girl, you look about fifteen as well, is that right?”

“Yeh, I iz nearly fifteen, so wut?”

The reporter shrugged. In his mind he was thinking, *this is perfect, a fourteen-year-old girl with a boyfriend who looks about twenty-five.*

“I just wondered. I am sure you can sympathise with the young girl. It must be horrible; I mean at fifteen she

is still a child in the eyes of the law. As are you of course.”

Kat stared blankly at him, she did not quite understand the direction the conversation was taking.

“Anyone who has sex with a fifteen year old child is breaking the law,” he concluded.

The reporter glanced at David who had not noticed what was going on behind his back. He was too busy pushing the crowd towards the police while shouting abuse towards the house.

“Nice looking lad,” said the reporter. He was more than happy to lie in order to get a good story. “Is he your fella?”

“Yeh, so?”

“Just wondered, with so many perverts around these days it must be nice to have a strong lad looking out for you.”

Kat simply nodded. She was now starting to feel trapped and a little confused by the questions.

“Looks a bit big for fourteen though. Does he work out?”

Suddenly Kat realised where the line of questioning was heading. She did not like the direction things were heading and resented the fact she had been duped.

“Fuck off,” she replied, unable to hold herself any longer. “I ain’t letting a fifteen-year-old cunt near my twat, geezer. My fella is twenty-three, good age and a good size cock. He knows where to put it. I also trust him cos he my cousin as well as well. He’s family geez.”

Oh thank you, god, thought the reporter, *this was pure solid gold, headline news.* This would go so well in

his story. A fourteen-year-old girl with a twenty-three-year-old boyfriend who was also her cousin. Both of them in a riot against an adult who apparently had molested another fifteen-year-old girl. *We simply could not make this up*, he thought to himself with a large smile on his face, *the gods are smiling on me tonight*.

Just to make his night even better the ten-year-old boy returned with the two bottles of spirit. He gave both to Kat who immediately opened the vodka and drank at least a quarter of the bottle straight down.

Keep it up love, thought the reporter. *The camera loves you so keep it up*.

“Like a drink I see,” he said with a warm smile on his face.

Suddenly Kat seemed to realise just how much she had been set up and just how many photographs had been taken of her. She stared at the television camera and the photographer and then back at the reporter.

“You fucking perverted wanker!” she shouted. “Fuck off before I tell everyone you had a good feel up my fucking skirt. You is mingin mate.”

With that she pushed her way to where David was standing and passed him is whisky. She glanced back at the reporter one last time and raised her skirt for the camera.

Fantastic, thought the reporter. Like all the other reporters in attendance and the police, he did not believe the man in the house had done anything wrong. He had been covering this sort of story for years. He knew how and why they started. He knew how they grew and he knew how they ended. He knew that on this occasion at least one person would get seriously hurt, possibly even

killed. His job was simple: report it, try not to give a damn and get out alive.

His story was already well formed. A five-year-old boy had been found wondering around with no clothes on. He had been awoken by the noise to find an empty house and an open front door. His mother was in the crowd somewhere and the boy was now in the hands of social services.

His photographer had taken hundreds of pictures of children drinking and smoking with their parents. They had photographs of young girls kissing and making out with boyfriends who were in their twenties. They had photographs of children stealing alcohol from the local shops.

They had also captured a group of children setting fire to a car, but the highlight of the evening so far had been his chat with Kat. She was tomorrow's headline news.

He knew that many of those in the crowd did not even live in the area. Most did not really care if the story was true. What mattered was that they were able to enjoy a drink and drug fuelled riot for a few hours and indulge in some good old fashioned violence while venting a little frustration.

David was now working his way back to the front of the mob. His bottle now half empty he was ready for some serious action.

The chant had now changed to 'burn the wanker out' and he knew what this meant. With Kat behind him, he made his way to where the bottles were being prepared.

Ten bottles full of petrol and primed for use where on the floor. David approved, he finished his whisky and grabbed a petrol bomb.

“Let’s fucking do it!” he cried.

A huge roar of approval went up around him and the other nine bottles where soon grabbed.

Within seconds all of the bottles were alight and heading towards the house. Six hit the house, one fell back into the crowd and the remaining three landed in the gardens of neighbouring homes. The front door and living room window started to burn.

That was the moment the police swung into action. They were ordered to break up the crowd and get them away from the house. Both mounted and foot police charged the crowd which immediately panicked and started to run in different directions.

David grabbed Kat.

“Get down to the shops, and wait for me there. If the filth grabs yeh, cry and pretend to be frightened.”

Kat nodded and ran off in the direction of the main shops.

David turned and ran towards the main area of confrontation. He did not care if they were police officers, it had been a good night so far and now it was getting better.

He grabbed a bottle from the ground and put it across the face of a young policeman. The bottle smashed on impact and left the young man’s face a mess of deep cuts and blood. The policeman screamed in pain and fell to the floor clutching his face.

David felt no pity. He kicked the policeman so hard in the ribs that three bones broke immediately.

David turned back to the main group and attacked another three policemen before realising it was a losing battle. The police now had the upper hand and the crowd was dispersing fast.

He knew this was the time to get away. All around him the police were getting closer as the retreating crowd started to thin out.

Running as fast as his smoking depleted lungs would allow, he made his way down to the main shopping area in Paulsgrove along with most of the crowd.

The shopping area was simply a line of shops that served the needs of the local area, namely a small supermarket, a couple of off licences, a Chinese take-away, one Indian take-away, a betting shop and of course the local fish and chip shop.

The area was littered with smashed windows and the police were fast bearing down on the retreating crowd.

David found Kat, grabbed her by the arm and shouted “this way” to her.

Kat followed and they ran down a narrow alley between the shops and out into a car park. David’s car was parked in the darkest corner and within seconds they were safely hidden in the back seat.

Both breathing hard and overexcited from a frantic night of action and violence they ripped at each other’s clothes until they were both naked.

Not a word was said as David entered her and thrust deeply and firmly into her young body.

All around them the violence and rioting of the night continued, but neither of them heard anything other than their own breathing and Kat's groaning as she experienced a rare occurrence, an orgasm not caused by her own hands.

Moments later David climaxed as well and they collapsed into a heap of sweat covered flesh on the back seat. Neither was aware, but at that moment, this was the night Kat became pregnant for the first and only time. Sadly, neither of them would ever become aware of this.

David reached for his jeans and found his cigarettes. He lit two and passed one to Kat.

"We had better stay here for a while," he said.

Kat nodded. In the corner of the car park she could see three policemen giving a local chav one hell of a kicking.

"Fucking pigs," she muttered.

David glanced over at the fight and nodded.

"Better him than us," he added.

They settled back down to enjoy their cigarettes and shortly afterwards they were both asleep.

It was just after two in the morning when David was awoken by the sound of someone trying to break into the car. He sat up and stared through the window at a young, hood covered boy who was attempting to force the driver side door.

David banged on the window with his fist.

"You cunt, fuck off now!" he shouted.

Kat jumped up and looked around.

The young boy jumped back, a look of terror on his face. He stared back at the two naked figures in the car, screamed and ran off.

“Fucking Paulsgrove poof!” shouted David.

He looked at Kat.

“You okay?” he asked.

“Yeh,” she replied.

David checked the time.

“Better get dressed,” he said. “Just after two.”

Without another word they both dressed and moved to the front of the car. David fired up the engine, made sure the stereo was on full and roared out of the car park.

All around them was signs of rioting and violence. Shop windows were smashed. Cars were burnt out. A bus was abandoned on the pavement and there was glass everywhere.

David realised that the police were probably still in the area, so he slowed and adjusted the volume slightly. Chances were that the police were still very truncheon happy and he did not fancy a beating.

They made the journey back to Kat’s road without incident, but as they turned into the street they were surprised by what they saw.

Across the road from Kat’s home was a glass repair van and a police car. The front room window of the house that Kat knew very well was in the process of being replaced. It belonged to the man and woman she had shouted at the previous night.

David stopped outside Kat’s home. Maureen was standing on the door step. David could see she had been crying. He turned off the music and the engine.

“You okay?” he asked as he got out of the car. Kat also jumped out and she gave her mother a hug.

“What’s up?” she asked.

“It’s your brother pet,” explained Maureen. “That fucking old wanker who upset you last night. Chris gave him a fucking good kicking and pushed him through their fucking window.”

“Where is Chris?” asked David

“Fucked off,” said Maureen. “Fucking pigs wanna do him, so I told him to run and hide.”

David nodded. *Very wise*, he thought, the filth would not treat him well.

“What about the old wanker over there?” he asked.

“He has gone to the fucking hospital, love. He must have been cut up bad cos they put the sheet over his face.”

David stared at his auntie for a second. He needed to be sure she had said what he thought she had said.

“Right over his face?” he asked.

“Yeh why?”

Kat realised the true horror of the situation. She burst out crying and ran inside the house.

“Cos he was fucking dead!” she screamed from the kitchen.

Maureen dropped the glass of vodka that was in her hand and stared across the road.

“The fucking cunt is dead,” she muttered. “Now my youngest son is going to be done for fucking murder cos of that old tosser?”

“Probably,” said David, “if they find him that is.”

“What the fuck did the fucking old cunt have to die for?” said Maureen, as she lit a fresh cigarette and stared across the road.

“If they do him for murder, I will kill that fucking old bag,” she muttered.

“You better get out of here, David,” she continued. “Filth are still angry after the riot, two people were killed, one was a copper.”

David had not known this, but he decided it was time to get home. He gave Maureen a kiss on the cheek and walked back to his car.

“See you tomorrow,” he said before opening the car door.

“Okay,” muttered Maureen, her eyes still fixed on the house across the road.

David got into his car, and for the first time in a very long time, he turned off the stereo before turning on the ignition. It simply felt like the right thing to do.

Again out of character, he drove away at a speed that remained legal. With no fuss or noise, he simply drove home and parked up for the night.

Once inside the house he walked into the living room and cracked open a can of lager. Everything was quiet, his mother was asleep upstairs and for some strange reason the stillness seemed pleasant.

It was not a sensation he was used to feeling, and it was certainly not something he understood. As he sat on the settee and looked out onto the deserted street, David pondered on his past, the present and finally the future.

Just what had he achieved so far?

Nothing, was the thought that came back.

Nothing that meant anything and nothing that he would be remembered for.

Tomorrow, he thought to himself, *tomorrow I will change all of that.*

With that his eyes closed and he fell asleep.