

# A Sinner Saved

A true story



Dan  
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*by Dan Nordquist*

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This is a work of creative nonfiction. The events are portrayed to the best of Daniel's memory.

While all the stories in this book are true, some names and identifying details have been changed to protect the privacy of the people involved.

## The Early Years, Part 1 – The Beginning

Daniel woke up from a deep slumber. A fleeting dream that he couldn't quite remember left him with a feeling of wonder and excitement. As he opened his eyes, he saw a shaft of sunshine slant across the room to brighten the white blanket on his bed. A single dust mote, shining like a star in the sunlight, slowly drifted in the air. He watched it until it finally drifted out of the ray of light and disappeared, marveling at the beauty of such a simple thing.

Life was so amazing.

His eleventh birthday was just two weeks away, and he knew the world was a grand place where he would live a long and wonder-filled life, full of adventure and excitement, and loving, fun people.

He sat up and stretched luxuriously, listening to Steven in the other room, playing with his toys, and sprang out of bed, running to tackle him and started tickling him until his laughter pierced the morning with a squeak of joy.

Mom came in the room with her hands on her hips. “Daniel,” she said sternly, “I guess you aren't really sick are you?”

He had totally forgotten that he faked being sick earlier that morning and stayed home from school. He wasn't sure why, but he just had a feeling he needed to stay home today.

Mom wasn't happy. He knew that when she called him Daniel instead of Dan, that he had better not push it ... She scolded him and marched him off to get into his school clothes, so she could take him to school before she had to leave with Mrs. White for the women's club meeting at noon.

Kicking rocks all the way home from the bus stop after school, he still had that feeling that life would never stop being so awesome.

When he walked into the house, he could feel that something wasn't right. The house was too

quiet. He went looking for Steven, but he wasn't in his room or anywhere that he could see. Checking the kitchen and living room, scouting the outside of the house, Steven was nowhere to be found. He finally shook the feeling off and went into his room to play, figuring Steven must be with mom somewhere, although where they could be was a mystery.

A little while later, his stepdad came to the door and asked him to come into the living room. Daniel was surprised to see that all three of his stepsisters and his brother were there, sitting around the room and looking confused, and Mom was sitting on the couch, waiting for him. He noticed his mom looked like she had been crying, which seemed very strange to Daniel. The only person missing was Steven, but he must have been in his crib, taking a nap.

As his stepdad started reading a story from the Bible, something about King David and his son, Mom started crying and sobbing with a deep, agonizing wail. It was so full of pain that it filled Daniel with a deep foreboding! Daniel was suddenly transported to some alternate reality that froze all his senses. Something was very wrong. The conversation was muted, but he slowly realized, after Dad continued talking and everyone else started crying, that something had happened to Steven.

He ran into Steven's room, but he wasn't in his crib. He couldn't understand. Where was he? Surely he had to be here somewhere? Time stopped. The world ceased to exist as he knew it. He *was* supposed to have stayed home that day! He was supposed to have been home to save Steven, but he had failed! He had failed. And now Steven was gone. He had allowed his eighteen-month-old little brother to die.

At some point, someone was trying to tell him that Steven was with Jesus now, and that it would be okay, but nothing really registered fully into his consciousness. His foggy mind registered going to school and being given comic books to read, but he couldn't read anything. Couldn't feel anything. Couldn't comprehend anything. He knew that it was his fault Steven was dead. And God hated him. He must, or this wouldn't have happened.

He questioned God's existence not long after that fateful day while walking alone down the dirt road that went past their house on Bull Mountain and into the woods. He pointed his BB gun randomly and fired, asking God to prove Himself by breaking the twig. The first shot did not hit the twig. He tried again. This time the twig broke. Was this random or God? If God, why not the first time? His pain had started turning to anger, and he directed that anger at God, but eventually that turned to denial of God entirely.

## The Early Years, Part 2 – Beaverton

The new Beaverton house was okay, but it just wasn't the same as the house on Bull Mountain. Daniel missed all the fruit trees and the open space where he could play and ride his bike on the dirt road that had led to the house. Here, there was just house after house, all packed in like sardines.

His opinion of himself over the last couple years had gotten so low that he knew he was unlovable and worthless as a person. Why should he care about that, though? No one was happy any more. Mom and Dad were distant people who never showed any emotion except anger or sadness, and his stepsisters were turning into horrible little witches who seemed to hate him. Even his brother, who was eighteen months older than Daniel, had grown estranged and distant. Daniel's internalization of the pain and sadness of Steven's death was turning to anger and misery. He told himself over and over that he didn't care. Didn't care. If he cared, then he had to feel, and feeling just meant more pain. Nothing mattered, and the world was a horrible place full of pain and misery. There was no such thing as love, no goodness or kindness in the world.

They got a little terrier/poodle mix dog, but it ended up drowning in the pool, and one of the girls found him floating in the water. Everything in life was a downer. No one ever mentioned Steven again because it just caused so much pain for everyone. His death was a taboo subject. Everyone had to just deal with it on their own, and Daniel was falling into a deep dark pit.

Daniel met a girl at school who seemed to like him and gave him her phone number, but feeling that he was so worthless, he stopped talking to her after a very short time. There was one time when they were talking on the phone, and Daniel told her about a silly mistake he'd made. He had accidentally set his radio alarm clock, and it went off in the middle of the night, blaring at full volume, and he was so sound asleep that he slept right through it, but it woke up his stepfather upstairs. Daniel didn't even wake up until it suddenly shut off.

She jokingly said, “That was swift,” with a giggle, but Daniel took it the worst way possible instead of good-naturedly and endearing as she had intended. So he never talked to her again. At the time, he didn't understand that he was taking it wrong. In his mind, he was a horrible person and everyone must have known that.

One afternoon, as he was finishing up his paper route, he saw Ron, his older brother, throwing his school bag into the air, laughing and catching it, with an almost-happy skip in his stride. Daniel wondered what could be going on that caused him to actually be happy.

As his brother approached, he asked what was going on. Ron said something about smoking something, and he could barely stop giggling and laughing. *Whatever he smoked*, Daniel thought, *must be amazing stuff*. Ron promised to take him along next time.

A few days later, Ron met him coming out of school. “Hey, Dan, the guy said it would be okay if I brought you with me today,” he said.

“What guy?” Daniel asked, suspiciously.

“You know, the guy I told you about.”

“Oh, okay ...” He wasn't sure how he felt about this, but he remembered the other day, and went with Ron to see what it was about.

The guy's house was barely a shack that seemed to be falling apart. The peeling paint left long lines of exposed, rotting siding along the outside of the house, and the inside was pretty much the same. They sat on old saggy couches, and the guy pulled out a big bag of some dried-up green leaves that he sold to Ron for ten dollars. When he lit up what looked like a hand-rolled cigarette and passed it around, Daniel sucked on it like he saw Ron do, but the foreign substance hit his lungs like a brick and he coughed like crazy. He wasn't sure he liked this.

Until his mind started filling with new thoughts ... Suddenly, everything was funny. The world had a whole new perspective, and the numbness and pain of existence had somehow lifted from his shoulders. He could laugh. He could just laugh and laugh and laugh. At twelve years old, he learned

that drugs could take the place of love and happiness. That it was fake happiness didn't matter. It only mattered that something could lift him out of the black hole he was spiraling into.

His paper route provided some walking-around money and cash to buy weed.

## The Early Years, Part 3 – Memories

Daniel didn't remember anything about Germany. He was only a year old when they went, after all, so there was nothing permanent about it in his memories. He knew that his father had been in the Air Force and was stationed in Germany and that Mom had taken him and Ron over to live with him, but they only stayed a year and then came back to the States.

He knew that his father had gotten some German girl pregnant and had killed some Germans in a drunk-driving accident, then spent some time in a German jail and was discharged from the Air Force because of these things. Mom divorced him when they got back to the States.

Daniel figured he must be just like his father. He had allowed his little brother to die, so he was probably just as bad.

His early childhood hadn't been so bad, he didn't think. He couldn't blame anything tangible for the evil in him, so he must have just been born bad.

There was the time when he and Ron and Mom lived in their little house in Michigan. He could remember getting his first ride on a motorcycle from one of Mom's boyfriends. It was in that house that he learned to ride a bike, got bit by a dog, heaped his cereal with six scoops of sugar one time, got cracked in the head playing catch with a baby food jar with Ron, and many other of his early childhood memories.

That was also the house where mom met his stepfather, Allen. Seemed like it wasn't long before they were married, and all of a sudden Daniel had three stepsisters that Allen brought from his previous marriage. It was something like the Brady Bunch, with so many children. And there was only three years separating the youngest from the oldest of all five kids, Daniel being the second to the youngest.

The family moved to the Portland, Oregon area when Daniel was about six years old, and he could remember playing with his first big “dobber/shooter” marbles in the little yellow house, before

they moved to Bull Mountain. His most profound memory was of a neighbor's German Shepherd getting run over by their family car on the way to church.

The house on Bull Mountain was a huge house, with a whole slew of apple trees, a couple cherry trees, an almond tree and a pear tree. It had a little mother-in-law cottage in the back, with a big garage and carport adjacent to the house, and a rose garden that Mom just loved.

There was the Cashe's big ranch-style property with horses across the street, and a pond they skated on in the winter, trails in the nearby woods, fresh air and a country-like life, even though it was fairly close to Portland.

When Steven was born and grew into a laughing, happy one-year-old, life seemed so good. There was a long walkway to the front door with a framed cover that had boards every few feet. Ron and Daniel used to jump and slap the boards going down the walkway, and Steven, at about a foot-and-a-half tall, would jump just as high as he could, trying to slap the boards, too. Daniel couldn't imagine anything better than the life they had.

He could remember times like the night all the kids were out in the vegetable garden and someone discovered how good carrots were when you pulled them right out of the ground and ate them when they were so fresh. He and the kids ate all of the carrots in the garden that day. Mom was, of course, furious. But it was one of those things that sticks in the mind.

Daniel had no idea that being beaten with a strip of aluminum and whipped with stripped-down tree branches wasn't normal. I mean, didn't all kids get beaten like that? He remembers the day that aluminum thing broke on him out in the garage when Allen was beating him with it. Daniel had been tasked with dragging piles of cut tree branches into the vacant lot next to them, but he had to go to the bathroom really bad when he was about half done. He said so, but wasn't allowed to go until he had finished with the tree branches, so he ended up pooping his pants. The beating was to remind him that he should work faster and not dawdle when doing chores so things like that didn't happen. That

aluminum rod getting broken was a relief, but there were plenty of other tools for his stepdad to use, he found out.

There was the time Ron showed him how to smoke a cigarette. “Smoking MBs,” he called it, short for Marlboro. It was nasty-tasting and he didn't inhale, but he puffed on it and acted “cool,” trying to blow smoke rings and be all sophisticated.

When Steven died, the world turned gray. He recalled watching Ron be cruel to cats in the neighborhood. Ron and his friends would play little sick tricks on Daniel, like ganging up on Daniel and shoving his head in a toilet with urine in it, and the time when someone smashed up things in the storeroom next to the garage, but all the other kids blamed Daniel, so he ended up taking the blame and the punishment. Times of pain and misery that really didn't seem to matter in the grayness.

Mom couldn't stand to stay in the house that had so many memories of Steven, so it wasn't long until the family moved to the Beaverton house.

After the first experience with marijuana, life turned down a different path for Daniel. Pot made it easier to not care about anything, and to forget that he had let his little brother die. He would walk around with an attitude, with a boom box on his shoulder blaring songs like Alice Cooper's “I Love the Dead,” telling himself that he didn't care. Didn't care. Couldn't care. He spent a lot of time alone, walking around the neighborhood streets, his life getting darker and darker. He hid tennis shoes in the bushes so he didn't have to wear the “old man” shoes his parents made him wear to school where he was a laughingstock for all the other kids.

There was no real guidance in the home. There was church, and there was home life. He had some vague idea that if you believe in Jesus you're “saved” and that's that, but then there was sin; and while it supposedly didn't matter to Jesus if you sinned after you were saved, you still weren't supposed to sin. It was nothing but confusing. The idea of religion became hypocritical to Daniel. The only real thing was anger and pain. Everyone in the house had both. If there was a God, he wasn't in that house.

Daniel had his first experience with a stolen car on one of the middle-of-the-night excursions

where Ron would sneak him out of the house, and they would run around being little delinquents. They would sneak out and just bum around the streets, diving into the ditch when they saw headlights coming and feeling a type of exhilaration from going into the unknown, like some kind of adventure. One night, Ron took him to a car he had stolen and stashed in the woods, and gave him his first driving lesson at twelve years old. It was a Datsun 240z that someone had left the keys in while shopping.

He ran away the first time at twelve years old. He only stayed away for a couple days that first time, sleeping in alleys and under bridges in the Portland area, until he got too hungry and tired, but this became a frequent occurrence for the next couple years. He survived by using the technique taught him by his big brother. Stealing ... looting unlocked vehicles, and shoplifting.

Ron got arrested for habitual car theft and was sent to a juvenile prison, and Daniel felt pretty much alone in the world. Sometimes when he ran away, he would head down to the Salem, Oregon area where the prison was and skateboard around, just to be near his brother.

One of the times he ran away, he attempted to steal a car that had the keys left in it, in the Washington Square Mall parking lot, but he didn't know you had to push the gear shift down to get the car into reverse and couldn't back it out of the parking space, and kept smashing into the car in front of it when he tried to. He had wedged his wallet into the driver's side window which was open just slightly, and he wedged it in to make room to get his hand in far enough to unlock the door. He was panicked after the window shattered, and he tossed his wallet in, jumped in and tried to back out several times before people were paying too much attention, and he had to bolt before the mall cops got there.

The next time he ran away, he was in the same parking lot, looking for a car with keys in it when the mall cops ambushed him. He spent his first night ever in jail when they discovered that he was the same kid that had banged up the car previously, since in his panic he had forgotten that he left his wallet in the car. He determined never to be such a stupid car thief again.

Not long after that, he came home from school one day to find Mom and Dad had laid out all his dope and smoking paraphernalia on their bed after searching his room, and they confronted him about it. He bolted, grabbed his skateboard and ran to the freeway, crossed it, and hitched a ride into Portland. The last thing he saw, as he was getting into the van that stopped to pick him up, was his stepfather driving up to the other side of the freeway and watching him get in.

Memories of those days include his first experience with Pink Floyd's *Dark Side of the Moon* album when Ron came back from jail at one point. "Breathe," "Time," "Money" ... these songs stayed with him for years. That, and Black Sabbath. His brother had been released from jail for a short time, and came back home, but he ended up right back inside before long (for stealing cars again).

## The Early Years, Part 4 – Up To Seattle

At age fourteen, the family moved again, this time to Renton, Washington, in the Seattle area.

His stepfather had always been partial to his daughters, and the first year in Seattle, it proved to be an escalating problem. For example, his younger sister would take a heavy iron frying pan and beat Daniel on the head with it, but if he retaliated in any way, his stepfather would whip him.

Mom was always there for him afterward, but she didn't do anything about the abusive treatment from Allen, and since Steven died, she was a shell of the woman she'd been before. They never talked about Steven. Everyone just ended up internalizing it.

Daniel was getting more and more rebellious and callous. He didn't care, after all, right? And authority was just a nuisance to be hated. He already saw the corruption in authority, both at home, at church, and in the government. It was all hypocritical and a power trip for people in authority, and he hated those that used their power for evil. He knew he was bad, but at the same time, he respected goodness and honesty, and hated mean, selfish, evil people.

Again, there was church. This was the most confusing thing of all, and the hypocrisy was so thick you could cut it with a knife. His stepdad was a deacon in the church, and the family was supposedly a very “Godly” family. If God was present, He wasn't felt by Daniel, and there was a pervading darkness that was ever-present, pressing down on him to the point of suffocation.

*Where is the love of God? Isn't God supposed to BE love?* If God was so present in the lives of his mom and stepdad, where was this comfort and love? How come his mom was so angry? Why were they constantly fighting? He remembers his mom in the front seat of the car, yelling at his stepdad, and watching the vein on the side of her head pulsing and popping out like crazy. *This is where God lives?* He wanted no part of it. God instructed men to beat little boys till they were black and blue, and shelter their evil little girls ... *Really? No thank you!*

He made plenty of friends in the new neighborhood. He found a lot of kids who loved to smoke and drink, so he fit in well with the more delinquent kids and spent a lot of time at the little stream across the street. It was a strip of woods that cut down the middle of the massive neighborhood and had a bridge crossing the stream.

One night, someone had managed to get ahold of a half-gallon of Everclear, and one of Daniel's friends, Brandon, ended up getting cut by the broken bottle someone had smashed after it was finished.

He took Brandon up to the house and used one of the outside hose connections to try and wash the wound. His stepfather came out, screaming at him, and dragged Daniel into the house and slammed him up against the wall. He knew there was a whipping coming ... Mom was there crying and begging him not to hurt Daniel. In that moment of hesitation, he bolted out of the house and ran.

He ran away quite a few times, usually heading to Portland for a few days. He had gotten quite good at shoplifting to provide for his daily needs. Daniel would hit the local malls and shopping centers, and, grabbing a backpack to carry stuff, he'd lift some food and drinks, gadgets, and things to play with and occupy his time. Daniel slept in alleys, parking garages, or under bridges. One time he went to see his girlfriend from ninth grade in Portland, and they were planning on stealing her father's car to run away to California, but her parents had called Daniel's parents, who showed up before the plan could be followed through on.

He was fifteen when he ran away the final time and left for good.

It was shortly after leaving that he had his first-ever sexual experience when walking by some apartments, and a young girl called out to him. It turned out that she was also a runaway and was staying with some older, college-age boys. She invited him to stay with her, and then seduced him in one of the apartment bedrooms. To this day, he has no idea why those boys let this happen, but he ended up staying there for a week or two, sleeping with the girl on the couch and happily learning all about sex with her. After that, they moved into another apartment where a single mother let them stay with her for a while in a spare room. Daniel learned a lot more about shoplifting from this woman. She

would go to the grocery store with her toddler, fill the grocery cart, and nonchalantly walk out of the store, pushing the cart with her child in the seat as if everything was completely normal and nothing was wrong, and nobody stopped her. He learned that hiding in plain sight was a neat trick that would come in handy down the road.

He stayed around the area for a while, but the girl got caught by the police and was made to return to her parents' home. He didn't feel any emotional attachment, so there was no pain of loss. He had discovered a whole new side of life, however. Sex was another thing to muffle the pain of failing his little brother. Another distraction. The most important thing was to not feel. Emotions would just cascade into a torrent of pain that would threaten to overcome him, so avoiding them was paramount. Staying angry, stoned, and aloof kept his heart safe.

His brother had recently been released from the juvenile prison in Salem and was living in Bend, in southern Oregon, so Daniel decided to go and live with him. He stole a '68 Firebird from a house a couple streets down from the family home in Renton (he'd learned how to hot-wire cars with a simple wire connection between the coil and the battery). Daniel drove it across Washington and Oregon, passing through Portland to get down to Bend.

On the way, he managed to outrun the police who were chasing him as he was coming into Portland, roaring down I-5 at 100+ miles an hour in the wee hours of the morning. There was no one else on the freeway, and he saw the lights way back before they caught up to him, so he just jammed the throttle and got away from them for a short while.

The sun was coming up by the time he hit the Portland metro area, and the cops were waiting for him, but they hadn't had enough time to do much but catch him flying by. He got off I-5, taking the Banfield Freeway, and there were plenty of morning commuters to dodge around and lose the cops without it being the height of rush hour, where he'd have probably gotten stuck behind vehicles, and he knew the exits pretty well, but when he had put a little distance between him and the cops, he made to

exit, but the turn was so sharp off the exit that he knew he wouldn't make it. So he slammed on his brakes, and then whipped the car back out into traffic to the next exit. Unwittingly, he had left a smoke and rubber patch at the previous exit, so the police thought he had exited and were chasing him that direction.

He went to his girlfriend from ninth grade's house and knocked on her window, naively thinking that she'd want to come with him and pursue the plan of running off to California. To his dismay, she simply said, "No, I can't!" and looked like she was upset that he had shown up at all with a stolen car. Daniel's silly romantic fantasies had expected her to leap out the window, into his arms ...

But he knew he was bad, failing his little brother like he had, and couldn't expect anything but punishment anyway, so he shrugged it off as best he could and drove south, down to Bend. He loved that Firebird. It was a four-speed manual, with a 400-cubic-inch V8, and he could roast the tires through third gear and even chirp 'em a bit in fourth. It was a very fast car. He learned that speed was another distraction that could make the numbness go away and give him something to feel. The faster, the more exciting!

He made it to Bend without incident, where he took Ron and his friends for one last joyride, and then dumped the Firebird at the local high school to try to make it as mysterious as possible when the police found the stolen car. They knew his brother, and they made a special trip over to Ron's, and after finding Daniel there they pointed out how obvious it was that Daniel had appeared the same time as the car, but the investigation didn't go any further since he played dumb and nobody was making any confessions.

It was a very hazy time in Bend. He was only there for about a month, but his first acid trip happened during that time along with lots of drinking and getting high. When a hitchhiking old man in his seventies turned up and everyone was so enamored with him, Daniel knew better. He could see the evil in the man and recognized the lies he was telling, but everyone else seemed unable to see that. When Daniel voiced his feelings, they all got mad at him, and Ron sent him up to Portland on his own

with a bus ticket. He told him to find a certain homeless shelter and stay there till he arrived.

## The Early Years, Part 5 – Back to Portland

When Ron came up to Portland a couple weeks after sending Daniel up, he got an apartment in an old brick apartment building right in the city. It was full of dealers and prostitutes mostly.

It was during this time that Daniel was introduced to cocaine for the first time. One of Ron's friends was the son of a gynecologist who got liquid cocaine (pure cocaine in water) for his practice and regularly used it for personal use. He had spray mechanisms, similar to perfume sprayers, that you would just snort the coke from in the liquid state. Being pharmaceutical-grade, pure cocaine, it was probably the best coke one could ever get. He (Dr. Johnson) was also a heavy pot smoker and would buy exotic weed to share with his son and friends.

Daniel got a job at “Herfy's,” a fast-food burger restaurant, and he and Ron did a lot of partying with friends, neighbors, and Dr. Johnson & Co.

The old adage, “sex, drugs and rock 'n roll” became a way of life for Daniel. It was a great distraction from the emptiness he felt inside. Van Halen made their first album during that time, and “Runnin' with the Devil” really was synonymous with the life he had in Portland.

He can remember many experiences with neighbors and “friends” from that time. There was a young prostitute who lived across the courtyard and up one floor who befriended Daniel and would have sex with him sometimes. He went to visit her one time with some of the liquid cocaine from Dr. Johnson, and the two guys that were there in her apartment were amazed that Daniel was snorting it instead of running it (injecting it). He never did get into that, and remains thankful to this day that he just knew it would be very bad if he ever got into that habit.

He remembers Ron getting lured into meth addiction by a dealer who played the standard trick on him. He gave him free meth for a while, and then started charging him for it. Daniel didn't like meth

and preferred cocaine so he escaped that trap, but Ron became a meth addict.

The few months spent at that apartment could be a book in itself with the stories that could be told. It was a mixed-up crazy time for a fifteen-year-old who was dropped into the underworld of Portland. One guy he remembers from the apartment complex had many stories of how he had volunteered for psychedelic drug testing for the government. And another kid from the apartment building was learning martial arts. He had Daniel take a knife and, grabbing his hand, he told Daniel to try to get out of his grip. Daniel just made a quick downward stroke and sliced the kid's hand open in the process. Daniel was mortified as the kid frantically ran to bandage his hand up. "You were supposed to stop me with your karate moves, man!" he yelled. The kid's father was furious, and threatened to sue Daniel, blaming him for the injury, but since Daniel had nothing to take, he dropped it.

There was a time when Dr. Johnson offered him any car he wanted, no matter how expensive, if he'd have sex with him. He refused. He just couldn't even imagine doing that, and was sickened at the thought. But his occasional gifts of liquid cocaine stopped after that.

Sometime after that, Dr Johnson's friend who owned a rental house in Hillsboro offered to rent it to the brothers and some friends. Daniel, being the youngest, went along for the ride, and there were 4 guys, including Daniel and his brother, who rented the house. He got a job delivering flowers for a local flower shop. The house ended up being a major party house, where they had parties almost every night. The cops showed up on occasion, but nothing ever came of it except having to move cars and lower the music volume.

Daniel lived the old adage, "sex, drugs and rock 'n roll" to an extreme. Every night was a party. Boston was hitting the charts big at that time, and coke, acid, weed, and any other drug that could be found was consumed, along with alcohol, on a daily basis. Daniel was stoned all day, every day. He took a bong hit first thing in the morning when he rolled out of bed, and continued all day. He couldn't

even remember how many girls he slept with. There were a couple girls who moved in with him for a while, including the young prostitute from Portland, but these were always short-lived relationships, since Daniel knew he was bad and never allowed any closeness, so no one could ever discover that he really was a failure who'd let his little brother die. If he ever opened up to anyone, it would have meant a torrent of pain and tears, and he had bottled that up tight his whole life, so it was impossible for the sixteen-year-old boy to change or even realize what the turmoil inside him was at that point. He didn't know why so many girls were attracted to him, but he figured it was because they saw something they wanted in him, saw someone he wasn't, and didn't know that he was a failure and couldn't ever really be loved. His confidence that they saw was really coming from the fact that he didn't care, as he always told himself, and it was a false image. It was just because he was the guy that lived in this party house. *That must be it*, he thought.

Ron worked at a gas station and had an idea for obtaining some money. He took all the money out of the safe one night, had one of the roommates hit him on the head, and then claimed he was robbed. It worked, and they got away with it.

Naturally, Daniel wanted a piece of the action, since he was the youngest one and didn't get to be included in the older boys' plans. So, he and the younger brother of one of the roommates decided they'd go and rob the place, too. They knew the key to the safe was kept in the desk drawer of the office, so they went in the middle of the night and used a glass-cutter to cut open a window to break in. The key was in the safe, but when they opened it, there was only a single dollar bill in it.

Disappointed that there was no money, they walked home, jockey-boxing cars along the way (a term coined for rummaging through parked cars to find valuables and money) to try to make up for wasted time. There was a guy awake at four a.m. who saw them breaking into cars and called the cops.

After his arrest, the cops tried to get Daniel to turn evidence against his brother for the gas station "robbery," because they knew Ron wasn't robbed, but they didn't have enough evidence to have a case against him. Daniel denied any knowledge of it.

He was sent to a local maximum-security juvenile prison while awaiting his court hearing. The corruption in the prison was immediately apparent. Two of the inmates had special treatment, and even went into the guards' areas at night, presumably getting high and partying with them, while all others were strictly locked down. Daniel had a couple run-ins with one of the “special” inmates. He was a brutal young man who loved to push his power around. One time in the shower, he was forced to give up his spigot in a show of dominance that Daniel decided wasn't worth fighting over, and another time playing basketball where he was blind-sided and brutally slammed into the floor by him without any foul called by the guard who was referee during the game. Everyone knew that you just had to play it cool with the privileged inmates. Fortunately, he was moved to a halfway house after two weeks and whatever may have happened with that situation never materialized.

The halfway house was a joke of sorts. They were allowed time outside the confines of the property for good behavior, so Daniel played by the rules and was given his time away, purchased joints from local kids and even forgot he had a couple joints in his cigarette pack one day (you were given your cigarettes when you left, but had to return them when you came back) but the “counselors” never caught on, or didn't care. It was so lax that they had girls and boys in the same house, and nobody seemed to care who was doing what, as long as you weren't blatantly obvious about it. Daniel played foosball and got to be quite an expert at the game while he was confined to that house. He was seventeen-and-a-half years old now.

After what was probably a couple of months, he had a court hearing and the judge offered to either remand Daniel into adult court and be tried as an adult, or Daniel could elect to go home to his parents' guardianship until his eighteenth birthday. This was a no-brainer for Daniel. He of course elected to go home.

During his incarceration, Ron was arrested for stealing cars again and sent to adult prison this time.

Daniel ended up back at his parents in Seattle again. This time he was seventeen and a very different person than when he left. The child was gone.

## The Early Years, Part 6 – Back To Seattle

“Home” was an unfamiliar place now. Daniel had a completely different perspective than he'd had before. Two years doesn't seem like a long time, but to Daniel those two years turned a child into a man. Allen no longer had any power over him because Daniel no longer feared him. His sisters became people who he now understood much more clearly. And it was like being a foreigner in a familiar place. It was almost surreal. He was seventeen, and only had to stay for a few months before he turned eighteen and was free to go. The one familiar feeling was the ever-present knowledge that he had failed Steven. He was old enough to understand that at ten years old, he could not have been responsible for his little brother's death, but he couldn't shake the self-hatred, and he still thought of Steven often. Being back home just reinforced that memory and brought it back out from hiding just under the surface.

He found some of his old friends, in particular Brandon, who was probably his best friend. And he started making new friends, all of whom were into the “sex, drugs and rock 'n roll” world that he now knew so well.

The neighbors who had moved into the house next door were something else entirely. It's not significant to this story so much, but how mind-blowing weird it was just makes the telling necessary. Rick and Kelly and their son and daughter lived there. Rick was a raging alcoholic. Kelly was a plump, sweet lady who drove a bus for the local school district but was secretly a drug dealer, selling marijuana and cocaine to the local kids. Jim was their deaf son, and the daughter was trying as hard as she could to deny there was anything wrong. It's probably impossible to explain this scenario in words. You really had to be there to understand. Kelly ended up being one of Daniel's customers after he'd become a coke dealer (in the later timeline). Jim ended up getting wasted in a bar and thinking much

more of himself than he was, picking a fight over some guy teasing him about being deaf, and was beaten to within an inch of his life over it. He was never the same after that.

Daniel can remember an acid trip one time where he was bored and took a couple hits of blotter acid (LSD on a tiny piece of paper), and then he climbed a tree in the strip of trees across the street from his parents' house. He was smoking pot, sitting on a branch way up in the tree when the acid started hitting him. The tree seemed to start moving and he hung on to the tree in terror for a while. Then, when he found a way to climb down, he was standing on a branch about thirty or forty feet up, and a man walking his dog below suddenly seemed to be “prey” to Daniel. He suddenly felt like Tarzan up in that tree and had to fight the urge to leap down on them, screaming a Tarzan scream. After that, he went to bed while he was still tripping, and after turning the lights off he felt himself drifting away from his body, into a “space tunnel” or some kind of void, and heard the sound of many people laughing. Then the voices hushed and a deep bass voice with pure evil glee was laughing at Daniel, and he saw Satan laughing as he pulled him into hell. A terror he'd never felt enveloped him, and somehow he managed to jolt himself out of it. He jumped up and flicked the light on as fast as he could, shaking like a leaf. That was the last time he ever took acid.

To this day he wonders if that was all hallucination or if he had really died for a moment and the devil was trying to take him for real. He wonders if this was one of those many times he should have died but God kept him alive.

Daniel tried to join the Air Force during his time at his parents, but they wouldn't take him because he had a criminal record. He got a job in construction as a laborer while he was living with his parents, but ended up going to Seattle Opportunities Industrialization Center (SOIC) under a government program to learn a trade, which was right in downtown Seattle. So he moved into Seattle with a roommate and went to school. He took body and fender class to learn to repair vehicles, but spent most of the time stoned and ended up selling weed to the other students for extra cash. He got his GED and graduated, mostly knowing how to weld sheet metal really well. If he'd stayed in high school,

he wouldn't have graduated yet. Getting stoned and welding was like a dream for Daniel. He could see the pools of metal so well and just flowed with it, like he was part of the metal himself. He welded so well that the class instructor had Daniel demonstrate how to weld a perfect bead to the rest of the class on occasion. He even gave Daniel the job of removing a rusted-out part of his Karmann Ghia sports car and welding in new metal.

He bought his first motorcycle, a used Honda CB350, that he used for transportation to school and visiting friends in the Renton area.

He remembers his hatred of authority getting a boost when one of the local cops would harass and beat up his friend Bill for no reason other than the cop was just mean and loved his little bubble of power. Daniel didn't witness this himself, but Bill and Brandon described how it had happened when Daniel noticed some bruises on Bill and asked about it. They noted that it had happened a few times.

During this time, his brother, Ron, had escaped from the minimum security prison he was in, and was living in Boise, Idaho under an assumed name. To appreciate the irony of this situation, it's important to understand that Ron was in prison for habitual car theft, and he literally stole a car from the prison to escape. Daniel didn't have any life to speak of, so after he graduated he bought a used '64 Chevy Impala, grabbed his cat and everything he owned and headed off to Idaho to go be with his brother.

Around the Tri-Cities in Eastern Washington, he was cruising along, going about 80 mph on a two-lane highway. It was a beautiful day and he was driving with the windows down, enjoying the drive, when he noticed his cat out of the corner of his eye, getting ready to leap out of the car over his left shoulder. He reach over and grabbed the cat, put it over in the passenger seat with a stern chastisement and finger shaking, and looked up to see a telephone pole directly in front of him. He jumped an embankment, cleared a six-foot chain-link fence without even touching it and plowed right through the telephone pole. He hit his head on the steering wheel on impact, and the car had flipped

over on its hood, landing upside down. He came to on his hands and knees on the inside of the windshield. He was bleeding profusely from the wound on his forehead, crawled out of the car and was trying to climb the chain-link fence when a man who witnessed the wreck came to his rescue. He helped him over the fence, put him in his car, and drove him into the nearest town and hospital. His cat was nowhere to be found.

The doctors stitched up the gash in his forehead, which left a small scar near the front of his head, just behind the hairline, and when they discharged him, he discovered they had already towed his totaled car to a wrecking yard. They allowed him to sign over the ownership of the car so he could gather as much of his belongings as he could carry, and he began hitchhiking the rest of the way to Boise.

The final ride he got was from a guy who was nursing a bottle of whiskey and was so drunk he was weaving across both lanes of the freeway, from one shoulder to the other. It was so bad that Daniel was scared to death and made the man relinquish the wheel to him. But, by the time they arrived in the Boise area, Daniel was also so drunk that he literally stumbled into Boise from the side of the freeway where the guy dropped him off. He wonders to this day if that guy ever made it to wherever he was going.

## The Early Years, Part 7 – Boise, Idaho

Boise was a quaint little town of about 40,000 people in 1980. Boise is an Indian name meaning City of Trees. It is up on the desert plateau, but there's a river running through it, and there are plenty of trees in the valley that holds the city of Boise.

Daniel, being a dope dealer in the trade school in Seattle, had brought a quarter pound of hashish with him to Boise to try to sell it and make some spending money. He hid it in his brothers console stereo cabinet, in the back where it was not visible without moving the whole cabinet. Ron didn't want Daniel living with him for long, and he made sure to tell him so right off. Daniel and the single girl living next door, Deana, hit it off right away and started sleeping together, so she offered to let him stay with her. They were all friends in the little triplex and spent a lot of time drinking and smoking together. Daniel and Ron would regularly get two fifths of tequila and get plastered and reminisce on their old times in Portland and such things.

Not long after his arrival, the hash behind the stereo was “stolen” and Ron accused an estranged friend of his of doing it. Daniel had long experience with his brother being a thief and knew how he had stolen from their parents, sisters—pretty much everyone he'd had an opportunity to steal from, and he was not stupid enough to believe some guy who had no idea there was hash behind the stereo would somehow find it and steal it without stealing anything else in the house. Daniel said as much and they had a fight about it, but Daniel, being either too forgiving or too dumb, he's not sure which, forgave him and moved on. He just kept that knowledge stored away and knew never to trust his brother with anything he cared about.

One night, they were talking about Ron's fictitious name and how difficult it was having to live outside the law the rest of his life, and Daniel convinced him to turn himself in and plead for mercy

since he only had a year left to serve when he escaped. He left that night, drunk as a skunk, and turned himself in. The court was indeed lenient, and only made him serve the rest of his sentence. Years later, he thanked his brother for talking him into it.

There were many long days playing cards at Deana's mom's house, getting stoned and basically being a bum. He never got a job or even tried. He just didn't know what to do with his life at that point, so he read a lot of books, played cards, got stoned, rode his bike around the parks along the river, and just lived a quiet life, and a very poor life.

At some point during that time, he got his cat back from the accident in Washington. The cat had found its way to someone's house, and they had found out that his cat was lost in the accident. They contacted his parents, and then his parents actually came to visit and brought the cat with them. He had the cat for some time, and a few others that Deana had, since she liked cats, but then they all disappeared one day all at the same time. He never found out what happened to them.

He can't remember all the details, but he remembers that he turned aloof and cold at times with Deana, like he always did with any girl who started getting close, and she started pulling away as a result. When Daniel saw her flirting around with the neighbor's son who had come home recently, and spending time with him in their house, he broke up with her. She moved back to her mom's house and Daniel stayed in the little apartment.

At one point, when they were still together but were falling out, they had gone to a hot springs party out in the wilderness, and Daniel ended up getting really drunk in the hot water. He vaguely remembers a fight with some guy, and Deana trying to pull him away while he was defiantly standing his ground (no recollection of what it was about), while other people were holding back the other guy. He later found out that the guy had found Daniel passed out under the massive wheels of his 4x4 truck after the fight, and he pulled Daniel out instead of running him over. That was probably another one of the times Daniel should have been dead, but something kept him alive.

He was so full of self-hatred that he just couldn't seem to stop driving everyone in his life away.

And because of that, he rationalized that it was just proof of how unlovable he was. But, at eighteen years old, he didn't even really understand himself well enough to know why he was reacting that way.

That winter in Boise was the coldest that Daniel can remember. He was broke and couldn't fill the oil tank for heat, so he used the kitchen stove and turned all the burners and oven on to provide some heat for the little apartment. The landlord was a very nice man who, for some reason, did not kick Daniel out of the apartment even though he never paid rent. Instead, he signed Daniel up for financial assistance and got the oil tank filled for heat, started a food stamps program for him, and let him stay there for free, for several months.

In the spring, he had a friend whose dog had puppies, and he got his first dog. Duke. Named after Duke Leto Atreides from the book, "Dune." It was three-quarters Labrador retriever and a quarter coyote. He had a hard time learning how to train and care for a dog, since all he'd had before were cats, and they were much easier to care for, but he loved Duke and played with him at the apartment and the train depot right behind the apartment. He used his food stamps to buy dog food. He couldn't buy dog food directly with them since it wasn't allowed, but he'd buy really cheap things like a candy bar and get cash for change, and after several times of doing that he'd build up enough change to buy a bag of dog food.

He lost Duke when he went to an overnight pig roast party in the desert and left him chained up with a huge bowl of food and water outside his apartment. He'd done this when he ran errands and things, and never had problems, so thought it'd be fine overnight. But, Duke had escaped from his chain and was in the neighbors' garden, digging it up, so they called the pound. Daniel had no money to pay for Duke's release when he got back, and they euthanized him within days. He felt like he had failed Duke so badly and was mortified, but he couldn't do anything to stop them. This was probably the first time he'd cried about anything other than Steven's death ... it was a sad day for Daniel.

It wasn't long after that when he got a letter from his birth father, whom he'd never met, that he

wanted to meet him.

## The Early Years, Part 8 – Off To Wyoming

His real father, Larry, seemed so awesome at first. He'd only known what his mom had told him about his father, and had seen a few pictures but had never met him, so when he pulled into Daniel's driveway (well, the dirt in front of his apartment) with long hair and sunglasses, smoking a cigarette, Daniel was elated! And, it didn't take long to discover that both of them liked smoking weed, so they got high together before they even left Boise and headed to Green River, Wyoming, where his father had a double-wide trailer house in a nice trailer park. He was married and helping his wife raise her eight-year-old son, Mason. His father worked as a miner operator in the Trona mines, where they make glass, paper products, laundry detergents, etc., from the soda ash refined from Trona. He was also an avid hunter and fisherman and taught Daniel how to hunt deer and fly fish, and how to be a functioning alcoholic. His father's regular routine included drinking four or five mixed drinks a night and smoking weed.

Daniel was happily along for the ride and just enjoying meeting all the family he'd never known, such as his grandparents, uncles, nephews and nieces, cousins, etc. They all lived around the Rock Springs area in Wyoming, which was only about fifteen miles from Green River. He met a few locals and made some friends and was content to just go with the flow. He stayed in the spare room his father had in his trailer.

After a few months of living with his father, he'd noticed the extremely harsh way he treated his stepson, and started thinking to himself that he was glad he wasn't raised by this man. Larry didn't believe in the word "sorry," saying you shouldn't have done whatever it was in the first place. He was a very hard man.

He began asking Daniel why he didn't get a job, and accusing Daniel of little things that he

hadn't done, and Daniel was taken aback by all this, not knowing what his place was or what to do. To be fair, Daniel was used to being a jobless bum, so it hadn't occurred to him to get a job or anything. He was just there experiencing his new family, and pretty much staying stoned and getting drunk a lot. And, he wasn't exactly a model son, either. He brought a girl to the trailer one time when he was expressly forbidden to do so, fell asleep with her before she could sneak out, and Mason saw her naked in bed, sleeping with Daniel when he opened the door in the morning to see if Daniel was home. Larry was furious. It was about eight months or so into his visit when his father confronted him and said that the "family" was saying Daniel was just there using him, and he wanted Daniel to explain himself. He was totally dumbfounded, having been invited there, and didn't know what to say. By that time, he'd gotten a job at a local grocery store stocking the shelves, and being so cruelly punched in the stomach like that, he just got a tent and moved to the river bank in his tent so no one would accuse him anymore.

Shortly after that, he and two friends decided to go to Oklahoma to find work in the oil industry. One of them knew a couple guys that had a shop down there, so they decided to just go and take their chances. He bought a junker 1970 Chevy Nova, and they headed down the highway.

About halfway there, the alternator in the Nova died. One of the friends was handy with cars, and they had no money beyond what they'd need for gas and food to get to Oklahoma, so at his friends' suggestion, they stole a battery from a parked car to limp along enough to find a car that had a similar model alternator. They found one in a used car lot and waited until it was late at night. Then they sneaked in, his friend got down under the car, pulled the alternator out and installed it in the Nova so they could continue driving.

Then, about two hundred miles short of Oklahoma City, the Nova threw a rod (one of the internal engine parts came loose and punched a hole in the engine block) and died on the highway. They left it there on the shoulder, gathered all they could carry, and hitchhiked the rest of the way into the city. Daniel had a toolbox, .22 rifle, and a suitcase with clothes and miscellaneous stuff.

When they arrived at the friend's "shop," it was going out of business, but they let Daniel and his friends stay in a van that was parked there until they could figure out what to do. They learned that the oil industry was in the middle of massive layoffs and there was no chance of getting work.

Daniel has a foggy memory of one night, on acid, getting in a verbal fight with a local black man at the convenience store across the street, and a short while later there was a large gang of colored locals that were heading toward the van, shouting and yelling. He fired a shot with his .22 rifle into the wall of a building just past the crowd and they scattered, but shortly after that, the police showed up because someone had called saying they had been shot at. Daniel admitted that he'd shot at the wall because there was a gang coming toward them, and the police actually let him keep the rifle for protection. The "shop" was not in a good part of town.

He doesn't remember much of the few days he spent in Oklahoma City except going to bars and getting staggering drunk. They had a lot of bars in Oklahoma City, with lots of specials to get drunk for cheap. Then one night, Daniel had his toolbox and .22 on him for some reason and was passed out in the bushes near the convenience store, and he woke up with a lump on his head and his stuff gone. After a few minutes, he recalled a vague memory of arguing with his friends and storming off with his stuff, drunk as a skunk. It was probably one of the locals that took advantage of him being passed out in the bushes and took his stuff. His friends were going to stay in Oklahoma and try to get jobs, and Daniel didn't want to stay. So he said his goodbyes, set out on his own and hitchhiked all the way back to Wyoming. It took about a week to hitchhike across the country, and when he got back to Green River, he made a deal with his father to seal the top of his mobile home for fifty dollars, enough money for bus fare to Seattle. He'd had enough of his newfound family, Wyoming and Boise, Idaho and just wanted to go back to Seattle to start over again.

He got a job in Renton at a large apartment complex as the assistant maintenance supervisor. Part of his pay was a free apartment, so it made moving back a lot easier. He learned many

maintenance skills and excelled at the work, discovering that he was a natural “Jack-of-all-trades” and found it easy to pick up new skills. He also volunteered to work security in the evenings for the complex, since it was a high-crime area and they needed someone to patrol from time to time and field calls and complaints from residents. He became familiar with many of the residents and the local cops, since he had to call them a lot to quell disturbances.

A significant event happened one day when Daniel and Dale went together to respond to a noise complaint. Dale (Daniel's boss) knocked on the door, and because the music was so loud, he had to pound on the door several times before it was answered. Daniel was slightly to the side while Dale was directly in front of the door. There was a yelling match, and the resident went to turn the music down as Dale was asking him to, and Daniel saw his hand reach for the stereo, hesitate, and then flick the volume all the way up. Then suddenly a flash of a knife plunged into Dale's neck. Dale stumbled back against the far side of the hallway and blood began gushing from the wound and coming out of his mouth. Daniel was in shock for a moment and didn't even notice where the knife-wielding man went. He was just staring at Dale, frozen. He expected to see Dale drop dead right there.

Then he launched into motion and grabbed Dale and started leading him out of the building. Dale told him to go ahead and call an ambulance while they were in the stairway, so Daniel ran to the office and called 911. Dale, fortunately, survived the attack, since the knife had missed his jugular by a fraction of an inch. It turned out the resident was a Special Forces veteran with PTSD and had a lot of anger problems. The courts sentenced him to a short jail term and anger management. Daniel had been called as a witness, and it was very nerve-wracking to have to testify against the guy as he was staring at him with murder in his eyes in the courtroom.

Another time, a resident had been shot in the back of the head, presumably from a bad drug deal, and Daniel had to clean up the blood and move all the furniture into storage. He inherited a piranha that was still alive in a small tank, since there was no one to claim the resident's belongings, and he ended up keeping it for several years. These things just served to make Daniel more and more

callous and convinced him that he really didn't care. Didn't care. Couldn't care. The world was a horrible place with horrible people, so why care? He was beginning to become very, very hard.

One evening, after settling a disturbance, Daniel was at the manager's apartment to inform her of the problem, and she seduced him. She was eighteen years older than Daniel, and he knew it was a bad idea doing that with his boss, but he let it happen anyway, being just a dumb twenty-year-old.

Everything was okay for a while until he met a young single mother who had moved into the complex and got involved with her and her toddler son. Once that started, he canceled all personal interaction with the manager, and I'm sure you know what happened then. She started criticizing everything and looking for ways to fire Daniel, which she eventually did. This may sound like a part of this story you've already read, from the later timeline, but it's just a similar situation that happened at this time. The end result was the same, but in the later instance Daniel was married and refused to have sex with her. In this circumstance, Daniel had moved his girlfriend and her son in with him, in his rent-free apartment, which was part of his salary, and that gave the manager some ammunition (because he was taking a rental customer out of the cash-flow equation). That relationship didn't last long, though. His girlfriend's ex was always a problem and constantly bugging her, especially after she moved in with Daniel. So one day she went to "talk" to him and try to calm things down. A couple days later, Daniel found himself infested with crabs (an STD), and he knew he hadn't been with anyone but her so he immediately knew what that "talk" had been. He kicked her out of his apartment and moved in with another resident he'd made friends with, name Rich. Rich was a bass guitarist and wannabe rockstar. He had tattoos all over his body and owned a boa constrictor, a scorpion and a Gila monster (a big, mean lizard). Daniel had lost his job, so he and Rich took up selling weed to make rent money, which was very successful. Daniel met many new people through Rich and their marijuana business, which started the ball rolling in his drug-dealing career.

Another time, Daniel had been out partying with some friends, and he and his girlfriend were in

the back seat on the way home very late at night and the two in the front seat were arguing the whole drive. When they got out and heading into the building, the guy was jabbing his girlfriend in the face with his finger and starting to hurt her, so Daniel got in between them and broke it up because he couldn't just watch that happening without doing something about it. He and his girlfriend were in the friend's apartment sitting on the couch when Daniel saw a flash behind him and everything went black. He woke up on his feet with blood streaming down his face and his girlfriend trying to pull him out the back door. The guy had hit him on the head with a baseball bat. He was too disoriented to do anything but allow himself to be pulled out and led to his apartment. He still has the scar on the top of his head from that injury, just behind the scar from his car wreck years earlier. Needless to say, he wasn't friends with that guy anymore, but he didn't do anything to retaliate. This is just another one of the many times Daniel is sure that God was watching over him.

He got two DUIs (drunk driving arrests) within twenty days of each other, shortly after he turned 21. In the first arrest he also had some marijuana on him, and it was the same judge at the same court for both offenses. Daniel was ordered to outpatient rehab and he had to attend AA and NA (Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous) meetings twice a week for a year. He quit drinking and smoking dope for the entire time because the outpatient rehab made random tests to see if there was anything in his system. They were actually upset when they never found any substances, and they were angry that they had to let him leave the program at the end of the year. They assumed that he had cheated the system somehow. But the truth of the matter was that he wasn't an alcoholic, which they insisted he was, and marijuana is not addictive, other than just a mental desire, so it was easy for him to skate through the year without drinking or smoking dope. The day he was cleared, however, he went and started partying again. But, he found that he really didn't like smoking marijuana as much anymore, and stopped smoking it all day every day, only smoking it recreationally after that.

He started doing more cocaine with his friends and learned how to “freebase” cocaine. This was before “crack cocaine” became a commodity, and it was the process of cooking the coke to remove the

hydrochloric salts and make it non-water-soluble so the cocaine was better to smoke. The difference between that and crack is that you would buy crack already cooked.

## The Early Years, Part 9 – The Animal House

Daniel eventually moved out of the apartment complex and moved into a three-story house in downtown Renton with four friends, including Brandon and his brother Jeff. There was a built-in bar in the basement, and they had regular parties where they would buy gallons of hard liquor and kegs of beer, and sell drinks to make some profit. They never got in trouble for it, which is amazing when you think about it, since it was a constant party house.

Daniel sold weed for his income and collected unemployment. Again, like the house in Beaverton, it was a wild ride of sex, drugs and rock 'n roll. A lot of women came and went, and he remembers one in particular who tried to force herself into the house and move in with him even after he kept telling her no. She actually showed up with a bunch of personal stuff and started moving it in until Daniel forcibly removed her and her stuff. He thought it very strange. He also spent a night in jail one time when a couple of fourteen-year-old girls were found by their parents outside on the lawn, high on acid, with a huge party raging inside. The cops had to arrest somebody, so they arrested Daniel. He was released the next day by the judge, since Daniel had no knowledge of the girls and they weren't in the house, so there was no responsibility on his part.

Daniel bought his second motorcycle, a Yamaha Special II 400. He loved riding and tore up the streets on that bike. Thinking back, he can't fathom how he never had an accident. He rode it like he stole it, many times cornering so fast that he had to go all the way to the outside of the far lane of oncoming traffic to stay on the road, and if a car had been coming the other way, he'd have just gone right under it, or would have had to straighten up and ride off the road at high-speed and plow into who knows what. Speed was like a drug to him. He loved it and didn't care if he died or not, he just wanted to go out smiling if he did. The bike's top speed was 110 mph, so that probably contributed to him not

having a horrible accident. Brandon and his brother and several other friends had motorcycles and they made several road trips together, going to the Tri-Cities, Washington for the boat races and other destinations. Daniel and his friends would tear up the campgrounds and parks during the boat events, riding wheelies down the paths and racing around the streets, high and drunk. Yes, you're probably thinking you would have hated Daniel if you were one of the campers or spectators in the area. Today, Daniel would agree with you. Back then he was a cocky, uncaring young man who no longer had any excuse for being the way he was. He had become set in his ways and was heading down the dark path he'd started out on at a very young age, speeding toward blessed death and blackness, where there was no more pain. He really didn't care if he died, and couldn't even imagine ever living long enough to reach thirty or forty years of age, or beyond. He had reached the point of no return entering into adulthood.

They did a lot of cocaine during this time, and for the first time, Daniel started thinking about selling coke instead of weed because there was so much more profit in selling coke than marijuana. He imagined himself rising above this stoner, bum life he'd been living since he was fifteen years old. He thought about actually doing something instead of just going along for the ride.

Daniel's attitude had morphed into a completely rebellious and aloof state. He still told himself that he just didn't care, and hated life, hated authority, hated himself, hated mean people, hated everything except people who had good hearts. Those, he tried to keep in his life but he never managed lift himself out of his misery pit long enough to settle down. He still grieved his little brother and tried to avoid emotional situations and commitments. He couldn't take it, and didn't know how to change.

The animal house eventually became a thing of the past. His unemployment ran out. The landlord started coming down on them for the shape of the house since it wasn't kept up well with a constant party going on. The roommates decided to move out (they probably had more sense than Daniel and didn't want to stay in that life forever), so Daniel got a job delivering pizza for Domino's

and moved into an apartment complex.

His life had become a slow crawl at this point. His friends were starting to grow up and become adults, moving on, and he was barely getting by with his pizza delivery job. He had his bike and a Chevy Vega that he called his “mini Camaro,” and it was starting to wear down due to constant use delivering pizzas. He wanted to save up to buy another car, but he just didn't have enough income to get ahead. He was offered and accepted a position as assistant manager for Domino's and thought that would help save his car further wear and tear, but he discovered that he made far less money without the tips he'd made as a driver, even with a wage increase. He felt trapped in a rut and wanted a way out.

Daniel wanted to obtain \$1,000 so he could buy a decent car. Back then, that amount of cash would buy something reliable. He had no idea how to make that happen, except through experience he knew he could sell some drugs to make some quick cash, so he started selling small quantities of cocaine to friends and acquaintances to try to make that \$1,000 so he could buy a newer car.

He knew enough people from his time in the animal house that it was easy to promote his new business. One of his friends was a small-quantity dealer that had high-quality product, so it was very easy to slide right into a steady flow of coke, and before he knew it he had his \$1,000. He found a 1977 Camaro that was in great shape and sold his old Vega. Since he was making easy money, he decided it would be foolish to quit selling in such a lucrative market. He went quickly from buying small quantities of quarter and half ounces, to ounces, and two ounces, then quarter pounds, and started selling to other small dealers and sending his user customers to those dealers to reduce the traffic flow to his home. Before long, it got to the point where going to work was infringing on his cocaine business, so he quit his job and moved into an upscale apartment complex.

He was using coke regularly, but he figured he could control his habit. He'd quit doing drugs and drinking for about a year, after all, so he'd proven he wasn't an addict and could control himself (so he thought).

His business grew by leaps and bounds. He had cash, which was very unusual for a coke dealer

at his level. Most dealers got the coke fronted (loaned to them) and sold it to pay for it. Daniel enjoyed a cash business and suppliers were able to capitalize on that with Daniel's cash and get larger quantities fronted to them by combining the purchases with his cash.

He stopped selling to any and all end users and limited his customers to a strict purchase amount before he would deal with them. He called himself an “honest drug dealer” since he did not cut his coke or try to rip people off, but gave them exactly what he got and charged a premium because it was high quality. He found himself walking around with thousands of dollars in his pockets all the time.

He bought a second car, a Subaru Legacy, so he could blend in with traffic and not stand out, and he put his Camaro in a shop, where they pulled the motor, balanced it, added a high-rise intake, headers, race cam, oversize rings, and other performance upgrades to make it a very fast car. With stock gearing and a beefed-up front end, air shocks on the back, but no obvious changes on the outside, it was a sleeper car, where it seemed ordinary but would do 160 mph and get there fast.

What he didn't expect was that cocaine was fast becoming a wraith that was haunting and controlling his life. He learned to eat and sleep while he was high. His normal life consisted of smoking cocaine for four or five days straight and then sleeping for a whole day or so. Then, starting over. It got to a point where he was always having people who hung around and called themselves his “friends” because he was always smoking coke with them. He added up his normal usage at one point and figured he was consuming about \$200,000 worth of coke per year and wasn't really advancing in business any more, but was stuck at this level, getting more and more addicted.

## The Coke Dealer, Part 1 – What it was Like

They pulled into the parking lot beside the building. It was a dark night with no moon, and there was only one working light in the nearby area, a pale globe barely shining in a pool of blackness. As he pulled in behind the other car, Daniel looked over at Doug and nodded for Doug to go ahead. As Doug got out of the car, Daniel checked the .38 Special he had between his legs for reassurance. These deals sometimes got a little hairy when some cocky small-time dealer thought he could pull some tricks on you.

As Doug brought the guy over and opened the passenger door, Daniel instinctively gripped the .38 with his thumb on the hammer for a quick pull if he needed to. He didn't allow his attention to slip, as the guy was practically gushing as he got in, attempting to be really respectful. He sat down as Doug got in the rear seat behind him.

Daniel, keeping his peripheral vision focused on the buyer, checked the mirrors and scanned around to ensure nothing looked out of place before turning to look at the buyer.

“A quarter pound, right?” Daniel said.

“Yeah, dude. Here's the cash.” He laid a wad of bills on the console between them.

Daniel pulled the coke out of his jacket and handed it to the guy as he picked up the cash to count it.

“Right on, man,” he said.

“Cool. Thanks man, I appreciate you trusting me, man.”

“Enjoy.”

When Doug got back in and they pulled out, Daniel handed Doug two hundred dollars.

A shocked look formed on Doug's face for a moment.

“Wow. I never imagined you'd be this straight up, man. Thanks.”

“You helped make the deal, so you deserve a cut. It's all good.”

## The Coke Dealer, Part 2 – Addiction

Sitting on his couch with his headphones on, listening to Pink Floyd's *The Wall*, smoking freebased cocaine, depression was hitting Daniel hard. He was a “pound dealer” in the cocaine business. He had two cars, one of which was a '77 Camaro that he'd built to push 10/1 compression and that did 160 mph. He had lots of cash, and he was listening to a CD in one of the first-ever portable CD players, which cost \$800. His supplier had the best coke of pretty much anyone, and Daniel had strict rules with his customers so his apartment wasn't compromised. He didn't have a care in the world, and a big wad of cash in his pocket. But he found himself staring at his .38 Special, wondering if he shouldn't just put a bullet in his head and get it over with.

His girlfriend had left him because he somehow had done what he told all his customers not to. He'd let the cocaine take over his life, and his only fear was not being able to take another hit. He was scared of nothing, but that thought terrified him. He knew the coke had him by the balls, and it was too late to reverse it.

In the beginning, he was able to control his use, but once he started smoking it more than he was snorting it, his control lapsed because smoking it was so much more addictive.

Over time, he'd learned to eat while he was high on cocaine, but Daniel had lost a lot of weight due to only eating about once a day. He was only sleeping once every few days, for a good twenty hours or so. It was ironic that early on, he got angry at his people for letting the drug get the best of them, but here he was, hopelessly addicted. He began to realize his own arrogance at this point. To think that he could control what no one else ever could was just beyond conceit. He'd controlled it for a while, but addiction to cocaine was a slow-creeping thing that was beyond any human ability to control.

He spent a lot of nights with Brandon, smoking coke and playing chess all night long.

When Spike got busted and his supplier was gone, he had to turn to his customers to find bulk product, and it all changed. He'd built a good business, and his people trusted him because he always dealt straight and didn't cut. If you wanted to pay less and have it cut, that was always an option, but it was part of the deal and always up front. So his people knew him and respected him.

Daniel never felt like he fit the mold for the criminal life, but he found himself on this level due to circumstance, how easy it was to sell drugs in the early '80s, and the decisions he'd made. He faked it well enough, but he wasn't cut out to be a criminal, because he wasn't ready to do anything outright mean or hurt people, and true criminals do not have issues with that. Daniel didn't care, as he always told himself, but he still valued honesty and being good to other people. He was here because it was what he knew, but he didn't like it and didn't want to stay there. But he didn't know how to get out. Didn't know any other life.

He called himself an “honest drug dealer.” Funny, huh? But that's really how he saw himself. He was different than most dealers who didn't really have any of their own money and operated on “fronts”: where the supplier would give them the product, they would sell it, and then pay the supplier. Daniel did not front to people, and he had built up his cash to buy his own product. He walked around with \$10,000 in cash in his pockets most of the time (usually spread out between two or more pockets so the bulge wasn't too big). He always had his .38 Special tucked into his belt holster so no one thought he was an easy target ...

Of course, before turning to his customers for the necessary supply to continue in business, he had the silly idea that he could quit doing coke on his own. He tried. Even moved his old girlfriend in. But it was only days later when she came home and found him smoking his coke, and she had a meltdown. She ended up throwing the promise ring he'd given her at him and leaving again.

It was around this time, in the mid '80s, that he heard about this rendition of the Twenty-Third Psalm that a cocaine addict had left behind in a suicide note, and it really hit home with Daniel. He saw

himself in this:

*Cocaine is my shepherd, I shall always want.*

*He makes me to lie down in the gutters.*

*He leads me beside the troubled waters.*

*He destroys my soul.*

*He leads me in the paths of wickedness.*

*Yes, I shall walk through the valley of poverty*

*and will fear no evil for you, cocaine, are with me.*

*Your needle and your pipe comfort me.*

*You strip my table of food in the presence of my family.*

*You rob my head of reason.*

*My cup of sorrow runs over.*

*Surely cocaine addiction shall stalk me all the days of my life,*

*And I will dwell in the house of the damned forever.*

That may seem extreme or even approaching blasphemy to print that, but if you've ever been addicted to a highly addictive drug, you understand the power it has over you. This was a tearjerker for Daniel, since it was so relevant to his situation, and he could imagine the torment the poor woman had felt before she killed herself. In his heart, he knew the situation he was in, but again, he didn't know how to get out.

Daniel ended up partnering with Gino. This was one of Daniel's large-dealer customers that came to him from time to time when he couldn't buy what he needed from his usual sources. Daniel had long ago pawned all his user customers off on the small-time dealers and only dealt to other dealers down the ladder from himself. But Gino was on about the same level and offered to partner up and combine businesses. One of the main reasons Gino partnered with Daniel was because Daniel had cash.

He was able to get a much larger supply with cash to go with the front and therefore gain more dealers to supply and move more product.

He met Jane at this point. She was one of Gino's small-time dealers, and Daniel took over that business for Gino since he liked Jane.

He ended up leaving his apartment because the landlord met him in the parking lot one day and told him he knew what was going on, and Daniel could leave on his own or he'd be calling the cops. This was shortly after the cops raided his apartment, because the neighbors called saying they heard a gunshot. Daniel always found that cooperating was the best with cops. So he let them in to look for weapons, if they agreed to ignore anything else they found. They had quickly put away drugs and paraphernalia before Daniel opened the door, so there was nothing too obvious sitting out in the open, and the cops didn't search, as they promised, while Daniel brought out the weapons he had, and showed them where they were stored. He had several rifles and pistols, but none were hot or showed signs of having recently been fired, so the cops left without incident. After they left, one of the girls there laughed and exclaimed, "Holy \$#!, there's a pipe sitting right here on the counter!" The other people in the apartment at the time were dumbfounded as to how he pulled that off. He didn't know, himself, how it had been so easy, but he happily laughed about it and took another hit.

So Gino and Daniel rented a house to do business out of in West Seattle.

## The Coke Dealer, Part 3 – A Den of Iniquity

The house in West Seattle was a den of iniquity in so many ways.

Gino and Daniel ran a very busy and lucrative cocaine business from there, with many associates and runners.

Jane was no longer selling small-time and was just spending most of her time with Daniel. She still maintained a regular life living at her parents' house, but her mother was a pain-medication addict with major mental problems. Daniel only met her a few times, but it was obvious to him that Jane wasn't lying about all the stories he'd heard.

ZZ Top, Robert Palmer, and Brian Adams were some of the popular bands at the time. Daniel is a music lover to this day and the times in his life are always marked by memories of the music he listened to.

In that house was one of the times Daniel believes he should have been dead, but something (he now knows was God) kept him alive. He'd been in his private room and took a humongous hit of coke where he felt an overdose coming on, and he started convulsing. He gathered all the strength he had and held on for dear life, and it gradually faded and he regained his senses.

Another significant moment was when Gino had a chat with Daniel about killing a guy that had crossed him, to make a point with the other players in the coke ring. He and Daniel had a chat out on the patio to discuss the business. "I think I need to kill him to show the rest of the players that I can't be disrespected like that, or they'll start thinking they can do the same" Gino said.

Daniel told him it was a line he wasn't willing to cross. "Yeah, that's bad, and needs to be addressed to discourage anyone else who thinks they can, but that's a line, once crossed, that you can never come back from, man. I'd say find another way to make an example of him without killing him," Daniel replied. *And Daniel was already guilty of someone's death anyway, right?* He'd failed Steven

and didn't want to add to that sin with cold-blooded murder. He wasn't a true criminal at heart.

At some point in the foggy timeline, Daniel got a hotel room for a night with Jane in a hotel that he'd been in before, with Gino and his girlfriend in an adjoining room, the Sheraton in Renton. He always used a fictitious name, and this time Jane had rented the room, but when Daniel went down to pay for another night in the wee hours of the morning, the front-desk clerk recognized him from the time he'd rented the two adjoining rooms. Gino and his girlfriend had torn the room apart in their drug-induced paranoia, looking for cameras and microphones, but Daniel was unaware of that and completely unaware that he was recognized. They were up all night, smoking cocaine and trying to get some pay channels on the TV, but it wouldn't work, so he called the front desk, asking for help with it. A few minutes later there was a knock on the door and the peephole showed a man who looked like a hotel employee, but when he opened the door, there were two police officers on either side of the door. They asked to come in as they barged past Daniel and proceeded to search the room. They opened his briefcase and found a quarter pound of cocaine in a sealed bag, about an ounce in another bag with pipes and other paraphernalia, along with his .38 Special, loaded with hollow-point exploding-tip rounds. The cops made special mention of that, asking if he wanted to kill someone. "No, just protect myself," he said.

Crazy as it sounds, they put both of them in cells adjacent to each other at the county jail, so Daniel was able to talk to Jane and calm her down and tell her, "Just say you know nothing, no matter what."

The cops took Daniel to an interrogation room and played the good cop, bad cop routine on him. First, there was just one officer who was nicely asking questions and trying to trick him with different slants of questioning, insisting on Daniel writing a confession that he was a dealer, etc. He denied it all and refused to cooperate, saying the coke wasn't even his but he was just holding it for a friend he refused to name. After a while, a second cop came in and stood behind him, making agitated

sounds, huffing and puffing, and finally grabbed him and threw him up against the wall, choking him and screaming in his face that he knew he was a dealer and he better confess or “You'll get the shit beat out of you.”

Daniel was proud of his reaction to that. He'd always wondered if he'd cave in a situation like that, and feared he would, but he simply looked him in the eye and choked out, “I want to call my lawyer.”

The cops knew they had to get a confession, because the hotel room had been in Jane's name, and they searched it illegally, so nothing could be used unless they got a confession. But neither Jane nor Daniel gave in.

They tried similar tactics with Jane, but she held to the “I don't know anything” line, and they had no choice but to let her go. They held Daniel on a mischievous mischief charge because of the trashed room from Gino. Jane got bail money and bailed him out. They kept all the evidence, of course, including his gun and briefcase, etc., and knowing how corrupt so many cops are, he didn't wonder that they didn't report the full five ounces and only claimed he had four ounces (there was a blurb about the hotel raid of a “cocaine dealer” in a local paper).

When Daniel got back to the house, he was having withdrawals pretty bad, so he walked in to the main living room and immediately looked around the room for someone smoking coke and motioned for them to share. As he took a hit, Gino smiled and said, “A thousand bucks!”

Daniel had forgotten that he and Gino had made a \$1,000 bet that they could refrain from smoking coke in front of each other, and whoever got caught first would have to pay up. “Aaargh!” Daniel exclaimed, as he leaned back, laughing about it. The incident at the hotel and getting busted made him forget all about the bet!

After that, Daniel knew they'd be following him, and he did a lot of reversing direction and watching to find the tails. There were many. They ended up finding the house in West Seattle before too long and tried to grab Daniel when he drove out one time, hoping to catch him with a large quantity of

cocaine, but he saw them rushing down on him and put his Camaro's pedal to the metal. He managed to actually outrun the two unmarked vehicles attempting to stop him and lost them by making a U-turn maneuver in traffic that was a lucky move, and the cops got stopped by jammed up traffic. Lucky, once again.

After that, he left the house and made plans with Gino, warning him to get out of the house before they all went down. He made a rule: stay in hotels, but never, ever stay more than two nights in a single location.

There was no GPS in the '80s and they used pagers to contact each other and customers, so the cops were left without anything to go on. But, this was in the '80s after Reagan started the War on Drugs and got the feds involved with state and local police. It became increasingly difficult to stay ahead of the cops.

It was a very paranoid time for Daniel. He spent a lot of time at the windows of his hotel rooms.

Again, the stories that could be told about this time would fill another book. One particular time that has relevance to future events is when Mikey had come to Daniel's hotel room to make a pickup for a delivery run, and Daniel invited him to stay, as he usually did, to smoke some coke until Jane returned. They chatted a bit, discussing the business and the other players in the ring. It was no problem until Jane returned and Mikey did not get up to leave. Being an addict himself, Daniel knew why he didn't want to go, but as Mikey eyed Daniel's 9mm and slid his hand near his own gun, Daniel casually put his hand on his gun and stared him down with a look that meant he would use it. Mikey decided at that moment that it was time to leave.

Sometime later, Mikey was arrested coming out of Gino's hotel room that he had stayed in for four days too long, with a pound of coke in his cowboy hat.

That was the beginning of the end. Daniel could only assume that that one moment in the hotel room is the reason Mikey gave up everyone in the ring, but not Daniel. He was the only one that did

not get busted. Of course, he wasn't anywhere anyone would know about when it happened. He'd left the state and went to Portland for three days when he got wind of all the stings, and later found out that Mikey had not given up his name. Everyone else went down, from the kilo supplier on down. When Mikey turned on his people for a reduced sentence, he helped them find all the players in the whole cocaine ring and take them all down. But not Daniel. Thinking back now, Daniel knows there was a higher power involved in his escape. It was God. He had plans for Daniel.

## The Coke Dealer, Part 4 – After the Sting

Daniel tried to maintain his business, but with everyone in jail, from customers to suppliers, he had a hard time with supply and demand, and ended up mostly just fiending for coke and trying to keep himself supplied. It was a horrific time trying to deal with addiction for the first time without a constant supply. He had to go back to small-time dealing with friends and the people he knew from his old neighborhood. He ended up staying in a mobile home owned by Kenny, his old friend who was also part-time in the business of cocaine trafficking, and he sold to his neighbor Kelly, who was also now highly addicted, along with her son Jim, whose sole purpose in life was waiting for his mother to give him more coke. He felt very badly for Jim, but there wasn't anything he could do to change things for him.

It was at this point that Daniel knew he had to either get out of the business or he'd be dead or in jail, one of the two. He was hopelessly addicted, about fifty pounds underweight, and had no hope whatsoever of any kind of future. He can't remember exactly when these things happened, but they stick in his mind because they had such an impact on him at the time and scared him to death. Once, when smoking coke with Jane on a dirt road up in the hills, she temporarily died, or appeared to, to Daniel. She took a hit, convulsed in overdose, and he watched the life drain out of her eyes. She was sitting there, eyes open and lifeless for a few seconds, probably a whole minute or so, which scared the living crap out of Daniel, and then she suddenly came back to life, but her memory was gone for a while. She didn't know who she was or where they were for several hours. Another time at a hotel, she overdosed and then upon waking had her memory completely gone, and she was paranoid to the point where she was freaking out and trying to flush Daniel's money down the toilet to get rid of "evidence." These experiences contributed to his desire to get away from the drug.

He knew that without leaving the area he'd never be able to get away from cocaine, and remembering the quaint little town of Boise, he decided to move there and start a new life, where he had no way to get any coke for at least long enough to get it out of his system. Of course, he took a large supply of coke with him, enough to make the trip without withdrawal and then some. His plan was to run out in a land far, far away so he had no way to get back and buy more. Jane was agreeable to this plan, so they made a side trip to Reno, Nevada and got married in the Reno Wedding Chapel on the way to Boise.

They also stopped in Green River, Wyoming and visited Daniel's real father for a while. He rented an apartment for cheap, since it was a dying mining town and there were lots of empty apartments. Larry, his father, didn't really believe Daniel was coming out of a drug-dealing business, even though Jane was there to corroborate, and Daniel was just as disappointed this time as when he met him a few years earlier, so they only stayed a couple weeks in Wyoming. It was in a hotel in some nameless town where they used the last of the coke. They stayed there for a good week or so and finished it off. They were also running low on cash, so they finished the journey to Idaho and rented a small basement apartment.

Daniel got a job working for \$3.85 per hour at a gourmet food delivery business, putting orders together for the drivers, and Jane got a job as a waitress in a local restaurant. It was a drastic change in lifestyle, going from walking around with thousands of dollars in his pockets to barely being able to buy groceries. But it was worth getting out of that life. He remembers that *Star Trek: The Next Generation* was on TV at the time. He always loved sci-fi and loved this show then.

It was horrible coming off cocaine. The *need* for cocaine was constant. He remembers waking up from dreams where he was smoking coke and would wake up holding his breath from a hit he just took in the dream, but of course there was no rush from the hit. The mental agony was awful. But his plan worked in that they had no money or supplier to get coke from, so they got past the initial withdrawal and were starting a new life without cocaine.

It took all of two months, however, before Jane found another waitress who knew where to get coke. Jane started a huge fight because Daniel refused to buy any, and Daniel even went to the bank where they had a joint account and withdrew all the money so she couldn't buy it behind his back. But, being an addict, Jane kept at him until he, also an addict, gave in, and they bought some coke with the money he had withdrawn. It was then that Daniel recalled having advised his customers in the past to “Never marry your coke whore” (forgive the language, but this was the term coined for girls who were just with a guy for the supply of coke he had). He realized that's what he had done and knew he now had a battle on his hands to remain free of cocaine. His inability to do what he adamantly told others to do was dawning on him. He was realizing how arrogant he really was. He wasn't sure how he could be so full of self-hatred and at the same time the most conceited person he knew.

Daniel was also devastated when they found out Jane was pregnant, and she refused to have the baby. Daniel wanted to keep it and had fantasies of a happy life with children in a little house with a white-picket-fence-type vision. But she would not have the baby because that would mean stopping using cocaine. She even went and had the baby aborted against Daniel's will. He began to despise and hate her for that. This was a time of his life that was most miserable. Even beyond being an addict, knowing his wife murdered his baby was a deep emotional black hole of hatred and pain.

Daniel, being a child of a divorce, did not want to divorce and held on to hope even though deep down he knew it was hopeless. When someone loves a drug more than they love the person they're with, it will be nothing but misery ... For four years, he stuck with it.

There was a time when Daniel was trying to get a job at Micron Technologies and his stepdad had given him bad directions to get there. He was furious and driving back to Boise after having missed his interview, and was doing over 100 mph, venting his frustration, when he saw a cop turn around from the other side of the freeway and turn on his lights. Having outrun the cops a few times in the past, Daniel mashed the accelerator, thinking he'd outrun the cop. But, Murphy's Law intervened, and it

just happened that he had been doing some work on his Camaro and had changed the thermostat for the cooling and it wasn't allowing enough water through the engine to cool it well enough, so it overheated and lost power. He stupidly continued to try to outrun the cop and ended up in town, dangerously leading a chase. Thankfully the car ended up stalling out, and he was apprehended before anyone was hurt. He ended up doing thirty days of jail-time in work-release for reckless driving and attempting to elude an officer. And, while he was in jail in the evenings, Jane went to the bars and made a bunch of friends. When he got out of jail, Daniel met some of these "friends" and noticed right away that they were very "unfriendly" toward him. He noted that when he was introduced after being released from jail, none of them were interested in meeting him and were strangely stand-offish. They *never* became friendly or even accepting of Daniel, but were very much *Jane's* friends. He wondered what stories they had been fed, and he knew it was probably about secrecy around doing coke. Time revealed that his suspicions were true. They mostly all knew each other and they were into drugs.

The fights over cocaine never stopped. It was a constant battle, but he knew that if he didn't give in, she would go and do it anyway, so he almost always gave in to her, and his addiction made it easy.

He remembers one time, early on, where she had fought with him and left to go to a girlfriend's apartment and do coke. He was so furious that he went to the apartment and walked straight to the front door and kicked it in, turned, and left. He didn't know what to do, and his anger was reaching a boiling point.

The remaining years of their marriage were a miserable time for Daniel, but even then, he was still mourning Steven and never could forget the pain of it. He knew, as an adult, that it wasn't his fault, and that he could not have known or been expected to be there to save him, but he still teared up from time to time when he thought about it. The habit of self-talk and hating himself still remained.

During that time, Jane got a job in a hotel and worked her way up to the front-desk manager position. She would embezzle money by destroying the records of people who stayed in the hotel and

paid cash when they left. She would keep the cash and simply destroy the record of them having stayed there. She used that cash to maintain their cocaine habit. Daniel had moved into a manufacturing job and was the night-shift floor supervisor. Their income was stable, and they bought a house where Daniel set up a Halide (simulated sunshine) growing room in one of the basement bedrooms and grew marijuana for extra cash (and personal use) as well.

The absolute lowest point of his life was when they had another of their many, many arguments about doing coke, and Jane pushed his buttons so badly that he had an episode of rage he'd only read about in the past. Everything went red. She had been screaming at him and trying to hit him while he simply deflected her blows and pushed her off of him, but something triggered in his mind with something she said, and he exploded in rage and broke her nose.

He hated himself for letting that happen. The cops were called when the neighbors heard her screaming in pain, but she washed up and came to the door and defended him for some reason. Her nose was crooked and swollen, along with the whole side of her face, and the cops saw it, but she was adamant that she was fine. They wouldn't leave until she came to the door, but they had no choice but to go after she did.

She told all her friends and co-workers she hit her face on the car dashboard in a sudden stop to explain it away. He didn't think anyone believed her, and he doesn't know why she did that. Maybe it was just guilt for pushing him so hard. But Daniel will never justify what happened and could not forgive himself at the time for hitting a woman, no matter the circumstances. The whole point of including this awful event in this book is so you know just how much of a sinner Daniel really was.

He says, today, that there's only one thing that the Apostle Paul wrote that he disagrees with. That Paul was the chief sinner. Daniel knows better. Why God saved him from death probably more times than he knows, and from himself in his angry misery and wickedness, Daniel will never know. He can only be grateful.

They got a ski boat and pretended to be in a happy marriage for a while longer, but divorce was on the horizon and both of them knew it. Daniel once again had tons of friends. Just like when he was a coke dealer, lots of people wanted to be his friend. Now, with a ski boat, there was a lot of people who suddenly liked him and Jane. They spent a lot of time at the Lucky Peak Reservoir in the summers, getting stoned and drunk, skiing and boating with their “friends.” In the summer, they spent weekends at the lake water-skiing, and spent several evenings during the week at the bars and dance clubs, doing coke, getting high and drunk, and living a life wasted away in a haze and a black hole of nothingness. Winters were very cold in Idaho, so clubs were also the weekend activity in the cold months.

He remembers that he frequently visited the Seattle area during this time. One time in particular he was coming out of the Blue Mountains at his favorite part of the drive to Seattle, where there's a steep decline that levels out into a long stretch of freeway that goes for miles in a straight line. He loved opening up his Camaro in this stretch, and this time there was only a single solitary semi-truck on the entire stretch of road. He was purring along at 140 mph, enjoying the speed that was almost a rush, and the truck driver must have seen him coming. Just as he was approaching the truck, it drifted over into the left lane where Daniel was flying through. He had only enough time to slide to the left and passed the truck on the left shoulder of the freeway. It happened so fast he could barely react, and by the time he was over, the shock the truck was far behind. He wonders if that trucker was trying to kill him, or if he even realized how close he came to doing it?

Queensryche's *Empire* release came out around that time. “Silent Lucidity” was Daniel's favorite song on that album. Getting away in a dream world sounded great.

They separated for a while before they finally divorced, and Jane cheated on him with a bouncer in one of the clubs, and another guy that he knew about. She actually came to Daniel wanting to reconcile, but when he insisted that she stop seeing this other guy, she wouldn't commit. He refused to consider getting back together if she wouldn't, so they just filed for divorce. Daniel never cheated on her, since loyalty, monogamy in marriage, and honesty were some of the things he still believed in.

When Daniel and Jane divorced, he let her keep the boat. And guess what? His best friend was suddenly Jane's best friend, and Daniel was hung out to dry. He didn't care, though. It just proved where their loyalties were and what they were really about. It was the boat. They weren't really Daniel's friends, anyway.

Again, the four years of their marriage have many stories that could but won't be told in this book. Suffice to say that they faked it fairly well, but in the end there was no love in their marriage and it ended like so many do today: in divorce. Cocaine was Jane's love, and she was determined to keep it!

He found out a few years later, when he worked as a bouncer for a while, that she was still doing cocaine, and he was glad he'd divorced her.

## The Ex-Coke Addict, Part 1 – Goodbye Cocaine

After the divorce from Jane, or rather, during the divorce proceedings, Daniel started dating Molly. She was one of his employees at Ecco Electronics, where he was the night shift supervisor for manufacturing. He saw her as the complete opposite of Jane. She didn't do drugs, hardly even drank alcohol, worked two full-time jobs, and still lived with her mother. She was eight years younger than Daniel, and he thought she was a perfect candidate to be the mother of his children. He proposed, and they married shortly after his divorce was final. In Idaho, at the time, you had to wait six months for the courts to finalize a divorce.

He ignored all the red flags. Didn't realize at the time that she was a rebound relationship and he had his head in the clouds. Things like, her best friend was way more upset about her getting married and being with Daniel than she should have been if they were just “friends,” and many other signs he should have paid attention to. As you'll see later, she was in fact a lesbian, which Daniel wouldn't really have cared about at that time in his life, but he certainly didn't want to marry one. He discovered later that she simply wanted a baby and knew she needed a man to make that happen, and she was “in the closet” with her sexual preference when it came to her mother and the rest of her family. Daniel was just a good opportunity to have a baby and pretend to be heterosexual. Daniel also should have asked why she had two full-time jobs while she was living with her mother. What he didn't know was that she was so far in debt that she had to have two jobs to make the payments on all the credit bills she'd amassed. There was more, but you get the drift.

While he was the supervisor at Ecco, he learned a love for computers. He had to produce graphs of manufacturing statistics for his boss, and he referenced a 700-page manual on Lotus 123 and used it to its full potential, creating his own complete menus and functions with the macro system built into it.

He even tried his hand at a little hacking in the company network as he learned the ins and outs of operating systems and networks. He bought his first computer, a 386sx. The fastest PC available at the time.

He had kicked the coke habit. He no longer yearned for cocaine on a regular basis, had learned to hate it because of the power it had over him, and slowly but surely, the nagging addiction left him completely. He can say today that he is no longer addicted. He never even thinks about cocaine any more, many years later.

For those out there with no hope, there is hope. Daniel is proof. The idea that once you're addicted, you always are, is not true. Daniel is no longer a slave to addiction in any way. It takes years for addiction to die, but it's not forever.

It was during a family reunion, not long after the wedding, that his mother had a stroke. They were on a houseboat on a huge lake in Eastern Washington. Far from any help, Daniel frantically drove the houseboat back to the pier while his brother rode in a speedboat with some fishermen they flagged down to get her to a hospital. They were many miles out in the winding river/lake, so it took a long time to drive the slow houseboat back. No one knew she was having a stroke at the time. Daniel recognized a similarity to what he had seen when people overdosed on cocaine. She was completely out of it, incoherent, convulsing, and making random movements and sounds. But he knew it wasn't a drug overdose. Nobody knew what was happening, and that made it so much worse during the long boat ride back to the docks.

It was fortunate that they were near Spokane, Washington, because the hospital there actually had some of the best neurosurgeons in the U.S. at the time. They discovered that one side of her blood vessels feeding her brain stem had never developed, and only one side was providing all of it, so when there was a blockage, it cut off the blood supply to her brain stem completely. This was why she had a stroke at only fifty years old.

This shocked Daniel to his core. His eyes were opened to the fact that his mom could die. As a child, she'd always seemed immortal and he'd never really thought about losing her, but this event smacked him hard with the reality that she would be gone someday.

On the way back to Boise, after she had stabilized, and the doctors were sure she'd be okay, Daniel made the decision to move back to the Seattle area to be near family. He wrote a new song called, "Mother mine," and Molly wrote it down for him while he was driving back. He had written many songs over the years, and even had a studio in one of the basement bedrooms of the house that he'd owned with Jane, where he recorded a few songs with a keyboard to mix the bass and drums while he played a melody on the guitar or keyboard, and sang.

He quickly made arrangements and moved within a few months. He got a job as a maintenance supervisor for a property management company, doing maintenance for a large apartment complex. He had learned this trade back when he'd worked with Dick Harmon upon his return to Seattle after meeting his blood father in Wyoming. This part of the early story hasn't been told yet, but it's coming shortly in the next couple chapters. As the maintenance supervisor, he was responsible for several cleaning employees and maintenance workers.

It was during this time that he taught himself how to program using a book he bought on Q-Basic, the free programming language that came with Microsoft DOS at the time.

His daughter, Nicole, was born. He'd finally become a father and was overjoyed with his daughter, but the joy was choked out by marriage problems. The signs he'd ignored when he met Molly were manifesting, and she couldn't seem to hold a part-time job much less something substantial enough to help with living expenses, which was a far cry from her holding down two full-time jobs before they were married. She'd had a couple lesbian relationships start up that she'd tried to cultivate, but Daniel stopped them in their tracks before they could really blossom. She seemed to think he wouldn't notice things and somehow thought he was too dumb to see the sexual aspect of the "girlfriends" relationships that she had while she was practically flaunting it in his face. He realized,

now, why her “friend” had been so upset when Molly started dating Daniel back in Boise. At this point in his life he didn't really care about that so much, but he wasn't going to be married to someone who was going to be going around behind his back, lying and cheating. Who would want that?

He met up with Brandon for drinks one night shortly after moving back to the Seattle area. He wasn't concerned about anything, and they caught up on events, but Daniel was saddened to find out Brandon was still doing coke. When they left the bar, Brandon invited Daniel over to his apartment to smoke some coke that he had purchased at the last bar. He went with him and even took a hit, but it was really bad coke, and it didn't even affect him. He was more affected by the fact that he'd left his old friend behind and hated that cocaine still had Brandon imprisoned in his addiction. He tried to talk about quitting, but Brandon would just not get into a serious conversation about it. He left feeling depressed and didn't see much of Brandon after that.

He also connected with a few other friends, like his old friend Mick, and found that he was drinking most evenings away and was in the habit of barhopping, looking for fights to vent his anger. Most of his old friends were just drinking away their lives, and many of them still doing drugs as much as they could afford.

But Daniel knew he was done with that life, so he stopped hooking up with old friends and just went on with his new life.

Marital problems were rampant, but he did not want to divorce again and for sure did not want his daughter to be a product of divorce, without both a mother and father in her life, like he had been.

He focused on his job and trying to succeed as well as he could, but one night after an emergency maintenance call, his boss tried to seduce him. This would have gone against everything Daniel stood for. He still had that nagging self-hatred, but he loved goodness and honesty and had no desire to cheat on his wife, no matter what she did. He refused and shakily retreated, but his job became very stressful after that, and she started coming down on him for everything and eventually found a

reason to fire him.

It was around that time that his stepdad offered to bring Daniel into his sales-rep business and train him in sales to eventually take over the business and buy out his stepdad. He didn't have a "business" so much as he had a large clientele that he'd cultivated over the years. He sold a variety of things to manufacturers, but mostly machine tools and plastics. Daniel took the chance and moved his family into the upstairs of the old family home, while his parents lived downstairs, and the garage was converted to an office. Molly worked as the secretary/inside salesperson while Daniel learned the ins and outs of sales, and his mom helped take care of Nicole while they worked the business. At first, this seemed like a great change!

His mom had recovered from her stroke fairly well. She'd had to learn to speak all over again, and had a slight accent that nobody could figure out where it came from. It was a very pleasant time with her, because her anger had seemed to disappear. She was a much happier person and was not constantly fighting and bickering with Allen. It was a very pleasant side effect of the stroke.

He hated sales, however. He'd never really been a "people person" and found that schmoozing and pretending to like people he didn't like was a big part of the job. The worst part was promising product to a customer based on established delivery times from the manufacturers and then having to deal with delivery or faulty product issues. He decided sales wasn't for him very quickly.

Being so close to his stepdad now, he also learned how a "deacon of the church" lied to his customers in the name of "sales," stopped in at 7-Eleven for doughnuts on the way to sales calls while hiding that activity from his wife (because he was overweight), etc. This was the last straw for Daniel. He had no respect whatsoever for his stepdad anymore, and staying in this relationship to eventually buy out the business in what was a very lucrative deal for his stepdad, but not so lucrative for Daniel, just wasn't in the cards.

He bowed out of that, and while his mother and stepdad weren't happy about it, he'd made up his mind and got a job as inside sales at a fair-sized sales office, "Western States Sales," selling PVC

pipng and other construction equipment. Since he was the only one with any real computer knowledge, he also took over running the small server and network.

It was around this time that he decided to take some programming classes, since he'd found he really liked Q-Basic, and got accepted at Bellevue Community College to take night classes. He found he was very good at it, a natural, and his Advanced C teacher even offered for Daniel to sit in on his C++ class for free because he was so impressed with his aptitude for programming.

He started his Wildcat BBS (a computer bulletin board system, which he named “the Desen Machine”) and he wrote a door game for his BBS, called Pike Place, which gained some popularity among other sysops (BBS system operators), and he had a few of them actually purchase the full version, which gave the sysops more power over the game content. For those of you reading this that are too young to know what a BBS is, it was an online messaging and multiplayer gaming system that was pre-internet, where people would actually dial into the BBS with a modem and a phone line.

He also met Kimbell Daniels, another sysop, who introduced him to Amway and the World Wide Dream Builders organization. He was skeptical of pyramid schemes, but Amway had a long history of success, and he made the decision to give it a full year and really work it to see if it could work for him. He ended up being in the top twenty percent of Amway. This may seem like something at first glance, but the top twenty percent just meant that he actually had some downline that was working the business. Downline was the Amway term for people under you in the business that you had sponsored. Upline was the branch of the business from your sponsor and up to your “diamond” level distributor (the highest level). After the full year, he had some regular customers and a couple downline businesses struggling to work the business. But, he also assessed where he was, and what he'd learned in a year. The business was successful based on numbers. On average, if you talked to ten people, you could end up showing two of them the “plan.”

You had to go out to stores and public places and pretend to actually be there for some reason

other than trying to find people to talk to, and then “FORM” them. Family, Occupation, Recreation, Message. You found some reason to get close enough to someone to say hi, asked them about their family, then their occupation, what they did for fun, and once you had them feeling good by getting them to talk about themselves, you hit them with the “dream” of creating a residual income, and you'd be happy to meet them sometime to show them the plan! It was all based on the “How to Win Friends and Influence People” concept (required reading of World Wide Dream Builders). Of those people you showed the plan, two out of ten would, on average, be interested. Of those, two out of ten would become active and try to build the business. Of those, two out of ten would be successful to some extent. Daniel did some math and figured out that based on the number of “Diamond” level Amway distributors there were in the Seattle area and the number of people that lived there, that everyone in the entire Seattle area and surrounding towns had already been approached at least once. There were no “fresh” leads in the entire area. And, the amount of time and work involved, as well as the expensive products taking chunks out of his paychecks, and having virtually no income from the business, he decided it was time to bow out of this as well.

The other side of his reason for getting out was that he'd developed a bitter attitude toward his wife, due to her lies and deceit, trying to sneak around behind his back, and he had grown very aloof and distant, so the hatred went both ways. She would laugh at him and mock him while he was trying to talk to people in his business to boost their attitudes, and at the same time she was incapable of helping with the ordering side of the business, so he was stuck doing it all. He couldn't see how he'd be successful with her in tow. His old bad attitude was still with him, and he didn't bother trying to hide his disdain of her. But he still refused to consider divorce for his daughter's sake.

Molly was pregnant with his son, Tyler, at this time.

This was not long after Daniel watched a gunfight between two rival gangs across the street from the apartment they'd moved into, while his eighteen-month-old daughter was playing at his feet. He imagined her going to school with these kids. It wasn't even a bad neighborhood. It was an upper-

middle-class suburb in Renton, and there was this going on. He decided that Boise, being about ten years behind the big cities as far as crime rates and gangs, was a much better place to raise kids.

He used this move back to Boise as an excuse to get out of Amway without outright quitting, which would have meant his downline would move to his sponsor and he'd be out of the picture entirely. He kept his options open just in case one of them actually succeeded in the business.

## The Ex-Coke Addict, Part 2 – Back to Boise

Boise had grown some since Daniel had lived there in the early '80s. It had doubled in size and was growing fast, with around 100,000 people now. Many people had the same idea that Daniel had, and were moving there for a quieter life away from the big cities and high crime rates.

He found a job in Boise while still in Seattle. Since he'd worked in networking and computer systems at Western States Sales, he got a job at St. Alphonsus Hospital doing systems administration and desktop PC support, working on the Novell Netware Servers used at the hospital. His friend, Paul, moved with him and brought his family (his girlfriend and her son that he'd been with for years) to Boise as well, for the same reason as Daniel. Paul and Daniel had met through Daniel's BBS and had become fast friends in Seattle. So, they both got jobs at St. Alphonsus, and rented two apartments that were right next to each other in a small apartment complex.

His son Tyler was born at St. Luke's Hospital shortly after moving to Boise. He was so proud to be a father again, and this time a son! Amid all the misery of a bad marriage he still found joy in that.

He also maintained a relationship with his Amway business since he had a small residual income that it was generating, but after a couple years, many of the upline and his downline all quit the business.

After about a year, one of the senior systems engineers had moved into a teaching position at a local computer consulting and software education company called Computerland, and he invited Daniel to apply for a new position that had opened up as the local systems administrator. He jumped at the chance to advance his career and worked for them for about four years gaining a lot of experience and certifications in Operating Systems like Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer (MCSE) and Certified Netware Engineer (CNE). He also took a part-time job taking care of an accounting firm's servers and

computers in the evenings.

During this time, Paul and his girlfriend had split up and she left, but Paul stayed in Boise. Daniel moved his family into a rental house in the area, and Molly again could not keep a job and was just sitting on the phone, complaining to her friends all day, while Daniel worked two jobs. She complained about him not being home but she would not get a job to help with finances so he could quit working so much. He would come home from work only to be met by a screaming, petulant woman who seemed to hate him. She started in on him as soon as he walked in the door most days.

One of Daniel's friends from work introduced him to "gentlemen's clubs." Daniel had never been in a club with "dancers" before, but found that it was a distraction from his home life, and he started going from time to time with his friend so he didn't have to go home. He brought Paul to these "clubs" as well, and they would all go out frequently together.

He also met a woman at work who he started spending time with outside of work, and Daniel ended up having an affair with her while she was engaged to another man. He castigated himself for this, and was very disparaged, but it's part of the story and must be included so the whole story is told. Daniel hated cheaters, but again, he fell to his own flesh and did something he would chastise someone else for. He hated himself even more for it. He doesn't think he was justified because of Molly's lies and disloyalty, and believes there is no excuse for what he did, no matter what happened in the past. When he cheated on Molly, he was devastated by his own wickedness. To top it off, he ended up meeting this woman's fiancé at a large group luncheon, and when he looked at the man, he asked himself what the hell he thought he was doing. It was the most despicable thing to do to another person. He couldn't look at himself in the mirror after that and broke off the affair. It was a new low for Daniel. This was when he started thinking that it wasn't good for the kids or anyone to continue in a relationship with Molly, and maybe it would be better to divorce.

Daniel knows that he can't judge anyone for anything because he's likely done the same thing at

some point in his life. There aren't a lot of sins he's not guilty of. These things just kept making his heart harder, and harder, not caring about anything, and hating himself even more.

He bought his third motorcycle during this time. A 1995 Yamaha Virago 1100. He had mellowed out some and didn't ride like the devil anymore, but he still loved riding and went on a few bike events with Paul and other friends who had motorcycles, sometimes with hundreds of bikes. He loved it and found it to be a great distraction.

Molly eventually found out that he had been frequenting strip clubs (he didn't try to hide it) and decided she could be a “dancer” herself. Daniel didn't like the idea, but he was happy that she might actually work and help pay bills. This did not happen, however. He tried to get her to help with bills, but she refused to give but a small portion of her earnings to help. She ended up making more money than Daniel did, but she still would not help with the bills, and instead just blew her money. Daniel even overheard her proclaiming indignantly to a friend on the phone that she “shouldn't have to give any of her money to pay bills.” *Why not?* He didn't know her justification, but she hated him as much as he hated her at this point, and the loathing in her voice was unmistakable. Don't get me wrong, though. Daniel wasn't a saint, either. He was very bitter and angry and didn't try to hide it. His old, “I don't care” attitude was still with him and he was really good at pretending he didn't care.

He started suspecting that she was doing more than “dancing” for the money she made, and he hired a PI to follow her while he was out of town on a business trip. He caught her having sex with her customers, spending the night at one particular customer's house. He wasn't Mr. Perfect by any stretch of the imagination, he knew, and he couldn't blame her for doing what he had done, but he wasn't going to put up with his wife becoming a prostitute, either. This wasn't just having an affair. He confronted her about it and could not believe how easily she lied about it and denied it. He even presented her with evidence and admitted he had a PI follow her, and she still denied it. He was flabbergasted. Even though she was caught red-handed and evidence to prove it was right in front of her, she still denied it. He couldn't understand how someone could lie like that with a straight face.

He had decided early on that he was going to stay married for his daughter's sake, and now he had two children to consider, but by the time Tyler was three years old, he figured out that it was actually worse for the children to remain in this dark and dreary marriage. It didn't do them any good at all to see what their mother was doing, and to see the venom in the relationship between their mother and father. They heard her all day long while Daniel was at work, complaining and ripping her husband to shreds with her friends on the phone. How was all of this good for them?

In a last-ditch attempt to avert failure, he tried going to a family counselor with her to see if there was any way to salvage the marriage, but the counselor caught Molly lying to him several times and actually advised Daniel to divorce her.

It was time for divorce number two. To say Daniel was depressed is an understatement in a big way. He had never wanted to be divorced even once, but his choices had led him to this place and he could either buck up, fight it, and try to change, or crumple into a heap and give up. Giving up was never an option, especially for his kids' sake. Molly didn't contest the divorce and they made a clean split without fighting a battle in court. He managed to get Molly to admit her cash income to the courts, and they arranged a shared parenting plan.

After the divorce, he got a job at one of the strip clubs as a bouncer to see what really happened behind the scenes at these places, and found that it was full of drugs and the sex trade, much more than just girls dancing in skimpy clothing on the stage. It was as bad as he thought, and it scared him to think his kids would be exposed to this life. He also found that the local biker gang was very involved in a lot of the "clubs" in the area. He became involved with one of the dancers for a while, but when he mentioned how sad he was for a little boy who was being raised by two lesbian "dancers," she broke up with him. He quit that job after a short time, but it opened his eyes to the filth he had gotten involved with.

He hired an attorney and hoped that his kids being exposed to the sex business, and in a very

dangerous situation that put them at high risk for sexual child abuse, would be enough for him to get full custody, but he found that the laws in Idaho very much favored the mothers, and that he'd pretty much have to get a video of sexual molestation or their mother with needles hanging out of her arms to get a judge to do anything. So even though she was openly having a lesbian relationship now, and working as a stripper, and doing drugs at her house with her clientele and co-workers around the children, a judge would do nothing unless he had iron-clad proof of criminal behavior endangering the children. Even catching her in prostitution wasn't enough because there was no police record of it.

So Daniel just did what he could while he had his children and spent the next five years as a single dad, taking care of them and picking them up even when they were at their mother's house to get them to school functions, sports, etc., and keep them protected as much as he could.

Those five years with his son and daughter were the best years he'd ever had in his life.

He again changed jobs, this time with a lot more experience under his belt with computers and servers, and moved to St. Luke's Hospital where he worked as a systems engineer and made more money than he ever had (legally), so far.

He had his kids every other week for a week at a time, and spent those weeks focusing on them. For the first time in his life, he felt like he was worth something. He was a father and loved being a dad and loved his kids. He had to deal with "the other side" often, but he was able to keep his kids in a happy home while he had them in his care.

He advanced in his job and excelled, getting nice raises and promotions as time went on. He worked at St. Luke's for eight years.

But, after about five years of being a single dad, he got lonely and stupid ...

## The End of the Ex-Drug Dealer

After years of no steady relationship with a woman, just taking care of his kids and living a fairly normal life, Daniel tried several dating websites. He ended up dating a whole bunch of women who he had no interest in. Some would use ten-year-old pictures, and when he met them he found that they had “gained a little weight,” some didn't seem right in the head, some were too into looking for a “father” for the child they wanted to have or for their existing children, and it just went on and on.

His friend, Mike from Computerland, and he had lots of conversations over the years about evolution and aliens and the universe, and how life might have begun. He chose to disbelieve in God and tried to make the theory of evolution make sense. It was impossible when he really studied it, and science didn't really support it, but he made it work in his head since he didn't want to acknowledge God, so it had to be true.

It was during this time that Daniel went to a hypnotherapist and tried to resolve his self-hatred and attitude. At her suggestion, he made a trip to Portland with his kids, staying at the beach house his parents owned in Ocean Shores, and visited Steven's grave. He purposefully “let him go” to finally have closure on Steven's death, and reconciled with himself that it really wasn't his fault, and he wasn't such a horrible person. It seemed to work. He had a better outlook on life and started thinking more optimistically, but he still denied God.

He gave up on dating a few times, and just never found a woman he was interested in pursuing. But he kept going back.

He made friends from work, and on his weeks with no kids he had frequent small parties at his house, and went out drinking with Mike and Paul a lot. He had taken up smoking weed again and was drinking a lot when he didn't have his kids. He was very lonely and very bored when he didn't have his children with him.

Then one day a new face appeared on a dating site and he sent a message. Tina had a son about Tyler's age, and she seemed level-headed. She played the game very well and fooled Daniel into believing she was for real. And he ignored the red flags, again. After they'd been seeing each other a short while, she revealed that she was in pain a lot and took painkillers for it regularly. It was “adhesions” from surgery in the past, and there was no known cure in the U.S. But there was a doctor in Germany that had a way to block the formation of adhesions and remove the painful scar tissue. Daniel decided it was worth a try, and Tina was all for it, so he borrowed \$10,000 to pay for the surgery and travel expenses.

Daniel learned the true meaning of “culture shock” when they arrived in Germany. It was a small town about thirty miles outside of Frankfurt, Germany. The doctor's assistant picked them up at the airport in Frankfurt and dropped them off at the room provided for the duration of their stay. There was no food or instructions of any kind, and Daniel found himself in a completely foreign place where nobody spoke English and there was nothing familiar. He found a small market, but even the layout of the store and the cashier setup was different than he'd ever seen. He must have stood out because everyone was looking at him strangely. He spent some time figuring out what foods might be fairly edible and found some bottles of water. There was a small kitchen in the apartment with utensils so he was able to cook. It was an experience he'll never forget.

The most disconcerting thing about Germany were the notices posted showing then President Bush's face and hatred of him. This was in 2003 when Bush went to war with Iraq. People could tell by their clothing that they weren't from Germany and most probably assumed they were American, and so they gave Daniel and Tina not-so-friendly looks.

The surgery went well, and she was supposedly free of pain. Daniel married Tina in June of 2003. She was supposed to be off the drugs and had no issues, but shortly after they were married, Daniel caught her taking some pills. She had never stopped taking them, but had cut down and was hiding it. She started having “pain” again to give herself a “need” for the drugs, and ended up going to

a pain management doctor and getting some very potent painkillers.

She very subtly began inserting herself between Daniel and his kids and manipulating things behind his back. He didn't realize how much of that was going on at the time and fell for some of her lies. It was like putting a frog in water and slowly bringing it to a boil. He didn't see what was happening until it was too late. He found out later that she was forcing his son to work almost slave labor while Daniel was at work, and treated him like a dog, while lifting her son up and spoiling him.

Barely a year after the marriage, Daniel told her he wanted a divorce. He had allowed this woman to destroy his life and his kids' lives with her vile manipulations and head games and could not believe how he'd let it happen.

This was divorce number three. Daniel was devastated. He had failed again.

## The New Man

This was the absolute lowest point in Daniel's life. He'd let his loneliness make bad decisions for him and brought this woman into his life when he should have recognized the red flags, once again. He'd betrayed his children for this woman and allowed her to manipulate him, and now he realized just how impossible it was for him to be a good man, and a good father. He was out in his garage smoking a cigarette, lamenting his failure, and finally admitted what he'd always known. He looked up and acknowledged God.

He prayed and asked forgiveness for thirty-plus years of denial, and admitted he could not do things on his own. He broke down and gave up, giving God what He deserves; acknowledgment and repentance. And God met him there. He was overwhelmed with sorrow for what he'd done with his life and how he'd gone so far against God, but God gave him a measure of His Spirit in that moment and strengthened him, forgiving him. Daniel was so grateful that Jesus had saved him from himself!

That moment in the garage was a realization that he'd been denying what he always knew deep down: that God *Is*. He exists, and He is exactly who He said He is in the Bible.

He came out of the garage a new man.

Daniel suddenly had purpose to his life, and was no longer lost and hopeless, but was full of hope!

Just admitting that God exists changed everything.

And God, giving Daniel the gift of His Spirit, being so patient and kind, was the loving father he never had.

He cried tears of joy!

This is not the end of the story, but I have to jump to the present, so you can understand some of the things Daniel learned about God and this world since his conversion.

It's important to know that true belief in Jesus brings a conversion that the Bible speaks of. We put off the old man (dying to oneself) and put on the new man (turning to follow Jesus in repentance). We're buried with Christ in baptism, in the likeness of His death, and raised in the likeness of His resurrection. We become a new person. This is what being "born again" means. This is what "obeying the gospel" means. All of this is detailed in the Bible for us.

Daniel became ravenous for God's Word and started reading and studying for literally hours every day.

He started studying prophecy and found that we're actually in the last days of the last days that God told us about. We're in the End Time.

Today, he's read the Bible from cover to cover more times than he can count and has dug deep into all the different doctrines that are taught in churches, so that the Word could correct the lies of the church and show him the One Truth that's in the Bible.

He understands why we're here, exactly what's going on, and exactly where we're headed!

The Bible literally tells us everything! It's amazing! We just have to read it and believe it.

Daniel knows that it's God who gave him this understanding and clarity. His goal in life is to share this knowledge with any and all who will listen.

A sinner saved. By the Grace of God. God saved Daniel from himself in so many ways. He will be eternally grateful.

He has online Bible studies and Bible studies in his home, multiple websites, a book (besides this one) and mobile apps. He gives it all away for free (except the printed book charges for just the Amazon printing and shipping costs).

His main website is: <https://www.BibleProphecyAndTruth.com>

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If you've read this book and you do not know the Lord but would like to, please contact Dan at the above website or email!

Daniel is the proof that God can forgive anyone, and has long patience that is incomprehensible for humans to understand. There is no sin that's too dark for God to forgive. The only unforgivable sin is denial of God.

## The Rest of the Story

The realization of how patient God had been with him made him weep with gratitude. Daniel knew the life he'd led, how much pain he had caused other people, how callous and indifferent he'd been to so many. How he'd contributed to drug addictions of other people. How he'd denied that still, small voice for thirty years, and denied that God even existed. He could never repay the Lord for being so patient and forgiving.

He decided that with God, he could go on. Tina had always claimed to be a “Christian,” but never really said anything or did anything to indicate there was any truth to it, and when Daniel told her about his conversion, she suddenly became a “true Christian” and was “eager” to go to church with him and start living for Jesus. Due to his announcement of divorce, but sudden reversal, she played the game well, pretending to also have a change of heart. In hindsight he knows now that this was all about her drugs and his insurance, but he didn't realize it at the time.

He decided divorce was against God's will, not understanding the Bible well enough at that time, and he found himself in the “Boise Friends Church,” a church much like the watered-down protestant church his family had gone to in Seattle. The pastor agreed that divorce was never God's will, and Daniel began going to church anytime it was open, and attending the church's Bible studies.

He started reading the Bible.

It didn't take long for Daniel to realize there was something wrong. The church didn't even have a baptismal font, and the pastor said it wasn't necessary. But Daniel was reading something completely different in the Word of God. He made a special appointment to discuss that with the pastor and was amazed that the pastor just blew off the scriptures he showed him, and said he could go to another church to get baptized if he really wanted to. He even said that Paul wasn't baptized, so why should anyone be? But, Daniel studied it out after that conversation and discovered that in Acts 9:18, and Acts

22:16 it documents the baptism of Paul. The pastor had proclaimed that he had been to Bible college and had “been studying the Bible for forty years and knew it well,” so Daniel should just take his word for it. This was laughable to Daniel. There had also been a few times in Bible study that he'd brought up some contradicting scriptures about what they were saying and people would get mad at him and demean him for saying things that contradicted with their teaching. There was one time, specifically, where Daniel brought up obedience and ceasing from sin because it was obvious in scripture, but they were teaching differently than he was reading in the Bible, and a guy with gold chains around his neck and his shirt unbuttoned practically to his navel got really mad and started spouting words like “legalism” and shouting at Daniel in his indignation.

It was time to find another church. Tina suggested her father's Pentecostal Church, so he figured it was worth trying. They went to the small church out in the sticks, and at one point in the service Tina stood, and started saying, “tee, tee, tee,” with her eyes closed and different vocal inflections, and everyone just went on as if this was normal. Daniel was perplexed and skeptical. This was supposed to be “speaking in tongues”? Tee, tee, tee was not a “tongue” that Daniel could reconcile, but everyone else seemed to just accept it. The thing he did like about the church was that the teaching was sound and was much closer to the truth than the Boise Friends Church. The pastor taught on salvation just as Daniel read and understood it in the Bible, with repentance and baptism in the name of Jesus as part of our obedience and turning to Christ.

Liking the teaching of the Pentecostal Church, He decided to find a church closer to home and found a small United Pentecostal Church using a storefront in a strip mall in Boise close to his home.

He also became extremely interested in Bible prophecy. He saw some videos that appeared to show how close it was to the return of the Jesus, so he started studying it and specifically comparing those ideas to scripture, discarding anything that did not fit with the Bible. If it was true, it would match the Bible perfectly, without any tiny little thing being out of place.

He was baptized into Jesus there, and was told that speaking in tongues was the “evidence” of

the Holy Spirit, so he started praying for that gift. It didn't come, and didn't come. The church regularly prayed in tongues together, some that you could hear was definitely a language of some kind, others just a “la, la, la” and Tina's “tee, tee, tee,” but again it was just generally accepted that this was a “tongue” even though Daniel knew better. They kept reassuring Daniel that it would come if he just kept seeking it, but there was no way he was going to start saying la la la or try to fake it. If he was going to speak in tongues, it was going to come from God. He was amazed and humbled and honored to hear the voice of God when he heard tongues and interpretation, where someone would speak a foreign language by the Spirit, and another would interpret by the Spirit. And sometimes there would be simple prophecy. There were a few times that God had a message for the church. God, through prophecy, specifically spoke to Daniel through the pastor at one point, where God told Daniel that He knew his heart, and Daniel wept with joy at this experience. The presence of God's Spirit in that church was strong. You could feel it.

At this point in time, Daniel had not read the Bible enough times nor had he had a chance to really study all of the doctrines taught in churches, so he fell prey to the doctrine of tongues that the UPC church taught (the doctrine that all who receive the Holy Spirit speak with tongues). He learned through the scriptures how wrong that doctrine is a little later, but God took him through a learning process that has stuck with Daniel ever since.

After a few weeks of praying for, but not receiving the Gift of Tongues, and being sold on the doctrine because it's true that everyone in the book of Acts who received the Holy Spirit spoke in tongues and prophesied and magnified God (he had not yet learned through study that only some spoke in tongues, and some prophesied, and some magnified God), and believing the UPC's twisted doctrine about that, he drove up to the top of a mountain and parked there with his Bible, got in the back and began praying. He reached out to God in earnest, entreating God solemnly, saying he was going to stay there until He gave him that gift. He had barely started praying when a burst of tongues came out and

he gasped in shock. He realized what had just happened and was overjoyed! He began thanking and praising God! He drove back home, blessing everyone he saw and praising God!

It's important to note at this point that after a few months, Tina's "Christian" walk dissipated and she started acting the same as before, abusing his children behind his back, but faking it for the church and pretending Daniel was the bad guy.

So when he got back home and told her about His experience with God, Tina didn't believe him. But he knew better and didn't care what she thought.

He talked to his church friends, Mike, and the Farmers, and he kept praying in church. Two weeks later, while praying in the midst of the church, he spoke in tongues again and Mike, one of the church elders, confirmed he heard and that it was the Holy Spirit, according to the traditions of the UPC church. Note, the fact that it was "confirmed" did not matter to Daniel since he knew what it was, but to other people like his wife, and the other church members, it was what they thought was needed. It was strange to Daniel that they, from then on, said he'd received the Holy Ghost on that day in church. Daniel knew different. He had received the Holy Ghost that day in his garage, and tongues was another gift that God gave him two weeks ago. None of this made sense, so he began praying and studying this doctrine they taught about tongues. God was teaching Daniel something very important.

Tina started making Daniel out to be an abuser, just like she said her ex-husband was. She would manufacture fights almost daily, and constantly try to get him to do something she could claim was abuse. Daniel even heard the exact same verbiage she'd used with her ex about "being abused" when he was trying to leave the house with her screaming at him and clawing at him. He just picked her up and threw her on the bed to get her off of him, and she claimed he was abusing her.

Her son, Mason, had some major issues and had to take ADHD medication to keep him calm, and he was a mean-hearted boy who Daniel discovered was being mean to Tyler, hurting him, and getting him to not say anything with threats of violence and further pain.

He separated them as much as possible, but he had to work and was unable to be home 100% of

the time to protect his son.

Any time Daniel tried to take control of the situation, Tina would badger him, verbally abuse him, and manipulate him until he retreated into a mental state of chaos.

He tried counseling again, and a family therapist tried to get Tyler to stand up for himself, but did not understand that Mason was a very strong boy, and that he had his mother to back him up in every instance. It seemed that Tina had the therapist convinced she was a victim. He even tried to get Daniel to react one time by pushing and pushing, Daniel concluding after the fact that he was expecting him to lose control. He realized that was another wasted effort.

He learned from scripture that God does not expect someone who loves Him to stay with another who doesn't. And he knew that Tina's whole reason for being with him was insurance and someone to pay the bills. She didn't love him, and obviously didn't love God. Jesus did say that without infidelity in a divorce that you should not remarry, but he does not condemn all divorce in totality. He speaks of love and forgiveness but knows that without Him there can be no perfect union of man and woman. So Daniel left her the house he had purchased before he met her and signed ownership over to her, putting it up for sale, since it still had a large mortgage that she was unable to pay, gave her one of his cars, and moved into an apartment with his son. He had visitation with his daughter but had his son permanently at this time. He left the marriage separation open, leaving any reconciliation or divorce up to her.

He'd learned during a process where she had to re-qualify for her "disability" that she was diagnosed with a "personality disorder," which is just shy of schizophrenia. He believed that she was simply smart enough to fool the doctors, and faking it for her "disability" checks. She proved her heart by dating other men, and based on personal experience most certainly was sleeping with these other men while she and Daniel were separated. She refused offers on the house because she couldn't make as much profit as she wanted, let the house foreclose, and filed for divorce. She had made a couple

attempts to reconcile, but Daniel saw the fake this time, and had no delusions that there was any love. Daniel signed the divorce without contesting and was in reality glad to be rid of her. She was a parasite and the damage done to his children was irreconcilable. He forgave her, but God never says we have to continue to allow evil people to ruin our lives after we forgive them, so he let her become part of his past and moved on.

The subject of speaking in tongues kept bothering him, and he kept going back to 1 Corinthians 12-14, where Paul speaks of the Gifts of the Spirit, and specifically tongues. It was obvious to Daniel that the church in Corinth had the same kind of thing going on back then as it is in the Pentecostal Church and other charismatic churches today.

Daniel had become very active in the church and was running the soundboard in the back of the church for the services. One Sunday morning, God showed Daniel the truth of the matter. He was sitting back at the soundboard, watching the chaotic activities as everyone in the church was speaking in tongues or praying in a charismatic way, and God planted the vision with an overlay of Paul's letter to the Corinthians in Daniel's mind. This was exactly what Paul was preaching against in his letter. Daniel had seen people come in, stay for a bit, and then walk out, which is exactly what Paul was saying would happen in 1 Cor 14. Paul says he's glad he speaks in tongues, but that it should be done in the correct way, not the way they were doing it, or people will see them as barbarians and it would create confusion.

With further study, Daniel learned that their excuses for believing the way they did were not based on actual scripture, but from a false philosophical interpretation where they add their own "logic" to it. Daniel and his friend John, who spent a lot of time with Daniel praying together and discussing scriptures, spent several months with the evangelist who was interim pastor at the time, going over the scriptures in extreme detail. For every argument, Daniel found scriptures to prove otherwise. The evangelist ended up saying, "You're right, Dan," at the end of it all. He admitted that nowhere in the scriptures does it say everyone must speak in tongues who receive the Holy Spirit, and it is not the

“evidence of the Spirit,” and Paul actually says the exact opposite of that! The gifts God gives to those who love Him are very relevant, but the gift of tongues is not a “sign” to those who believe as evidence of the Spirit. It's the least of the gifts and is not given to everyone. Daniel's hope is that this man will start teaching differently someday ...

You might be asking, “Why would God manifest His power in a church that teaches a lie?” Daniel asked that same question. The answer is, “Why would God not?” I mean, if there's one person who loves God among a thousand that don't, is God going to abandon that one person? No way! He will do what He wills for that person and not worry about the others. God is not going to give in because Satan is winning in this world. It's only temporary until God's plan is concluded and He destroys the devil. The falling away that the Apostle Paul prophesied of in 2 Thessalonians 2 has happened. But even though there are very few, even in the so-called church today, that truly love Him (evidenced by their fruits, as Jesus said), He is still going to do what He wills for those that do. God says for those that do love Him to come out of the great whore and her daughters (the mainstream churches) in Rev 18. We who love God should heed that command.

So Daniel started church-searching. He knew that the UPC was preaching a lie, and he wanted to find a church that taught the whole truth and nothing but the truth. He went to church after church, spent time with pastors in their offices discussing doctrine, and searching for that one beacon of hope in many different denominations.

He couldn't find it.

Abraham believed God and was justified because of it ... Daniel made this his motto. Just believe what God said! He started just counting on God and His word and read and studied even harder than before.

He discovered that you can line up forty pastors who swear up and down they've been studying scripture for forty years and they know its truths, but they all teach different doctrines depending on the

denomination they subscribe to. Even “independent” churches are the same. There was not one church that he'd found that didn't teach any lies. They were different lies, depending on the denomination, and they all had some of the truth, but they all taught at least one lie or another.

He learned, after reading the Bible over and over again, that God hides His truth in His word, just like He did when He was on the earth as a man. He taught in parables so those who don't love Him will not know the truth. We must seek it with all our heart, and then He will reveal it to us.

Daniel is actually glad that he came through all that, and came to know the Lord the way he did, or he might have spent his whole life thinking that because he was baptized at ten years old and “professed to believe in Jesus,” that he was “saved.” He would still be mired in the false churchianity that the rest of his family is stuck in. He knows that and is grateful that God forgave him for so much, and brought him to the Truth.

Today, Daniel is not an addict anymore, and has no desire for drugs. God has created a new heart and a new man in him. He holds Bible studies, preaches the gospel to any who will listen, and promotes the truths he's discovered in the Word of God online with multiple websites and mobile apps.

At the end of 2007, God brought another woman into his life. He'd tried some Christian dating sites after the divorce, but found that they were mostly like the worldly dating sites, and the women claimed to be Christian but were mostly worldly women in their apparel, words, and actions, and he didn't want to be promiscuous but wanted to find a woman who loved God as much as he did. He had canceled all his memberships except “Christian Dating For Free,” because it was free, and he didn't actively look, but had reconciled with staying single and just serving God. One day, a wink came across his profile on that dating site and he got an email notification. There was no picture, but her great personality came across in her profile, and she was looking for a man who would love God more than her. That was not a problem for Daniel. He would always put God above anyone and everyone, so he liked that about her. They began talking on the phone and fell in love before even meeting in person. He prayed about it and felt that God had given him this woman as a gift. Proverbs 18:22 He who finds

a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the LORD.

He visited Kelleen in Florida in January 2008, and began looking for a job in Florida, praying for God to pave the way if it was His will for Daniel to move to Florida, and he found a job so easily that he acknowledged it was God. He flew to Florida for an interview in February, and the manager practically fell in love with Daniel and wanted him to start right away. It was almost as if he couldn't have stopped himself from getting that job even if he'd wanted to.

In March of 2008 he moved to Florida with Tyler and married Kelleen. Daniel and Kelleen married each other before God most importantly, first and foremost, but also at the courthouse to make it legal.

To say it was all perfect would be incorrect, since they are both human beings, but their love for each other and God's love brought them to a place of perfect union that He gives to those who love Him. The doctrines of the modern church were embedded in Kelleen due to her father being a Baptist preacher when she was growing up. Daniel had to be patient as God removed that old programming and taught her His truth. There were times when he had to stand his ground, arguing with her and his mother and stepfather all at the same time against the lies believed in the mainstream church. But, eventually through having in-home Bible studies, she was able to see where the Bible taught differently than she had been told, and when she read the whole Bible from cover to cover, the scales came off completely. She is a woman with whom Daniel believes God is pleased. He is blessed to have a woman who loves God, and for the first time in his life, a woman who truly loves him!

They went through some rough times, especially when her mother died, and then her father just a few years later. And there were normal problems you would expect with a blended family. Tyler and her son, Alex, were thrown together in a whirlwind marriage and it took time to settle down. But God is good, and He brought them together for a reason, and for good.

Together they await the Lord and serve Him as best they can, where the Lord leads.

Today, Daniel says that the best years of his life are now, serving God with a woman who loves him and loves God. He prays for his children and her children, hoping God will reach them, past all the confusion Daniel had subjected his children to in their early years, and draw them to Himself and show them His truth.

He still holds Bible studies regularly and continues to preach the truth on his websites, etc.

As time rolls on, God has revealed more and more about the working of Satan and the darkness covering the world like a putrid blanket, and it has become obvious that we are in the final years of this age. He teaches any who will listen about the prophecies of God, and how we can see them for what they are today in the pictures God painted for us thousands of years ago.

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**The End**