

Sisters of Pain

An Ethnography of Young Women
Living in Secure Care



Leon Fulcher and Aliese Moran

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Leon Fulcher and Aliese Moran

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Dedication

Aliese wishes to dedicate this work to her mother who has shared both wisdom and unconditional love; and to her children – Chelsea and Schuyler – who have always been precious angels.

Leon dedicates this work to his grandchildren – Jacob, Luke, Caitlin and Harley – for nurturing steep learning curves about the value of quality care with loving carers.

The Fox explained to The Little Prince,
“It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye”.

Antoine de Saint-Exupery, 1943, Chapter 21, p.60

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Preface

*I hurt myself today
To see if I still feel
I focus on the pain
The only thing that's real*

– from *Hurt* by Trent Reznor, sung by Johnny Cash
as one of his last recordings

This book is unique in my experience. The reader needs to be prepared for a psycho-emotional journey into self which will confront your beliefs, values and perceptions in personally and professionally challenging ways. The real authors of this text are the young women, many just girls, who give voice to their pain, often in a raw and disturbing manner. This is not a book for anyone who is not prepared to accompany these girls, their family members and their workers into the “heart of darkness”. But it is also a book about hope, compassion and spiritual resilience.

The first story is written by Jenette, who sings the blues as eloquently as any jazz singer I have ever heard, and yet in a manner more gripping in its *a cappella* form, without the softening overlays of guitars and saxophones. Jenette gives the book its title – “Sisters of Pain” – and the pain of these young women flows through these pages as it does throughout their young lives.

My own experience of young people in the child welfare and juvenile corrections “systems” is that ALL of them suffer deep and profound pain, psycho-emotional pain which can become invisible to those around them. What family members, friends and child welfare workers observe is “acting out”, “delinquent”, “maladjusted” or “bad” behaviour, and we can become insensitive to what lies behind and underneath the surface. As a result of seeing too many workers “glossing over” the pain of the children and youths with whom they were working, and reading too many books on “troubled and troubling children” that left their pain hidden and largely unaddressed, I coined

the term “pain-based behaviour” in an attempt to unveil this basic reality of the lives of young people in care (Anglin, 2002).

Young people in our “care systems” throughout the world have suffered unspeakable (or at least often unspoken) traumas, losses, violence and neglectfulness which interfere (sometimes in what seem to us as bizarre ways) with their growth into personhood and even the formation of healthy pathways in their brains. The central challenge of care work – which to be worthy of the name must involve at its core the formation of direct, emotional and reciprocally meaningful relationships – is to respond sensitively and effectively to pain and pain-based behaviour. To do this reasonably well, we need to be sufficiently healthy, self-aware and communicative with others (e.g. supervisors and co-workers), as this can be dangerous territory. These hurting young people are usually clever, sometimes seductive, often experienced and generally desperate enough to ensnare the naïve or unsuspecting “do-gooder” in their sticky webs.

At the same time, these are children of the Creator (however we may understand this great mystery), and as Aliese and these young women remind us, they too have souls which embody infinite potential. The stories told in this book are of “lost souls” who are desperate to discover their way (as we all are), to move from being victims of fate to becoming shapers of their own destinies. Leon and Aliese brilliantly connect their own personal and professional perspectives with these young women’s accounts in a masterful feat of compassion and generosity, born of a committed and messy struggle to serve the best interests of these “sisters”.

It is a paradox of group residential care that in an artificial and non-normative setting, young people can often develop a sense of belonging, perhaps for the first time. Being free, at least to some degree, of daily fear, abuse and demeaning reactions, young people can experience a sense of being respected, a sense of being cared for, a sense of self-worth, a sense of competence, and a sense of their own potential (amongst many other things) in a new way of living.

Several features make this text a compelling read and a powerful tool for learning. First, the stories and poems of the young women give voice to their deepest thoughts, emotions and aspirations. These are voices too often missing from the child welfare literature. In parallel, we can

trace the struggles of the care workers, social worker and some of the parents and others who share in different ways some of the residents' life spaces. Then, following this "tango of perspectives", we get to hear the reflective voice of Aliese, one of the young residents herself, who speaks with the benefit of shared experience matured over four decades of subsequent learning and post-incarceration living. Finally, Leon offers a rich smorgasbord of ideas, strategies and tools that help youth workers and social workers develop their capacities to offer therapeutic support for young people struggling to find themselves – dazed and confused – in our child welfare, mental health and corrections systems.

I found I could not read this text from beginning to end in a single sitting. It would be like trying to eat an entire restaurant menu in one meal. This resource lends itself very well to inclusion in an educational course, or as the focus of a care work training program. It is perhaps the next best thing to actually working "on the floor" in an intensive residential setting, including having the benefit of good on-site supervision. Many core professional topics and issues such as children's rights, boundaries, routines, assessment, rhythms of care, developmental assets, self-awareness and corporate parenting are explored and clarified with the benefit of practice-based evidence. The rich and highly relevant reference list provides excellent direction for further study. I want to express my appreciation to Leon, Aliese, all of the young women and others who contributed to this amazing resource. I hope this book finds a place in every social work, youth work or child and youth care program on the planet.

Prof. James P. Anglin, PhD
School of Child and Youth Care
University of Victoria, BC, Canada

Leon's Foreword

This volume was written for young men and women seeking professional careers as social workers or youth workers in direct practice with children, young people and families involved with the Child Welfare and Youth Justice systems. It was written specifically for students engaged in the second half of their professional studies in colleges and universities, after completion of foundation level studies. The volume will also be of interest to recent graduates or new entrants without qualifications – including foster carers – who are already working with challenged and challenging young people in out-of-home care.

North America in the 1970s provided the historical, social and cultural context upon which this volume developed. Aliese provides a more detailed summary of such influences in her Introductory comments.

Readers will find this volume quite unlike most coursework texts. Some may find it a challenging read as it seeks to give voice to 16 young women in secure care at the 'end of the line' in the Child Welfare and Youth Justice systems. We believe those preparing to work with children and young people in out-of-home care need to enter the messy worlds as they exist for these youths and their families – moving beyond their own personal comfort zones and abstract theoretical models examined during college and university lectures.

A stimulus for this volume came whilst sorting through a box of old case notes gathered a lifetime ago during my employment as a Psychiatric Social Worker assigned to a state institution for teenage girls in the USA. With the enthusiasm of youth, a hand-picked team of carers, teachers and social workers back then were tasked with transforming part of the institution – an historic old youth justice secure unit – into a therapeutic community for 16 female residents. The girls had been assigned by Juvenile Courts to an Assessment Center. Then, after assessment and when sufficient 'progress' had been made, the girls were transferred to institutional campuses for younger and older teenagers, a variety of group homes and potential foster homes. The campus for older teenage girls where these 16 girls were placed

included 2 secure units (populations separated on the basis of maturity), 7 open campus cottages, a high school, administration and professional support, as well as full recreational facilities.

The caseload of a Psychiatric Social Worker included 16 young women committed by the Juvenile Courts and assigned to one of the residential cottages in the institution, along with 2 or 3 additional cases involving young women either on extended furlough or AWOL status. In seeking to create an ethnography that shares something of the daily and weekly life in a secure unit for teenage girls some four decades ago, the reader is introduced to 16 young women whose stories are shared in the room-assigned chapters that follow. Three of the young women were of Native American ancestry, three were Afro-American, one was Hispanic and the rest were Caucasian.

The human ethics associated with fashioning this ethnography have received careful scrutiny since standard ethical protocols requiring informed consent and release of information within a formally recognised research project could not be followed in the decades since my professional notes were written. After graduating as an MSW qualified psychiatric social worker, and as part of my own professional development, I continued to use the technique of process recording in journals over the years to strengthen my recall and to prepare myself for on-going work with my clients. This was not a requirement of the job nor were these notes part of the official case records. I consider these notes to be part of the professional record of my experience. I have always been careful not to include in my journal anything that would reveal my clients' identity. My supervisors at the time knew of my personal professional record-keeping, and I shared notes with them from time to time as these were useful in our work together as a therapeutic team, though not part of the case recording system. These people agreed to my keeping a record of my professional experience in this way and accepted that my journaling did not jeopardize the confidence of the clients nor risk exposure of their identities. They also knew of my aspirations to one day share the stories of young women who experienced residential group care services '*at the end of the line*'. Four decades on, we know of only one of those supervisors and managers who is still living, playing golf, far away from the events written about here.

Few of the services which featured in the lives of the *Sisters of Pain* now exist. The child welfare legislation and systems have been transformed into child protection and youth justice services. All cases are still processed through the Juvenile Courts which operate at County levels. Names of all who feature in the *Sisters of Pain* have been assigned pseudonyms and geographic locations have been altered. As participant observers in this ethnography, both authors share advocacy for ethical standards which honour the memory of the *Sisters of Pain*.

No claims are made – either by myself or our team of carers – about being infallible youth care experts with all the answers. Despite my co-author’s more than flattering remarks about my abilities as a social worker, my own inexperience and naiveté are all too evident. However, it must be said that the team of men and women gathered together in this unit was highly gifted in many ways, and many of the carers were able to make closer connections with some of these young women than anyone in their past.

When reflecting back on that time, it is staggering to think of the complexity and trauma associated with placing 16 young women together – each with huge amounts of pain, challenge and distress – locked up in a secure unit. At the same time, I am reminded of the love, compassion and skills shown by the men and women who worked long hours, every day, trying to assist these young women create new lives for themselves through trying to make sense of lives they had lived.

New girls arrived at this institution from an Assessment Center on a Thursday afternoon. Diaries were cleared that afternoon each week so that new arrivals could receive as much time as they needed to talk about this life crisis of entering a lock-up facility. Life stories leading to placement in the secure unit were an essential starting point. 75 percent of girls entering this secure unit had spent time in other institutions, often moving around the Child Welfare System for up to 4-6 years until ‘aging out’ at age 18. Girls’ progress was reviewed every week, with formal Review Boards at the start, and at three month intervals thereafter. Most young women would move from the secure unit into an open-cottage setting and attend campus school before returning to the community on parole.

Jenette’s short story about life as a teenage prostitute reminded me of how rarely social workers or those entering the child and youth care

field are provided with educational materials using the voices of young people, or voices of carers living most closely with challenging and challenged young people during significant times in their lives in out-of-home care. The book starts with Jenette because her verbal and writing skills are highly accessible, with many insights akin to those of a wise old woman. Like many of her peers who spent time in “The System”, Jenette demonstrates an understanding and an awareness of how she has reached this place in her life.

The idea for this volume was further stimulated by old case notes written about other young women and their care workers during my involvement in their lives before moving overseas. Regardless of the passing of decades and regardless of the location of these incidents, the pain and events experienced by these sixteen young women are universal. Although some themes, such as HIV-Aids, “Crack” and “P” (methamphetamine) are missing from these historic narratives, other challenges for young women in most communities were highlighted, whether they be challenges with sexually-transmitted diseases or with substance abuse, through alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, psychedelics, amphetamines, barbiturates, cocaine or heroin.

The title – *Sisters of Pain* – was chosen out of respect for Jenette’s story and stories of other young women whose childhoods ended prematurely. The *Sisters of Pain* narratives reinforce Anglin’s (2002) claim that pain-based behaviour is central to the lives of most young people living in out-of-home care. Pain-based behaviour was especially prominent amongst these young women, living in secure care administered by the State Child Welfare System at ‘the end of the line’. These young women stared at the prospect of an early death, or lengthy periods of their adult lives in the criminal justice or mental health systems. Relationships matter for all young people, but are especially important for those in out-of-home care.

The *Sisters of Pain* life stories reflect daily life events lived by adults and young people interacting together in and around one State-administered secure unit or life space environment during an intensive eighteen month period. Each young person’s story is told – wherever possible – using historic narratives written in her own voice or in the voices of family members and friends. These accounts are supplemented with narratives written by carers and teachers.

Letters from family members and friends are also included where informative, and where disclosure resulted in no harm to either the young women or their family members. As indicated at the start, any identifying information has been removed and cities have been re-named. For ease of identification, the voices of the girls, family members and boyfriends are recorded in italics (with some of their spelling deliberately left intact). Carer and social work voices are located in shaded boxes.

As sadly so often happens, I – the social worker – left this particular employment after two years, and the girls were faced yet again with changes in the people who cared for them. Because I also left the area, my contact with people there almost ceased. However, contact has been maintained over the years with some of the girls and some of the staff. Facebook provided some up-to-date knowledge about outcomes based on fragments of information offered via a network of connections when available.

One major outcome involved the closure of this State institution for older girls. De-institutionalization policies resulted in institutional care provided by the State for non-delinquent girls being phased out, except for the most extreme cases. The authors know little about what happened to most of these young women so it is impossible to report on any “results” that might be attributed to any short-term interventions at the end of their many years of pain. That wasn’t our purpose here. Our priority was to give voice to the life stories of young women in secure care, illuminating relationships and daily life events in one particular residential community with 16 young female residents and their out-of-home carers.

Reflections and Commentaries

The *Sisters of Pain* life stories are augmented by a voice rarely encountered in the child welfare literature. One of the young women who lived alongside Jenette and the other secure unit residents in this volume contributes her own reflections – using a contemporary voice – some four decades later. As the mother now of two successful young adult children, as a new grandmother, as an adult daughter caring for an elderly mother, as a Native American activist, as a legal aid professional, as a dog

walker and as co-author of this volume, Aliese contributes a personal reflection in her Introduction, at the end of each chapter, and then again at the end of the book, after a short reflection at the end of the volume written by her mother. Aliese first saw these written materials more than forty years after they were written. She had seen some of the material written by and about herself, but nothing else. Her reflections are very enlightening.

In order to make the volume more useable for social workers and youth workers in training, each chapter has a sub-title and ends with a short professional commentary that draws together an eclectic selection of concepts and tools derived from contemporary information about evidence-based assessment and interventions with young people in out-of-home care.

Building on Anglin's (2002) notion of "pain-based behaviour" and Hewitt's (2003) autobiographical methods of a 'looked after kid', the sixteen commentaries have been crafted around the seminal writings of my mentor and friend, Henry Maier (1987) whose work was influential in our thinking then and is still highly relevant today; Trieschman, Whittaker & Brendtro (1969); Brendtro & du Toit (2005); research by the Search Institute about developmental assets (Benson et al, 2006; Fulcher, McGladdery & Vicary, 2011); and foundational work by Garfat (1998) and Garfat & Fulcher (2008; 2011; 2012); in collaboration with Ainsworth (2006); and with Smith & Doran (2013). At the end of each chapter, five questions are offered with the aim of facilitating discussion in staff training, group tutorials or cyber classrooms.

Most importantly, the narratives which follow give evidence for the importance of genuine, healthy, caring relationships, particularly when working with children or young people in out-of-home care. The fundamental need to develop relationships that matter is reinforced, not only by the young women themselves at the time, but also by my friend Aliese and her mother, forty years later.

Professional distance has its place in social work and youth work practice. However, ALL children NEED genuine, healthy, caring relationships with genuine, healthy, caring adults! The development of close, but professional, relationships strikes at the heart of therapeutic care-giving and relational caring.

Aliese's Introduction

My first thoughts are, “How sad that these were the options we had as young women”. I have often thought about options, opportunities, consequences and how we perceive what those were yesterday, and what they are today.

For example, a child in any family might get into an argument with a parent and they would have a different set of immediate choices laid before them. That in part, is what defined us as juvenile delinquents, and later helped us to fulfil that destiny. I am not so sure that a child running away from something that is abusive and demeaning to a child, is being delinquent. In the past, I have remembered the stages of putting myself back together. I have forgotten these earlier years, as many years have rolled by since then. I have seen the aftermath of several generations in which to compare all the heart break, broken families, and lives, and finally the learning to forgive through understanding and compassion. I would never have become the woman I am today without the genuine care, love and trust so many people instilled into my life... Well that, and the tools I had earned and learned to use as the apprentice in my life.

Rebellion against identified authority figures in our lives is part of any normal growing-up process, and a daily feature of any family life. I think in part, this sort of division between youth and adults is universal and part of the grand scheme. Somehow in dysfunctional families, this course takes a twisting turn here that changes the lives of everyone involved, including the carers, the social workers and anyone else who touches their lives, as these young women were escorted from their homes and their lives and into institutional living.

Case studies and opinions are just that – but it is so very important to keep reminding one's self that the people in these case studies you will read about are human beings, young women who will be shaping their community, and their world, and have indeed done so. We had hearts that beat and break just like yours. Some would say we were born into this world cursed and at times we all felt that way. Now I perceive these experiences as gifts and challenges in life that we were given to

overcome, so that in our turn, we would be able to help and guide those around us in this hurting world.

There were so many influences during those years, and the years to follow. Without going into great detail, or offering a guided tour through history, some of the more significant ideals, changes, and turbulence are highlighted since these affected us *Sisters of Pain* and the system in which we resided. Naturally, viewpoints and opinions about history depend upon our position on the fence.

The influence of music was as great then as it is today. There was a fresh newness to the music, and there was this huge awakening heralded through the music scene. Through the music we questioned everything from war and government brutality, to the existence and purpose of life. We listened to music that had meaning, whether it was the love melodies of the 40s, the Rock-n-Roll of the 50s, the British Invasion, Hard Rock, and Motown scene of the 60s. Those times musically energized our generation. Music has always been an escape for youth, (and very therapeutic too, as we have proven in later years). Music offered a way to ignore our surroundings, but the message was clear: we had a purpose, we had choices, and we were empowered. All we had to do was harness that energy and direct it towards a successful life. That was not an easy task for young people, adults, or the system struggling to cope with the challenges and changes of our turbulent times.

As a nation, the USA was dealing with the Vietnam War in which the “enemy” was never clearly defined. It seemed to be more about nationalism and neo-colonial economics than presenting any real national security threat. Watergate rattled the Nation’s consciousness as did Nixon’s presidency ending with impeachment. We were involved as youths and were front page, but most of us were a peaceful bunch seeking peace and freedom for our nation, intent on exposing the lies of those profiteering from war. We participated in peaceful protests and sit-in’s, leaving school or our homes to attend these national events. There was also THE DRAFT and draft dodgers that divided the country and impacted on Canada. Such themes also divided families as we and our closest friends participated in these political movements and progress.

Later, the war brought the refugees and America was not ready. Many were still emotionally raw after the Japanese Internment. New

lines were drawn and no one was really sure where they stood, or where they belonged. Racism was swept out from under the table to become a fundamental issue in law and in all community practices. Blacks were being beaten in the rural countryside, university students were shot on campus, Indian women were being raped, and young women on the run – including those whose cultural identity was not immediately apparent – were considered White trash by predatory males.

The times also brought an assortment of “Movements” that affected, influenced, got us thinking, and changed our lives in one way or another. There was some violence such as Kent State, and also very active were the Chicago Seven, the Black Panthers and AIM – American Indian Movement. Those of us who were of mixed blood and who had met other Native Americans in other foster homes, diagnostic centers and orphanages, really connected to Indian Rights. We were fighting for our fishing rights and Indian Child rights, so there was turmoil in Indian Country, as well as America.

Feminism was winking its eye and the birth of the ERA finally arrived. So here you had women involved, regardless of the political left or right, rich or poor, Black, White, Asian, Indian and Hispanic strongly united, probably for the first time in America as a powerful front. That brought on the “Contraceptive Liberation” and hand in hand with that came all the STD’s because no one knew any better, and early teenage pregnancies. Later all the fallout helped to institute Women’s Health.

Women were also united in that they could reach out for help against their abusers, be it physical or other. Prior to this time, there really was no safe outlet and medically speaking, a woman had no rights either. VAWA had not been born.

The Drug Scene was ON and had been for a solid couple of generations, in addition to the martini scene and happy hour crowd. It was a time when everyone was getting high on something, legal or illegal. I think the young people who are described in this book, including myself, were just along for the ride and were trying to escape all the chaos that adults had created. We were still just kids. I mean everybody was going through some kind of changes or awakening, struggle, involved in some aspect of the turmoil of the times. Everyone’s world had been turned upside down or questioned, and the rules did not seem to apply any longer.

I am sure all of these evolving spins kept troubled youths in a whirlwind of exciting choices of mentors and superheroes, and gave us a real quick tour of reality as everyone tried on their grown up shoes. Those who were lucky enough to make it through to the other side alive are probably very strong and powerful women in their own right. I am sure they are probably better for their stay at this particular High-Security Unit, because of the type of structured program, care and communication that occurred there. I mean these folks stepped way out of their comfort zones, took tremendous risks, got somewhat personally involved, truly cared for and loved us girls. We knew it, we sensed it and we clung to it for our only salvation and escape from an otherwise condemned life. I know I was lucky, blessed, whatever one may call it, but I was also provided with powerful tools that taught me what the real values are in life.

Time and wisdom have surely given us all a different perspective now. Under today's circumstances, these opinions and evaluations of the carers would be different. As a people, they have evolved with the times too. Values, enmeshed cultural differences, tolerance, and a fuller understanding of people as a whole society have changed over these years. I think that it is important to re-evaluate the process and to take risks, and accept change because we are evolving as a species and we do not have all the answers, yet.

We were in the middle of it and it was an exciting time to be alive, and also to witness the progress and good changes that were coming about in the world. Up to this point many children had been failed by parents and family members, most adults, and certainly a system that didn't have all the right answers and often caused more damage than good to "troubled teens" over time. One would never think back NOW and make those same choices. I would hope not. The people we are now would not have made those choices. At that time, it was all we had.

To understand *Sisters of Pain*, you must read this with your heart, an open mind, and with the mind's eye of a child. We were tough, but still afraid of what we might do, in our fight for survival, identity, and search for love.

Room 1

Jenette – Making Connections

I was only fifteen at the time all this took place and I'm sixteen now, so I remember it all very well.

I'd had it up to my neck with my mother, the welfare people, the project I lived in and the constant demands for money from my Negro boyfriend. So I said "To hell with you all" and left one night with two of my girlfriends.

We walked down the main street to a chicken stand. We had knives concealed under our clothing, planning to rob someone. They went inside and me being my usual poor self couldn't buy anything, so I waited outside.

Ramona came back before Spanky did so we stood in the cold night air, laughing and talking. "Did you see the fine dudes that just went by?" Ramona asked me.

"No, where?"

"In a red car."

"Oh."

Finally Spanky came back and we stood talking about whether to go get high or not. If we didn't, that meant having to go back home and I didn't want to do that at all.

"Shit, let's just get a ride with some fine dudes so we can get high," I said, being my usual greedy self.

"What if they want to keep us though?" Spanky asked like an idiot.

"You're a chick shit, no one gon hurt you when we got knives!" Ramona declared looking evil.

A car full of dudes went by and honked their horn, so we waved at them. They made a screeching U-turn and came back. The driver was about twenty-three. He was also drunk and acting real crazy, so were the other dudes he had with him.

I backed away and so did Ramona and Spanky who were also scared and wishing they were at home. Even though we were on a busy street, that didn't help our fright.

"Say little mama, come and talk to me," the big one said to Ramona,

who looked like a scared rabbit.

“Say sugar, I like you, come talk to me,” the driver said addressing me. I tried to play it cool and walked over slowly as possible, not knowing what to say now that I was confronted with the situation.

I leaned against the car and said rather dumbly, “Huh?” He eyed me sullenly and smiled slowly. “You sure looken fine baby, I want you for myself.”

“Oh. Why?”

“Baby, we gon make us a palace in the sky, can you understand that?”

“I understand anything that needs to be understood,” I answered dryly.

“Come on, get in,” he said, giving me a look that made me very uncomfortable.

“No, that’s okay, I’ll walk.”

“Shit woman, come on, I like you!”

“I can’t leave my friends here.”

“Tell them to get in, we can drop them off and then have a ball.”

“Come on, let’s get in,” I said to Ramona and Spanky who were waiting patiently.

“No, we’re walkin.”

“Shit, come on!”

“Nope, we’re walkin.”

I couldn’t decide what to do so I looked helplessly at the driver.

“Come on, get in, ain’t no one gonna hurt you, pretty baby.”

“Okay, you two tell Denny I said to fuck it, and don’t be running your mouths off telling anybody any thing” I said to Ramona and Spanky, scared to death but trying to act as brave as I could.

“Sure Jenette, bye,” they said, watching me get into the El Dorado and feeling rich already. “How old are you?” the driver asked, restarting the car and driving down the brightly lit Detroit streets at a higher speed than allowed.

“Seventeen and a half.”

“You sure?”

“Of course,” I answered, not feeling sure of anything except fear at the moment.

“What’s your name?”

“Jenette. Who are you?”

“The one and only Ebony.”

“Yeah baby, that is THE Ebony,” a dude in the back seat said with a funny smile playing across his dark and handsome face. I look at Ebony. He was really kind of cute and the mink trim on his leather jacket proved he got his money from other sources than a square job.

“You gon stay with me?” he asked making it sound more like a statement than a question.

“Sure, but I have to get my clothes first.”

“Okay, where do you live?”

“In the project down by the new school.”

I gave him directions and he parked the car around the corner from my shabby house. I snuck inside and much to my feelings of relief, no one was home. I threw everything I owned into some suitcases and ran out the back door.

5 April: Care Worker Notes

Mrs F and I contacted Jenette in her room where she has been using her time away from the resident group to write her life story. As her new Keyworkers, we shared some ground rules which all the staff will abide by during the forthcoming days or weeks. Jenette showed little reaction other than twisting an empty cigarette packet in her hands throughout the entire period. I told her that she and I need a few days to get better acquainted before any heavy counselling would be attempted on my part. She could choose the topic for discussion – all I wanted to do was get some idea of how her mind worked before we could expect to accomplish very much.

We stressed that the time for game playing was behind us now and that we asked little more from her at this stage other than absolute honesty.

We were not interested in anything other than her true feelings and thoughts. Otherwise, it would be a complete



waste of time. We were here to help her if she wanted help, would share the knowledge we had gained over many years of hard personal experience, and offer viewpoints which perhaps had not occurred to her.

It was all straight talk and Jenette accepted it as such. At the conclusion of our talk, Jenette gave us several pages of thoughts and feelings she had been writing down ...

“You got plenty of clothes,” Ebony said, taking my suitcases and putting them into the trunk.

Once he had them lost in a pile in the trunk, he took me to a club and had me wait in the car while they went inside. A few minutes later a pretty Black girl came out and tapped on the car window. I pushed a button and the window rolled down.

“Hi, I’m your sister, welcome to the family,” she said, leaning against the car and smiling sweetly.

“Oh, hi, ah, nice to meet you,” I managed to mumble, all the while not sure of whether I wanted to get out and run or sit there and see what would happen next. She left and dear old Ebony came back, smiling and talking loudly with Marcus and Terry.

“Did you like her?” Ebony asked hopefully.

“Yeah, she seemed pretty nice.”

“She’s my other lady, her name’s Anita.”

“Oh, she is?” I asked, not knowing what he expected me to say.

“Yeah, you two will get along fine.”

I didn’t know what to say or do next, so I just sat there and played with my rings.

“You hungry?”

“No, I ate a little while ago.”

“Pretty soon, Anita will be off work, oh, here she comes now,” Ebony said. He seemed pretty nice, but Lord I was scared to death! Anita got into the car and sat next to me. The red haired girl – she came back and sat in the back and when I was introduced to her, I almost said “Nice meeting you, scare crow.” She eyed me as the others had done and I took an immediate dislike to her.

Nobody did a thing or said a thing. Ebony drove with the radio blasting

on the soul station and my ears felt like they would blow away any minute if he didn't turn it down. But he didn't and my ears continued hurting.

Finally, Ebony, Marcus and Monte started talking. I thought it was a bunch of jive but I didn't say so. We drove down a dark, bumpy road and Ebony started cursing the "White man" for not paving the roads. Since I was White, I gave him a dirty look and accidentally on purpose elbowed him.

"Oh, sorry," I said quickly, not wanting him to know I did it on purpose.

"It's alright, baby." He parked the car and we got out and went inside the house. The others went on to their own house which was about two feet away. The house was nice but slightly messy. It was then that I discovered Anita had four little kids. "Oh brother, just what I always wanted," I thought, getting slightly irked.

"Where can I sleep?" I asked, seeing only the couch was available.

"With us in the bed," Ebony said with that sly grin I was already used to. I almost choked. In a bed with him and another woman, is he crazy? I wondered.

I undressed quickly, not wanting him to see me naked. I put on a nightgown and robe and got into the double bed. Anita got in the middle between me and Ebony, which was fine with me. I didn't want him trying to do anything with her in the bed. I went straight to sleep and woke up to find Anita with her hand in my underwear. I was terrified, so I pretended to be asleep and turned over.

"She still asleep?" Ebony asked Anita.

"Yeah, I wanna fuck". I almost cried when I found that she was serious. Ebony got on top of her and away they went, moaning and groaning with me tryin to ignore them.

I felt a hand on my breast and one creeping into my underwear, so I did my fake sleep act again – my mistake. This time Ebony decided to have some fun with me, thinking I was asleep. He pulled off my underwear and away he went with me while Anita played with my hair.

I guess I felt like a corpse not doing anything back, so he left me alone and went back to Anita (bless her soul). I don't know how I did it but I finally went back to sleep and didn't wake up until noon.

I put on my bathrobe and asked Anita if I could use the iron. "Sure, you live here too," was her sweet reply. She was awfully pretty but I remembered the night before, so I didn't get too overjoyed.

I ironed my pants while she dressed and put on make-up while Ebony shaved. I didn't have a top to match the red platform shoes or white pants I had on so Anita gave me a real cute red shorty top with a sweater to match. I thanked her and she seemed real pleased with herself. "How you gonna fix your hair?" she asked in a real sweet voice that made me sick.

"I don't know, it's ugly anyway" I said looking at the dyed black mass of curls and friz that was a poor excuse for hair.

"Well, I have a blonde wig you can wear."

"You don't mind?" I asked, feeling real dumb.

"No, come on, I'll help you." She put the gypsy-styled wig on me and some false eye lashes. "There, you look real cute!" she said, making me feel two or three at the very oldest. I looked in the mirror and it did look good if I do say so myself. But I certainly did not look like the Jenette I had been the night before.

6 April: Care Worker Notes

Jenette has started a report to be presented at her Planning Board. There is some straight talk. Also more of her feelings are written down for Mrs F and me to read. While the others were watching the movie tonight, I spent about an hour and a half listening to a review of her life from the time she began getting into trouble (around age 9-10) up to the time she reached the age of 13. This was a non-stop, completely emotionless and confident recital. It was only interrupted at the movie intermission, and a couple of times when I needed some clarification on something I had not completely understood. The subject matter was entirely of her choosing. It's far too early to form any conclusions but already an interesting picture is beginning to take shape. Jenette is a much better talker than I had anticipated. She has no trouble communicating verbally or in writing. I'm already anxious to get going on the next instalment.

Then Anita insisted on putting on my make-up for me so I let her. When she was through at last, I looked in the mirror and I looked even more different. She is good at things like that, but every time she wanted to start in on something worthwhile, Ebony stepped in and wouldn't let her, or me for that matter, I soon found out.

"Thanks alot Anita, do you want to wear something of mine?"

"I'll let you wear my jacket if I can wear yours," she said looking at my white shorty jacket with the fake fur trim. I looked at her white leather midi coat with the real fur trim and decided she was nuts.

"Okay, but yours is a lot prettier though," I said.

"I think yours is," she said and we both laughed. Ebony came back into the bedroom and I tried to ignore him as he swung his penis around teasing Anita.

After a while I said "Where am I going?" I knew Anita hadn't dressed me up for nothing – and most of all I hated not knowing.

"Anita is going to work and I'm gonna buy you a purse and some make-up, maybe some new shoes; you only got two pair?" Ebony asked.

"Yeah."

Ebony dressed while Anita and I cleaned the house. After we were through, we got into the car and left. We dropped off Anita and went on our shopping trip. Everything was fine. He bought me a black leather shoulder purse, make-up, a wig and black leather platform boots.

He showed me off to all his friends and I went with him everywhere for a couple of days. Then he decided he wanted me to be a go-go girl. I knew he was nutty then. Fifteen, and I don't look seventeen, so how can I be lookin twenty-one? Well, he fixed that. He got me four pieces of I.D. including a driver's license, and I don't know how to drive. But they were all under the same name so he said not to worry.

So the next day I found myself in a skimpy royal blue costume, my new boots and a light brown wig styled in a shag, walking up to men in the plush club asking them what they wanted to drink. The men gave me a lot of tips; I probably reminded them of their daughters. Some were so old I might have been their grand-daughter.

Anyway I made good money, but I didn't like to get on a stage and dance like a sex pot with no top on, but those men sure enjoyed it!

Then I got word that my mom was getting Black FBI men to track me down since she knew a white one could not do it because I don't associate with White men unless it's to get their money, but that's as far as it goes.

12 April: Care Worker Notes

I've lost some continuity in working with Jenette since I was assigned security duties last Monday and then again last night, with two days off in between. It was good to see that Jenette remained cooperative and still a more than willing participant in our working relationship. I did think it went far better and smoother than anticipated. Her mother is not that tough when she does not have control of the situation. Jenette and I got together again tonight and covered the remainder of the historical material all the way up to her assignment to the secure unit. I think I am slowly gaining the trust and confidence of Jenette – as evidenced by the fact that she chose my side of the fence against Mama during our 3-way visit. That plus other signs I've picked up along the way. Putting her in the driver's seat and allowing her to steer and control the conversation was, I feel, a good manoeuvre. I have the feeling that the occasions where she was not almost exclusively on the receiving end of conversation-wise were few and far between. At any rate, she has gone almost non-stop during each session thus far. Tomorrow we begin communications which are more two-way, and some interesting pictures are emerging more clearly already.

Ebony found out I was only fifteen and cussed me out good and then he took me home. My mom had three fits when she saw how skinny I had gotten. Hell, what can you expect when the bum never feeds you?

I stayed home overnight, packed up the next day and went back to Ebony's. Anita was so happy she gave me a kiss. I thought she was "funny" myself. I went back to work at my hateful job and got more money than before.

I guess the old bastards missed me. Then I decided to go back to my ex-man Denny. Ebony had fifty fits and said "Go, and don't come back." I left and got to Denny's at midnight. "So Bitch, you decided to come back to your man?"

“Yeah, here I am,” I said wearily.

“You wanna get drunk?” he asked eyeing me thoughtfully. I really had changed.

“Yeah, is it Mad Dog?” I asked knowing he had that raunchy wine prepared. I drank most of it and I was so drunk, I couldn’t walk. He got crazy and took a stick and beat me with it for leaving him.

I just stumbled into the bedroom and took off my clothes, half crying because I knew my face would be black and blue the next day and so would my back. Denny came in and looked at me standing there naked and crying. “Come on, you know you want me,” I said, looking dumb and ready to pass out. He undressed and so much for that, we stayed up half the night.

I was with him two days and he started jabbing needles full of speed into my arms. I lasted a week and then I went back to Ebony’s. He had to buy me all new clothes because I had lost so much weight.

I got my job back and started working my ass off to make Ebony happy. Then Anita made a pass at me and I sat there and just laughed. I was wondering how two ladies are supposed to fuck.

Anyway I told Ebony I wanted to leave. “Bitch, are you crazy?” he roared and hit me so hard I fell out of my chair. I felt the throbbing in my eye and knew it was already getting way bigger than it should be.

“No.”

“Bitch, do you know you’re fuckin with a man?”

“Yes,” I said helplessly. Then he took a stick and beat me in my face and back and stomach with it. I couldn’t catch my breath long enough to scream or cry, but I knew it hurt like hell.

Don’t say “How come the stupid bitch didn’t hit him back” because hitting him back is really gonna make him kill you. He finally stopped and I lay on the floor bleeding and finally able to cry. Then he hog tied me and said “Bitch, I should kill you, but I like you.”

“Thanks,” I muttered. Then I said, “If you go to sleep, you dirty mother fuckin fuck up, you won’t wake up ever again, you’ll go straight to naughty pimps land”.

“Why?” Ebony asked, getting very curious.

“Because I’m gonna kill you!” He laughed and went to bed and left me there on the floor. Anita came home and cussed him out and he told her to shut up and get in bed. I stayed on the floor like that all night, freezing and mad as hell.

Next day he untied me and things were fine until a couple weeks later. I went with his brother-in-law and sister to their house and got high. No fuckin him or even kissing him at all. His lady was there.

But Ebony thought different. He tried to chop my damn fingers off. I was so high, I laughed. Then he beat me worse than the last time. The next day he had the nerve to tell me to go to work. Two black eyes, a fat lip, bruises all over my body and almost unable to breathe through my nose because he had almost broken it and it hurt to just barely touch it.

And the inside of my ears were also black and blue. Ebony had done a good job; he hadn't missed a spot on my body.

I dressed up real nice, took all the extra money I could get and pretended to go to work. I got a twenty dollar loan from my boss and went to Nathan's house. I had a hell of a time getting there because I was so afraid Ebony or one of his goons would see me – then I would have really died.

I finally made it, but Nathan was not at home so I went to the next door neighbour's house. Dorothy opened the door and when a minute of staring at me passed, she screamed. I tried to laugh but it hurt too much.

After a few more minutes, she said "What the hell happened?"

"My ex so called man is crazy."

"Looks that way, you gonna press charges?"

13 April: Care Worker Notes

We talked for an hour tonight, during which time I shared some initial observations as the result of listening to Jenette and observing her for the past week. She was a bit dumbfounded that I had gotten to know her that well in such a short period of time merely by listening to her talk and watching her facial expressions. The areas covered were her views and/or feelings about specific people and also general groups. We have reached a position of trust and understanding now where the words flow easily back and forth during a free interchange of ideas.



I think it would be a good idea for all staff to read what Jenette has written while in her room, in chronological order. There was not a really significant change in what she wrote or how she wrote it until after our 3-way meeting with mother on Friday. Friday's effort is drastically different. Jenette has informed me that she feels her program will be loosened up this coming week. I asked her upon what she based that conclusion. She told me that another resident had told her that she had been told that she would be only staying in her room a half day after the Board meeting next week. I told Jenette that this was a very flimsy basis for her to accurately judge what action, if any, might be taken this coming week. I do feel that a more open life for Jenette is appropriate at this time in view of her positive and cooperative attitude. I do not desire to lose what I have gained thus far merely because Jenette becomes discouraged and figures 'What's the use of making any effort?' At the same time, I feel we need to move slowly - because we still have a lot of ground to cover and probably a good deal of it will be a lot rougher to traverse than what we've travelled until now.

"You's talkin crazy now," I said, sitting down and lighting a cigarette.

Wish I felt "Kool" I thought, staring at the brand name of my cigarette.

"Nathan's home now, he's just walkin to the door," Dorothy called from the kitchen.

"Okay, bye," I said, glad to leave before her man came home and saw how ugly I was lookin.

"Bye," she called watching the face I made getting out of the chair. I walked down the steps wondering what Nathan's reaction would be.

"Nathan?" I said, not knowing what else to say.

He looked at me like I was a freak from outer space. "What the hell?" he finally said, not knowing who I was at first.

"It's me, Jenette," I said wishing he would hurry up and open the door.

"Sure and the fuck don't look like you!"

"Thanks a lot pal, can I stay here?"

"Yeah, come on in."

I went inside and plopped my sore butt into a chair. He wanted to know what had happened to me so I told him the story – especially how Anita was “funny”.

“Shit, you picked a good pair – Gonna be my lady?” he said all in one breath.

“You know I am,” I said thinking “Until I get the hell out of Detroit and get back on my feet”. But of course I did not tell him this.

We stayed up all night long, doing the usual thing and the next day Nathan and some of his friends made some plans for us all to go to Chicago. I got some new clothes, since I’d left everything at Ebony’s. I hope Anita is having fun wearing them.

Nathan’s sister Melina was real sweet and we got along real good. She knew Ebony and hated him. It made me feel good to know that he really was a Bastard.

We left for Chicago on Friday. Lee, Delono, Gwen and her son Don – who was really a girl but she was making him into a punk and “it’s real name was Donna”.

We were riding in a Coup De Ville and even though it was big, we were all cramped up. We stopped to eat and pick up last minute things in Detroit before we left for good.

20 April: Care Worker Notes

I talked only briefly with Jenette last night and for the first time she showed some uptight, nervous and even despondent signs. Excited and a little nervous about our visit with mother and grandparents for one thing, but that was only a small part of it. Jenette has felt the previous 2 or 3 days gave her little feeling of accomplishment, and thought her progress had ground to a screeching halt. It was hard to believe Jenette showing concern about a 2 or 3 day lack of progress when she has gone months at a time not giving a damn about anything?!



It damn near blew my mind!! I assured Jenette that she had far surpassed anyone's expectations during her first two weeks on program and she could not hope to continue that sort of a spectacular pace continuously. I tried to explain that progress normally proceeds in spurts, with periods in between where gains are consolidated and reinforced. She was relieved but still had something eating on her. So I told her to spit it out and she did. Jenette has been thinking about where she will go after leaving the secure unit and at this point doesn't feel she is handling the uncertainty very well. I said it was too early to be discussing where she might go and that we would carefully consider where she could be most benefited. I would personally like Jenette herself to join with us in making this decision together. Jenette was reassured that careful thought would go in to any future placement and became less agitated. After some chit-chat, the session ended.

I went into a store and bought a gangster hat. While I was looking at the make-up (as if I needed any) someone said "Say, pretty baby, I like your ass".

I jumped, thinking it was Ebony or Denny. I turned around to look, holding my breath. It was not either of them.

As a matter of fact I had never seen this dude before. He sure is cute, I thought looking at him.

"You lookin nice baby, got a man?"

"Yeah," I said regretfully, and the dude knew it too.

"So come be with me, I know how to treat beautiful ladies like you."

Before I could say yes, like I wanted to, Nathan found me and gave me a murderous look. "Come on, Lee wants to go now." I followed him meekly still looking at the man that had spoken to me.

"He your friend?" Nathan asked when we were on the road heading for good old funky Chicago.

"Not really, he just told me I had a nice ass." Nathan gave me a dirty look and I smiled sweetly. I slept most of the way and so did Gwen and Nathan for that matter, but Lee stayed awake the whole time and so did Delono who was constantly telling Don to "Shut the fuck up and be good".

We stopped at a soul food restaurant and I ate nothing. I wasn't a bit hungry.

"Eat stupid!" Nathan growled.

"No."

"What?" he asked me, like I was nuts for not being hungry or telling him no.

I found out it was for telling him no. "I said no," I repeated calmly. Nathan was too scared of losing me to get too out of line.

"You eat!"

"No!"

"You crazy?"

"No, are you?"

"I'll beat your ass!"

"So, I ain't hungry."

"Go put this in the juke box and play 'For the Love of Money,' Nathan said handing me a quarter which I took but remained sitting.

"No, you got two feet to walk with!"

"Go!"

"No!"

"I swear I'll knock you out of your chair!"

"Ain't you got no manners?"

"What?"

"We're in a public place, eat with your mouth closed!" I said getting up and walking over to the juke box. I played 'Jungle Boogie' and 'Mighty Mighty' instead.

Nathan gave me a dirty look so I winked at one of the dudes that had just come in. He winked back and Nathan said, "I am gonna kick your sweet little ass as soon as we get to the motel!"

"Sure, Nathan, then what you gon do when I leave?" He didn't answer me and I smiled at him again.

We drove around Chicago for awhile with Lee and Delono telling Gwen and me what streets were good and what places to avoid.

We got to our motel room and Nathan and I took a bath together. It was hard because the tub was so small. But we did it. I got in bed first taking the best side. Nathan turned the television on and got in beside me.

"You happy, baby?" he asked, looking at me like I had to say yes or he'd cry.

“Yeah.” He kissed me and said, “That’s good because you’re gon be happier tonight.”

“What makes you think you can please me?” I asked cynically.

“You sayin I can’t?”

“I’m sayin how do you know?”

“Well I’ll find out,” he said, turning me over.

We finally got to sleep at 4:30 and then woke up at 8:00, had another shower and dressed as fast as I could.

21 April: Care Worker Notes

Jenette’s mother and grandparents arrived a minute or two before I arrived at work today, so we got right into our meeting. Grandparents, like Mother before them, were here to be convinced that what we were trying to accomplish with Jenette was more than mere lip-service and that we had their family member’s best interests at heart. Suffice it to say that they came as doubters and departed as believers. I was completely open and honest with them, told it like it was and did not pull any punches. The clincher came when I told them that all questions and/or suggestions would be welcomed. The questions would be answered and if I felt the suggestions had merit, I would tell them so. If suggestions were out of line, involved an attempt to interfere, or were otherwise inappropriate, I would also tell them that too. I explained again the reasoning behind Jenette’s program and what had been accomplished to date. Grandma wanted to know how come the Grandparents’ visit was for one-time only. I explained that the visit would be evaluated and if it was beneficial to Jenette, they would be encouraged to keep visiting. However, if we considered that their visits were becoming a distraction for Jenette, we would discontinue their visits. Grandma didn’t like this too well but accepted it gracefully enough. After all their questions were answered, I left the four of them to themselves then conferred with mother for about a half-hour just before they departed.

“Wear that pair of white pants,” he said after I was fully dressed. I would’ve argued but he had pimped before so I just put on the white pants.

“Now put on that baby blue shorty top,” he said, so I put on the baby blue shorty top.

“Put on the white platform sandals.”

“They ain’t platforms, they’re wedges.”

“Well I ain’t never seen a pair of wedges that big before.”

“They’re platform wedges.”

“Shut up and put them on!” So I did.

“Now wear your baby blue shorty jacket.”

“It’s pink, white and yellow too”.

“Shut the fuck up and put it on!” So I obeyed this command also.

“Now take your white purse.” I picked up my black purse and emptied its contents into my white one.

Then he looked at my wig and said, “Wear the light brown wig.” So I took off the one I had on and put on my light brown wig. I was mad because I still had to put on make-up so I had to hurry.

“You look good,” Nathan said happily.

“Sure, thanks.” We got back into Lee’s car with all our luggage repacked and left the comfort of the motel.

“You two ladies put your money in the wigs you wearin, your underwear or any place but your purses,” Nathan said. “And take your luggage and put it in a locker in the bus station,” Delono said.

“Jenette you gon work right here on the strip. It’s hot but there’s only two other hoes so you gon make plenty green and stay around here so you don’t get lost” Lee said, sounding like a police officer telling me my rights.

21 April: Care Worker Notes (cont)

Grandma asked whether I thought Jenette was gullible. I asked what she meant and she wondered whether I thought



Jenette was easily led. Maybe that was the reason she had gotten into so much trouble (implying that Jenette was merely a follower and not one to get into trouble on her own). I did not spare Jenette at all. I told them that Jenette was smart, an independent thinker, knew exactly what was going on and did not get into anything unless she wanted to. I could see Jenette out of the corner of my eye nodding in agreement.

I ignored him and waited patiently while he showed Gwen “her territory”. Then we drove back to the strip and I got out with my luggage and put it in a locker at the bus station. I was scared as I walked down the street shaking my ass, but I held my head up high and smiled at all the passing men, even the men with their wives and girlfriends.

“Hey cutie, come with me,” an ugly man said.

“No, you go to hell.”

“Oh, you’re real cute. I’m Bill, who are you?”

“Fawn.”

“Oh, you’re nice looking, I stay in the Hilton on the 17th floor, room 1716.”

“What’s your last name?”

“Zimmerman.”

He walked away and a few minutes later I was in his room arguing over the price of my body. “Twenty dollars for an hour,” he said like he was doing me a great favor.

I laughed hatefully and said, “Sixty or nothin!” I got the sixty, that’s a dollar a minute, pretty good but not good enough. I checked him over and made him wash his self. It’s terribly degrading to a woman’s pride selling herself like that, the last thing I needed was a disease from some creep. He lay there panting over me and I lay there looking at my watch every five seconds and smoking. If I wouldn’t have been breathing, they would have pronounced me dead – I wouldn’t move an inch.

“Don’t you like it?” he asked, trying to be sexy.

“Not hardly, get off, I have to go.” He got off and I took a bath and dressed, putting the money in my underwear.

“Can I see you tomorrow night?” he asked, laying there like a king.

“If you have eighty dollars, and maybe even more...” I left and got a ride from a dude because I wanted to see some more of Chicago. I got lost and had a hell of a time. It started to rain and I was glad I had stolen an umbrella. I had more money from a couple other tricks, well over a hundred dollars. Well over any amount I’d ever had at one time before.

I finally got a ride from another pimp that claimed his name was ‘Money’. I snickered inwardly and wanted to tell him I was the great white hope.

“Who are you, Baby?” he asked, looking at his diamond rings.

“To you I am Jenette.”

“What do you mean to me, is that your real name?”

“Yeah.”

“You got a man?”

“No, I got lost and I don’t know where he’s at.”

“Yeah?”

21 April: Care Worker Notes (cont)

Mother questioned whether Jenette was still communicating with “those people” – the ones she got into so much trouble with. I explained that I would have to check to be sure, but I knew that Jenette and her social worker had come to a mutual agreement that further correspondence with them could in no way aid in her progress. She had been corresponding with a boy she had known and associated with off and on since before she had gotten into trouble. This had our approval because we felt she needed a supportive source her own age in addition to family. Mother wanted to know if he was Black and I told her that he was. I asked if she had ever met him but she couldn’t remember if she had or not.

“Show me a hundred dollars.”

“I’ll get it for you if that’s what you mean,” I said, not wanting him to know I had way more than that. I wanted to see just how serious he was.

"That's what I mean."

"Take me to the strip and I'll get it."

"You better be serious because I ain't got no time for free fuckin you."

"I know that, I don't have the time either."

He gave me a funny look and said, "I'll pick you up at three."

I started to get out and he said, "Can't you give your man a kiss?" I kissed him and got out. I liked him and I hoped he liked me but it's hard telling. He never came back at three and I was very glad I hadn't given him any money.

Anyway I wandered around mad as hell and tired beyond explanation. To add to the joy of my night I was followed by a pervert and the vice. I decided to just turn another trick but a vice car stopped and the finest looking dude I ever saw got out and walked up to me, leaving the funky looking White man in the car.

I was very suspicious. Why would a fine looking nigga like that be with a vice? One answer, he is a vice too.

"I know you think I'm a vice. I'm not, he is, but he's a crooked vice and he wants you to turn a trick with him."

"No."

"Come on baby, he got good money."

"No."

"You think I'm vice?"

"I don't know what you're talking about."

"Look sugar, just get in the car." I don't know why, but I got into the car and I'll be damned if the bastard wasn't a crooked vice. Just goes to show how 'straight' our police are.

"Hi there, I'm Steve, what's your name, Doll?" The way he said it made it sound like he thought it was Doll.

"It sure in the fuck ain't no Doll!"

"Well, what is it?"

"Fawn."

"Fawn what?"

"Fawn Brooks."

"Hey, those other vice are following us!" he said, speeding the car up. We went across the bridge and lost them and then we did a U turn on two wheels and went back. It was like a game of cops and robbers. I was scared shitless and I found myself clutching the fine dude's arm.

I could not read this text from beginning to end in a single sitting. It lends itself very well to inclusion in an educational course, or as the focus of a care work training program. It is perhaps the next best thing to actually working "on the floor" in an intensive residential setting, including having the benefit of good on-site supervision.

PROFESSOR JAMES ANGLIN – School of Child and Youth Care, University of Victoria, BC, Canada

This is a powerful read that starts from the heart, captures a rich depth of humanity, and weaves together private, personal and professional voices; an utterly rare resource in our field. The voices of these young women bring us right into their complicated and very difficult worlds; the reflections of staff remind us of the power of their caring relationships as well as the potential damage of uninformed judgements.

JENNIFER DAVIDSON – Director, Centre of Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland (CELCIS)

Sisters of Pain provides a raw and transparent view into the inner life and experiences of young people struggling with the effects of relational trauma. Anyone seeking to better understand pain-based behavior and wanting to connect with young people transitioning from the most extreme places in systems of care will find this a rare and remarkable contribution to personal and professional development.

JAMES FREEMAN – Director of Training, Casa Pacifica Centres for Children and Families, Camarillo, California

Sisters of Pain set off an explosion of feelings – pain, anger, joy and respect! Bravery shines through this absolute must read for social workers and other professionals entering the lives of vulnerable children and young people!

JENNY MALLOY – www.HackneyChild.co.uk Looked After Care Advisor and Trainer, London

Leon Fulcher

Leon grew up in the US Pacific Northwest where he learned to navigate wilderness regions through Scouting as well as family fishing, horse-riding and hunting activities. From the age of 10, Leon travelled with his father – the emergency tow truck operator – so someone could 'keep your foot on the brake in case the emergency brake fails'. As a mature student Leon was active in college and university student politics, being elected to Who's Who in American Colleges and Universities in 1969. Since graduating as a psychiatric social worker in 1971, Leon has travelled extensively and lived outside the land of his birth for more than 40 years, practicing child and youth care work – as foster carer, professor, scholar, researcher, educator, author and youth hostel warden – in North America; Europe; the United Arab Emirates; Peoples' Republic of China; Malaysia; South Africa; Australia; and New Zealand.

Aliese Moran

Aliese grew up in the rainforests of the Pacific Northwest, hitched-hiked across North America, and traveled on the subways of Boston and New York during her brief childhood. Deeply connected to her Native American roots, she became a youth activist who blazed her own trail, fought for Indian Fishing Rights and Community Healthcare, the rights of foreign contract workers at Guantanamo Bay and as a Campaign Manager petitioning to reduce the cost of US healthcare. She is blessed with a daughter and a son, both of whom have made her a grandmother, and together they are all blessed that their great grandmother is still with them. A former little league soccer coach, Aliese is also a certified legal assistant and heavy equipment operator with an interest in civil engineering. She lives with two Labradors, is passionate about simpler ways of life and enjoys a rousing debate.

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