**Every Parent’s Nightmare**

When Christopher left our house on that lovely summers May evening little did he know that a few hours later he dies from an unprovoked attack by a gang who were high on drugs and drink later in hospital.

**Friday May 25th 2001** was just like a normal day. I came home from work, Chris was getting ready to go out and he asked me if I could give him a lift to his sister's house. I said "I was too tired and if I drive anymore today I think I may crash the car", so he said "okay not to worry I will call around a friend's house and then we will walk down to Philip's *(our other son)* and maybe pop into Gills house for a coffee", which they did most weekends, and off he went and the last thing he ever said to me was "Dad I really love you" and kissed my forehead and then he left. Vi *(my wife)* came home. We did things like most people; have an evening meal, watch TV and then go to bed.

**Saturday May 26th:** It was around twelve forty when the doorbell rang. I was going down the stairs moaning like most fathers saying "how can two boys forget their door keys?” But when I opened the door instead of Chris and Phil, there were two policemen standing on my doorstep. One asked if I was the father of Christopher and Philip Donovan> I said yes, they then asked if they could come in as there had been an incident involving Chris and Phil and they need to talk to both myself and my wife.

I got Vi out of bed and we were told to sit down I remember my heart was beating so fast that I thought it would jump out of my chest not knowing what they were going to say. Then the policeman told us that Chris and Phil had been involved in a fight and Chris was badly injured and they need to get us to the hospital right away. We got dressed and went in the police car to Epsom Hospital.

When we arrived, Phil was standing there with blood on his face and he was dressed in a white forensic suit and slippers.  as we arrived in the police car Phil thought everything would be okay now mum and dad were here.

Then a big policeman came up to me and said I'm sorry you can't see Christopher they have taken him up to the operating theatre. He then led us into a small room and said someone will come soon to let you know what is happening and left us just standing there. After what seemed like hours, some doctors came into the room and said Christopher was in a bad way. Most of the bones in his body were broken and he has lost a lot of oxygen to the brain and we could be looking at severe brain damage.

We just didn't know what to say or think. We just sat there quietly. After they left the room we asked Phil what happened. He told us that " Chris and his friend Richard came to his shop where he worked and Chris was in a great mood laughing and joking, Chris Said shall we get a mini cab to Gills house? But Phil said it’s a nice evening lets walk, we were having a great time walking along minding our own business and Chris was singing an Oasis song.

As we walked along the road we came to the hill and unknown to us coming towards us was a gang of boys and girls, about fourteen in all. as we got nearer, the gang opened up to let us pass. I went first but as I was passing through, one of the gang punched me in the face for no reason and broke my nose. It felt like my nose was touching my cheek,

In shock, I put my hand to my nose (The Doctor told me that somehow, I clicked the bone back and that is why I blacked out)

and the pain was so bad I fell to the floor and then three of the gang started to kick me in the head that is when I passed out."

The rest of what happened is what witnesses said in court. When Philip fell on the ground they saw three boys kicking him. They then saw Christopher going over to save his brother but two other lads got in his way and blocked him.

Then another boy got around the back of him and pulled him to the floor and all three were kicking and stamping on his head.

They then left him unconscious in the middle of the road which is has four lanes;

 A road with a maximum speed of forty miles an hour.

One of the girls in the gang went to pull Chris off the road and the eldest gang member shouted leave him there!

A couple of cars came over the hill and somehow missed him. Then another car came over the hill and the driver said in her statement she thought it was a bungle of rags in the road. She ran over Christopher dragging him about forty meters down the road.

When Philip regained consciousness the first thing he saw was his brother under a car wheel. A woman came running out of a house to help. She said she was a nurse and it is best not to move Chris until help arrives, so all Phil could do was to sit beside his brother who was unconscious and hold his hand.

As we were talking to Phil two doctors came into the room and told us that were looking at severe brain damage and they are doing everything to save him.

Then at 03 45 the doctors came into the room with two policemen. Their eyes told us what they were going to say. They said “that they were sorry, they did all they could” and before they could say anymore, Vi ran out of the door. She said later that if she ran away it wouldn't be real. I remember I fell on my knees banging my head off the floor screaming a doctor ran over to me and held me in his arms.