

## Prologue

When they asked me, ‘Did you kill your father?’ Did you do it alone?’ I said yes both times because that was what we’d agreed. I expected to go to prison. That didn’t frighten me because I thought it could not be worse than my life already. The way I thought was, even if I am in prison, it will still be more freedom than before because it will be away from *him*. I was 36 at the time (1987).

I didn’t believe that he *could* die. Even though I’d seen his body with the wounds it still took a long time to sink in. Mum and Mo were the same. In spite of telling the police that I’d done it on my own, they were both charged with conspiracy to murder, but the magistrate’s court found them not guilty so they were free. My trial was about six weeks later, in November. I pleaded not guilty to murder but guilty to manslaughter, and I was given a three-year suspended sentence. The judge said (I will never forget this), ‘In many ways your life has been a form of punishment.’

Sometimes I wonder what he would have said if I had told the truth.

From Sheila Shand’s journal, written in 1988

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