

THE PHARMACOLOGY OF SILENCE



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The pharmacology of silence

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The Pharmacology of Silence is a call to awareness, encouraging readers to question the limitations they have accepted as truth and to embark on a journey of self-discovery and empowerment. It is a reminder that true freedom lies not in the absence of challenges, but in our ability to navigate them with clarity, courage, and an unwavering commitment to our own well-being.

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Are you guilty, or are you a lunatic?

FOREWORD

[to be written by someone else]

PROLOUGE

There's always a cockroach.

It crawled out from corner of the room like it had no fear, cutting slow lines through the stale air. It moved with a strange kind of confidence, the confidence of something that has survived everything humans built to contain it. How it got in or will get out is beyond me, but they manage to thrive.

I watched it make its way across the floor while the man one cell down screamed for the guards to let him call his family. He had been banging on his door for hours, all day, and all night. I later learned he was in the mental health wing because he was charged with murdering his fiancée.

I couldn't help myself but to not feel any stress, at this stage the absurdity of it was too much, this was where the system had placed me. This was where the "dangerous, delusional, psychotic threat to the greater Sydney community" had ended up. A cockroach, a murderer, and me.

The toilet didn't flush. The sink had no water. There was no shower.

A guard eventually walked past my door to take me to see a nurse, she looked at my file and let out a comment on her disbelief. "Is this seriously all you're in for?", she asked, "this is the stupidest reason I've ever seen someone put in here".

There were no windows in Parklea's isolation cells. The outside world existed only when a guard opened the hatch and let a face appear.

The world wasn't afraid of me. It was afraid of being wrong about me. And it would rather cage me than correct itself.

My mentality had shifted. I no longer cared where I was, or what walls surrounded me. If they released me, I couldn't return to a society that believed a person deserved this. Better to lose time in a cell than to work and pay into a machine that crushes the spirit of those it misunderstands or refuses to listen to.

Part I - The Descent into the System

Chapter 1 – Before the storm

Before the police reports, the tribunals, the cells, the formalities of diagnoses I never recognised in myself I lived an excellent life. It was ordinary in the way most people's lives are: structured by small routines, guided by quiet ambitions, and built around a sense of who I believed myself to be, or more importantly, who I believed I could become in the future.

My life wasn't glamorous. It wasn't cushioned by wealth or safety nets.

Financially, I lived close enough to the edge that a single unexpected bill or a hole in my shoe could tilt the whole month off balance. I worked hard, studied hard, and stretched every dollar thinner than it should have been stretched. There were months where groceries were a calculation, not a choice. Where exhaustion replaced sleep, and stress replaced comfort.

But even in that fragility I walked through the world in a kind of awe.

The electricity that flicked on with a switch didn't feel mundane to me.

Running water felt like a privilege.

The fact that strangers were awake at three in the morning to drive ambulances, repair roads and staff emergency rooms stunned me.

The existence of people who devoted their lives to keeping the rest of us safe, warm, fed, or simply alive... it gave my life a meaning so overwhelming I sometimes struggled to contain it.

I never needed marketed luxury to feel fortunate. I only needed to look around.

Despite everything I lacked, I lived with a gratitude so intense it was almost painful. A gratitude that came from knowing how much goodness there was in our beautiful nation, how many hands were silently holding up the structure of our lives. How many hours of silent toil go unnoticed in the present but define the future. That gratitude shaped my mind and my ambitions. It grounded me, humbled me, and gave me a direction: to contribute, to understand, to repay in whatever way I could.

And that is who I was before the storm. A young man with very little, but a sense of meaning so deep it felt like a responsibility. But it wasn't always this way, it took a crisis and a miracle for me to get my life together.

I've always been guided by a set of stories, one of those stories which I read as a child is about a man named Joesph. Joesph was given a coat made of many colours by his father, his brothers in an act of jealousy rebelled against him and abandoned him. Yet through hard work and kindness Joesph made his way to become the advisor of an influential family.

When Joesph reconnected with his brothers, he didn't seek revenge, instead he embraced them.

The way I interpreted the story of Joesphs coat of many colours was that a good life is lived by learning how to meet people where they are, to understand them, to speak in the emotional language they can hear, to carry within yourself *a personality of many colours*, capable of connecting with anyone.

My friends have referred to me in the past as “the glue”. I keep friendships strong, mediate relationships and people like to listen to my advice. I was characterised at high-school as an “inbetweenner”, I wasn't a member of the “in-crowd”, and I wasn't rejected as an outcast – I was friends with everybody, if you were kind and wanted a conversation then I'd talk to you.

In social settings I could be either quiet or the life of the party. If there was something funny or meaningful to contribute, I said it. If not, I listened. People relaxed around me. They told me things they didn't tell others. They trusted me, and I wouldn't betray them.

What changed my outlook on life was a period where I spent living in a men's refugee for the homeless. I ended up there after a family argument and circumstances which were out of my control. I had a somewhat cynical view of life prior this experience, "How could there be a god if there's so many wars, so much bad in the world; we need to get rid of all values of old which caused so much distress". But here I was, I ended up in the arms of people who cared.

Most people might hear about living in a homeless refugee and assume it's a traumatic experience, lonely, desolate, but to me it was one of the best experiences of my life. I was supported, I had a wide range of connections, I wasn't alone. And I realised something significant while I was there: it could be so much worse, it could easily be so much worse, what really struck me was that it wasn't an accident I was being helped. Generations before me had suffered worse conditions and worked harder to establish the possibility of the comfort I was in. They believed in something, and they wanted me to believe in it too, and I did.

I decided I would do everything I could, no matter how bad the conditions are, to leave a legacy which will help people I didn't know. I wasn't bitter, I was reborn.

I put in an application to volunteer for the state emergency service.

I applied to join the army.

I paid my own way into college for youth leadership.

I didn't drink alcohol for five years.

My goal was clear – I was going to do everything I could so another soul would never have to suffer.

Chapter 2 – The relationship

Emelia entered my life the way some people do — softly at first, almost forgettable, and then all at once. She was wounded in ways she didn't hide: scars on her arms, stories of trauma, years of instability and damaging relationships that she carried like a shadow behind her. She could be bright and charismatic one moment, withdrawn and unreachable the next.

I didn't judge her. I saw someone who had survived more than most people admit to feeling.

Our relationship never had clean lines. It was short, but intense. I thought the relationship would never take off, but she stared at me with an intensity and offered me things other people weren't. She spoke of plans to have children together, I became the centre topic of her conversations, she told her friends I was amazing. Then suddenly she ended it abruptly, stating she was returning to her previous partner, and I believed that was the end of it. Painful, but understandable. When we broke up, I said it had been a rollercoaster.

Except it wasn't the end.

Not long after the breakup, she began posting things on social media, public messages about loneliness, heartbreak, missing someone, she had never posted thoughts like this before. At the same time, people close to her, including mutual friends and housemates, were telling me privately that she still cared about me, still talked about me, still thought about me.

It created a kind of emotional double-vision:

Her behaviour said go away, but her words, and the words of the people around her, said come back.

She watched my behaviour, she would ask me about everything that happened to me, "why did you go to sleep late last night", "who were you with?". She read everything I posted online, she would copy it and share it, and every song I listened to.

I set a firm boundary, I told myself if she wants this relationship with her ex, then I will support her on her endeavour, because what you do for someone when you care about them is you help them do what's best for them, not what benefits you.

I wasn't chasing shadows; I tried to reconcile the contradictory stimuli from a real person whose world was unstable.

She would block me, then her friend would reach out. She'd post something emotionally charged, then her housemate would tell me she still had feelings for me. She'd unblock me and ask for favours, money, emotional support, then push me away again. When we were driving she would try to hold my hand and tell me stories about how lonely she was.

It was an emotional pendulum, and every swing had me more confused than the last. She made me make promises to her to always support her emotionally, she would ask me for valentine's day gifts and told me it would hurt her to see me move on.

The concept of "a rollercoaster of emotions" suddenly became a central theme to her online persona, she quoted it, she quoted everything I said.

When she called me at 3 a.m. demanding food, then blocked me when I said no, I realised I didn't understand the rules of whatever dynamic had formed between us. I wasn't in love with her, but I did feel responsible for her. She had trauma, and I understood trauma. I thought I

could help her stabilise or at least be a reliable presence when her world fell apart. She confirmed my position in her life, by reaching out to me and asking me to be the light of her life after the breakup. She had asked me to help her get her life together, help her find a job, and write resumes, I thought I could help.

But every time I stepped back, she reappeared through some other avenue.

Every time I tried to disengage, something pulled me back into her orbit.

On one hand, I wanted to escape this force, but on the other hand I had this conscious thought that I may be the only person in her life who wasn't supplying her with drugs and a lifestyle that was irreconcilable with a plan for good mental health, and the fantasy of a promised land where we could reconcile our differences was enough to motivate me to continue sacrificing my own emotions in the hope of a negotiated shared territory of predictability and understanding.

Emelia's history, the trauma, the instability, the substance use, the volatile attachments meant that her behaviour toward me was not linear or predictable and I came to learn later that I was not the only one.

But in the moment, it felt like trying to decode a radio transmission that kept cutting in and out. I knew something was happening; I just couldn't tell what. And I cared enough to try to understand it, and when I was exhausted and tried to step away, the cries got louder and I felt more guilt and pressure.

I couldn't bring myself to become another person who simply disappeared when things became difficult.

What I didn't know was that this confusion would become the foundation for everything that followed. And every system that later judged me would falsely interpret it through a narrative which I didn't deserve.

Chapter 3 – The threats and harassment (2017–2022)

After Emelia and I fell out of contact, I expected life to return to something normal. The relationship had been brief and confusing, but it was over. I had to grieve a lost love, but I had to understand it was an unresolved situation and move on.

What began in 2017 as mixed emotional signals gradually evolved, over the next five years, into something darker.

It began with rumours.

Then with cryptic messages through mutuals.

Then with open hostility.

Emelia would block me, then her friends would contact me.

Random accounts would appear on my social media, and when I responded cautiously, it was somehow reported back to her instantly.

Her friends, or people close to her, spoke about me with an aggression that made no sense. I wasn't pursuing her. I wasn't contacting her. I had moved on with my life, I had another partner, but somehow, I was still in theirs.

And the tone of everything had changed.

Something wasn't right. Something didn't add up.

I couldn't articulate it, but the atmosphere around Emelia felt charged, reactive, unstable, watching me even when I wasn't watching her.

I came up with a plan, something unorthodox. It was a make-or-break idea. I wanted to understand what she cared about.

I posted a Facebook status visible to only *one* person: Emelia.

“I just had sex with a girl.”

It received no likes. No comments. No reaction. It appeared to vanish into the void, exactly as expected, because no one cared.

Or so I thought.

I stopped by a friend's house: my best friend's older brother's best friend. I was there briefly, ready to head home, when they asked me to come inside for a beer.

Hours later, the topic shifted. One of the women there began asking me questions. Eventually she posed the question: “Why did you post on Facebook that you had sex with a girl?”.

“Did someone send that to you?”, I asked.

“Yeah”, she replied.

Her best friend was standing next to her; I unlocked my phone and passed it to her friend.

“See the post on my Facebook? You haven't seen it yet. Check the settings. Who is the target audience for that post?”

Her face drained of colour, “She’s the only one who can see it” she told her friend.

It was odd behaviour for someone who didn’t care about me and was trying her best in a new relationship. I asked, “did they say anything else about me?”.

She looked down at her phone and began to read, “I can’t believe I love him”.

The room changed, suddenly they figured out the something I had suspected.

“You’re soulmates!”, one said.

“You two are in love”, another chimed in.

I had moved on.

I wasn’t playing these games.

So, foolishly, after a few drinks, I told them honestly that her behaviour exhausted me and that I had a new partner.

Big mistake. Suddenly I was the target of attack.

The mood snapped like a dry twig.

Insults flew.

Accusations started.

The same woman who had praised me moments before now begged her boyfriend to fight me.

When he refused, another woman lunged at me out of nowhere, slammed me to the ground and choked me until I couldn't breathe.

I restrained myself until survival kicked in.

When I fought back, they screamed that I was "crazy", "abusive".

The room changed, suddenly I was surrounded by strangers.

In that one night I lost numerous friends who would never speak to me again.

No one understood, and if I had told them I was suspicious about an ex-partner they would have called me delusional anyway, and if I did try to tell them once the word got back to her and she denied it suddenly I'm a hostile person.

Gaslighting at its finest.

Emelia later sent me messages telling me she planned to sleep with my neighbours and that she wished I would die. I had never said anything even remotely as rude to her.

I went into self-protection mode.

I deleted every woman on my social media.

I cut my online social circle down to fewer than a hundred people, only those I truly trusted.

Anyone loosely connected to her was removed. I didn't want to be in her orbit ever again.

I stopped sharing even a single update, I hid my birthday, all information was private and protected.

The final breaking point of that early period came in 2019.

Emelia called me at 3 a.m., demanding I buy and deliver McDonald's to her house.

When I refused and suggested she get her prince charming who she broke up with me for to get her McDonalds, she immediately blocked me.

I changed my phone number the next month.

A part of me thought it wasn't serious, she blocked me and unblocked me all the time, maybe she was just joking. I asked my friend if I should take out a restraining order, I

asked my neighbour in the apartments what I should do if I'm harassed.

One of my best friends passed a message on to me, Emelia was being publicly ridiculed for stealing large sums of money from her housemates. I didn't know what to make of it, she had become someone who I held close affection for and saw great promise in, into someone who was an impulsive drug user with an STI and has the tendencies of a criminal. 2019 was the last year I ever heard of her.

There was another layer of confusion I didn't know how to process at the time. Even while she was still "dating" her ex-partner, she was active on dating apps. I'm not claiming it was my place to judge that, but it added to the sense that nothing in the relationship had clear edges or consistent rules. I never knew what was honest, and that uncertainty and contradiction was a consistent theme.

I self-referred to a mental health service, I was diagnosed with severe anxiety. A social worker noted "Jake experienced further trauma during his period of homelessness suffering an unprovoked serious assault resulting in him being diagnosed with significant levels of Depression and Stress coupled with Severe Level Anxiety.".

I assumed distance would resolve everything. I was wrong.

By 2022, I had been locked out of my social media accounts and was forced to create new profiles. I began uploading all my old memories and connecting with everyone I had left behind years ago again.

I came across Emelia's profile, she made some posts to the effect of "it still hurts after all these years", and that she misses her ex-partner. During the time we were together, she had never posted anything like this, it only began once she left me and started dating her ex again.

I reached out to her, I told her I wasn't really fond of her, but I'd put my personal anguish aside if she needed someone to talk to. She responded by posting that she was a combination of sensitive and savage, then blocked me.

A male housemate of hers messaged me; he knew her closely and spoke as if he had seen more than he negotiated for, but even still he would never say anything to damage her reputation.

"She's been keeping you in for a reason dude", he said.

"She's in love with you", he told me previously, echoed by another previous female roommate.

It's difficult to even put into word the confusion I felt at this point in time.

Why would someone who invests so much emotional energy into me, block me, despite her friends and roommates telling me she loves me?

"I love you, stay away from me."

"I hate you, don't leave me."

I found myself at a crossroads no one wants to be at:

Someone who I knew struggled deeply was crying out online, lashing out, then retreating, then re-engaging through intermediaries.

Someone who could not articulate her needs yet expected me to somehow intuit and fulfil them.

Someone who appeared to want connection but could not tolerate me.

So I made a decision, one born out of exhaustion:

I would speak to her directly, face-to-face.

Just to understand what she wanted, and to give her the chance to say it plainly.

The door to my world was open for her to step into, and I made myself vulnerable.

I told myself:

'If she tells me she wants nothing to do with me, there's nothing a man can do.'

The situation needed sunlight, and an explanation, not one distorted through rumours, third parties, or emotional theatrics.

I was willing to face whatever happened.

So one afternoon, I walked to her house with nothing but a self-help book to seek advice from, to ask a simple human question:

“What is going on?”

I got to the top of the driveway. I stopped, sat, and I thought to myself “is this really what I deserve to be doing?”

But I knocked, then I walked away, and sat.

Emelia opened the door, she looked different, it had been about half a decade.

When she saw me, her jaw hit the ground. I didn't see fear, what did she have to be afraid of?

She asked me what I wanted.

"I'm just here to talk".

"Go away before I call the police", she replied.

I thought to myself:

'If I walk away now, nothing gets resolved.

And if the police come, I'll simply explain I'm a concerned ex-partner, worried because she's been posting distressing things, and people have been passing on messages to me on her behalf.'

Sure, they might tell me to leave, but at least someone might listen.

So, I sat outside, and I hoped, I watched her cat jump around trying to get outside.

She picked up the phone and made a call.

"HE'S A PSYCOPATH AND HE WON'T LEAVE", she shouted.

A few minutes went by; I was expecting the police to arrive.

Her father, whom I had never spoken to, suddenly appeared in my orbit with explosive anger.

I was surprised to see him, she had previously told me stories of abuse, homelessness, and betrayal.

He stood a few meters away from me, a younger woman entered the scene, I don't know who she was, a family friend, a counsellor, a childhood friend?

She asked me what I wanted.

"I'm just here to talk".

She stepped over me, ignoring me, she didn't really have any concerns for me.

She walked inside, I heard their conversation, "Emelia... this boy is gorgeous, what are you doing?"

The friend walked outside, she tried to say something, but didn't really make a sentence, she was confused, I was confused, Emelia was acting afraid, she walked back inside.

Her father stepped closer, sizing me up with hostility.

“What do you want?” he barked.

I saw a parent acting on the information he had, information Emelia had given him, information I knew was distorted but that he had no reason to question.

He was trying to safeguard someone he loved, and we both cared about her.

But that didn’t make answering his question any easier.

How could I possibly explain?

How do you summarise five years of mixed messages, emotional whiplash, and quiet confusion into a single sentence?

I froze. The question was impossible.

“You’d better say something before I hurt you.”

There was no space for nuance.

No time to explain the complexity of what had led me there.

All I could manage was the simplest version possible:

“I... just want to put problems aside. And apologise.”

In hindsight, it was the worst sentence I could have chosen.

It made me look guilty, small, like I was at her door to seek forgiveness for something I hadn't even done and to beg for her approval.

But my tongue was scrambled.

“Tell me”, he said. “Then I'll tell her. And then fuck off.”

I repeated the sentence.

He didn't listen to the content; he listened only for compliance.

“Get the fuck out of here before I bash you. And never come back.”

There was no misunderstanding the intent, and certainly no invitation to explain myself further, or for a proper introduction.

As I turned to leave, I realised Emelia had been filming the entire thing. Later, I learned the video had been shared around.

Passed from person to person.

Sent through group chats.

Displayed as “proof” that I was some deranged intruder, *a creep turned away at the door.*

The truth didn’t matter.

Context didn’t matter.

What mattered was that a moment of desperation had been converted into a caricature; portrayed as a stereotype.

And I didn’t even know it had begun.

I went home and did the only thing that felt remotely human in that moment:

I tried to reach out to someone mutually connected to Emelia, to ask them to help me with the complexity of this situation.

What came back wasn’t reassurance.

It was a barrage of violence.

The messages arrived rapid-fire:

“I’ll put you into the fucking ground.”

“Try that again and you’ll see what happens — it’ll be fucking sick.”

“We’ll send you to the hospital on a stretcher.”

“You’re fucking mentally ill.”

“Either go to hospital and get put in a straitjacket and sort out your mental issues, **or we’ll end your life.**”

“We won’t stop. **Five years of hell is coming your way.**”

The threats were explicit.

I didn’t retaliate.

I didn’t send threats back.

I didn’t escalate.

I just sat there and absorbed it, confused at how my life had spiralled into this.

Late at night, my doorbell rang.

Loud.

Unexpected.

I paused. I'd lived there for years, and no one had ever come to my door unannounced. Not once.

Something in my body recognised danger before my mind caught up.

I reached instinctively for my phone, I thought I needed to record what was coming.

But the ringing kept coming, fast and aggressive, so I rushed to answer.

I answered the door.

There was a man standing there.

Face covered.

Hood up.

A cigarette rolled into the corner of his mouth.

He started shouting when we made contact, a stream of profanity, spit, and rage.

But the words didn't land in my brain. The speech came out so fast, so loud, so charged that it disintegrated into noise.

It didn't make sense.

I wasn't hurting anyone.

I'd gone to her house peacefully, with a book in my hand, apologies on my tongue, and forgiveness in my heart.

And somehow here I was, face to face with a masked stranger on my doorstep, screaming at me like I'd committed some unforgivable crime.

That was the moment the world shifted.

These people ***hated*** me.

They blocked me on Facebook; every line of communication was gone.

Everyone had seen the video.

Once people decide you're a lunatic, nothing you say sounds sane. Now how many people thought I was crazy?

I had no way to talk to Emelia.

No way to clear things up.

No way to stop whatever machine had started turning.

I was out of options.

So, I did the only thing I could think of something simple and clumsy:

I wrote a letter.

“If these threats continue, someone is going to get hurt.”

It was a warning, a statement of the obvious.

If you terrorise someone long enough, someone gets hurt.

That’s how reality works.

It was the truth. A warning about the direction *their* behaviour was heading.

One afternoon, there was another knock at my door, but this time it wasn’t a stranger.

It was the police.

I answered, expecting at least a conversation.

Instead, the first officer spoke so quickly, in such a heavy accent, that I couldn’t understand a single word. At the time I didn’t even think he was speaking English... “Is this Arabic?” I thought.

We went back and forth, me trying to decipher what he wanted, him repeating something.

Finally, a second officer stepped forward and said plainly:
“Can you come outside?”

I did.

And the moment my foot touched the ground, they grabbed me.

I was placed under arrest on my own doorstep.

At the station, they put me in a small concrete cell and handed me a set of charges:

stalking, intimidation, harassment.

A restraining order was imposed, the final irony.

They legally barred me from contacting someone I already wanted nothing to do with. After all that had happened, why would I ever want to speak to her again?

But the system had its story.

And from that moment forward, I wasn't a person in distress, I was a case file, a statistic, a narrative, a cultural problem.

The police wouldn't ask why I wrote the note; Emelia had told them everything they needed to know.

At that stage, something inside me shifted, not into self-hatred, but into a cold, heavy resignation.

I didn't think I was a bad person.

I didn't think I was dangerous.

I didn't think I deserved punishment.

In fact, I thought the opposite:

I thought I had the truth.

I believed that if someone listened, everything would make sense.

I knew my intentions were righteous.

I knew I wasn't acting out of malice.

I knew the situation was a due to a pattern of behaviour anyone would be concerned about, and I had the proof.

But knowing you're right doesn't help when no one cares.

My mind went to a harsh place I had never experienced:

“Being good isn’t enough.”

“Doing the right thing isn’t enough.”

“Speaking the truth isn’t enough.”

I felt like wasted time, not because I hated myself, but because I was pouring my life, my effort, my sanity into a world that refused to meet me halfway.

It was like there was a black hole inside me that was sucking everything good in my life into it.

It’s one thing to doubt yourself.

It’s another to believe in yourself completely and still watch everything fall apart anyway.

I wasn’t suicidal from shame or guilt. I was worn down by the feeling that the universe was indifferent towards fairness, that no amount of clarity, evidence, or moral intention would change how I was being interpreted.

It was a moral exhaustion so deep it hollowed out the meaning of everything.

It was in that psychological space, certain of the truth, but utterly defeated by how little it mattered, that the next chapter began:

The moment the system mistook my clarity for insanity.

Part II – Inside the system

Chapter 4 – Slowly, then all at once

Part of my bail conditions required me to attend a psychiatric assessment.

To be clear, I already had a support network, a social worker, a therapist, and a psychiatrist who had known me long before any of this unfolded.

Their evaluations were consistent:

“Mr Walklate is hardworking, resilient, and conducts himself with honesty and integrity.”

“Jake is always respectful in all communications. He is timely with appointments, communicates clearly and honestly, and takes initiative.”

These were the professionals who actually knew me.

So, thinking logically, I decided to pre-empt further escalation and report everything to the police, the threats, the visits to my home, the hostile messages, so there was a record if things got worse.

A female police officer took one look at me and immediately made a call, he's in severe distress, he needs help.

I was detained and taken to the hospital.

I was there for maybe four hours.

They discharged me as a "high suicide risk", slapped together a few lines of notes, and handed me off to community monitoring.

Later, when I got hold of my medical file, I read their words:

"Possible Antisocial Personality Disorder"

ASPD!

That's the same diagnosis used for sociopaths and psychopaths.

This was written by people who had spoken to me for less than an hour.

In that moment I understood something with painful clarity:

They weren't assessing me.

They were interpreting me.

And they were interpreting through the lens of the charges, not the person.

I had lost control; people who were the perpetrators of threats were now in control of what the hospital staff thought and saw.

That was the last time I'd make that mistake, why would I trust the hospital again?

But my social worker insisted I continue the assessment process, he booked another appointment and I went.

The second assessment was entirely different.

"He has had many relationships with women who appear to financially or emotionally abuse him... yet he continues to reach for companionship. He appears to have a sound head on his shoulders with big plans for the future."

No formal thought disorder

No paranoid or persecutory delusions

Not responding to non-apparent stimuli

Affect congruent with mood

Good insight and judgement

Then I spoke to the psychiatrist who had been helping me reach my goals for over a year, someone who had watched my progress, understood my history, and had an idea of the kind of person I was.

The moment he heard the details of the arrest, he didn't hesitate:

"She has borderline personality disorder, and an avoidant attachment style."

"How do you know?" I asked.

He looked at the large bookcase behind him, mildly amused.

"I've been doing this for decades."

"That's the same diagnosis she told me when we first met", I said.

He chuckled.

I opened my laptop, and I googled.

"Borderline personality disorder and stalking".

I was flooded with anecdotal reports of partners claiming their ex-partner with BPD was stalking them.

I saw online videos of people saying they had even been charged for trying to make it stop.

I read research by psychologists, “40% of stalkers have borderline personality disorder”.

Why didn't I know this earlier?

I posted on Facebook saying what had happened to me, the push, the pull, the twisting of reality.

People reached out to me, people who knew her.

“She was the same with her ex, it’s so gross. Stay away from her hun, it’s not good for you.”

“My advice is to stay away from anyone who has a history of meth use like her.”

“Yeah I was dating her for a while. Fuck, I’ll never forget the shit she did, all you can do is laugh at it. She did a bunch of drugs then cheated on me multiple times.”

Well now I had information to take to court.

I had threats I received.

I had peers telling me conflicting stories.

And I had experts telling me she’s unstable.

Importantly, I had my integrity.

Chapter 5 – Is someone following me?

5.1. The friend calls me

I received a phone call from an unknown source.

It was the person who had, at Emelia's house, called me gorgeous and tried to find a resolution.

Emelia had been telling her about me.

Emelia told her who I was friends with, who I spoke to, who I interacted with. But she had all this information from well after we broke up.

The friend wanted to know about a boy she was seeing, she wanted to ask my opinion on him.

I told her what I knew.

It was obvious Emelia had been talking about me, not just to her, but to other people too. She knew stories, but why or how she knew them was out of my understanding. She said during the police interview "I don't his friends or anything about him".

The friend concluded, "I know you just want closure", she said, "but...", she froze. She had nothing to say.

5.2. Getting used to cells

I received a friend request from a stranger on Facebook.

Someone monitoring me I thought, checking what I knew, or waiting to see if I would say the "wrong" thing.

It was pattern recognition. Everything I did seemed to travel back to her instantly.

We had no mutual friends, I didn't know the name, and it was too much of a coincidence.

I messaged this person, I tried to tell my side of the story, I told them I didn't want any more problems.

I went out for my usual nightly jog, then I came home.
A knock at my door.

“Can you come outside?”

I wanted to know why, but I did anyway.

“As of now, you're under arrest for breaching a domestic violence restraining order”

I had no idea who she was, but I was taken into jail and refused bail anyway.

I get to the jail, the guards laugh at me.

They take me to a room and tell me to take off my clothes, bend over and show them what I'm hiding inside me.

“If you make any sudden movements, you will get hurt, do you understand me?” the correctional officer commanded.

In one minute you can lose so much dignity.

I was no longer trusted even with my own anal cavity.

I was locked in a holding cell with:

- a heroin addict with no teeth, trembling through withdrawal, begging the guards for medication to get him through it
- a man pacing aggressively, ranting about the drugs he planned to take once released and the fights he had been in
- and a third man, soft-spoken, who told me he had been arrested for breaching an AVO too, though he also had no idea what breach they were talking about, he said he had a new partner and had moved on with his life, but they arrested him anyway.

It's difficult to sleep in that environment, you keep one eye open.

You can't trust anyone, they might be violent.

The staff give you a few blankets.

You fold one up and use it as a pillow.

Another you use for warmth.

One blanket is cold, two is too hot.

There's no showers for the next day.

The night is long, there's no windows, you know it's morning when the lights turn on.

You know it's night when the lights turn off.

If you try to use the buzzer to talk to a guard to ask what time it is, when breakfast is, where your lawyer is, the best answer you'll get is a swear word.

If you're not dying don't bother to talk to them, even if you are dying you might avoid pressing the buzzer.

The place probably hasn't been mopped since it opened; there were cockroaches everywhere.

I tried to talk to a guard, to make small talk and pass the time.

He had an American accent.

"Hey, where are you from?" I asked.

"You don't ask me questions, and you refer to me as sir. Do you understand?"

"Sure".

Even if you're innocent until proven guilty, no sympathy is coming from the guards.

When I finally stood before the judge, the police prosecutor said:

“Your Honour, he is a danger. He should not be released.”

The judge looked at me for a long moment and said:

“I don’t believe he will survive if we keep him in custody. I’m releasing him.”

It was the first sliver of humanity I had been shown from the justice system.

5.3. Please leave me alone

I needed to understand what was really happening, and how far this surveillance, this pressure, this distortion of reality actually went.

I had an idea.

A test.

I wrote a document, a letter.

I uploaded it to a private website.

No one knew the URL.

I didn’t send it to anyone.

I simply edited an old Instagram post and quietly embedded the link.

A link surely no one would find, and only I knew it was there.

A few weeks later, police showed up at my house again.

They had the document in their hand.

They told me it was another breach.

“But I didn’t send it to her”, I said.

“You posted it online”, they replied, “and she saw it.”

“How?” I asked. “She blocked me.”

They hesitated.

I pressed again:

“Have you actually read the document you’re holding?”

They hadn’t.

Inside, plainly written, was the line:

“Please leave me alone and stop stalking me.”

Yet here they were, claiming she had somehow accessed a private document she had no logical means of finding.

I hadn't posted it publicly. I hadn't sent it to anyone. It wasn't on Facebook.

But the police had it.

Someone was monitoring me, not casually, not coincidentally, but methodically.

Not only watching what I did...

...but watching what I had done, going through my accounts, tracing my digital footprints, and treating every action as evidence of wrongdoing.

The question wasn't just why, and how, but also for how long this had been happening.

And how did she get away with this?

How can you go to the police with a document that says "please stop stalking me", claiming you found it online, that you're the victim and want the person who wrote it arrested?

Chapter 6 – The house of justice

I was assigned a lawyer.

I did some background research and found out that he used to work as a police prosecutor.

I messaged him, and I asked him if he had the ability to maintain neutrality, and I expressed my concerns.

He transferred my case to a different lawyer.

Unfortunately, he wasn't available, and it was transferred again.

The third guy was an ex-detective, Bryce Kuwin.

I was both cautious and intrigued.

He was a former detective, to me that signalled that he liked to get to the bottom of problems, he knew the truth required investigation, on the other hand a former police employee said, 'not impartial and maybe unwilling to rock the boat'.

I took a chance and went with him.

Bryce called me once before the court hearing, we spoke for maybe 10 minutes, he concluded with some proverb about the chattering teeth of the system.

We wouldn't talk again until the day of court.

I arrived early; I met him.

He said “your only option is to plead guilty; they’ll give you a more lenient punishment. Alternatively, you could go in there and pretend you’re schizophrenic, but then you’ll spend the rest of your life locked up in a mental hospital”

“What about my evidence, did you look at it? I was threatened first, it was self-defence”

“Dropping a letter off at someone’s house isn’t self-defence”

“Well, I’m going to go in there and speak my truth”, I said.

He laughed and mocked me.

We walked in, Emelia’s mother and father sat there looking at me in disgust.

The police’s evidence played on video.

Emelia spoke, “He’s a really shy and awkward person, I thought I’d let him hang around because I felt bad for him, but he was really clingy and creepy so I broke up with him, but he wouldn’t let go so I had to block him. Then we didn’t speak for years and suddenly he just messages me saying he’s angry and then shows up to my house, I was so afraid. Then he started threatening to kill people”.

The detective in the video asked a question, “has he ever harmed you or been aggressive in the past?”

“No, he’s always been really nice”.

I stepped up to the microphone.

My lawyer — Bryce — asked me exactly one question.

“When you went to Emelia’s house, did you plan to hurt her?”

“No”, I said.

“Thanks, that’s all I have.”

He sat down.

That was it.

That was my defence.

Then he handed me over to the police prosecutor like a lamb to the slaughter.

The prosecutor didn’t waste a moment.

“How much meth and alcohol do you consume daily?”

“None”, I replied.

“I find that hard to believe”, he said, as if the accusation itself was proof.

For hours, he questioned me as if the goal wasn't to find the truth but to force me into a shape that fit their narrative. Meth addict. Violent man. Delusional stalker. Dangerous.

Emelia's narrative was clear, and the police believed it:

He is a stalker, he refused to let go, he violated boundaries, she was just a young girl in love, and he forced himself into her life.

She said her posts were about the ex-partner she left me for, but he'd been in a stable relationship for over two years. I had no way of knowing what to believe. All I knew was that the stories around me didn't line up, and for not knowing my place as a creep I was humiliated. Maybe he was so sick of her that he didn't want to be with her, what does that say about her? Or was he evil and mean? If he was then why would she go back to him? Nothing made sense.

We broke for lunch.

I sat outside with Bryce.

"I have the evidence I was threatened first", I said, "Can you look at it?"

"No. I have more important matters to deal with. I don't have time to look at your case."

We returned to the courtroom.

The prosecutor continued:

“Why did you threaten her?”

“I was threatened first.”

“By who?”

“Her father.”

“Is there proof of this?”

“Yes. It’s on video”

“Then what happened?”

“I was threatened by her friends”

The judge stepped in.

“Is there proof?” the judge asked.

Bryce stood up.

“No. There’s no proof.”

I froze.

What.

The.

Fuck.

Yes, there was proof.

I had just tried to hand it to him.

He refused to look at it.

And now he had just told the court, confidently, that it didn't exist.

He wasn't defending me.

He was feeding me into a machine, because to him... I was one file among hundreds, and my truth was irrelevant.

And now my own lawyer was helping the prosecution bury the evidence that could have cleared my name.

My lawyer had made his mind up, I was guilty.

Hours lapsed.

The judge Jessica Parks came to her final decision.

"I find Jake guilty of intimidation and breaching a restraining order, there's no proof he was threatened first. Jake is SICK, he's DELUSIONAL, he lacks logic and he's a TWISTED person. He is a LIAR."

Emelia's parents erupted in laughter.

I couldn't believe it.

I got up and silently walked out of the court room.

I wasn't going to sit there and listen to a room of people misinterpret me.

I walked home.

Frustrated.

My lawyer called me.

"The judge wants to convict you of contempt of the court for your immaturity"

Fuck off idiot.

My first thought was the police needed to see this evidence.

I went to the police station and asked them to review the evidence.

"What do you want me to do with this?"

"File it and look at it."

"What did the judge say?"

"She said I'm delusional and guilty"

"Well, there's nothing I can do, get out of here."

"This isn't fair, no one has helped me, you have to help me"

"Get the fuck out of here, and don't come back or I'll charge you.", the officer said.

I walked to the hospital. The sun was setting.

I entered emergency department and asked to speak to a psychiatrist.

I told them I was stalked and a judge called me delusional.

Their diagnosis was *'first episode psychosis'*.

They told me I was never going to leave the hospital until I was medicated.

They told me if I refuse the medication then they'll hold me down and forcefully inject it into me.

I was stuck in a hospital bed for about a week in a dark room.

A nurse came to me and spoke.

"We have good news, you're getting transferred to another ward, it'll be much nicer"

They put me in a wheelchair and wheeled me into an octagon shaped room.

Everything was bolted to the ground.

They called it the “high dependency unit”.

Nothing could be carried, no tables, no chairs.

Nothing could be picked up, touched, moved.

The toilets were made of metal, bolted to the ground.

It was a prison within the hospital.

No one could enter without permission. No one ever left without permission.

There were four doors guarded by nurses and security between me and the outside world.

There was one substantial figure who made my time hell.

His name was Ronnie.

Ronnie was a convicted bank robber, he spent years in prison for his crimes.

After days of sitting inside my mental health prison, I lost patience.

I asked a nurse for help.

I was frustrated.

Angry.

He gave me a drug to help me calm down.

The next day, the same emotions surfaced.

I asked for the same drugs, they said they couldn't help me.

I threw a half empty water bottle at the wall and shouted for them to let me out.

This was a mistake.

Ronnie decided this was his time to shine.

He cornered me.

My back was up against a wall.

He towered over me.

“You’re a boy, living in a man’s world. If you want a fight, I’ll give it to you”

From that point on he took everything he could off me.

He stole my pants.

He stole my headphones.

He stole my shoes.

Every move I made was under his aggressive watchful eye.

I was powerless.

The nurses wouldn't let me out.

They had nowhere to move him.

The doctors thought I was a delusional convicted domestic abuser, I was no better.

My father found out what was happening to me.

He called the hospital, absolutely furious.

He demanded they let me out.

The next day I was free.

Chapter 7 – An angel reveals herself to me

I met her on a dating app.

Nothing about it felt significant at first.

She was an international student, here temporarily, with less than a year left on her visa. Realistically, we weren't going to build a life together.

Her name was Waka.

She studied full-time at a private college and worked part-time, surviving on almost no sleep. Her days began at 8 a.m., commuting an hour to class, then rushing to work, then catching the last train home past 11 p.m.

I lived fifteen minutes from her campus. I handed her a key to my apartment and told her she could come in anytime she needed a place to rest between her long shifts.

She had no idea about the charges, the court case, or the years of chaos I was trapped inside. All she knew was that I was at the hospital, and that I seemed fragile.

She visited me every day. Between classes and work, she always made time for me. She came to the hospital with food, clean clothes.

My father found out what she had been doing for me

“You better marry her”, he advised.

“No one else will treat you like that”

A month after my release from the hospital, by unique circumstances, she was able to extend her visa for a year, to stay and work without studying.

I didn't know it yet, but she wasn't just someone I met online.

Chapter 8 – A moral protest

8.1. Prejudice, aggression and an escape

Society rarely wants to admit that men can be stalked or harassed.

It prefers a cleaner narrative:

Man = perpetrator.

Woman = victim.

Anything else is too complicated.

For five years, I lived in that complexity alone.

It was a long, slow escalation of external stressors — real threats, real hostility, real confusion — that no one wanted to look at, because it didn't fit the standard mould. The consequence of their refusal to see the truth would shape the coming years.

I emailed my lawyer Bryce Kuwin and asked him to help me begin an appeal process.

He refused.

Instead, what Bryce did, was he put in a complaint against me.

He stated I refused to follow his advice, that I was pugnacious.

According to Bryce, he gave me great legal advice, he submitted evidence. He objected to the claims made against me. He defended me well.

This is the real kicker, and this is why they cancelled my funding, according to Bryce, he advised me to get a mental health evaluation report written.

According to Bryce, I made “delusional remarks” about “the victim of the matter deserving the attack”.

Bryce, in his words, was worried about my mental health, and asked me to speak to a professional, but **I refused**.

Bryce could no longer work with me, he gave me advice to see a psychiatrist, he tried to push me towards helpful channels to help me deal with my mental health, but I wouldn't cooperate.

My legal funding was revoked. I no longer had a lawyer; I couldn't appeal the charge. I was a plastic duck in a shooting gallery.

I filed a formal complaint against Bryce and requested a reinstatement of the legal aid funding. The review board dismissed my complaint almost immediately.

Their reasoning was chilling in its implications:

"His account is more believable."

I tried to present my evidence.

"I can provide proof I have a therapist and a psychiatrist"

"We also have court transcripts which prove he never presented any evidence"

Their response?

"We don't think it's worth our time"

That's the public legal system at work — protecting the vulnerable.

I had decided the “psychosis” diagnosis was nonsense, not because I was an expert in psychology, but because I understood what I was experiencing was real.

I needed clarity and real support for what I was going through, so I went to another hospital for a second opinion.

To my surprise, they didn't immediately assume I was delusional.

They acknowledged something had happened at my house, someone had turned up to intimidate me, but they couldn't determine the source of manipulation with confidence.

Was it her?

Was it me?

Was it both of us who were dysfunctional?

They note:

“The relationship appears to be quite complicated with a lot of emotional hurt. Had plans to join the army or be a doctor and now feels he cannot do those things with a criminal record”

I was still taking the antipsychotic medication I had been coercively forced onto by the previous hospital. It was a difficult time for me.

At first, I thought what I was experiencing was just psychological recoil from the trauma.

I couldn't sit, couldn't lie down, couldn't stay still.

If I stood, I had to walk.

If I walked, I wanted to sit.

If I sat, I needed to stand.

My body felt hijacked.

My mind felt trapped inside it.

Waka realised before I did:

"It's the medication", she said.

"Please stop taking it."

I booked in with the prescribing psychiatrist and expressed my concerns.

They didn't listen.

Instead, they accused me of googling side effects to "sound convincing."

Eventually they told me to taper down. Then to stop.

Earlier that same week, I started a new job at the post office.

I lasted a few days before HR called me in:

“We’ve discovered you have a criminal record. Your employment is terminated immediately.”

That moment broke something inside me.

I didn’t choose the criminal life, I didn’t believe I was a criminal, but the system had stamped it onto me. They had a version of events they wanted to believe and now it was written into history as fact with the stroke of a judge’s pen.

If they were going to treat me like a criminal... fine.

I would show them the version of me they insisted was real.

I went to a hardware store and bought an empty can.

I walked to a petrol station and filled it with petrol.

I bought matches to accompany it.

Then I walked into the police station which had arrested me and refused to review my evidence.

“Here’s your last chance”, I said.

“Look at my evidence, or I’ll walk out and burn your police car to the ground”

I was exhausted of being forced to live as a person I wasn’t. I had to make sense of the criminal label. At least I was in control of it now, *the criminal label was now mine*.

A policewoman replied calmly,

“I’ll upload your evidence”

I dropped the matches on the ground, abandoned the petrol, and walked home.

A few hours later, detectives arrived:

“We’re taking you to the hospital Jake. Open the door or we’ll kick it down.”

Waka opened the door to let them in; they jumped on me and cuffed me.

Waka burst into tears.

“Why are you taking him? He’s so nice. He hasn’t done anything.”

I thought the police were lying to me about taking me to the hospital.

I didn't know where I was going, I thought maybe I'd get 5 years in prison.

I had a plan, if they sent me to prison, it was simple:

I'd get out...

and escalate again...

and again...

until they got sick of having their equipment destroyed and someone finally listened.

They took me to court.

There were no normal lawyers available, so I was assigned a barrister, supposedly the elite of the legal system.

He read the fact sheet. He looked at me with disbelief.

“What the hell happened? I’ll speak to a nurse; we’ll get you sent to a hospital.”

I sat in a holding cell for hours.

The guards finally came and collected me and shackled me at my hands and feet.

When I finally reached the hospital, a psychiatrist greeted me warmly.

“You’re in luck, we’ll take you in”

I messaged Waka. She came immediately.

For two months I stayed in that hospital.

I was under the care of the same psychiatrist who had already decided I was psychotic and put me in the friendly company of an armed bank robber.

The final diagnosis: *Delusional Disorder*.

A disorder I had never even heard of.

The psychiatrist said,

“You’re probably going to prison. There’s nothing we can do.”

I felt nothing. He could have helped me long ago. He could have listened. He didn't.

When they discharged me, police took me back into custody.

On the way to jail, we had to wait for paperwork, a sergeant stopped, looked at me, and said:

"I'll find someone who will listen to you. We have a good nurse here"

Then he told me the twist:

"Since you were diagnosed as mentally ill, the charges will likely be dropped, as long as you comply with treatment."

I had no idea this was coming, but I felt such relief.

8.2. What the bureaucracy looks like

The hospital arranged for me to see a forensic team, experts in crime, law and psychology.

By that stage, even they seemed unsure of what they were dealing with.

I was adamant that I was the victim, not a perpetrator, not psychotic, not unstable.

So they asked for backup. They said they would bring in a forensic psychiatrist for a second opinion.

A few weeks later, I sat across from a team:

A forensic psychiatrist and a forensic psychologist who normally worked with prisoners, offenders, and high-risk patients.

We spoke for almost an entire day, six hours, maybe more.

I brought everything.

Receipts.

Screenshots.

Dates.

Messages.

Character references from ex-partners, friends, colleagues, employers.

People who had known me for years.

People who had seen me under pressure.

People who knew Emelia and described her instability long before any of this began.

At one point, my psychiatric nurse left the room halfway through.

He said he had to take a phone call or attend a meeting — I don't know.

When the interview was finally over, the forensic team sat back, almost stunned.

They asked me how I felt.

“I’m sick of being called delusional”, I said.

The forensic psychiatrist nodded.

“We have a very different opinion”, he replied.

“We’re happy with the conversation”, they said.

I walked out feeling hope. Believing that, finally, someone would write down what I’d been trying to say all along. Believing that something objective, something with institutional authority, would reach the doctor in charge.

A week later, the report came back.

Twenty or more pages.

Detailed.

Comprehensive.

A meticulous reconstruction of everything we had discussed.

And not a single sentence challenged the diagnosis. Not one line contradicted the narrative of psychosis.

When I asked what had happened, the team didn't hesitate.

"Well", they said casually, "we still think you might be psychotic."

It was then I learned the truth about the bureaucracy:

No matter how much evidence you bring, no matter how many experts listen, no matter how coherent your story, if it contradicts the narrative the institution wants to believe then it never reaches the headline.

That was the last time I ever allowed a psychiatrist to speak to me without putting their signature on it.

8.3. It's hard to believe

I was released from police custody.

I was in the community, and I was attending some art classes.

My phone rang.

It was a government agency.

“We know you were deemed mentally ill, and we need proof you’re recovering to continue to allow you to retain some of your working rights”

“Mind your own business”, I replied, “I’m innocent, that’s all you need to know.”

There was a man sitting across the table from me, he said he wanted to talk to me.

He saw the pain I was suffering. He said he felt the despair in my voice.

It turns out he was a lawyer, he was in the process of getting his license renewed and was starting a law firm called *Victim 2 Victor*. He offered me his services. As he was unlicensed, he could only help refer me to people who could practice. He asked me what happened. I told him my story.

“What’s her name?”

“Emelia”, I said,

“*****”, he replied?

That was her last name. He knew her.

“She’s done this before, I know her. I know her ex, he overdosed on drugs. She’s taken out restraining orders in the past.”

And just like that, the narrative I had been crushed under, psychosis, danger, and instability shifted. The problem had never been that I couldn’t see reality; it was that no one else wanted to.

Chapter 9 – The medication became its own punishment

I gained 14 kilograms in a matter of a few months.

I developed severe sexual dysfunction.

My cognition slowed.

My emotions dulled.

My life shrank.

I begged the clinicians to listen.

One nurse did. He understood. He saw the suffering the others dismissed. He treated me like a human being. He told me he would do everything he could to get the drug dosage reduced to a tolerable level, and then at the end of 6 months I’d be free to leave.

Then he suddenly resigned.

I was assigned a new nurse, she didn't know me.

In our very first session, she asked for my version of events.

I told her.

Her face tightened. She panicked.

Everything she had read in the file, the “delusions”, the “psychosis”, the “paranoia”, the “anger at injustice”, the “belief he was the victim”, none of it had gone away.

And that terrified her.

She spoke.

"You're severely mentally ill. You've been diagnosed as delusional and you need to take the medication."

"We've looked at the police's evidence, from what we can see everything is your fault, Emelia is not to blame. If you don't take the medication then I'll call the police, tell them you're non-compliant and you'll get you sent to jail".

I stood up, I said nothing, I walked home.

A few hours later, she called me.

“Jake, I want to discuss your care, I’ve spoken to the doctor and we’re going to work something out for you. Come back to the hospital and meet with me and we’ll talk about a plan to move forward”.

I walked to the hospital, she was standing there.

Suddenly, I was descended upon by numerous security guards, five, six, seven. I’m not sure.

She said, “I’m sorry I had to do this, but you’re not getting better”.

I was taken back into the ward where I had spent two months.

“We’re going to check your blood, we think you’re being noncompliant”, they said.

The question to me at this point was, *if I was* psychotic, what do I have to gain by being non-complaint? I’m clearly suffering emotional issues, most importantly the charges against me by the police were dropped. Why

would I want to live this delusional narrative that I'm a victim of domestic abuse? What do I have to gain from it? The court rooms and the jail cells are behind me. Taking the medication should be in my own best interest.

So, I volunteered to go on the injectable form of the drug.

"If it helps you sleep at night and will prevent you from kidnapping me because you're so scared I'm not on the medication, then forcefully inject it into me. Then you have no excuses as to why I'm not getting better"

"That's a very mature plan", the doctor remarked.

I was discharged and allowed to go home.

The hospital summary states:

"He's hallucinating, he thinks we've called him delusional, no such remarks were ever made. He has rigid delusions surrounding his ex-partner and the police's actions. We think it might be schizophrenic"

I read this document, and I'm trying to figure it out:

So I'm having delusions.

You've diagnosed me as delusional.

I'm on medication because I'm delusional.

But because you've never told me directly to my face you think I'm delusional that's proof I'm mentally ill?

Some might call that gaslighting.

Chapter 10 – Maximum security

By this point, I felt like I was living in two overlapping nightmares.

First, there was the emotional manipulation from a relationship I had endured years earlier, the gaslighting, confusion, mixed signals, and threats.

Now there was the institutional version of the same thing.

This time, it wasn't a volatile ex-partner shifting blame. It was doctors and nurses.

Both seemed to be acting with the approval of the justice system.

I was being gaslit by an entire system, one armed with needles, guards, and legal authority.

They were rewriting history as each day passed.

Emelia's version of events was permanent.

They tapered one drug rapidly, then refused to touch the other.

I asked why.

The psychiatrist receded.

“I can’t tell if it is or isn’t working, so we won’t remove it”

Instead, they decide to extend it for another 6 months, so I’m stuck.

I got the letter in the mail confirming I was trapped on the anti-psychotic.

At the same time I’m experience severe withdrawals.

I vomit, I’m nauseous, I’m suffering.

I need to stop walking when I’m going down a footpath and kneel on the ground because I don’t feel well.

I start breaking down, I throw things, I punch my computer, I throw a golf club.

I sent the nurse a message from a place of total collapse.

I wrote:

“I can’t handle this anymore. I’ve told you repeatedly that this medication is harming me and you keep

dismissing me. You keep calling this a hallucination, my partner was physically present and heard the same things.”

“I’m on the brink of violence. I’ll take a knife to defend myself. If you don’t listen I’ll punch the doctor in his face. I don’t want to harm anyone, please help me and make this stop.”

I was doing the only thing I could think of to make them understand the position they had put me in. They wouldn’t listen to my pleas, they didn’t listen to negotiation.

Days go by of silence.

One night I'm at Waka's work.

It was our routine. I’d go to the gym, meet her afterwards, keep her company until close. Sometimes we’d get dinner together.

Then my phone rang.

A detective.

“Can you come by the station for a chat?”

"Sure"

I head there, then, I'm placed in cuffs.

"You're under arrest"

"What for this time?"

"We'll tell you later. Do you have anything illegal on you, drugs or weapons?"

I'm charged for threatening the doctor.

The police kicked down my door while I was out, they took every electronic device and everything pointy in my house.

They showed me a picture of a knife, it was the only knife in my house.

"Tell us about this, what did you plan to do with this knife?"

"That's not mine, it's my girlfriends"

"You don't even own a knife?"

The detective rolled his eyes, they searched my whole house and found a knife which wasn't even mine.

I didn't even own a fork.

The glass window of the cell was covered in blood.

"He's a threat to the greater Sydney community", the police write.

"We're not satisfied any measures can be put in place to protect the public. His mental health hasn't improved"

"He just threatens anyone who does not give him what he wants"

The judge agreed.

I was ordered into custody.

Not minimum security.

Maximum security.

I didn't know where I was transported to. I thought I was going north, across the Sydney harbour bridge, they never tell you.

I get out of the vehicle.

"What's your inmate number?"

"I'm not sure"

"Well, you'll remember it soon enough."

I did learn it, it was 684294.

They placed me in a segregated cell, in what they called the “hospital wing”. Hospital was a generous word. It was a concrete box closer to a nurse’s desk. A cage with a medical label slapped on the door. There was no doctor.

DCS - Inmate ID Card



MIN : 0000684294

WALKLATE

JAKE

26/06/1997

Signature

PARKLEA CORRECTIONAL CENTRE

Each inmate is responsible for the safe keeping of his identification card. Loss or damage, whether deliberate or accidental, will require replacement at the inmate's cost.

inmate ID Cards must be carried on you at all times and presented upon request.

There's always a cockroach.

It crawled out from corner of the room like it had no fear, cutting slow lines through the stale air. It moved with a strange kind of confidence, the confidence of something that has survived everything humans built to contain it. How it got in or will get out is beyond me, but they manage to thrive.

I watched it make its way across the floor while the man one cell down screamed for the guards to let him call his family. He had been banging on his door for hours, all day, and all night. I later learned he was in the mental health wing because he was charged with murdering his fiancée.

I couldn't help myself but to not feel any stress, at this stage the absurdity of it was too much, this was where the system had placed me. This was where the "dangerous, delusional, psychotic threat to the greater Sydney community" had ended up. A cockroach, a murderer, and me.

The toilet didn't flush. The sink had no water. There was no shower.

A guard eventually walked past my door to take me to see a nurse, she looked at my file and let out a comment on her disbelief. “Is this seriously all you’re in for?”, she asked, “this is the stupidest reason I’ve ever seen someone put in here”.

There were no windows in Parklea’s isolation cells. The outside world existed only when a guard opened the hatch and let a face appear.

The world wasn’t afraid of me. It was afraid of being wrong about me. And it would rather cage me than correct itself.

My mentality had shifted. I no longer cared where I was, or what walls surrounded me. If they released me, I couldn’t return to a society that believed a person deserved this. Better to lose time in a cell than to work and pay into a machine that crushes the spirit of those it misunderstands or refuses to listen to.

Days went by, I had no TV, all I could do was imagine the stress Waka was in.

I spoke to a lawyer, and I went before a judge.

“What do you want to plea?” my lawyer asked, “if you plead not guilty, then you’ll be stuck here for probably about 9 months waiting for a trial, if you plead guilty then you might get out this week. I could try to argue that you’re not guilty by reason of mental insanity”.

I wasn’t worried about myself, I had lost motivation, there was nothing for me on the outside, I didn’t want to work, I didn’t want to study, who cares, but then there was Waka.

I had been paying Waka’s rent for over a year, she didn’t know how to pay the bills, she couldn’t afford to even if she wanted to. Waka was innocent, she didn’t deserve to be scared, alone and confused. I had to get back to help her.

I went into the court room, hoping the judge would understand that my mental and physical health is poor.

And you wouldn’t believe it, guess who it was. My old friend Jessica Parks, the same judge who convicted me for being a domestic abuser and called me a sick and delusional liar.

“At some point he needs to be held accountable for his actions”

Guilty.

Later that day I'm released from the prison dumped into the street, I didn't know where I was. It wasn't even until I was leaving the jail I asked someone, "Where am I? Is this North Sydney?"

"You're in Blacktown"

Someone else was being released from prison at the same time as me. Now this was a guy who was *really* unstable. He couldn't help himself but draw chaos around him with every word he spoke, everything he said was a story about threatening someone, the guards, people he crossed, people he shared a cell with, but he told me to follow him, and he took me to the train station.

I called Waka from a payphone, no one had heard from me in days.

She was so surprised to hear me.

"I'm coming home, I'll see you in an hour"

She ran to the station and waited there, she checked every chair of every train that went past waiting to see me.

When I got off the train, I cried, I broke down into tears, I had nothing but an apology for scaring her.

My dad called me, “Hey 684294, how are you going?”

Part III – Fighting for my narrative

Chapter 11 – Rehospitalisation

The medication continued, at this point I was furious.

“What are you even accomplishing? You claim you’re helping me but I’ve just been sent to a maximum-security prison, your medication has fixed nothing!”

“I’ve got an idea”, a nurse remarked.

They reinstitutionalised me. They sent me to another hospital for evaluation.

Another month went by, another month in the hospital.

If you’ve ever spent any time in these places, you’d realise that probably half of everyone there has nothing wrong with them. Maybe they smoke too much weed, maybe they just believe internet conspiracy theories. They’re not going to act the way you want them to act just because you give them a drug.

I made my case to the psychiatrist, he listened. I didn’t feel listened to, but he calculated what I said.

“It’s an unusual diagnosis” he stated.

“Look, here I am, if I have received the correct care, then I’m really grateful, I have a treating team, I get free anti-psychotic drugs which help me. The only problems is that I’ve felt no benefit from any of it, my thoughts haven’t changed, what I believe is the same, and even worse, if it isn’t psychosis then I’ve been gaslit and abused” I argued.

He contemplated in silence.

“I’ll see you again later”

I was slowly ejected from the system.

“I hate these drugs, they’re making me stressed”

“I can see that, we’ll try to reduce them”

FINALLY.

They discharged me.

The summary notes:

“His thought form was logical, linear and goal-directed. He expressed ongoing paranoid ideas about his ex-partner stalking him online which were not clearly delusional in nature. The current treatment framework might well be exacerbating his frustration and risks. At

most, he would qualify as a delusional disorder, however this would be difficult to differentiate from his underlying character. We think there is a role for down titrating his depot. We have given him 200mg injection on 24/5/24 and suggest decreasing to 100mg IM fortnightly and monitoring his response.”

Chapter 12 – Emergence

Another six months of medication went by. Another six months of uncontrollable apathy.

I managed to challenge the police charges in the district court, the conviction was overturned and sent for a re-trial on the basis my plea wasn't genuine.

I was assigned a new psychiatrist.

He “treated” me, or in my opinion he kept the momentum of the previous assumptions going.

Once the court enforced treatment order expired they had no evidence to extend it. With a diagnosis of “not clearly delusional” and no ongoing problems they had no ammunition to keep me injected with drugs.

He advised me, “stay on the medication for another 12 months”.

There wasn't a chance in hell Waka was going to let that happen.

"Tell him NO", Waka said.

So I did, I refused.

Another few months lapsed, we met again.

"So.. tell me the story again.." the doctor asked.

"I was stalked by a drug abusing girl with borderline personality disorder"

"That's a good combination", he replied.

Considering I had to face court again, I decided to try my luck with another forensic psychologist. I wanted to clear the legal record and produce new evidence. I asked the new doctor for a letter, to my astonishment he wrote something helpful:

"Dear colleague,

I have been Jake's treating psychiatrist for the last year. Jake has requested that I write a summary of his care which may be informative for the work you are doing together.

He came into my care after being discharged from Prince of Wales Hospital after a three week admission in May 2024 prompted by his presentation to the Kings

Cross Police Station with concerns that his ex-girlfriend was stalking him. He was admitted under a section 19B with concern that he was psychotic.

Considering the differential diagnoses, delusional disorder or schizophrenia, paranoid type, the treating team suggested down-titrating his 200mg fortnightly dose of zuclopenthixol depot and carefully monitoring response.

Over the last year this is what we have done, reduced and ceased his antipsychotic medication in the setting of case management and regular medical appointments along with a CTO. Importantly over this time no symptoms of psychosis or negative symptoms of schizophrenia have been elicited or reported and he has worked commendably in a collaborative manner with the St Vincents Community Mental Health Service. After the CTO was allowed to lapse approximately 6 months ago, Jake continued to adhere to the treatment plan.

This all occurred on the background of 3 admission in quick succession at the end of 2023 and January 2024 to St Vincents Hospital with concerns about an emerging psychosis. Jake believed, plausibly, that his ex-girlfriend was harassing him online with some of her posts. Whether these were ideas of reference with perhaps an over-reaction, or whether these were delusions of reference was the question.

He regularly expressed his frustration and sense of injustice regarding his treatment. Especially he was concerned about having to take an antipsychotic

against his will, which caused him distressing side effects and was not reducing his preoccupation with his ex-girlfriend.

In this context he made threats to a treating psychiatrist and case manager in 2024, restricting his access to St Vincents Hospital. He was also followed up by the police. It is important to Jake that these threats, and subsequent more pro-social expressions of his frustrations, be seen as a reasonable (though excessive) response to his circumstances, and not psychotically driven. During my time managing his case, I have not seen anything to discount Jake's view of events."

After he published this letter, police have never knocked on my door again. This was quite a nice gesture from a man who was reluctant to take me off medication. Until then, the police had been knocking on my door twice a week, calling me regularly, they wanted to know my every move, where I was, who I was with. They reminded me every time we spoke that I'm not to breach any restraining orders. Every incoming phone call, every doorbell ring, every knock I heard caused a panic attack: *"Am I going to jail again?"*.

I tried to engage with the forensic psychology team. They called me one morning, "we've decided to drop your case, it's too complex for our team to manage."

Great.

“What I’ll do, is I’ll refer you to a psychiatrist, she’s got a great reputation, you can pay for her services privately and she’ll assess you”

HA.

‘I am NOT paying a private psychiatrist to medicate and diagnose me’, I thought to myself.

So that’s it. I moved on with my life. My partner got pregnant, and I kept moving forward, trying to recover emotionally from what happened. I had basically given up on the fight, I wasn’t going to get a lawyer, or a psychologist report, I was just going to shrug my shoulders and say *‘what else could I do but shout, they wouldn’t listen’*.

Then something strange happened. I was walking through the city one day, it was raining, I was in a rush. I saw a poster on a box. “The dark side of psychiatry: a history of psychiatrists abusing patients”.

‘That’s interesting’, I thought. I’m curious about that, I snapped a photo of the poster, I thought I’d go see it another day, maybe it’s somewhere else. Then someone popped out of a door, “come in” he said. Little did I know I was standing in front of the exhibition. “I’ll come back later, I’ve gotta go” I replied.

I went back later.

I encountered members of various human rights groups, including the Scientologists, who were the last group I ever expected to receive guidance from.

They were some of the few people who didn't automatically treat me as a psychiatric stereotype.

In a world where institutional voices had defined me as unwell, they at least treated me as human.

They gave me resources on groups which advocate for patient autonomy.

I watched a documentary they shared. It was a panel of experts, over 10 to 15 doctors, psychologists and professors making the argument that psychosis is such a fragile scientific concept as it lacks almost any replicable diagnostic methodology. There's no DNA test, no brain scan, no checklist of thoughts, and existing research states that within a group of psychiatrists seeing the same patient many times they can't even definitively agree on a diagnosis. Well, that was exactly my experience.

I walked out, one guy asked me who I was, “I can see in you that you’re a cool guy, and without even speaking to you I know they’ve done horrible things to you. They’ll lie about you, they’ll lie to you, and then when they’re wrong they’ll gaslight you. If you weren’t crazy going in, then you’ll sure sound crazy walking out”.

He was absolutely right, and now I knew I wasn’t alone. I had a newly found purpose and sense of self.

No one ever suspects that the very institutions which are designed to protect, heal and help can do immense harm. If you even made the argument that the hospital, police, and courts are often using lies or assumptions as their map of navigation then people would probably assume you’re some sort of anti-establish conspiracy theorist or even worse a political terrorist.

I reached out to one of the doctors who gave a speech in the documentaries I watched. He accepted my request to help me and he suggested we do a DNA test. The results came back and it indicated that I was allergic to many of the medications the hospital forced me to take.

I wasn’t feigning side effects.

I wasn’t non-compliant.

I was literally incapable of processing the drugs they prescribed to me and forced me to take.

And I told them they were doing harm, and they refused to listen to me, instead they marked it down as a “risk”, something which required a “threat-assessment”, something to be concerned about?

I’m marked with a new sense of clarity, and the scars of an experience I wish no one to have to tolerate.

At times my teeth grind, a wave of red washes over me. I had nothing but honest intentions, a peaceful goal, a vulnerable heart. And I was chewed up, spat out and swept under the rug, but my goal has been to become stable for my new daughter and I won’t let it get the better of me.

Waka gave birth to a healthy girl, she’s gorgeous and we adore and love her. We’ve built a family together, and I would never have made it if it wasn’t for her love, support and care.

The final reports state:

“My professional opinion is that Mr Walklate is neither criminal, nor is he mentally ill or insane. He has suffered sustained neurotoxicity due to the psychiatric drugs he was treated with, which resulted in out-of-character behaviour, such as the threats he made to police and to

the psychiatrist. Having been off all psychiatric drugs since October 2024, he has regained psychological stability and is attempting to get on with his life as a university student and prospective neuroscientist, and now as a new father. Research conducted by forensic psychiatrist Dr Yolande Lucire demonstrated the role of genetic mutations in the CYP450 liver enzymes (such as seen in Mr Walkate), leading to drug-induced neurotoxicity, often resulting in symptoms like aggression and suicidal ideation (Lucire & Crotty 2011). They report many cases of “out-of-character” behaviour displayed by people who were experiencing adverse reactions to psychiatric drugs such as antidepressants and antipsychotics, often involving criminality and aggression- these outcomes were often observed in people who, like Mr Walkate, had no history of criminal or antisocial behaviour prior to being on psychiatric drugs. The combined effect of the adverse drug reactions (from July 2018 until October 2024); the threats and harassment he claims he was subjected to; the unwillingness of police and others to attend to the evidence he presented; the narrative that he was suffering from various psychiatric disorders- and ultimately, his inability to make a difference in regards to any of the above mentioned stressors, resulted in a sustained and overwhelming state of agitation, helplessness and distress. The threats that he made to the police (burning a police car), and to the psychiatrist can be made sense of in light of these factors.

In addition to the emotional turmoil which the relationship with Emelia resulted in, including the range of threats of violence that he was subjected to, Mr. Walklate has suffered from a range of adverse effects from the psychiatric drugs he has been placed on.

It is a sad reflection of the mental health system in Australia that people suffering from psycho-social stressors, as was Mr. Walklate, are routinely placed on psychiatric drugs, usually as a first treatment option without any regard for their ability to adequately metabolise and expel the chemicals in the drugs. Adverse effects are commonly experienced, however the symptoms of these negative reactions are routinely viewed as further evidence of mental illness, which then results in more drugs being added to the treatment regime (exactly what the DSM cautions against).

This was Mr. Walklate's experience, and no one in a position of power or authority was able to recognize it, e.g. the treating psychiatrists (who are often unaware of the role of pharmacogenomics, and often tend to deny the adverse effects of the drugs they prescribe), and the police (who have no training in mental health issues in general, and drug effects in particular-and whose role is to respond to socially disruptive behaviour). Even his own solicitor did not attend to the evidence of Emelia's harassment of Mr. Walklate.

It appears that all of the authorities involved accepted the spurious diagnoses of various mental illnesses, and as a result dismissed everything that he had to report on

the matters at hand. The arbitrary nature of the various psychiatric diagnoses he was given throughout these years is an example of lack of scientific rigour, a rigour which one usually expects of any branch of medicine. Mr. Walklate, at various times, was diagnosed as suffering from major depressive disorder, various personality disorders, schizophrenia and psychosis. This is analogous to a person complaining of abdominal pain being diagnosed with stomach cancer, irritable bowel syndrome, intestinal parasites, or a digestive disorder. We would not accept such a lack of diagnostic clarity from any other branch of medicine.”

The hospital replied:

“Following an episode of inpatient care, the diagnosis of psychotic disorder was dropped. [For a period of two years] he has shown no symptoms or signs of a psychotic or any other mental illness.”

They also gave me some personal advice:

“Get over it, and don’t talk about it, or you’ll get treated with suspicion again”

I later developed gynecomastia, a permanent condition associated with certain antipsychotic medications due to hormonal disruption. Whether directly caused or contributory, it became another permanent reminder that my treatment was inappropriate.

Chapter 13 – The emails

I didn't see the email until much later, long after the damage had been done. It was handed to me by the police. I read it, impressed by how confident they are that I was entirely wrong and they are correct.

This is what they wrote:

“I advised Jake that his court ordered treatment is coming up for renewal and I discussed this with the doctor and we feel as a team we are going to renew it. Jake immediately became oppositional, tone of voice changed, he began to shout stating ‘no, why would you do that?’

I reiterated that the teams request is to have him on treatment for at least another six months. He was difficult to reason with, kept interjecting with comments that we don't care about him and are just trying to push our meds onto him and have power over him, when there is nothing wrong with him, it's us that have the problem.

This guy has a delusional disorder, is a ticking time bomb and reasoning with him is extremely difficult along with the fact that I believe he masks a lot of these symptoms.

I am sending you this email because this guy... we know what he is capable of.”

There it was: the entire story they had written about me, laid out in clinical language, a ticking time bomb, delusional, dangerous, masking symptoms, incapable of reasoning.

They couldn't even prove I was psychotic, so they said I was "masking" symptoms.

Masking psychosis.

A disorder you can never disprove. A label that turns even benign behaviours into a symptom of deeper instability.

At this point I was medicated for 6 months, was does "looking good" even appear like? Displaying no symptoms is psychosis, psychosis is what? Worse? They were looking pretty desperate.

And in that was a masterpiece of reasoning:

"We can't prove he's psychotic, but we'll continue to treat him as if he is psychotic. No bad will come from this."

Of course, the best part is that in her own official victim statement, the nurse said my behaviour was "out of character."

So on one hand I'm a ticking time bomb, and on the other I'm someone who... doesn't normally do any of the things they're accusing me of.

Two versions of me, running in parallel.

Whichever one suited the audience on the day.

And the funniest part is that in her statements, she insisted she never threatened to send me to jail, never called me delusional, and that everything she'd ever done was above reproach.

Which would be impressive, if it wasn't printed right here in her own email doing exactly those things.

I don't need to comment on that. The document does the talking.

Post-hospitalisation

Chapter 14 – A critique

Most people assume the system works because they never have to touch it.

They imagine that laws are applied consistently, institutions are rational, and professionals act with calm objectivity.

They think injustice is rare, an exception, a glitch, something that happens to people on the margins.

People fall through cracks because there are cracks in the system.

If you are articulate, stable, supported, and wealthy, the cracks feel invisible.

But if you are vulnerable, grieving, confused, traumatised, harassed, or simply overwhelmed, the cracks become chasms.

A person who is frightened is easy to dismiss.

A person who is emotional is easy to label.

A person who is confused is easy to pathologise.

A person without money is easy to ignore.

And once a file or a diagnosis is created, it becomes your shadow.

Everyone who reads it assumes the last person was correct.

No one wants to be the one who overturns the consensus.

No one wants to be the outlier.

So the first mistake becomes the foundation for every future decision.

Psychiatric misdiagnosis is not rare, it is systemic, and psychiatry has a shaky scientific grounding.

People imagine psychiatrists as neutral scientists, I did too.

But psychiatry is an interpretive art, built on conversation, intuition, and incomplete information.

A doctor sees you for 30 minutes, while you're anxious, distressed, exhausted, scared, and makes a decision that can define years of your life.

And paradoxically the more vulnerable you are, the more "symptoms" you appear to have:

Fear looks like paranoia.

Trauma looks like instability.

Confusion looks like delusion.

Self-defence looks like aggression.

Crying looks like emotional dysregulation.

And asking for help looks like obsession.

When you are harmed, you look "unwell".

When you advocate for yourself, you look "fixated".

When you are angry at injustice, you look "psychotic".

And once the label is written, every future behaviour is reinterpreted through it. A single sentence in a report can outweigh a thousand sentences spoken in your defence.

Authority magnifies everything, especially when you're vulnerable.

When a stranger gaslights you, you can walk away.

When a doctor gaslights you, it becomes a *diagnosis*.

When a police officer misunderstands you, it becomes a criminal charge.

When a judge misinterprets you, it becomes the truth.

The machinery of authority turns subjective impressions into permanent facts.

And the most tragic part is this:

The people most harmed by misdiagnosis are the least able to fight it.

Those who break under pressure are seen as proof the diagnosis was right. Those who stay calm can be seen as manipulative. Those who question the system are seen as paranoid. Those who ask for help are seen as unstable.

Those who protest their innocence are seen as dangerous and unwilling to accept accountability.

You cannot defend yourself without confirming their suspicions.

There is no right move.

The 'system' – I've learnt – isn't designed to get to the truth of things, it's not designed to investigate problems to find the root cause. It's designed to crush, it's designed to humiliate, it's designed to suppress dissent. The truth belongs to the people, and the people only.

For me, psychiatric diagnosis became a tool of control rather than care.

This isn't just a personal grievance, studies have repeatedly raised concerns about diagnostic subjectivity, confirmation bias, and coercive treatment in involuntary settings.

My experience didn't contradict the literature.

It embodied it.

Overall, I spent 20% of the year locked in a hospital ward, just over a week in prison cells, and over 12 months on psychiatric drugs for a diagnosis I never had.

Chapter 15 – Recovery

Recovery is messy, an uneven process, filled with contradictory thoughts.

You can feel healed in the morning and crushed by memory at night.

You can be highly functional and emotionally frayed.

You can understand the truth logically but still feel the wound spiritually.

Recovery is about becoming someone who can carry the truth without collapsing under it. Recovery is about being the force which takes on the vulnerabilities and dangers of the world, faces a problem and brings a people closer to safety. It's about being a guide to help others through their turmoil, and in the struggle of weakness finding your strength in your ability to help others.

To all the men out there, always try to use your voice before you chose violence. Set boundaries, and enforce them, if no one is listening, don't give up, find someone

who will listen and ask for their help, and if you feel alone, you'll find a sense of pride in being the person who never makes other people like you feel alone.

I went through eight years of hell, but the future is filled with meaning.

I never thought this would happen to me.

Chapter 16 – Making sense of myself

It's hard to express how much stress the situation I was in put me through.

Despite my lack of psychological training, I'll try to express it in terms which are credible.

I think everyone has experienced fear, and most people are probably familiar with the term Fight or Flight.

When you're confronted with a situation which is threatening, the amygdala is the quickest region of the brain to respond. The amygdala activates the fight or flight response. It's a primitive response, but it's vital and functional for survival.

What I felt wasn't just an episode of fear, followed by stability. I had a constant, imminent and looming danger, not just in the present but also affecting my future.

The threat of a criminal conviction, loss of career opportunities, travel restrictions, prison time. All of it came for me.

The way I interpreted this, wasn't just an individual who was making a mess, it wasn't just an area, it wasn't a state, it wasn't a country. I felt like I had the boot of one of the largest empires to ever sprawl the world stamping down on me, crushing me, with a knife to my eye making sure I didn't make the wrong move.

I had no guidance, no lawyer would help me. No counsellor had legal training, no GP knew what to do. The police only wanted more evidence to pile against me.

I was stuck, I couldn't run, I couldn't leave the country, I couldn't enter my own future

My attempts to alleviate my stress were interpreted as "obsession" by the hospital. I needed answers, I needed a defence, I needed safety.

There have been studies using rodents as subjects undertaken by neurologists in laboratories. They study the effects of long-term stress by placing a predator (or the illusion of a predator) in the presence of mice and force the mice to live in that environment. What the mice display are long term behavioural changes, increased levels of hormonal stress, changes in brain circuitry, and increased anxiety and trauma-like symptoms. This effect isn't alleviated when the threat is removed from the environment. They develop long term changes to their memory, and behaviour.

When the amygdala is activating a defence response, the higher regions of the brain responsible for rational and calculated thoughts often get suppressed, and many times functionally overruled. So, fear can often hijack rational thinking and in doing so the flow of blood is actually restricted to the region of the brain responsible for intelligent thought.

This is significant, the chronic stress I felt, coupled with the belief I had been purposefully interpreted as someone I wasn't put me in a position where I felt that it's better to try to burn the system down one vehicle at a time than live my life as someone whose existence had been overwritten by the stroke of the pen of authority, with the ink on the page of history permanently fixated on me.

The pen of authority wielded by people who had no interest in knowing me or understanding me and only wanted to crush what they assumed I was.

Chapter 17 – Disclaimer and suggestions

This book is one person's perspective on events as they experienced them.

Names and details have been altered where necessary.

It is not intended as a medical or legal argument, but as a personal record of surviving systems that often don't record their own errors.

This work is not an argument that psychiatry is inherently corrupt.

Like any human system, it has helped many people and can play a critical role in care and recovery.

However, when it becomes defensive instead of reflective, or prioritises control over understanding, it risks causing profound harm.

Involuntary treatment, in particular, carries the potential to cross from care into inhumanity.

Institutions do not need to be evil to be destructive.

Humans, by their nature, are not perfect, thus the systems which are aggregates of humans will embody the same flaws humans express on an individual level.

The responsibility, then, is not to pretend to be flawless, but to listen with intent, question with humility, and remain open to correction and conversation, especially when holding power over others.

What happens when clarity is mistaken for delusion?

The Pharmacology of Silence is a psychological and moral memoir about a man caught between a volatile relationship and an inflexible system — a place where explanations become diagnoses and self-defence becomes pathology.

After setting boundaries with an unstable ex-partner, Jake is pulled into a nightmare of legal accusations, psychiatric confinement, forced medication, bureaucratic indifference and a maximum security prison. He is told he is delusional — not because he cannot see reality, but because his version of it is inconvenient.

This book explores:

- The blurred line between distress and “psychosis”
- How institutions simplify complex trauma
- The cost of being misunderstood by those in power
- And the quiet violence of never being believed

The Pharmacology of Silence asks an uncomfortable question:

What if the real disorder isn't in the patient... but in the system?

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