

*Chris Donovan Trust*  
Changing lives, making a difference

# FIVE MINUTES OF MADNESS

*... a lifetime of regret*



£1.50

## About the Chris Donovan Trust

The Chris Donovan Trust was set up after the murder of Christopher Donovan.

We hope that as you read this booklet, you will see how just five minutes of madness could not only change *your* live forever, but also the people you hurt and the community too.

In this booklet there are real life stories about how lives have been changed forever.



You'll often hear people say "if only I didn't take a knife/gun out with me that night" or "I wish I'd stayed home". The whys and wherefores could go on and on.

We feel that as you read these stories, maybe you will take time to think before you act and ask questions like, "do I need to carry a knife or gun?" and "if I do, how long will it be before I use it and kill someone?"

Another question is "how can your friend tell you it is okay to get drunk and take drugs?" Again, take five minutes to think this over and ask yourself, "is this a real friend?" Stop and think of the many lives that have been ruined because of drink and drugs.

**Remember:**

**FIVE MINUTES OF MADNESS WILL LEAD TO A LIFETIME OF REGRET.**

*Just five minutes...*

*that's all it takes to change your future.*

“ There was a gang walking down the road, looking for trouble, when they came across three young men coming towards them. The young men were in high spirits enjoying themselves and as they came nearer the gang, some of them stood aside to let them pass, but as the first young man went through, one of the gang thought it would be funny to punch him in the face. He hit the young man in the nose, breaking it. The young man fell to the floor and then some of the boys in the gang started to kick him in the head.

When the young man's brother went to save him, other members of the gang started to hit him as well. They got him to the floor and kicked him in the face and head, then left him unconscious on a busy A-road and ran off.

Two cars missed the young man, then another one came over the hill and before the driver knew it, she ran over him and dragged him forty yards down the road.

The young man later died in hospital. This young man's life was taken because of **five minutes of madness**.

Because of their actions, the family of the young man had to wait sixteen weeks before they could bury their son because forensics had to prove whether it was the kicking or the car that killed him. It was later proven that the kicking killed him and three members of the gang aged fifteen, sixteen and nineteen, were sent to prison for murder. ”



# *Consequences of your actions...*

Now how would things have been if some of the gang took time to think?

**Action one...**

**Why were they out so late?**

**Action two...**

**Why, when they were underage,  
did they drink alcohol and take  
drugs?**

**Action three...**

**Why did they join their mates and  
kick this young man while he was  
lying in the road?**

Five minutes of madness, does not just ruin *your* life, but also your family, the family of your victim and the community too.



## *To all the youths and teens...*

“ I am writing this letter, not to preach or claim I am now holier than thou, but I just want to make an effort to stop anyone else from doing what I did and going through what I went through.

At seventeen years old, I was always the centre of attention amongst my friends and community, luckily for all the right reasons. I was doing well in my A-levels and I had a promising future in boxing. Sadly I was just three weeks away from becoming a semi-professional before I was arrested. Anyway as I was saying, I enjoyed the limelight and always wanted to be better than others. You could say my reputation was becoming more important than my own family.

On a hot summer's day my best friend was involved in an argument which escalated. Without thinking, I punched one of the youths and knocked him down. The buzz and thrill that I felt from those around me made me forget that every action has a reaction.

The next day, the guy I punched came back with friends and we had an altercation, during which I stabbed him, not meaning to kill him, just to hurt him. I thought that my reputation was going to be sky high if I put this guy in hospital. Only later did I find out he had died and this dream life I had was now a nightmare, not just for me but for everyone around me. I was charged and sentenced to twelve years mandatory life. Although prison was the hardest thing I had encountered, it didn't compare to the pain and anguish I had caused my family and the victim's family. At twenty-two now, I have probably seen and been through more than someone who has lived a lifetime.



All the softness and innocence I once had has now all gone. I had to grow up fast, all because I wanted more, when I had all I needed in the first place.

So my main message from this letter is **cherish your family, freedom and simplicity of life. Don't complicate something for your own greed.** I've missed out on the best part of my youth. I wouldn't wish that on anyone.

If you have a caring family who love you, or if you have something to live for, just remember my story and don't throw away the world for something that in the long run is going to leave you with nothing but pain and heartache.

Thanks for reading what I have to say and if I have from preventing you from even thinking of doing something dumb, then my mission is completed. ”

**Here are some questions the young man must be asking himself:**

**Why was I carrying a knife  
in the first place?**

**Why was the reputation of my  
friends more important than that  
of my family?**

**Where are my friends now?**

**Why did I let five minutes of  
madness ruin my life?**

It seems most of our young people want to be part of something, like the young man, he wanted his mates to see that he was ready to do 'anything' to earn their respect, even if that meant knifing someone.

But let's read the end of his letter again where he says:

**“All the softness and innocence I once had has now all gone. I had to grow up fast, all because I wanted more, when I had all I needed in the first place.”**

Sit back for five minutes and ask yourself: **“is my freedom worth what others might think of me?”** Maybe you think you don't have a loving family? Well most youths think that. Even the well-off youths think the world is against them.

Most youths come home and go straight up to their bedroom to play computer games or surf the net without their family knowing it.

When was the last time you took five minutes to sit down with a family member and talk? I know what you're going to say: "The oldies always say they don't have time, or they are watching the TV". Okay, but this doesn't mean they don't love and care for you. It just means they live in their own world and have forgotten what it is like to be young with all the problems you have today.

**“Don't throw away the world for something that in the long run is going to leave you with nothing but pain and heartache.”**



# *HM Prison Service*

When we visit young offender institutions we often ask this question:

“How many of your friends or gang members come to visit you?”

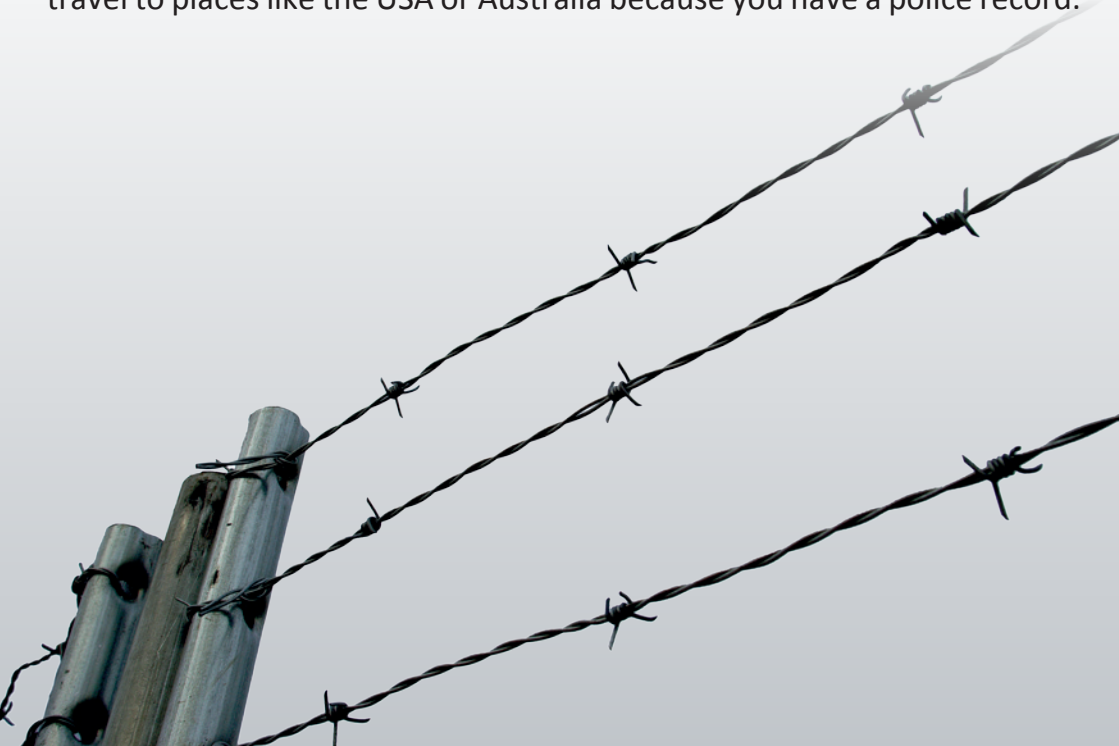


The answer is always the same, **"none"**!

Then we ask **"what about your family?"** They sit up and say **"a member of my family always comes to visit me without fail"**.

Then we always say **"so where has all that respect gone if your friends think so much of you? How come they have forgotten you and left you out to dry?"**

So sit back and think, is five minutes of respect more important than a life time in prison? Even if you only do a few months inside it is still a lifetime of regret when you come home because it is always hard to find work or travel to places like the USA or Australia because you have a police record.





## *A night of madness*

During the riots of August 2011, we saw so many people who thought it would be okay to loot shops and businesses; and then there were the bystanders who got caught up in the excitement of it all. As they were walking past shops they saw broken windows and helped themselves to the most silly of things like packets of chewing gum, bottles of water and even two scoops of ice cream!

**Now these people each have a criminal record and may also lose their jobs because of five minutes of madness.**



# *A lifetime of regret*

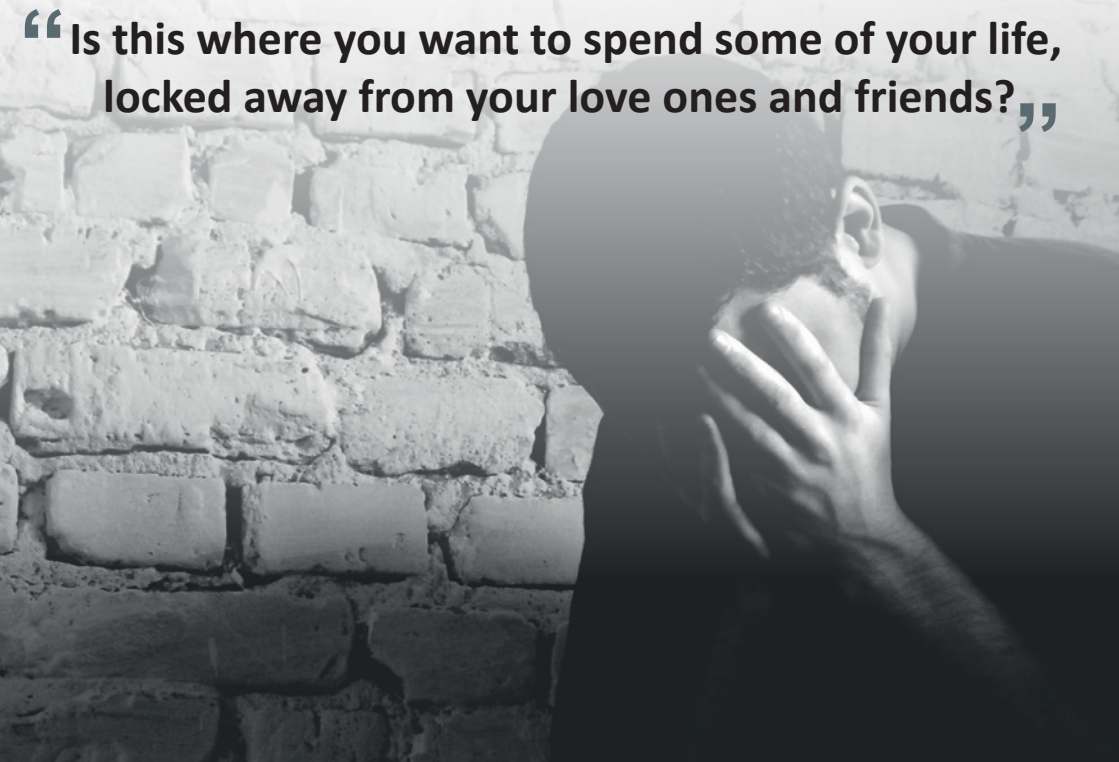
Just take a moment and think what it would be like to...

- Be locked in the same building day in and day out
- Not be able to go to the town centre to shop, or eat in a restaurant
- Not being able to watch a film
- Be told when to go to bed, when to get up, when to eat, when to wash
- Never have your friends come around for a chat or to just watch TV
- Not be with your family at birthdays and Christmas
- Have no mobile phone to call your friends
- Not be able to go to the seaside or park on a lovely summer's day

**This is what prison life is like.** It is not a fun place to be and at times it can be very scary and dangerous not knowing who is going to be your cell mate, having to be careful of everything you say in case you say the wrong thing and maybe get into a fight. **Prison life is not a holiday camp.**

So think before you act, ask yourself this question:

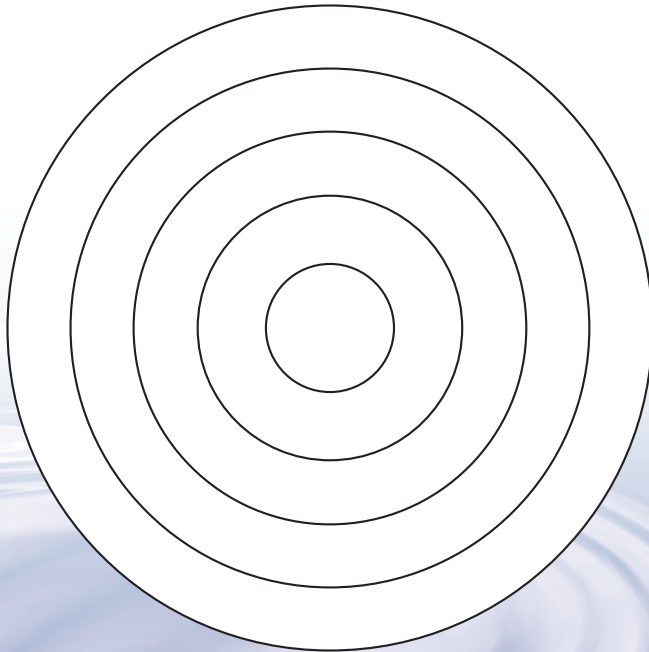
**“Is this where you want to spend some of your life, locked away from your love ones and friends?”**



# *The Ripple Effect*

The ripple effect is what happens not only to a victim but the other people who are involved in a crime, i.e. offenders, families, the community and the police to name but a few.

Think of one of the crimes you have read about in this booklet, or maybe think of a crime you know about and add the names in the circles on this page, starting with the victim's name in the middle, then working outward.



It is called the ripple effect because when you drop something in water the ripples flow away from the centre.

This is the same for a crime. You will be surprised by how many people are affected by **five minutes of madness**.

# *Chris Donovan Trust*

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**The Chris Donovan Trust is a charitable organization.**

Working name of Forgiveness Ministries, registered charity 1112759.

For more information please log onto our website:

**[www.chrisdonovantrust.org](http://www.chrisdonovantrust.org)**

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