

# What Goes Around, Comes Around

It is not a pleasant topic to speak of, but there are adults out there in society that intentionally harm children. I encountered at least two of them. The first was when I was doing rotations in the emergency room as the final chapter of EMT school. Late one night, there weren't many customers in the ER, but there was one toddler, however, who had taken a nasty spill. He was in Trauma Room 3 and his dad was in the waiting area. Dad looked like he could use some company, plus he was wearing a local police department tee-shirt, so I went over and sat across from him. I asked him what had happened to his kid. Dad teared up and said, I quote, "*He fell off his little horsie.*"

Now, that sounded pretty innocuous to me and Dad was teary-eyed, so I volunteered to go check and see how the boy was doing. I promised Dad I would be back with some info.

I made my way into T-3 and told one of the attending nurses I was inquiring for Dad.

She shocked me by spitting out, "Fuck him. He's the one that put this child in the ER. He's on our suspicious list and this is the third time he's been in here. He's been in the Richardson ER two times since April. The no-good bastard's a cop, too."

That put things in a new perspective for me. I didn't bother to go back and sit with "Dad." I heard a few weeks later that this event had gotten him cashiered from his job at the RPD.

I withheld the name of the police agency as a courtesy to them.

The next evil parent, or stepparent, that I encountered was at an old, dilapidated farmhouse a few miles north of Plano out in the boonies. Like the *hospital horsie case*, this would have been in the summer or fall of '77. My pal, Doyle, and I were crewing Ambulance 1 out of Central. We got a call of a domestic disturbance out in the County. In those cases, Plano usually only sent an ambulance to medical events outside our normal jurisdiction. Dispatch advised us Collin County had an officer on-scene. We headed up there, red lights only, no siren and at a moderate speed. That was known as a Code 2 response.

Dispatch informed us that the address was "red-flagged" for child abuse. That was a procedure we used in fire and police to keep up with persistent troublemakers. In this case, we went in armed with the knowledge that in the past a child had been harmed at that location.

We found the place with no trouble. It was off the county hardtop about a hundred yards and there was a sheriff's car out front. As we pulled up in the yard, a uniformed officer came out. Doyle knew him very well. I had met him myself, a couple of times. It was Little Bill. Now, there was nothing little about "Little Bill." He was a giant of a man, tall, broad-shouldered, and tough as nails. He and Doyle had been buddies in the Marine Corps. In '68 and '69, they did

some time in the woods of Southeast Asia together. I said earlier in this book that Doyle didn't take no crap off nobody. Well, Doyle was a Sunday School teacher compared to Little Bill.

It was widely known that Little Bill was a damned good man to have on your side when things went bad.

So... Bill met us outside and Doyle got out and went over to parlay. Doyle came back to the ambo and told me to stay outside and get the cot ready and he would come back and get me if we were going to be needed. Doyle and Bill went into the house.

In just two or three minutes, a lady carrying a toddler came bustin' out through the screen door and took off at a dead run in the direction of a neighboring house about two hundred yards down the black top. I noticed that the kid had a cast on his arm.

About five minutes later, Doyle came out and said we definitely had us a patient. Trying to evade arrest, the patient had fallen down the stairs. We saddled up and took the cot and the med kit inside.

Upon entering, I got my first gander at the patient. He was a rough, scruffy-lookin' dude about thirty-five or so. He had indeed, taken himself a tough tumble down the stairs. His right arm was very obviously broken and he had a number of contusions about his head and shoulders. Both his eyes were bruised and beginnin' to swell up. At best, he was what I deemed to be, semi-conscious. Doyle told me that our patient was a known child abuser with a long history and had been arrested just a month ago for breaking that little toddler's arm. At present, he was out on bail. Doyle told me all that right there in front of the guy. When he got to the point in the conversation about the kid's broken arm, I was actually diggin' in the med kit for a splint to put on our patient's fractured arm. An odd thought hit me, and I looked up at Bill. He just stared back at me and kind of nodded.

I got back to work.

As I patched that no-good bastard up, I got a chance to see the full extent of his injuries. I saw first-hand just how bad an accidental tumble down a flight of stairs could be. He was sure lucky that two United States Marine Corps combat veterans were there to help him get back up.

Me and Doyle ran into Little Bill ever now and then at MVA's and such out there in the county. I don't guess we ever talked about that poor fellow that we helped that night. My mom always told me that some things were better left unsaid. I figured that fall down the stairs was probably one of 'em.