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*"He was never considered vulnerable or statistically significant. Denied an emotional lexicon, he never complained."*

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### From the cradle to the grave

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Born on 4 June 1985. Two parents, a big house, and lots of expectations. Brought up the proper way: sent off to boarding school, rugby, cars, golf, Ralph Lauren polo shirts, pinkie rings, pink trousers, and wine. A man's man. Rugby made him feel he belonged and was his only acceptable emotional outlet. Married in his twenties to a woman he thought he should marry. Working in a career that made money but had no value. Up to his neck in debt, school fees to pay, and cars to maintain. Work and more work and not too much to say. Friends lived far away. Keep it all inside. Even the sexual abuse he experienced at school, which no one expected or suspected. He tried his best. He didn't choose his stolen childhood.

Born on 4 June 1985. Only one parent, a council flat, and no expectations. Brought up the improper way. Drink and drugs never too far away. Got himself to school, got himself fed. Football made him feel he belonged and was his only acceptable emotional outlet. Learnt to be handy and willing to fight; being in a gang made him feel tight. A man in a man's world.

Out on the street, his only education was at the university of life. Sometimes in the young offenders unit there was tokenistic care from educated people who pretended to care. Then, not a wife, but a girlfriend and then a baby that caused them trouble and strife. Constant fights, then when the police were called you got a restraining order. He tried his best but he didn't know what his best could be. He didn't choose his stolen childhood.

One day his wife asked him to leave, for she was in love with someone else. He had no choice and moved to a small flat. He had to keep working and paying for his children who he loved, but they grew distant as he saw them only every other weekend. His sister did what she could but she had her own life. He smiled and put up with it. He drank more for it freed him. He smiled and drank more and more. His work sent him for counselling but it was just tokenistic care from educated people who pretended to care. He got sober with AA for a time. He

rarely got to see his children. His Labrador and his loneliness were his constant companions. He just smiled and put up with it. Time never took away the hurting. He was never considered vulnerable or statistically significant. Denied an emotional lexicon, he never complained.

He got his own small flat in a tower block but finding work with his past was difficult; any minimum wage job and any hours. The more he worked the less he got in benefits. He drank for the fake freedom it gave him. He got clean and sober with AA after his mother died. His mongrel dog and his loneliness were his constant companions. His sister helped the best she could but she had her own problems. He never saw his son and all the cards and presents were just returned. Time never took away the hurting. He was never considered vulnerable, just statistically insignificant. Denied an emotional lexicon, he never complained.

On his birthday he showered and dressed. No cards or presents. He had clarity and took what he considered to be a logical decision. Wrote a few words of apology. Took his belt off and climbed onto a chair. His dog started to howl as he took his own life. Just two men cast in a careless concrete social stereotype of privilege.

Suicide is the merest tip of the male mental illness iceberg.

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