

“I CAN DREAM AGAIN” CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS

CHAPTER 1 – THE BROKEN DREAM

Tragedy in Manhattan

Most of Billy’s veins were already destroyed and had collapsed from constantly sticking needles in his hands, feet, and arms, so it was hard to find a good vein. I helped Billy tie off his upper arm with a belt, and he frantically searched for a good vein. I held his bicep to get a vein. He finally penetrated a usable vein and then shot three bags of heroin into his arm.

Within seconds, the very thing I always feared came upon us. Billy looked at me in panic and utter shock as he said, “Jimm—...!” He fell out of the van before he finished getting my name out. I realized he had overdosed. The bags we bought must have been uncut, pure heroin. That’s how people die.

Billy was on the street turning blue in front of my eyes. He wasn’t breathing. I jumped out of the van in panic and began mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. With my hands on his chest over his heart, I was pumping his heart up and down, crying and screaming, “Come on, Billy!” His heart stopped beating and he stopped breathing. I lifted up his limp, lifeless body. I smacked him, hugged him, and tried to make him walk. We both fell to the ground.

Billy was closer to me than a brother. Now it looked like I had killed him. “Billy, wake up! You can’t die! You can’t die!” I screamed. “Don’t do this to me, Billy! Wake up!”

We knew addiction was a monster but never thought we would feel the sting of its poison. Now facing the reality that I had held the arm of my best friend to inject the deadly poison into his vein while he overdosed, I had to ask, “Who is the monster now?” Here we were, lying in the gutter of New York City—two young men in our twenties living life on the threshold of death. Now it had finally arrived. Our potential was destroyed, our dreams broken, and seemingly all hope gone.

Some have said that when you die your life passes before your eyes. Focused as I was on reviving Billy, my own mind flashed back to the memories of the crazy things we did together growing up a usable vein and then shot the three bags of heroin into his arm.