

# A MOMENT IN TIME

CHARLES TIMMINS



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## CHAPTER ONE

As the sunshine coats the hills and valleys of the countryside, with the red-hot net of heat draping itself over the centuries old land, the many local adolescents come together to enjoy what they realise soon enough as the best days of their lives. This day sees the local bike trail busy with many excited families and friends basking in the sun's extraordinary heat for the time of year. Among those racing along the trail is a group of four thirteen-year-olds. Three boys and one girl race past the mountainous trail views and among the bumpy track itself to the small seaside destination and finishing point of the trail where delicious local treats and a picturesque sunset is promised.

The four teenagers race their bikes evenly along the trail with the group racing in formation with the rewards of the destination firmly keeping the four as eager to finish first as they progress into the final quarter of the trail. As they begin the slow downhill descent into the seaside town to finish their race, a sudden rush of yelling from one of the boys brings things to a sudden halt. James starts to yell and scream as he hits a rock with his front tyre sending him into a state of panic

as he loses control of his bicycle with his concentration on the trail ahead sending the boy very suddenly tumbling to the ground on top of the centuries old rock. Lacy stops at the sound of this dramatic accident and walks back a hundred yards or so with her bike to where James is sat writhing in the pain from the hard impact of the fall and slide across the harsh abrasive surface.

The two other boys yell that they will see them at the end of the trail and ride off down towards the destination. “Are you ok?” asks Lacy but James notices the freshly formed gash on his arm from the fall before he can mutter a response alarming James as he doesn’t know how he is going to treat this gash to his arm but Lacy reassures and calms James from his worry as she reminds him, they are not far from the end of the trail where there is a shop where they could buy something to treat the cut. Lacy helps James to his feet with the boy impressed with the kindness and thoughtfulness that most of his peers did not possess.

The two teens eventually get to the destination of the trail and not too far along the closest path to the sun kissed beach, they find the local shop in town which conveniently has two dusty bikes leaning up against the wall of the shop from just outside the door as Lacy heads inside to find a soothing item for James’ cut. When she returns, James is laid up against a dark blue van parked just outside of the shop as he stretches out his shaky left hand, still shocked from the crash to accept the towel Lacy had purchased. James tends to his wound and

cleans it as much as he can as the two other boys also join the other two outside the shop and remark on how bad the gash looks on his arm. James angrily retorts by asking “why did you two not stop when I crashed?” which is met with scoffed laughter as Tom responds by mocking him for losing the race because of his inability to keep on his bike. The two boys who abandoned James stroll off towards the beach area on their bikes, leaving Lacy and James who continues to tend to his wound to keep him company before the owner of the dark blue van James is leaning against shouts “Hey!”. James quickly turns around and on the other side of the van he sees a slightly overweight, sweaty, physically imposing man in his thirties with hair that continues to wilt telling him to stop leaning against his van.

The man though is a somewhat familiar face to James as he recognises him as the man who works as the cleaner at the local school that the local kids attend pushing James to tell the man he knows him from school and ask whether he can give him and Lacy a quick lift back to the village just a few miles away where they live. The greasy man ponders before agreeing to if they both clean their bike tyres with the towel James just used for his wound. James and Lacy agree and quickly rub the dust and slight bit of mud off their tyres before placing themselves with the bikes in the back of the van. As the van driver pulls away, James slightly leans over to Lacy and thanks her for the help with his cut from the fall to which Lacy responds “That’s ok” before giving James a kiss on the cheek.



As the summer heat rises with the bright ball of fire in the sky burning its way through the clouds that hang on, Lacy and James' relationship blossoms with the seeds of love sowing themselves each day with the next week or so involving further riding amongst other challenging trails but this time only they share the joy of the experience rather than the acquaintances that hang on to ride the best moments of their lives. One late evening, as the sun begins its descent and stomachs rumble for their daily feast, the two teenagers return from their day of bike riding to come back to their respective homes for the evening with dusk rushing in, the two stroll along the pavement first towards James' humble abode. Lacy thanks James for the day spent together and goes in for a hug which is met warmly by James who gives her a strong gripping hug in return with Lacy then giving James a kiss on the lips, startling James with surprise with Lacy reminding him as she walks down towards her home, with a large vehicle passing with its wall of noise, what time to see each other again tomorrow to which James struggling to hear her over the racket of traffic agrees and gives his goodbye before heading inside his home.

As he strolls inside, his mother stands before the oven waiting for their dinner to finish cooking and locks eyes with her son. James informs her quickly that he is heading up to his room to play on his PSP before dinner. Thirty minutes or so go by with James focused on his game before some distant shouting catches his attention. He tries his ignore the noise thinking it is just some kids from down the street playing together but the shouting becomes louder and closer to James' home and turns

more into a distressed call for help, but this voice sounds familiar to James. The voice's call for help is now recognised by James as Lacy's mother who is calling "LACY! LACY WHERE ARE YOU!" which alarms not only James enough to run downstairs and outside to see what's wrong, but James' mother joins them too. Lacy's mother frantically confronts James asking where she was as she was last with James, but James tells her that he last saw her walking down the street to her home, but James is met with a brutal and chilling realisation once Lacy's mother emotionally responds "But she hasn't come home". In just that brief time from last seeing her walk off towards home and stepping through his own front door, Lacy vanished from sight. Lacy's mother continues to scream and cry for help as James' mother tries to comfort her as best she can whilst James realising what has happened starts to fall apart emotionally with a large tear drop dripping down his cheek, fearing the worst as to where Lacy is or what could have happened.



## CHAPTER TWO

### FIFTEEN YEARS LATER

Tears still fall down the cheek of James especially when stood at the memorial site of his long-lost love, lost in imagination as to wherever she went. As tears stream and the pouring rain rushes down his face, James, now an adult, lays down some flowers before quickly getting back into his car to drive into the city just a few miles away for work. As he enters the city and drives deep into the heart of the brutalist architecture, he stares blankly ahead whilst his mind is occupied with the thoughts of ‘that’ day. The day everything upside down with all the emotions and feelings still haunting his mind. His hair is long and is rarely groomed, his facial hair is long, shaggy and without structure and despite only being in his late twenties is aging quicker and quicker due to James’ substance abuse. His abuse of alcohol drives his usual mood to one of apathy for not only his job but everything life has to offer, his

life is lacking purpose, meaning and the only structure comes from his office job that he loathes intensely. He eventually arrives to the underground parking lot and parks; he heads many floors up to his job at an accounting firm. A lifeless and soulless job that he completes weekly with no end in sight. Devoid of everything he dreamed life would be as an adult fifteen to twenty years ago. The drive back home is equally as depressing as the drive to the city with the rain showing no signs of waning in its assault as James finally arrives back to his rented apartment, hood up and keen to retire to his bed for the evening. Luckily for James, this workday would be his last for a couple days as the weekend was kicking in but for James it would only result in a usual outcome.

A day later, on a brisk Saturday night, James heads to his usual haunt of the local pub just a half a mile walk from his apartment where he keenly drowns his sorrows for the weekend. On this night he walks into the bar and orders his usual Budweiser and sits at the table in the corner and out of the way of the main heart of the pub, so to avoid any interactions with the others who in contrast are enjoying their Saturday nights. James sits alone and continues to knock back the drinks he orders repeatedly to numb his mental anguish when a group of lads, brimmed with testosterone barge their way into the bar with most of the group immediately heading for the only pool table whilst a couple of them order their drinks from the bar but already, trouble is brewing. James is immediately angered by the brashness and level the group make over their game of pool and tries his best to put up with the barrage of noise just a few yards away from him but with

the influence of alcohol having taken hold, his limit has been reached. "HEY!" James shouts to grab the group's attention before demanding to keep the noise down a bit. But this blunt request is met with confrontation. One of the leaders of the group, Dean, starts to antagonise James by asking why he is so miserable and angry and progressively winds James' levers and pushes his buttons by asking whether his mood has anything to do with being dumped by a girl or having relationship problems. The comments unsettle James, his head now dropped towards the floor as he stimulates his eagerness for throwing fists by gently rubbing his increasingly hot head, but he hears a calm and concerned voice from just across the table "Don't do it. Please." And across from him he glances to see, his true love, Lacy.

His mind repeats visions of his soulmate, punishing him to torture over what could have been with his weekly intoxication pushing him deeper into his guilt with her visions as constant reminders. Lacy pleads for him to just leave but it is too late for reason, James has lost it. He jumps from his table in a murderous rage and sprints towards Dean with his fist clenched and smashes Dean in the face with his fist before Dean's friends all jump in, James who with this rage fights on regardless of being heavily outnumbered. Before James gets battered, thankfully the bar staff step in to stop the fight and order James to leave the pub for fighting yet again with this being his third scrap in just a few months. James grabs his coat and marches out of the door screaming into the open air. Slowly this rage dissipates and all he is left with is his own misery. James mopes his way back to his apartment and heads

straight for bed feeling absolutely fed up with life at this point. He slams his back down on his bed, stares towards the blank ceiling and exclaims gently “‘Why can’t I just die””. James, know he has hit his rock bottom and from this point forward he knows that his choice is either to find purpose and meaning in his life or die.

James passes out on his bed and begins to drift off to the memories of yesteryear, days of his childhood spent with his love, riding in innocence along the country trails, living like lovers in the sizzling heat. But it soon turns to the recurring nightmare of her disappearance and the events of that day. On this occasion though, his dream took an unfamiliar direction compared to his usual one he has had for the last fifteen years in that this time a key detail he had never recognised opened his mind and made a connection that he had not thought of before. Just like his usual dream, James remembered the holding of hands, the kissing of lips and the warmest of hugs with his senses still holding onto every second of the experience but spots a dark brown van creeping around the corner of the street she lived on and slowly approaching where she was.

James has seen this exact same type of van, a Ford Transit, but in a different colour. He remembers the day Lacy helped clean a gash on his arm before asking the van owner if he could give them a lift home, but the van on that occasion was dark blue. This familiar van awakes him from a dead sleep as he realised, he may have mentally connected the dots as to why

Lacy's disappearance was never resolved. The next day, James gets out his laptop and searches for stories regarding the investigation into the disappearance and discovered that the police detective who interviewed James at the time, Detective Herd, informed the press during the investigation that the only lead they had was a neighbour of Lacy's who saw a dark brown van around the same time she was reported to have gone missing but James discovers something from his research even more concerning. Since Lacy's disappearance, there has been multiple disappearances of females in their teens with some of the investigations into these disappearances having the same lead evidence of seeing a Ford Transit van of particular colour close by to where the person was last seen, but just like the investigation into Lacy's disappearance, they could never track down this exact vehicle and colour seen at the time. James desperate to tell the world this new potentially break through story about the disappearance knows that he must find Detective Herd to solve this case.

Nearly a week later, with dusk fast closing on a comfortable summers' day, James was able to locate where Detective Herd is by calling the local police station to ask for him but discovered he is now retired. James is given an address near to his apartment which he heads to in desperate hope of help. James ventures up to the door and knocks a couple times before Mr. Herd's wife Susan answers the door asking whether James is there to see her husband to which he replies that he is whilst reminding her that he is the boyfriend of the girl who went missing fifteen years ago so that her husband

knows who it is. Susan invites him in and gives her condolences for what happened back then before James thanks her and walks through to the living room to see Mr. Herd. He enters the peaceful living room and glances at the television before then looking over to the other corner of the room to see Mr. Herd slouched in his chair watching the football. James introduces himself which reminds Mr. Herd of who he is, and he remarks on how much hairier James looks since he last saw him which at least breaks the ice between the two. James then sits across from Mr. Herd and starts to relay why he is there by retelling his story with what he now remembers of the incident. This fully pulls in Mr. Herd's attention who first asks "Have you contacted the local police about this?" James had contacted the local police about the whereabouts of Mr. Herd but never informed them of the story he just told the retired police officer. "The new detectives there do not know the case like you do."

This was your case, so I am coming to the person I know remembers a lot about this case after all these years" James explains prompting Mr. Herd to inform James "Look. You know I am sure that I retired from the force about five years ago." James nods knowing this but is soon met with crushing disappointment as Mr. Herd continues "This case was very important once during my time as lead detective but all I came across was dead ends and zero leads so if you want to do something about this then contact the new lead detective, tell them what you just told me and let them handle it ok." James pleads with the retired detective by asking "Please Mr. Herd" to which a blunt response flies back "Call me Mike please."

James does yet again put his case forward “ Mike. Please help me with this case. I need closure. Lacy’s mother needs closure, the community needs closure. You know since she disappeared, Lacy is not the only teenage girl that has gone missing in these parts since then and somebody must stop this. Whoever took Lacy, took these other girls. You MUST help me, Mike.” This conversation stirs up old regrets for Mike to which he cannot hang on to inside him any longer “ You know one of those teenage girls that has gone missing was good friends with my daughter?” Mike reveals to James’ shock. Mike then spills his pent-up agony “ Yeah. This was three or four years after Lacy went missing and it was a similar type of case. Young girl walking along the street and then [clicks finger] gone just like that. A couple witnesses who saw a dark green van which we never could track down but despite that, we had absolutely no chance of finding her. The worst part about it though was having to look my daughter in the eye and tell her despite being a police officer and supposed protector of the community that one of her best friends was gone. Never coming back.

And that there was absolutely nothing that I could do about it. She is at university now my daughter and she’s doing ok but I know it still hurts her. And knowing that absolutely kills me in here. And seeing the pain in your face just brings it all back up again.” Mike takes a sip of his drink before informing James that for his own conscience he will help him track down this van and perpetrator but only under the condition “If we hit the same roadblocks I hit as before then you must give it up and try your best to move on, ok? And the local police will not



help you either, you know why? Because they will not touch this or those other cold cases because there is no smoking gun of evidence to dedicate taxpayer money towards these cases so don't get your hopes up with this. Because chances are, we will find only dead ends." As this is James' last hope, he agrees to Mike's condition as they both get up and shake hands before Mike invites James into his office just next to the living room. Mike opens the door and flicks the lights on to reveal an investigation board of pins and pictures which map out the known details of each disappearance thus revealing to James that Mike was still working the cases even when retired in the hopes of connecting the dots and solving the cases himself.

## CHAPTER THREE

The first step on this new investigative trail is to find where the cleaner for the local secondary school James and Lacy both attended. When the working week returns, Mike calls the school and asks whether they know where this man is but is informed that the man left the school a few years ago. Mike tries to push the school receptionist into revealing where he went after his job cleaning and asks why he lost his job as a cleaner. The receptionist finds out for him that he was alleged to have acted inappropriately towards a student which led to a quiet and swift dismissal. But at least Mike and James find out from the school receptionist the name of the person they suspect is the perpetrator, 'Gary Campbell.' A name the two did not recognise but at least it was a good start to their investigation. Mike then called one of his old friends at the local police department who had access to records for the county's residents and manages to get his old colleague to search for the name they had now uncovered but what was discovered was unusual. The search is made, and the name does come back for the person they are looking for with

information on his record stating that he had been employed with the local school but since being let go went off grid. The man was not even being listed in the last census as being a resident of the region, having any record of having done anything after being dismissed from the school or having any family members that could be tracked down and contacted. Mike thanks his friend for the help he provided but James and Mike are now a bit stuck in their investigation. They have a name but have no idea where he lives or if he is even alive but at least know what type of vehicle they are looking for if he is still alive and roaming the countryside.

The only chance they have of finding the man is by searching high and low for the vehicle around the village to see if they can spot the same type of vehicle no matter the colour then try to figure out whether that vehicle has had a change in colour. A few days pass and the two men decide to head out into the village in Mike's large people carrier to see if they can spot the van from their vehicle. An hour or so passes and they cannot see anything that resembles the van, so Mike decides as still quite a few people are coming home from work to turn into and park in a small car park located next to a local park. The car park exit comes out onto the main road into the village that everybody uses so if the van is out there and being driven back to the village then they should spot it. The wait for some traffic to head into the village is torturous with Mike promising James a drink together if this hunt turns up nothing to which James informs Mike that since he has been working on finding out what happened to Lacy, that he has stopped drinking as it was destroying his life. Mike is pleased to hear

this as it at least shows James is on the right path to a better life even if their investigation does not go as hoped. As the sun continues its descent towards dusk and birds continue to chirp, hope is progressively being lost with Mike even drifting off into a nap to pass the time. But as the two were just minutes away from calling off their search, the roar of an older vehicle than most in the village catches James' attention in the hope this might be it and sure enough, he spots the van. "MIKE THERE IT IS! LOOK! Let's go" frantically says James as Mike bursts back to consciousness and sees the very back end of the dark green van drive by and immediately sets off after this van.

They follow the van but make sure to keep as far back as they can get away with as the van begins head into the back lanes surrounding the village and eventually pulls up and parks outside of a house about half a mile outside the village itself. Mike decides to speed past to pretend he is going somewhere else but then slows down and stops around the corner from the home to the point where Mike's vehicle cannot be seen. Mike parks on a grass bank just next to the road with the two getting out of the vehicle and slowly creeping towards the home. The home itself appears to be at least fifty years old and has a medium sized farm attached to the back of it which Mike remarks that the occupants clearly aren't poor by the size of the farm around the back but soon enough the two men quietly walk towards the front door. James is crouched down and begins to make his way towards the rear of the home whilst Mike is going to pretend to be an active police officer and occupy the van driver with Mike telling James that once

he hears Mike inside the house then that is his sign to come through the back door. James nods and disappears around the back whilst Mike approaches the door. ‘‘Knock, knock, knock’’. A voice answers Mike’s knocking asking who is there. Mike responds that he is a police officer wanting to ask some questions relating to the registration plates of the van. The door to the house gradually opens with a man standing there appearing to be of similar age to James who queries what is wrong with the van’s plates. Mike makes up that the registration number is showing on the police’s system as being expired as he just happened to be behind the van when trying to travel elsewhere.

The man ponders before asking how he is supposed to sort out this issue, but Mike puts the man at ease by informing them that he can just sort it out now with Mike if he allows him in just to show him on the internet how to quickly update his plates rather than going down to the police station. The man agrees if Mike is quick with his tutorial which Mike accepts and tries to reassure the man that will only take five minutes. The front door closes with James positioned just next to the back door which looks out onto the farm with his left ear pressed against the home waiting to hear Mike’s voice. He hears the front door close but then hears nothing for some seconds until Mike deliberately clears his throat. The signal is made and like an explosive force, James thunderously enters the home and immediately sets his eyes on the similarly built man now just a few feet in front of him. Mike concluded from his own experienced investigative mind that this man cannot be the guy they are looking for as he would be too young, but

James has lost all sense of rational thought as he marches towards and grabs the man by the scruff of his shirt before demanding “WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH THOSE KIDS!!? WHERE ARE THOSE KIDS YOU TOOK HUH! Without a moment’s thought James starts pounding his fist into the face of the man with the occasional punch going into the torso, releasing all the years of his torment on this man. With every brutal punch, James’ grip on reality loosens as he can only think of the day of Lacy’s disappearance whilst delivering blow after blow after blow. The only man seeming to possess a moral compass in this situation finally steps in to end the savagery as Mike restrains James. “COME ON JAMES!!! STOP THIS NOW!! He pleads but this rage has possessed James at this point until Mike physically throws James to the floor with his heading almost bouncing off the wooden floor to the amazement of James which snaps him out of his rage.

James, now in awe of his senior partner and backs up to sit on a couch just behind before Mike bellows at James that “I TOLD YOU WE WOULD CONFRONT HIM, NOT KILL HIM!! OK! A stunned silence meets the request as Mike takes a second to breathe before grabbing the man on the floor and placing him in a chair located just behind where he was laid out. Mike sternly tells the man what is going on and why they are there “Right look. Your van, me, and him over there, are quite sure is involved in the disappearance of a handful of teenage girls including one Lacy Stewart who was the first to disappear which is why he beat you half to death. Now I know that most of those disappearances could not have been you

because most of those happened when you were too young to drive. So, start talking.” Mike grabs a wooden chair to sit in front of the man who is swollen and dripping profusely with blood but does not respond to Mike’s request to start talking. He eventually mutters a question “You promise that you will both leave me be if I tell you the truth?” which Mike agrees only if he had nothing to do with any later disappearances. The man named Jack pleads with Mike that he had nothing to do with it with Mike quick in response demanding repeatedly the truth to the point of yelling “TELL US NOW! The shock of this silences Jack for a few seconds which forces Mike to ask James “you ready for round two?” Mike barely finishes his question as Jack exclaims “IT WAS MY DAD! Mike and James lean in closer to learn the gruesome truth that Jack’s dad was indeed Gary Campbell who worked as a cleaner at the local secondary school.

“H-he worked for years as a cleaner at the local school and that is how he chose his victims because he had access to them.” James sighs in almost relief to hear confirmation that they have found the truth, but Jack’s revelations don’t end there “I knew for years but he put a knife to my throat the day when I found out what he used the van for and made me promise to never speak about it.” To confirm a theory about Gary respraying his van to evade capture, Mike asks how he got away with it to this point which Jack confirms that Gary resprays the van after each kidnapping and hides it in the garage he has next to the home for a month or so therefore nobody had a chance of finding this van. But a final question that is important in putting the local misery to an end is asked



which is where Gary is now to which Jack responds that he has been away for a week or so but will be back in a couple of days. Mike stares at James briefly once they hear he will be coming back and nods towards James with the intent of putting this all to an end. Mike thanks Jack for the information and helps clean some of his wounds from James' attack whilst James walks outside to the front of the property. He looks out towards the fields with a sigh of relief that they have discovered the truth all along, but his mind now races with the thought of just what he will do to Gary once he comes back to the area.

Mike eventually joins James out on the dusty front drive and digs his pockets for a tracking device that he has had for years and applies it to the underneath of the van so that they can track its movements from now on but just to confirm what Gary's son said was true, Mike grabs his keys from his pocket and begins to chip away at the paint of the van. And to Mike's amazement and anger at how the van had evaded him all this time the dark green van has a bright blue colour underneath. Before heading back to the village James apologises for losing himself in the home to which Mike makes sure to remind him that when they catch Gary, to make sure he is fit enough to face justice for his crimes against humanity.

A day passes without incident with the tracker firmly silent as James and Mike sit together at the former detective's desk and wait for any kind of movement. The hours go by; dusk takes hold before dawn returns with yet another picturesque rising

of the sun, bathing this troubled village and still...nothing. No beeps from the tracker or signs of movement as both men continue taking their periodical naps before what is to these two the most beautiful sound imaginable; The beep of the tracker as it senses movement. At just after seven o' clock in the morning the tracker stuck underneath the van now starts to send the two men its location information and to their delight the van is heading towards them and towards the village. The two jump into Mike's vehicle with James holding the laptop to tell Mike where the van is and where it is going as Mike drives into the heart of the village at a leisurely pace with James waiting for the tracker to approach their position. Mike comes to a stop along the tarmacked pavement as the van just about enters the village with the van expected to turn in from the junction to go through the centre of the village but.....To their agony, the van speeds straight on and continues on the road it is on towards the other exit of the village down the other back lanes.

They both see the van speed past and decide to chase after it with Mike leaving a trail of rubber on the road and pavement in hot pursuit with it not being too long before they come right up to the back of the van down these windy, dusty roads. Gary knows at this point that he is being hunted but makes it abundantly clear that he will fight to the bitter end as he picks up the speed and begins driving erratically to put off his chasing duo, but the road starts to open with the main road into the city only another mile ahead. Gary realised this so suddenly brakes **HARD!** And causes Mike to smash his car into one of the rear corners of the van which destroys his car.

Their startled reaction lasts only a second as they notice the van speed off and turn right into a field so James jumps out the car and gives chase into the field. Once James enters though there is an unnerving hush surrounding the area with the birds who normally sing the morning away nowhere to be heard amongst this cursed land. The van he notices is parked towards the bottom of the field where there is a shallow lake passing between the fields, but James does not sense any movement. He creeps up to the van with his pent-up rage filling his veins ever more as Mike limps along to join him eventually just a few paces behind but who will bite first in this confrontation? Due to his experience, Mike insists to engage first and walks in front of his younger partner to slowly engage the driver. “Knock. Knock.” Mike demands Gary to come out and surrender himself but instead an absolute chilling silence meets his plea. Instead of giving the driver more time to come up with a plan, Mike decides to open the back door of the van to force a reaction.

The back doors fly open, and they are both startled by the sight of a small teddy bear, the remnants of a previous kidnapping. Before the sight can even register in their heads, Mike glances up at the barrel of a shotgun about to trigger its powder and is staring death right in the face. The shockwave of the shotgun blast is felt and the bullet hits Mike...luckily only in his collarbone as James immediately sprints around to the driver's side door to stop Gary killing Mike. His approach though has been accounted for with another blast of the shotgun going through the driver's side window as James takes cover next to the front right tyre. Gary goes to reload

which gives James a few seconds to apprehend the killer and pull Gary out of the van with his shotgun as they fall into the long grass of the field. James grabs Gary's head and repeatedly slams his head against the car door before pushing him over to the edge of the lake." IT WAS YOU WASN'T IT; YOU TOOK THOSE KIDS DIDN'T YOU! DIDN'T YOU!!! James screams whilst now holding all the power in this fight with the shotgun firmly aimed at Gary's head. James demands admittance but Gary does not care at this point; The game is up. With a sick bloody smile on his face, Gary puts James out of his misery by pulling out a pistol he had in his side pocket and puts it to his own head. "BOOM!" Gary falls into the lake now washed with his blood. The inflictor of so much pain and the darkness within the community has been finally extinguished. This realisation hits James like a ton of bricks who lays down up against the tyre of the van before another realisation hits him...Is Mike ok? He rushes around to the back of the van to Mike who is laid up against the back left wheel of the van, struggling to sit up with James now applying pressure to his wound whilst letting him know that they finally got him thus ending their guilt. Mike smiles knowing he is going to be ok as James calls for an ambulance on his phone with the countryside settling from the trauma its land had seen for way too long.

## SOME WEEKS LATER

As summer begins to give way to an autumnal breeze, James visits Lacy's memorial and can finally break a smile knowing that justice has been served and that his tremendous heartache has been mostly cured. Just a few steps behind James who kneels to read all the different kind of messages on the memorial, Mike walks up alongside now healed from his injury to lay flowers at the memorial right next to James' set. James notices Mike, smiles and gives him a big pat on the back as a thank you for helping bring the pain to an end. Mike thanks him back before strolling away as James slowly stands back up, looking at the memorial site with a familiar face just behind him. Lacy in an adult form pulls a gentle smile with a tear slowly rolling down her face as she knows her soul is now finally at rest. James walks back to his car to drive back home whilst now at rest, Lacy's form dissipates into the atmosphere with a community now at peace.

THE END



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