

Mick

I think it's best that I start by introducing myself. Will it be important? I guess I'll leave that up to you in the end. I think introductions are the best so if I tell you who I am, then you'll at least know something about me, but then by the end of my story you'll know all about me. You'll know why I do what I do. Why I'm going to do what needs to be done. Should have been done...

My name is Mick, Mick Connors. I live in the south suburbs of Chicago. I'm thirteen years old, and I have two half siblings, a brother and a sister. I don't see them much, but in all reality, I don't care. They live with my mom a couple of towns away. I'm supposed to go to my mom's house every other weekend, but my dad lets me stay home. He doesn't force me to see her. She's the reason why they're not together anymore. It's one of the reasons why I live with my dad and not her! Well, if you haven't figured it out yet, I have given you two clues... Yep, that's right, the half siblings.

Their divorce caught me unexpectedly. I mean... they seemed so together. Like they knew what they were doing, but then—*Wham!* It was like I was sucker-punched in the gut when they broke the news to me.

Okay, so if I look back and think about some of their fights, yeah, I can see that they had their moments, but divorce? That's like—final. There's no, "I'm just kidding", or "We can always just rip up the papers and act like it never happened." No, divorce is divorce. It means it's over and there's no going back. We tried, but I can't stand living with you anymore, so yeah, goodbye.

Seven months later, after my dad moved out, she was getting ready to give birth to my half brother and sister. I'm not sure what surprised me more—the divorce or the fact she cheated on my dad and got herself pregnant. I don't even want to think about it anymore.

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I hate everything about school. I hate getting up in the morning to go. I hate the classes they make me take. I hate all the teachers. I don't think I've ever liked any of my teachers in all the time I've been in school. But mostly, I hate the kids that go to the school. Well, at least the ones that are mean to me. The ones that bully me!

So now you know my parents are divorced and I live with my dad. You know I have two half siblings and that I hate school.

One more thing, I used to live with my mom, but since the start of eighth grade, I've been living with my dad. They say it's for the best, you know, because of what happened to my best friend. Oh, I guess I haven't told you that part yet...

Accident

It's been four months since the accident. "Accident," I whisper, as if that were what it really was. Four months since my friend was found dead in his bedroom. I'll have to take the story back before the accident so that way you'll get the *jiffs* of what really happened to my best friend.

My best friend's name was Ray, Ray Mullion. He was younger than me by three months, but at the time, he was the same age as me. I'm not sure if that's significant or not.

He lived a couple of houses down from me. We met in first grade when he moved here from Iowa. He stood by me through everything since we were six. I wish I'd been a better friend to him as he was to me, back then. Maybe, just maybe, he'd still be alive.

Where my mom lives in Stuart, Illinois, is where we lived growing up, but now I live with my dad in Homer, Illinois, which is in Will County. Like I said at the beginning, I moved here after the accident.

With all the technology these days, there's a lot of cyber-bullying going on. So much that parents don't know what to do about it. I'm sure most parents don't even know what their child is doing when they're on their cell phone or computer. What they're posting or even saying to other kids. Or in some cases, what other kids are saying and doing to them.

Here's an example of one of the texts I kept from my friend Ray's Snap/Chat account. It was a hate account set-up for him by someone we didn't know or maybe we did and we just never figured it out yet.

From unknown person:

trill.em.ray.hate.account

Seriously, this faggot needs to get a f***ing life and get some real friends and stop f***ing posting depressing shit! If he hates his life, he should f***ing kill himself and make us all happy!

Ray responded:

trill.em.ray

Who is this?

From unknown person:

HELP ME!

trill.em.ray.hate.account

Go hang yourself!

Ray responded:

trill.em.ray

Who tf is this? OMFG!

From unknown person:

trill.em.ray.hate.account

You are a waste of f***ing oxygen!

It took Ray an hour on the computer before he was able to hack into the account and take it over. I still don't know who did it, or why? That was the start of his depression.

At first, I thought he was joking about killing himself, but I guess in the end, the jokes on me. If I'd taken him seriously, then maybe he'd still be here. Then maybe, I'd take my life more seriously and not think about suicide myself...

HELP ME!

Suicide

Did you know that nearly thirty thousand people commit suicide every year? That suicide is the third leading cause of death for fifteen to twenty-four-year-olds and second leading for twenty-four to thirty-five-years-olds? They say on average, one person commits suicide every seventeen minutes. How about this: A one in sixty-five thousand children ages ten to fourteen commit suicide each year!

I guess you can say I've done my research, but it still doesn't take away the thoughts of suicide from my mind.

Have you ever had one of those days where everything comes crashing down at once? Everything bad just comes out of nowhere and eats at you? That's how I've been feeling ever since my friend Ray took his own life.

He didn't take pills to make himself fall asleep, poison himself, or hang himself by asphyxiation. No! Ray chose to take his dad's .44 Special and blow his f***ing brains out! I overheard the cops say that there was only one bullet in the gun, as if he played Russian roulette by himself and lost.

It was actually a game we'd played a couple of times together. You know, like a dare, but nothing had ever happened, of course.

Sometimes I feel so angry inside and want to destroy everything in my sight. A part of me even feels responsible for my friend dying. Like, I could've stopped him from doing it.

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I knew my friend Ray was being bullied. In fact, we both were, by the same kids at my old school. Neither one of us said anything to the teachers or principal that we were being bullied. Nothing will ever be done to them, and in all reality, does it even matter? Ray's dead. He's never coming back, and they're responsible for it.

Ray kept getting hate email from some unknown accounts. They call it cyber-bullying, but nothing ever seems to be done about it. Kids will continue doing it no matter what. There's no stopping them from being mean to other people.

HELP ME!

The week and days before his death, Ray became more distant towards me. He shut me out of his life. Like he didn't need me or want me around him. That right there should've told me something. No, I think the day before gave me a definite clue and yet, I didn't do anything. I didn't say anything to anyone.

The last time I saw Ray was the same night he killed himself. I went to his house after school. He actually begged me to hang out with him just like old times. We were in his room, messing around when he went to the nightstand beside his bed and pulled out the gun. My eyes drew wide; I think I was more in shock than anything. Though we'd played that game I'd told you about, but I didn't think he kept the gun in his room. Kept it beside him while he slept. That's when he asked me if I ever thought about death.

"Hey Mick, have you ever thought about ending your life so you don't have to put up with those assholes from school anymore?" Ray had asked.

I shrugged, "Sometimes, I guess." What really could I say? It made me nervous, watching him hold the gun.

The gun was in one palm, and he kept flipping it over and back again. It was as if he wanted to look at both sides at the same time. He stared at it as if he was transfixed in some way. After several minutes, he placed the gun back in the nightstand as if it were an everyday routine. Couple of hours later, I walked home. It was the last time I saw him alive. The gun went off at exactly midnight. How do I know that? Because it was the exact same time I sat up in bed, knowing something bad had just happened. Something I'll live the rest of my life trying to forget. Wondering if I could have saved him...