

From “God’s House to You: The Amazing Journey of a Psychic Herbalist”

Chapter One: A Violent Beginning

I was born on May 27, 1952, in Peterborough, Canada. My parents named me after Randolph Scott – my dad loved westerns.

Like many people born under the sign of Gemini – the twins – my early life was shaped by two forces: my father’s anger, and God’s love.

I never had to be brought to God; I believe He was with me the moment I was born. I can’t explain how I know this, I just do. As a youngster, I felt Him in my heart, and I felt Him surrounding me. He was like a comfort, a pillow to rest my head on. I often daydreamed about Him, envisioning Him as a loving father, a beautiful, gentle spirit with a white beard and a white smock. And when I dreamed about Him at night, I felt His presence as a peaceful energy.

I did not grow up in a religious house. We attended church on the occasional important holidays. Yet I still felt close to God. He protected me when I was three years old, when my father threw me against the wall and broke my leg. I know he was there two years later, when my skull was crushed when I was hit by a car.

When I look back at those traumatic experiences, and other events that created the person I am today, I know that during my worst moments, God held me protectively in His hands in a way that said, *You’ll always know that I’m there.*

Shortly after I was born, we moved to Detroit, where my father, Donald Pinch, worked for a time on the manufacturing line at Chrysler. He had citizenship in both

Canada and the United States, and when I was young, we moved back and forth between the two countries several times. On one trip, the sides of the moving truck he'd rented blew out, and a lot of family paperwork we were carrying went out on the highway. So, unfortunately, a lot of my early records were lost. For all I know, my birth certificate, early immunization records and other documents are still in some farm field east of Windsor.

My father was a very angry person. But when I look at his life, I can understand where all his rage came from.

He was mulatto, but looked like a black person. He had tight curly hair and his skin was a deep brown colour. As he got older, it lightened a bit, yet not enough to attain a mocha hue. He was a construction worker, and his nickname was “nigger” – that’s what people called him at job sites in Europe or in California, or in the bars and pool halls where he would hang out.

When Donald was in a mood, he became an angry and brutal man. He probably couldn’t help it; he grew up with violence, and that’s how he was programmed. His father was a very brutal and abusive man who bullied his family. He used to make his wife sleep in a box. I don’t know why; I never learned the whole story. I’ve just been told he was a brutal man who stood about 7-foot-2, and he towered over everything. He had to bend sideways to come through a door – just like my Dad, who was 6-foot-7. He was an alcoholic, and did stupid things when he was drunk. He’d make bets, like he once bet some guy in a bar that he could cut off part of his finger with a knife. Donald won the bet, but lost part of a finger.

My mother, Margaret, was the illegitimate daughter of a wealthy man in the food industry. He didn't want to recognize her, and his rejection embittered her. Plus, her mother had spent time in a mental institution. Years later, my Dad went to see my grandmother, and told me she was pretty much out of it, screaming and carrying on like she thought the devil was after her soul. It was very bad.

Margaret had anger issues, too. She was your typical headstrong teenager who didn't want to follow rules, and didn't want anyone to control her. Plus, she was an emotional Italian woman. Her father put her in a nunnery, but the life of abstinence wasn't for her. When the novitiates went out on one of their day trips, somehow she met a famous hockey player, and ran away with him. Years later, the nunnery burned down.

She and this hockey player – I never did learn his name – had a child. Things didn't work out and they separated. She moved to Quebec and befriended a French family, who adopted her. Her foster father was a railroad engineer and when the couple died, they left their money to her.

Meanwhile, Margaret met another fellow and had two more children, but that relationship also didn't work out. Then she met Wilfred York, an Army man. They had four children together. He drove a tank during World War II, and was killed in battle. Wilfred was buried in France.

How Donald and Margaret met is an odd story. In her heart, Margaret was a kind person who liked to help people. One day, while walking through the park, she noticed a woman sleeping on a bench. The woman didn't look like a derelict. Sensing something was wrong, Margaret approached the woman and asked her if she was alright.

“I have nowhere to go,” answered the woman, who introduced herself as Mrs. White. “My husband beats me all the time. He makes me sleep in a box, so I had to leave him.”

Margaret was astounded. “Why don’t you come home with me?” she said. “And would you like a job? I’ll hire you as my housekeeper.” So she brought Mrs. White home to clean the house, and take care of her seven children – my half-brothers and sisters.

You can imagine how crowded the house was, and it was a great deal of work for poor Mrs. White to keep track of everyone. She must have felt she had walked into the story of the old lady in the shoe!

Mrs. White eventually became my grandmother. Here’s what happened: One day, she told Margaret, “I have a son. His name is Donald. I’ll show you a picture.”

Margaret thought he was very handsome, and said she’d like to meet him. At the time, he was working in Ireland as a handyman. Relatives brought him to America, and then Margaret signed the papers to let him come to Canada. They met and got married, lived in Peterborough and had four children. (I was the third of those four.)

I believe my mother and father loved each other, but theirs was an abusive relationship. Both parents drank, my father more so. And the bottle sometimes put bad ideas in his head that were hard to shake loose. Unfortunately, I became the brunt of one of those horrible ideas, and it was something I had to live with for many years.

Just after I was born, my father looked at me and said, “Who’s that effin’ kid from?”

Mrs. White – my grandmother – was shocked at the vile look my father gave his newborn son. She said, “Don, take a look at his face, don’t look at his hair.”

My hair was curly and platinum-coloured, quite the opposite of his kinky black hair. With disgust dripping from his voice, he said, “That thing is not mine.”

From that moment on, he hated me. He was convinced another man was my father. (Years later, when my hair started turning darker, he realized I was his son, and he started to love me. And I could begin to forgive him.)

But when I was very little, whenever I went near him or passed through his field of vision, I felt his anger radiate toward me in waves, like he was shooting me vibes saying, *Don’t let me see you*. So I tried to avoid him as much as possible.

I was probably three years old when he threw me against the wall and broke my leg. Why? Because I walked in front of the television. He was sitting in his worn recliner and watching a western movie, some Roy Rogers oater. For some reason, I meandered between him and the TV, and he muttered, “I’m warning you, don’t walk in front of that TV again. If you walk in front of the TV again, you’ll pay for it.”

His voice had a sharp edge of resentment, a bitter tone that I knew meant, *Don’t dare mess with me*, so I stayed out of his way. But a little later I got fidgety and got up to go to the washroom or something. He growled, “Ok, I warned you. Now you’re going to see.”

He picked me up over his head like a rag doll, and threw me against the wall. The impact cracked my left leg, and I dropped to the floor like a crumpled shirt.

The moment his enormous hands grabbed me and hoisted me into the air.... Time slowed. I left my body, and from somewhere above, watched myself being hurled across

the room. The wall seemed to float toward me and I closed my eyes. For a tiny instant, I felt weightless and free....

I didn't even feel my leg snap. But everyone in the house heard it. My brothers and sisters rushed at my father and began hitting him with pots and pans, anything they could get their hands on, until he cowered away.

He wasn't drunk at the time. He was just filled with anger.

I was taken to the hospital. Things were different back then – doctors were not as vigilant in 1955 as they are today when it came to reporting suspected cases of child abuse. I don't know what excuse my parents gave the emergency room physician, but no one asked me about my injuries. While I was in the hospital, Dad came to see me. I was in bed, and when I saw him approach, I tried to shrink into the blankets. I was afraid he'd hit me again.

“What kind of toy do you want?” he said, his voice as hollow as an empty room.

“A fire engine.”

“Okay.” He gave me an emotionless nod, “I'll get it for you.”

He never did, and he never came back to the hospital to see me.

Alcohol sharpened my father's violent edge, and a night of drinking could turn him into a vicious machine. We loved him as a father, yet often lived in fear of him.

One night, he staggered home and began pounding on the front door, which my mother had locked – she knew how surly he could get after spending the evening in a smoky bar tossing back shots of rye. His thick fists battered the wooden door, and it felt like the whole house was shaking.

With a voice that growled like the big bad wolf from one of my fairy tales, he ordered my mother to let him in.

“No,” she cried. “You’re not coming in here!”

She had anticipated his foul mood, and was afraid for herself and her children. Before he’d left, they’d fought about his drinking. He’d stomped out of the house, screaming at my mother to stop telling him what to do.

He banged the door even harder. “You better let me in the house, you know what’s good for you!”

My sisters Sandra and Sharon wedged knives in the door frame to try to keep him out. But the closed door mocked him, and made him even angrier. We cowered against the back wall, hoping for some miracle that would save us. We were terrified when our father turned into an ogre. When he was drunk and seething, he could do anything. Our tiny voices shouting for him to go away made us all the more scared.

He kicked the door until the wood began to splinter. And then his heavy boot smashed through the door like Frankenstein’s shoe. The door swung open and we scrambled for hiding places.

My mother wasn’t fast enough to get away. She had humiliated him. In his eyes, that was unforgivable. No one was ever allowed to stand up to him!

He looked at her with steely eyes. His face was a frozen scowl.

Suddenly he was on her, beating her with mallet-like fists until she slumped to the floor. The air seemed to crackle with static electricity, as if a tornado of evil energy was spinning around us. We screamed at him to stop; he ignored us. He stared at her unconscious body on the floor, and his mouth twisted downward. He hefted my mother

over his head as if she was weightless, and moved to take her outside. He wanted to throw her down the cement stairs on the front porch.

And kill her.

I stood in the middle of the floor crying. This ogre who had broken my leg last year *was trying to kill my mother*. “Why?” I shouted, terrified. “Why are you trying to hurt mom?”

Sandra threw herself against his legs as hard as she could, and he lost his balance and fell backward. Mother dropped from his arms, hitting her head on the linoleum floor.

A neighbour must have called the police, because suddenly sirens were screaming in the night. Awareness dawned on my father, and he staggered to his feet to run away. He made it as far as the sidewalk, before two policemen caught him, handcuffed him and put him in the back of the squad car. Unfortunately, they didn't quite shut the door properly. While they were driving down the street, he gave a huge donkey kick with both feet, banged the door open and jumped out of the car. The hilly road was icy and he slid down to the end of a block. Then he ran to the house of a friend, who used a hacksaw to cut off the handcuffs. Many years later, I swallowed my revulsion as he laughingly retold the story.

An ambulance took my unconscious mother to the hospital. When she came back a few days later, she didn't know who we were. She just smiled at us. It took weeks for her to recognize us because he'd beaten her so badly. Hitting her head had given her a severe concussion. It changed her whole personality, even when she finally recovered from the injury. For the rest of her life, she experienced wonderful highs and terrible lows.

She was still a loving and beautiful person who would open her heart to help strangers who were suffering. Other times, though, she would sink into moods, where she closed all the curtains in the house and sat in the dark. Sometimes, she talked to herself. When she acted that way, distant and gloomy, it scared and saddened me, because I could not understand her. A stranger was inhabiting my mother's body.

After that malicious incident, my parents split up. They had separated a number of times before, but always got back together after a few days or weeks, depending on how tempestuous the fight was that had separated them. But this time, they split for good. They separated, but never divorced. They were married until they died.

Growing up in such a turbulent house and being raised by two emotionally damaged people, it's a wonder that many of my siblings didn't end up emotionally damaged themselves.

What helped me stay grounded was the close relationship with God that I had developed. I started praying when I was four years old. It just came naturally to me. I would go into a room by myself and start talking to God. I'd tell Him I was scared of my Dad, and sometimes scared of my mother.

Whenever I prayed, I'd get a peaceful feeling and hear these words: "I'm always here for you."

I never forgot those words, and the serene feeling that came with them. While I was being thrown across the room, I was aware of being taken aside and put in a safe place. God was cradling me, whispering into my ear, *Don't worry*. I didn't feel any pain when my leg broke – I wasn't even aware the bone had snapped. And when I lay in the

hospital, I knew that God had been with me, would always be with me, and was going to protect me from major injuries – injuries to my body, and injuries to my soul.

I'd often blurt out, "I love God." My mother would look at me with a cocked eyebrow and say, "How do you know this?" I'd smile and shrug. I couldn't put my feelings into words, it was just something I just felt in my heart, that I'd always be okay because I had God with me.