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HOW DOES ONE COPE?

Brian T. Shaw

The night was silent. The couch held me. There I fell asleep. And rest I did. For tired I was. The day was long. Not unlike others were. I spent all energy. I ran all over. Fun was my escape. For it I paid. Yet sleep was brief. A shadow passed me. It was my mother. She heard a knock. So she answered it. I heard an exchange. She backed away quickly. She turned to run. I heard an explosion. It was the first. The door was kicked. It flew open fast. My mother ran past. The couch held me. I did not move. The couch knew something. Time stood very still. A gunshot rang out. It missed my mother. The couch saved me. It was a shotgun. The hole was near. Just four inches away. I was still alive. I thanked the couch. It was so dark. No one saw me. They ran past me. I only saw two. Later there was another. I knew not this. The two passed by. I waited a moment. And then I ran. The apartment was small. The back was near. The bathroom held me. I locked the door. I was lost there. Then a thought came. Could I fit through? The window was high. I needed help now. We needed help now.

The toilet held me. I reached the window. I pushed it open. The wind rushed in. It was very cold. My emotions were cold. Both needed each other. I crawled out fast. The fall was short. My feet were bare. I had no shoes. My feet turned cold. The grass was wet. I did not care. I needed help now. We needed help now.

I started to run. My travel was short. I found some friends. Their door opened quickly. They took me in. I told a story. It was very brief. Through tears it came. Emotional waves carried it. Friends acted without question. The police were called. I waited in fear. How was my mother? How was my cousin? How was her husband? They awaited a baby. We were all happy. This night changed much.

I opened the door. Cop sirens were heard. They were not far. I looked toward home. Thugs were still there. Soon they came out. I saw their figures. But they were masked. It was dark outside. This aided their escape. So did their car. They jumped in quickly. Their car sped off. Somehow, my brother arrived. He beat the police? He ran inside quickly. He saw the damage. He ran out after. His car sped off. It was not long. The police then arrived. The damage was done. A life was lost. And pain lives on.

How does one cope?