

## The Beginning of the End

After being kept for a brief period at her majesty's pleasure in Portrack Leisure Centre, (aka Holme House Prison) I was freed on New Years Eve 2004.

<https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/6984747.judo-expert-jailed-assaults/>

I went to surprise my girlfriend at the time, who wasn't expecting me to be released. Truth be told, I wasn't expecting the release. I had been convicted of 2 counts of Actual Bodily Harm (ABH) that led to my incarceration, the subsequent raid on my home found illegal drugs and weapons that meant I had other charges pending whilst serving my sentence for assault.

The whole process was both confusing and terrifying to me, I didn't know how long I would be locked up for.

My brief spell in jail was an interesting and challenging experience, about which I may write about later.

Years later I realised that the time I had been locked up for was a blessing. I was working with members of organised crime gangs, ABH was one of the lesser crimes I could have been convicted for during this chapter. The time away was a much needed pause for me to reflect where my life was going.

Anyway, I was woken early on the morning of New years Eve 2003 to be told I was being released. Time served, subtracted court days and the holidays meant my release date was a week earlier than on the computer system.

I went through the release process and was picked up by my sister, Jen who drove me over to my then girlfriend Sarah's house, where I was planning on having a happy 'surprise!, I'm free, it's so good to see you!' moment which would end in us hugging and crying with happiness.

I knocked and the door was opened by a female I recognised as a friend of Sarah. Her reaction was initially one of surprise, which was understandable but then something else crossed her face, I don't know it at the time, but later on I realised it was fear.

After a pause, I was invited into the house, where I found Sarah and a male of around the same age. The look that passed over both their faces as I entered the kitchen was undoubtedly fear, they were both routed to the spot, ashen faced.

There was no rushing into each others arms, no declaration of everlasting love nor tears of joy, instead there was fear, apprehension and silence.

The fear was understandable as during this time, whilst I was never violent towards Sarah, I was regularly involved in violent encounters.

I was also under observation by police intelligence due to my activities.

I had a 'reputation'

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If you haven't already realised, the reason of the atmosphere was of course my girlfriend had found companionship in this other male, a worker on the farm where she lived.

It dawned on me instantly.

I was a shocked as they were, I turned and as I walked out the front door, I paused, looked my now ex-girlfriend in the eye and said "You should have told me".

Sarah and I met and spoke later in the day, we reconciled the rocky relationship, albeit briefly.

I totally understood her loneliness as we were inseparable until I was locked up.

The relationship endured for a time then came to a crashing end which was entirely my fault.

Years later I apologised to her for being the arsehole I was at that time, I was immature & sel fish.

She deserved better.

It took the ending of my first love to start me down a road of change.

I'd tasted prison, I knew it wasn't for me.

If I didn't change I would likely end up back there permanently, or in the ground.

In a sense Jiu Jitsu, and those I met through it, saved me.

**To be continued .....**