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Still I Rise

By Maya Angelou

You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may trod me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?
Why are you beset with gloom?
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells
Pumping in my living room.

Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I'll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like teardrops,
Weakened by my soulful cries?

Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines
Diggin' in my own backyard.

You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise.

Does my sexiness upset you?
Does it come as a surprise
That I dance like I've got diamonds
At the meeting of my thighs?

Out of the huts of history's shame
I rise
Up from a past that's rooted in pain
I rise
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.

Leaving behind nights of terror and fear
I rise
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear
I rise
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors
gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.
I rise
I rise
I rise.

Leaving behind nights of terror and fear
I rise
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear
I rise
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors
gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.
I rise
I rise
I rise.
Half-Caste – John Agard

Excuse me
standing on one leg
I’m half-caste.

Explain yuself
wha yu mean
when yu say half-caste
yu mean when Picasso
mix red an green
is a half-caste canvas?
explain yuself
wha yu mean
when yu say half-caste
yu mean when light an shadow
mix in de sky
is a half-caste weather?
well in dat case
ingland weather
nearly always half-caste
in fact some o dem cloud
half-caste till dem overcast
so spiteful dem don’t want de sun pass
ah rass?
explain yuself
wha yu mean
when yu say half-caste
yu mean tchaikovsky

sit down at dah piano
an mix a black key
wid a white key
is a half-caste symphony?

Explain yuself
wha yu mean
Ah listening to yu wid de keen
half of mih ear
Ah looking at yu wid de keen
half of mih eye
an when I’m introduced to yu
I’m sure you’ll understand
why I offer yu half-a-hand
an when I sleep at night
I close half-a-eye
consequently when I dream
I dream half-a-dream
an when moon begin to glow
I half-caste human being
cast half-a-shadow
but yu must come back tomorrow
wid de whole of yu eye
an de whole of yu ear
an de whole of yu mind.

an I will tell yu
de other half
of my story.
County Lines Quick Guide

What is meant by county lines?
Operations in major cities seek new markets outside urban hubs for their drugs, primarily crack cocaine and heroin. The expansion of their networks into the regions often comes with exploitation.

Who are the victims of these operations?
Children and vulnerable adults are often coerced into ferrying and stashing the drugs. They can be homeless or missing people, addicts, people living in care, trapped in poverty, or suffering from mental illness or learning difficulties. Even older and physically infirm people have been targeted and officers have observed a gang member attending drug rehab to find potential runners.

How do they target people?
Initially they can be lured in with money, gifts and the prospect of status. But this can quickly turn into the use of violence, sometimes sexual.

How prevalent are county lines?
National Crime Agency research shows police have knowledge of at least 720 county lines in England and Wales, but it is feared the true number is far higher. Around 65% of forces reported county lines being linked to child exploitation, while 74% noted vulnerable people being targeted.

How many children are at risk?
Children without criminal records - known in the trade as "clean skins" - are preferred because they are less likely to be known to detectives. Charity The Children’s Society says 4,000 teenagers in London alone are exploited through county lines. The Children’s Commissioner estimates at least 46,000 children in England are caught up in gangs.
Levels of child criminal exploitation 'almost back to Victorian times'

Exclusive: police chief says problem is at a high for modern era amid lack of youth facilities

Vikram Dodd Police and crime correspondent

Thu 2 Jan 2020 12.32 GMT Last modified on Thu 2 Jan 2020 20.00 GMT

The criminal exploitation of children is at its highest level in modern times as gangs capitalise on a lack of youth facilities and school exclusions to groom children, a police chief has revealed.

Chief constable Shaun Sawyer said that as state provision for children receded in the last decade, driven in part by austerity, criminals had exploited the space between “the school gate and the front door”.

Sawyer is the national police lead for modern slavery and human trafficking and he said exploited children were “almost back to Victorian times”, and called for a gender bias against seeing boys as victims of criminal exploitation to end.

He said more police officers promised by Boris Johnson’s government was welcome but more needed to be done to look after and protect children. “We are seeing more exploitation than before in modern times. They are UK nationals. More police officers will make a dent, but it won’t stop the causes,” he said.

“One of the solutions to the causes is the gap between the dysfunctional home and the school.”

Sawyer said most of those youngsters subjected to modern slavery and human trafficking were British nationals, up 73.7% on the previous year, at about 726 people.

He said that while in previous years, sexual exploitation or labour exploitation were the biggest reasons to class someone as a modern slave, it was now criminal exploitation driven by drug gangs, and including the county lines model of distributing and selling illegal narcotics.

Under county lines youngsters are groomed by urban gangs operating phone lines for customers to buy drugs, and travel to take supplies up and down the country, and deal them.

According to police figures, in one three-month period 638 children under 18 claimed to be criminally exploited and the majority was because of county lines, Sawyer said. That was 94.5% higher than the previous year.

For adults and children there are 1,739 live modern slavery operations. In January 2016 the figure was just 180 operations.
Some of this is due to improved reporting, while some is because of increased exploitation.

Sawyer said: “For these children they are almost back to Victorian times and are being criminally exploited. These kids are looking for family and security. This is the vacuum of youth diversion schemes.

“For understandable reasons of austerity, state youth services have been vacated. This gap of youth provision between the school and family is the void that the exploiters are filling.”

Sawyer, the chief constable of the Devon and Cornwall force, said criminals wishing to groom and exploit children portrayed themselves as charismatic, aspirational, and could seem powerful: “We’ve seen our schools in Devon and Cornwall work so hard, but more can be done.”

“If you exclude a kid you are immediately putting them in this space. The state has walked away, where do you expect them to go? The exploiters go thank you very much, that kid is mine.”

“Youth diversion services need to be hard wired in. Child criminal exploitation, it’s all about family, creating feelings of security, self-worth and power. This gap between the school gate and the front door is where the exploiters are attractive to youngsters.”

Sawyer said attitudes to young boys being exploited needed to change. Girls being sexually exploited will be seen as victims, he said, but it is less likely the authorities will see boys pressed into working for drugs gangs as victims and not criminals.

Sawyer said: “We accept that a 14-year-old girl does not make a choice to sleep with multiple men. I don’t think it is an informed choice to choose repeatedly to steal or deal drugs, and then hand over the profits.

“We’ve learned that girls who are exploited can be victims, but we seem unable or unwilling to learn the same lessons for boys where criminal exploitation is concerned.”

In one case youngsters from north London were dumped in the flat of a 56-year-old addict in Bodmin, Cornwall, which they used to sell heroin and crack cocaine that had been driven into the county in hired cars.

In September 2019 seven gang members were convicted of running a county lines operation which exploited vulnerable young people to sell drugs. The “Billy line” sold class A drugs to almost 100 users in Cornish towns.

One of the exploited boys, 16, told police he had incurred a drug debt of £55 with the gang and was told he could pay it off by dealing. He presumed he would be put to work near his home in north London but ended up 250 miles away in Bodmin, far from family, friends and familiar surroundings.

The gang was so violent that when police raided addresses in London and Cornwall, one gang member threatened officers with a machete before being overpowered and arrested.
Violence traps scared kids in county lines gangs. They need help before it's too late

Young people are exploited for years before getting support. Social care, schools and police need to know the warning signs

Sonya Jones

Mon 25 Nov 2019 08.44 GMTLast modified on Tue 3 Dec 2019 12.18 GMT

The National Crime Agency say county lines drug dealing has fuelled an 807% increase in the number of child victims of modern slavery since 2014. Photograph: Alamy Stock Photo

Josh* had just turned 15 when the police caught him with more than £100 worth of cannabis and £200 in cash. They seized the drugs, took him home and gave the money to his mum. No referrals were made, or support offered. His mum, unaware of what was going on, simply gave the money back to Josh and left it at that.

He was a scared kid caught up in a world he didn’t know how to get out of. But rather than getting the help he desperately needed, he was given a slap on the wrist and a pep talk to shape up his act.

County lines drug dealing – the process of drug dealing gangs from cities expanding their operations to other areas of the country – has increased dramatically in recent years. The National Crime Agency says it has fuelled an 807% increase in the number of child victims of modern slavery since 2014. Meanwhile, the Children’s Commissioner estimates “27,000 children in England identify as a gang member, only a fraction of whom are known to children’s services”.

I work for the drug and alcohol charity Addaction, and manage a young person’s substance misuse team on the frontline of this issue. Many services working with young people, such as schools, social care or the police, miss the signs of exploitation. Too often the young people we work with have been exploited by manipulative adults for years before being offered support. This is due to a lack of awareness rather than individual mistakes, but leaves many children vulnerable.

The most common way gangs groom young people is through cannabis. They will give groups of teenagers free weed, building a supposed friendship with them. Young people rarely start drug dealing by selling heroin or crack. Instead, gangs will give them a small amount of cannabis to sell: the stakes are not so high if caught and
many young people enjoy the money and respect. At this stage they often feel in control of the situation, but the tables turn quickly as gang members use debts and violence to push them into selling class A drugs.

The trauma of being involved in county lines can leave deep scars. Young people drop out of school, become alienated from their peers, and witness and execute extreme violence. Many enter the criminal justice system once they turn 18, often becoming locked into a revolving door of criminality, their chances of living a normal life reducing with the passing of time.

This is why seeing the signs of exploitation early is crucial. Finding a young person with a large amount of cannabis and money is a big clue. It’s also true that cannabis is the most commonly used drug among under 18s, with the majority using it for enjoyment. That’s why services must try to look for signs such as a young person suddenly having new expensive clothes, a second phone, regularly getting in trouble at school or becoming alienated. Once young people start selling class As, they may stay out all night and be prone to violent mood swings.

But in our age of tight budgets, it’s tough to ask stretched services to dig deeper. The charity St Giles Trust recently started a brilliant project in partnership with West Midlands police, placing youth workers in hospitals to support victims of knife crime. This should be happening in pupil referral units and custody suites in known county lines hotbeds.

Organisations also need to increase awareness closer to home. Parents tell me they wished they’d known more about county lines so they could have better supported their child. Without understanding the signs of exploitation, they can’t take action.

Eventually, Josh’s school referred him to our service. At first he didn’t understand the danger he was in and worshipped the man who had been exploiting him. But over time the stress of his double life began to show. He opened up about violence he had witnessed and been forced to inflict, and the sense of fear that had come to define his existence. He felt comfortable telling his support worker this because they had built a relationship over many months. She offered Josh an emotional connection free of judgment or blame, allowing him to rebuild a sense of pride in who he was.

Josh is now excelling in an apprenticeship, but, sadly, is one of the lucky ones. County lines can impact any child. Remaining blind to the signs of exploitation means support services and parents don’t see the grip it has on young people until it’s too late. As young people get older, the way people perceive them shifts from being the victims of crime to perpetrators. As a society, we need to do more to recognise exploitation before the offer of support turns to punishment.

* Denotes name has been changed

• Sonya Jones is a service manager and safeguarding lead at Young Addaction, which offers advice via www.addaction.org.uk/webchat
When [my father] opened the door, he saw two men standing on the porch. One of them - J. W. Milam, we would learn later – was tall, thickset, and balding; he had a gun in one hand and a flashlight in the other. The second man was almost as tall but not as heavy; he was the one who had spoken, Roy Bryant. A third man stood behind Bryant, hiding his face from Dad. Dad believed he was someone who knew us.

The men entered the house through our front guest room, where Wheeler and Maurice were sleeping. Dad woke Wheeler up first. Milam told Dad that Wheeler was not the boy he was looking for; he was looking for the fat boy from Chicago. Then I heard loud talking in my bedroom.

In my half-conscious state, I had no idea what was going on. Was I dreaming? Or was it a nightmare? Why were these men in our bedroom at this hour? I rubbed my eyes and then shielded them, trying to see beyond the glare of the flashlight. The balding man ordered me to go back to sleep.

Dad had to shake Bobo for quite a while to wake him up. When he finally awoke, the balding man told Bobo to get up and put his clothes on. It was then that I realized they had come to take him away. It wasn’t clear to me what was going on and why they wanted just him. At first I thought they had come to send him back to Chicago, but that didn’t make sense at all.

I was lying there, frozen stiff and not moving, when my mother rushed into the room. She began pleading with the men not to take Bobo. I could hear the fear in her voice. She broke into a mixture of pleas and tears as she practically prayed for Bobo, asking the men not to harm him. The men ignored her, urging Bobo to hurry up and get dressed. He was still somewhat groggy and rubbing his eyes, but he quickly obeyed. My mother then offered them some money not to take Bobo away. I was now fully awake but still not moving. It was now crystal clear to me that these men were up to no good. They had come for Bobo, and no amount of begging, pleading, or payment was going to stop them. Although Dad had two shotguns in his closet, the 12-gauge and a .410, he never tried to get them. If Dad had made a break for his guns, none of us would be alive today. I believe Milam and Bryant were prepared to kill us all at the slightest provocation. I am glad that Dad didn’t do anything to put us all in danger.

Suddenly, the same panic I had felt after Bobo had whistled at Mrs. Bryant returned, and it was all I could do to stop trembling with fear, realizing that Bobo was not only in trouble but in grave danger. My fear soon escalated into terror, and I was still frozen stiff in my bed, unable to move or to say anything. My mother’s pleas continued as the men pushed the now-dressed Bobo from the room. Bobo left that room without saying one word. There is no way I could have done that. Everyone along Dark Fear Road would have heard my screams.

At the time I didn’t know what happened next, but according to my dad, the men took Bobo out to a car or truck that was waiting in the darkness. One of the men asked someone inside the vehicle if this was the right boy, and Dad said he heard a woman’s voice respond that it was. Then the men drove off with Bobo, toward Money....

https://famous-trials.com/emmetttill/1754-abduction
40,000 AT TILL YOUTH’S FUNERAL: TWO MEN HELD ON MURDER INDICTMENT

CHICAGO – Funeral rites for Emmett Louis Till, the most recent victim of brutal Mississippi lynchers, were held here Saturday after more than 40,000 persons had filed pass the slain youth’s body. The shot which felled the 14-year-old youth after he allegedly violated southern tradition by emitting a “wolf whistle” at a Mississippi white woman has aroused the entire country.

Roy Wilkins, executive secretary of the NAACP*, in a heated statement, said, “It would appear from this lynching that the State of Mississippi has decided to maintain white supremacy by murdering children.” Mississippi’s Gov. Hugh White, who referred to the slaying as “out and out murder,” has promised vigorous prosecution of the guilty parties. Meanwhile, a grand jury in Tallahatchie County, Miss., indicted two white men for the murder Tuesday. Named in the murder indictments were Roy Bryant, 23-year-old Money, Miss., storekeeper, and his half-brother, J.W. Millam, 40, of Glendora, Miss.

The youthful lynching victim, who was visiting an uncle in Money, Miss., while on vacation from his native city of Chicago, was kidnapped from his uncle’s home on Aug. 27 by two white men and a woman. Bryant and Millam admitted spiriting Till away from the home of Rev. Moses Wright, but claimed they released him unharmed. The woman in the case, Mrs. Bryant, has disappeared. A warrant charging kidnapping has been issued against her. The Mississippi grand jury returned joint murder indictments against the brothers shortly after it met to hear additional evidence. It was not announced when the case will go to trial. A conviction of murder in Mississippi carries a mandatory death penalty unless the jury recommends mercy.

EXTRA POLICE OUT

Here in Chicago, extra police were assigned to the church where final rites were performed. Bishop Louis H. Ford, pastor of St. Paul’s Church of God in Christ, delivered the eulogy. Burial was at Burr Oak Cemetery. The body lay in state at the Rayner & Sons Funeral Home where the throngs turned out to see the remains.

Crosby Smith, an uncle of Till, interrupted a hasty burial of the body in Mississippi. About three hours after the body was found adrift in the Tallahatchie River, he said, “the sheriff told me it was at the cemetery in Money.” Rushing there, Smith found a two-foot hole dug in the graveyard of the East Money Church of God in Christ. “They were getting ready to spill the boy into that,” Smith said. “He hadn’t even been embalmed.” Smith said he told officials he would “see that the body got to Chicago if I had to take it in my own truck.” When the body arrived in Chicago, the youth’s mother, Mrs. Mamie E. Bradley, leaped from a wheelchair, ran across three sets of tracks to the baggage car to see the pine box containing her son’s body.

As the box was lifted from the train, she fell to her knees sobbing and exclaimed: “My darling, my darling. I would have gone through a world of fire to get to you. I know I was on your mind when you died.” When the remains were taken to the funeral home, Mrs. Bradley demanded it be opened. “Open it up,” she said. “Let the people see what they did to my boy.”

PEOPLE SEE BODY

It was then that people got a chance to see the extent of the damage done to the boy. Condition of his face indicated a beating far more brutal that first reported. Almost all of the boy’s teeth were knocked out. The entire right side of the face was caved in. There was a small bullet hole through the temple. Mississippi newspapers joined Gov. White and local officials in asking for a full-scale murder prosecution this week.

In the statement issued by Wilkins, the top NAACP official said, “The killers of the boy felt free to lynch him because there is in the entire state no restraining influence of decency.” Wilkins simultaneously dispatched a telegram to the Mississippi governor asserting: “…All decent citizens throughout the nation call upon you to use all the powers of your office to see that the lynchers of 14-year-old Emmett Louis Till are brought to justice. We cannot believe that responsible officials of the State of Mississippi condone the murdering of children on any provocation.”
A reply received from the governor at NAACP headquarters in New York said, in part: “Parties charged with murder are in jail and I have every reason to believe the courts will do their duty in prosecution. Mississippi does not condone such conduct.”

Two other Negroes have been lynched in Mississippi since May 7. On that date Rev. George W. Lee was gunned to death at Belzoni after a vigorous campaign to get Negroes to register to vote. A little more than three months later, on Aug. 13. Lamar Smith, a 63-year-old farmer, was shot to death on a crowded court-house square at Brookhaven, Miss. Smith also had been active in encouraging Negroes to register.

*NAACP - National Association for the Advancement of Colored People*
Woman at center of Emmett Till case tells author she fabricated testimony

Carolyn Bryant disappeared from public view after alleging Till harassed her in a grocery store. Sixty-two years later, it has emerged her story was not true

It was the lynching that outraged African Americans, spurred the civil rights movement and etched the victim’s name in history: Emmett Till. The 14-year-old Chicagoan was visiting relatives in the cotton country of the Mississippi delta on 24 August 1955 when he allegedly wolf-whistled at a white woman. Three days later his body was found in the Tallahatchie river. Till had a bullet hole in the head, an eye gouged out and other wounds. The murderers had wrapped barbed wire around his neck and weighted him down with a cotton gin fan.

It was a ghastly crime that changed the United States but the woman at the center of it, Carolyn Bryant, long remained an enigma. A few weeks after the murder, the then 21-year-old testified in court that Till had grabbed and verbally harassed her in a grocery store. “I was just scared to death,” she said. The all-white jury cleared her husband Roy Bryant and his half-brother JW Milam of the crime. They later publicly admitted their guilt, saying they wanted to warn other blacks. Carolyn Bryant disappeared from public view.

Now, 62 years later, it has emerged that she fabricated her testimony about Till making physical and verbal advances. “That part’s not true,” Bryant told Timothy Tyson, the author of a new book, The Blood of Emmet Till. That four-word confession, of sorts, has provided an unexpected coda to a story whose victim is commemorated annually.

Bryant spoke to Tyson, a Duke University senior research scholar, in 2007, when she was 72. The admission was not made public until now. Bryant, who is still alive at an undisclosed location, told the author she could not remember other details about the fleeting encounter with Till, who went into the store to buy gum. She did, however, express regret. “Nothing that boy did could ever justify what happened to him.” She said she “felt tender sorrow” for Till’s mother, Mamie Till-Mobley.

Bryant’s comments still leave questions over what precisely transpired in the grocery store but they do suggest its bloody and controversial aftermath marked her. “That case went a long way toward ruining her life,” Tyson told Vanity Fair. The author did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Friday.

Till’s mother insisted on an open-casket funeral in Chicago and Jet magazine published photos of his corpse, sparking revulsion and galvanising the civil rights movement. Rosa Parks said Till was on her mind in December 1955 when she refused give up her bus seat in Montgomery, Alabama, kickstarting nationwide protests. The killing has been the subject of a play by the Nobel laureate Toni Morrison, a poem by the Harlem Renaissance writer Langston Hughes, and a song by Bob Dylan.

Once acquitted of murder (the jury deliberated for barely an hour), Bryant’s husband and Milam were protected against further prosecution by the double jeopardy rule and so admitted the crime to Look magazine. “I’m no bully,” Milam said. “I never hurt a nigger in my life. But I just decided it was time a few people got put on notice … ‘Chicago boy,’ I said, ‘I’m tired of them sending your kind down here to stir up trouble, I’m going to make an example of you, just so everybody can know how me and my folks stand.’”

The case was reopened by the FBI in 2004 to see if any accomplices could be brought to justice. But in 2007, a grand jury decided there was insufficient evidence to bring charges.
When I was twelve, my parents had two talks with me.

One was the usual birds and bees. Well, I didn’t really get the usual version. My mom, Lisa, is a registered nurse, and she told me what went where, and what didn’t need to go here, there, or any damn where till I’m grown. Back then, I doubted anything was going anywhere anyway. While all the other girls sprouted breasts between sixth and seventh grade, my chest was as flat as my back.

The other talk was about what to do if a cop stopped me.

Momma fussed and told Daddy I was too young for that. He argued that I wasn’t too young to get arrested or shot.

“Starr-Starr, you do whatever they tell you to do,” he said. “Keep your hands visible. Don’t make any sudden moves. Only speak when they speak to you.”

I knew it must’ve been serious. Daddy has the biggest mouth of anybody I know, and if he said to be quiet, I needed to be quiet.

I hope somebody had the talk with Khalil.

He cusses under his breath, turns Tupac down, and maneuvers the Impala to the side of the street. We’re on Carnation where most of the houses are abandoned and half the streetlights are busted. Nobody around but us and the cop.

Khalil turns the ignition off. “Wonder what this fool wants.”

The officer parks and puts his brights on. I blink to keep from being blinded.

I remember something else Daddy said. *If you’re with somebody, you better hope they don’t have nothing on them, or both of y’all going down.*

“K, you don’t have anything in the car, do you?” I ask.

He watches the cop in his side mirror. “Nah.”

The officer approaches the driver’s door and taps the window. Khalil cranks the handle to roll it down. As if we aren’t blinded enough, the officer beams his flashlight in our faces.

“License, registration, and proof of insurance.”

Khalil breaks a rule—he doesn’t do what the cop wants. “What you pull us over for?”

“License, registration, and proof of insurance.”
“I said what you pull us over for?”


Khalil groans and takes his wallet out. The officer follows his movements with the flashlight.

My heart pounds loudly, but Daddy’s instructions echo in my head: *Get a good look at the cop’s face. If you can remember his badge number, that’s even better.*

With the flashlight following Khalil’s hands, I make out the numbers on the badge—one-fifteen. He’s white, mid-thirties to early forties, has a brown buzz cut and a thin scar over his top lip.

Khalil hands the officer his papers and license.

One-Fifteen looks over them. “Where are you two coming from tonight?”

“Nunya,” Khalil says, meaning none of your business. “What you pull me over for?”

“Your taillight’s broken.”

“So are you gon’ give me a ticket or what?” Khalil asks.

“You know what? Get out the car, smart guy.”

“Man, just give me my ticket—”

“Get out the car! Hands up, where I can see them.”

Khalil gets out with his hands up. One-Fifteen yanks him by his arm and pins him against the back door.

I fight to find my voice. “He didn’t mean—”

“Hands on the dashboard!” the officer barks at me. “Don’t move!”

I do what he tells me, but my hands are shaking too much to be still.

He pats Khalil down. “Okay, smart mouth, let’s see what we find on you today.”

“You ain’t gon’ find nothing,” Khalil says.

One-Fifteen pats him down two more times. He turns up empty.

“Stay here,” he tells Khalil. “And you,” he looks in the window at me. “Don’t move.”

I can’t even nod.

The officer walks back to his patrol car.
My parents haven’t raised me to fear the police, just to be smart around them. They told me it’s not smart to move while a cop has his back to you.

Khalil does. He comes to his door.

It’s not smart to make a sudden move.

Khalil does. He opens the driver’s door.

“You okay, Starr—”

*Pow!*

One. Khalil’s body jerks. Blood splatters from his back. He holds onto the door to keep himself upright.

*Pow!*

Two. Khalil gasps.

*Pow!*

Three. Khalil looks at me, stunned.

He falls to the ground.

I’m ten again, watching Natasha drop.

An ear-splitting scream emerges from my gut, explodes in my throat, and uses every inch of me to be heard.

Instinct says don’t move, but everything else says check on Khalil. I jump out the Impala and rush around to the other side. Khalil stares at the sky as if he hopes to see God. His mouth is open like he wants to scream. I scream loud enough for the both of us.

“No, no, no,” is all I can say, like I’m a year old and it’s the only word I know. I’m not sure how I end up on the ground next to him. My mom once said that if someone gets shot, try to stop the bleeding, but there’s so much blood. Too much blood.

“No, no, no.”

Khalil doesn’t move. He doesn’t utter a word. He doesn’t even look at me. His body stiffens, and he’s gone. I hope he sees God.

Someone else screams.

I blink through my tears. Officer One-Fifteen yells at me, pointing the same gun he killed my friend with.

I put my hands up.
A fire lit in Tottenham that burned Manchester: the rioters' story

Rioters from across England describe how it felt to be caught up in the chaos that engulfed the country last summer

Paul Lewis

Mon 5 Dec 2011

It was 6 August – two days after police shot Mark Duggan dead – and a small demonstration over his death was sliding into a riot. For three hours, Duggan's family and friends waited outside the police station for a senior police officer who never arrived. They left the protest when the crowds swelled, and began attacking the police cars.

The fires that began in Tottenham would burn through English towns and cities for four nights. The summer disturbances left five people dead, hundreds injured and more than 4,000 arrested. It was the most serious bout of civil unrest in a generation, with as many as 15,000 people taking to the streets.

In an investigation into how – and why – the disorder spread, we have interviewed 270 people who rioted in six major cities. Each had a different story to tell. But like Alex, their accounts challenge the many assumptions about the riots.

**Sunday 7 August, 12.15am**

"I could see the smoke from Edmonton," said Angela, 18, a student. "And I was like: 'Oh my God, I want to see what's happening.'" She arrived with friends to see more fires blazing along Tottenham High Road.

Following messages on their BlackBerry smartphones, Angela and her friends headed to take pictures of the fire engulfing a Carpetright store. Then they jumped into the car of a friend who said they were going to Wood Green.

Less than 100 yards away, James, a 19-year-old student from Hackney, was also thinking about leaving the area. He had headed to Tottenham with the intention of fighting police.

"I didn't plan to rob anything," he said. "Someone came up with the idea: if we spread this, could the police like control it? So like, let's go to Wood Green. I called as many people as I could: 'Oh, I hear everyone's going to go to Wood Green – call as many people as you can. Go to Wood Green.'"

He arrived to see people breaking into jewellery shops and a man running out of Holland & Barrett with protein shakes. "We had one motive, that was to get as many things as we can and sell on," he said. "The phone shop close to JD [Sports] got ripped apart," he said.
James stole several phones. "I think the looting came about because it was linked to police," he said. "We're showing them that, yeah, we're bigger than the police, we are actually bigger than the police. Fair enough, we are breaking the law and everything, but there's more of us than there are of you. So if we want to do this, we can do this. And you won't do anything to stop us."

Angela – the teenager taking pictures of the burning Carpetright store – was being driven to Wood Green along backstreets when she saw the commotion. "We saw lots of people in cars. They were like: 'Get what you can.'" They parked the car and walked along the high street to find the Shopping City mall being emptied.

"And then we saw H&M got smashed in too, and we went to H&M. Some of my friends took some of the clothes," she said. It was a surreal sight: "People were just running about really, like headless chickens. And I was just laughing about it. Like when my friends were walking with clothes in their hands, I was just like: 'Oh my God. You lot are mad, absolutely mad.'"

Angela and her friends put the looted clothes and some creams stolen from The Body Shop in a wheelie bin and pushed it home. They passed a supermarket that had been gutted by fire. "What are you going to set places on fire for?" she said. "This is a place where you go to shop sometimes and you want to set it on fire?" She said her sister lived nearby. "I know Asda's there but Aldi's cheaper. So, she's got nowhere else to get cheap stuff – but she's got kids."

She said she saw 10 police vans drive past her friends as they pushed their wheelie bin. "I was just thinking to myself: you see a group of girls, with a big wheelie bin going across the road and you're not going to stop them? They're not doing their job."

**Monday 8 August, 5pm**

The whole of Britain was waiting to see what would happen next. The answer was that the third day of riots would begin in Hackney, before spreading throughout London, and erupting in towns and cities across England.

It would be worse in scale and intensity than anything experienced over a similar period during the 1981 riots.

Andrew, a 16-year-old schoolboy, knew the riots were coming to his area, Hackney. "It was planned," he said. "Everyone knew: as soon as it comes 5 o'clock, start rioting." He saw all the young people from his area come together. "Basically, all the gangs put down all the beef [rivalry] for one day," he said, listing the names of local groups of teenagers. "Suwu red bandannas, Pembury, Mare Street, Well Street, Mother's Square – the whole of them, Holly Street."

Andrew added: "Police don't think we're rioting for a reason. They believe we're rioting because Mark Duggan died and we have no other reason. Like, we're rioting cos they're not giving us nothing to do, they're taking away EMA [educational maintenance allowance], taking away free travel, taking away certain allowances that teenagers have and they're not replacing it with anything good."
When it began, he started hurling bricks at police. "The frontline would be attacking the police while the backlines would be in the shop," he said. "So the frontline's holding off the police and then the people at the back are looting the shops. So it's like a formation."

Meanwhile, Catherine, 20, a college student who wants to be a primary school teacher, covered her face and started walking along a street in Peckham with her friends. Peckham was quiet, but they found a police car, smashed the windows, stole the radio and used a petrol bomb to set it on fire.

"It felt good, that police car – it felt really good," she said. "Especially when my friend took the radio and started saying all this hullabaloo over the radio and confusing them and all that. It was fair for us to do that."

Police recently broke her brother's nose, she claimed. "My little brother, he's always in trouble with the police. They have no respect, especially for my mum who's just a little old woman. She's always polite and stuff as well and they're always rude to my mum – had no respect for any of us.

"You get to the police station and they think they can sit there and take the p*** out of you so, obviously, in my eyes, I don't see them as good people."

Her friends wanted to go looting. "I was like no," she said. "I didn't want to rob anything. It was just the police, that's what I was totally against."

Back in Hackney, Andrew returned to the home he shares with his parents. "Had a shower, changed, chilled, smoked a bit," he said. "Then at about 1 o'clock in the morning went out again. Everyone got called saying, 'Yeah everyone's going to Ealing now. You lot best get there before everything gets looted.'"

**Monday, 11.40pm**

Around that time, the crowds in Toxteth, on the fringe of Liverpool city centre, were at the height of running battles with police. Charlie, a student in his 20s, said he just "moved with the current". "There must have been at least 200 people," he said. "It was just a horde, like a mosh pit." He watched as people jumped on to the roof of a moving Transit van and smashed the windscreen. "Cars got destroyed. Boss cars. Like Beemer, Mercedes. I'm sitting there watching kids just rain stones on them.

Charlie turned the corner to find police cars on fire. "There's this one kid with a golf club running up to the [police] Matrix van itself and repeatedly going bam bam bam. These two kids managed to get one of the doors open as they were driving back and forward. "I hate the police. I hate the fact that one time I've been stopped and searched on the street and this man's thought I had a weapon just because of the way I had a certain scarf," he said. "They talk as if they are above you."

Charlie refused to say whether he fought police that night. But he described the experience as "like a dream". "I was actually doing it. I felt alive, there's no word to explain it. It was like that first day it happened will always be the best day of my life for ever – I swear to God."
London riots 2011: 'We were getting hit all the time with missiles'

During the summer riots in 2011 police officers came under attack from thousands of people involved in civil unrest and looting. Lawlessness broke out in cities across England in perhaps the largest example of disorder in post-war Britain.

Here, two former Metropolitan Police officers describe what it was like policing London, where the riots began.

The riots began following a protest in Tottenham over the shooting of Mark Duggan by police.

Sgt Simon Willmott and a fellow officer filming the disorder found themselves facing a violent mob of several hundred people.

He only had a see-through plastic shield to protect himself.

"I was on the front with the shields with the other officer who was doing the filming, and we were getting hit," he said.

The pair were hit with bottles and fruit.

"It just seemed surreal. We were then getting attacked with tins of baked beans and soup. We weren't trained for that.

"We were getting hit all the time with missiles. I thought it is only going to be a matter of time when we will get hit with something that will cause me serious injury."

While not specifically afraid for his life, at the back of his mind was the knowledge he could be shot at too.

"Being in an area such as this [Tottenham, north London] with the link to firearms that it has, there's that risk of threat as well," he added.

Flitting through his mind was the thought: "Is a gunman going to come out of the rioters and suddenly shoot at you?"

Years of training and experience stopped him from being paralysed with fear though.

"You are working with your colleagues who you trust and you're there to do a job. At the end of the day, whilst there were several hundred, if not thousand, people causing destruction on the streets of Tottenham, we were there to protect many other thousands that were in that area."

Mr Willmott, a police officer of 32 years, retired from the Met in 2013, but for him the memories of 2011 are still vivid.
"I was involved in policing many violent disorders in my career, but this was without doubt the most serious one.

"It went on for the longest, the intensity was quite overwhelming and the destruction on the night will forever stay in my mind."

Buildings burned down, windows were smashed and glass, bottles and other debris clogged the roads.

In his experience "serious disorders don't last long".

"I expected this one to sort of peak-out quite soon, but it just seemed to go on, and on, and on."

It was light when we he started his shift and it was light when he and his colleagues finished the following morning as more officers moved in to replace them.

He said walking down Tottenham's High Road on the second day of the riots was like surveying a "war-torn scene".

Afterwards he spent hours poring through the tapes he and his colleague had filmed to see if they could identify any of the rioters and looters.

"It was an opportunists' night, people came and seized what was a peaceful demonstration - and in some eyes a justifiable one - and turned that around and attacked the community."

"They wanted to hurt people, regardless, I think, of who they were."

https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-36977810
The Young’uns – Be the Man

Matthew Ogston is my name, and you’ll not hear me mourn
I will never live in shame, I will not walk alone
For though my love took his own life because of bigotry
I’ll be the man, be the man, be the man I was born to be
I was born to be

And my love, he was warm and kind, and my love, he was strong
And when his brown eyes first met mine, I knew he was the one
And though I walk a silent road, he will walk with me
If I be the man, be the man, be the man I was born to be
I was born to be

There is a cross upon the hill, its arms are open wide
There’s a star upon a windowsill, that beckons me inside
But I’ll walk beneath a crescent moon, I’ll walk until they see
That I’ll be the man, be the man, be the man I was born to be
I was born to be

For the man that I was born to be, is a man who lives for love
Kindness, and charity, but most of all, love
And there’s no God that I’ve heard of, who could disagree
So I’ll be the man, be the man, be the man I was born to be
I was born to be

Wherever love is called a sin, and families are torn
Wherever mums can’t love their sons, because of how they’re born
Wherever there are hands to hold, that’s where I will be
And I’ll be the man, be the man, be the man I was born to be
I was born to

Be the man, be the man, be the man I was born to be
I was born to be
Before Rosa Parks, There Was Claudette Colvin
By Margot Adler
2009

Rosa Parks is well-known for her refusal to give up her seat to a white person on a bus in Alabama. A famous bus boycott followed because of her act of protest. However, Parks was not the first person to refuse to give up her seat. In this informational text, Margot Adler discusses the lesser known actions of Claudette Colvin and why her activism has gone unnoticed in comparison to Parks. As you read, take notes on what inspired Claudette Colvin's actions and how leaders of the Civil Rights Movement responded.

Few people know the story of Claudette Colvin: When she was 15, she refused to move to the back of the bus and give up her seat to a white person — nine months before Rosa Parks did the very same thing.

Most people know about Parks and the Montgomery, Ala., bus boycott[1] that began in 1955, but few know that there were a number of women who refused to give up their seats on the same bus system. Most of the women were quietly fined, and no one heard much more.

Colvin was the first to really challenge the law.

Now a 69-year-old retiree, Colvin lives in the Bronx. She remembers taking the bus home from high school on March 2, 1955, as clear as if it were yesterday.

The bus driver ordered her to get up and she refused, saying she'd paid her fare and it was her constitutional right. Two police officers put her in handcuffs and arrested her. Her school books went flying off her lap.

“All I remember is that I was not going to walk off the bus voluntarily,” Colvin says.

It was Negro history month, and at her segregated school they had been studying black leaders like Harriet Tubman, the runaway slave who led more than 70 slaves to freedom through the network of safe houses known as the Underground Railroad. They were also studying about Sojourner Truth, a former slave who became an abolitionist[2] and women’s rights activist.

1. **Boycott** (noun): the refusal to have dealings with a person or organization as a means of protest
2. a person who advocated or supported ending slavery
The class had also been talking about the injustices they were experiencing daily under the Jim Crow segregation laws, like not being able to eat at a lunch counter.

“We couldn’t try on clothes,” Colvin says. “You had to take a brown paper bag and draw a diagram of your foot… and take it to the store. Can you imagine all of that in my mind? My head was just too full of black history, you know, the oppression that we went through. It felt like Sojourner Truth was on one side pushing me down, and Harriet Tubman was on the other side of me pushing me down. I couldn’t get up.”

Colvin also remembers the moment the jail door closed. It was just like a Western movie, she says.

“And then I got scared, and panic come over me, and I started crying. Then I started saying the Lord’s Prayer,” she says.

‘Twice Toward Justice’

Now her story is the subject of a new book, *Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice*.

Author Phil Hoose says that despite a few articles about her in the Birmingham press and in USA Today, and brief mentions in some books about the civil rights movement, most people don’t know about the role Colvin played in the bus boycotts.

Hoose couldn’t get over the teenager’s actions, nine months before Rosa Parks, “in the same city, in the same bus system, with very tough consequences, hauled off the bus, handcuffed, jailed and nobody really knew about it.”

He also believes Colvin is important because she challenged the law in court, one of four women plaintiffs in *Browder v. Gayle*, the court case that successfully overturned bus segregation laws in Montgomery and Alabama.

There are many reasons why Claudette Colvin has been pretty much forgotten. She hardly ever told her story when she moved to New York City. In her new community, hardly anyone was talking about integration; instead, most people were talking about black enterprises, black power and Malcolm X.

When asked why she is little known and why everyone thinks only of Rosa Parks, Colvin says the NAACP and all the other black organizations felt Parks would be a good icon because “she was an adult. They didn’t think teenagers would be reliable.”

She also says Parks had the right hair and the right look.

“Her skin texture was the kind that people associate with the middle class,” says Colvin. “She fit that profile.”

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3. state and local laws that enforced racial segregation in the South
4. Oppression (*noun*): prolonged, cruel, and unjust treatment or control
5. a movement emphasizing racial pride and the creation of black political and cultural institutions
6. an African American Muslim minister and human rights activist
7. the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, founded in 1909
David Garrow, a historian and the author of *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference*, says people may think that Parks’ action was spontaneous, but black civic leaders had been thinking about what to do about the Montgomery buses for years.

After Colvin’s arrest, she found herself shunned\(^8\) by parts of her community. She experienced various difficulties and became pregnant. Civil rights leaders felt she was an inappropriate symbol for a test case.

Parks was the secretary of the NAACP. She was well-known and respected and, says Garrow, Parks had a “natural gravitas”\(^9\) and was an “inherently impressive person.”

At the same time, Garrow believes attention to Colvin is a healthy corrective, because “the real reality of the movement was often young people and often more than 50 percent women.” The images you most often see are men in suits.

Hoose says he believes Colvin understands the pragmatism\(^10\) that pushed Parks to the fore,\(^11\) but “on the other hand, she did it.”

Hoose says the stories of Parks and the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. are wonderful, but those are the stories of people in their 30s and 40s. Colvin was 15. Hoose feels his book will bring a fresh teen’s perspective to the struggle to end segregation.

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8. **Shun (verb):** to avoid something (or someone) out of fear or dislike

9. dignity; seriousness

10. practical attitude or policy

11. to the front
I do not come here as an advocate, because whatever position the suffrage movement may occupy in the United States of America, in England it has passed beyond the realm of advocacy and it has entered into the sphere of practical politics. It has become the subject of revolution and civil war, and so tonight I am not here to advocate woman suffrage. American suffragists can do that very well for themselves.

I am here as a soldier who has temporarily left the field of battle in order to explain - it seems strange it should have to be explained - what civil war is like when civil war is waged by women. I am not only here as a soldier temporarily absent from the field at battle; I am here - and that, I think, is the strangest part of my coming - I am here as a person who, according to the law courts of my country, it has been decided, is of no value to the community at all; and I am adjudged because of my life to be a dangerous person, under sentence of penal servitude in a convict prison.

It is about eight years since the word militant was first used to describe what we were doing. It was not militant at all, except that it provoked militancy on the part of those who were opposed to it. When women asked questions in political meetings and failed to get answers, they were not doing anything militant. In Great Britain it is a custom, a time-honoured one, to ask questions of candidates for parliament and ask questions of members of the government. No man was ever put out of a public meeting for asking a question. The first people who were put out of a political meeting for asking questions, were women; they were brutally ill-used; they found themselves in jail before 24 hours had expired.

We were called militant, and we were quite willing to accept the name. We were determined to press this question of the enfranchisement of women to the point where we were no longer to be ignored by the politicians.

You have two babies very hungry and wanting to be fed. One baby is a patient baby, and waits indefinitely until its mother is ready to feed it. The other baby is an impatient baby and cries lustily, screams and kicks and makes everybody unpleasant until it is fed. Well, we know perfectly well which baby is attended to first. That is the whole history of politics. You have to make more noise than anybody else, you have to make yourself more obtrusive than anybody else, you have to fill all the papers more than anybody else, in fact you have to be there all the time and see that they do not snow you under.

Well, in our civil war people have suffered, but you cannot make omelettes without breaking eggs; you cannot have civil war without damage to something. The great thing is to see that no more damage is done than is absolutely necessary, that you do just as much as will arouse enough feeling to bring about peace, to bring about an honourable peace for the combatants; and that is what we have been doing.

We entirely prevented stockbrokers in London from telegraphing to stockbrokers in Glasgow and vice versa: for one whole day telegraphic communication was entirely stopped. I am not going to tell you how it was done. I am not going to tell you how the women got to the mains and cut the wires; but it was done. It was done, and it was proved to the authorities that weak women, suffrage women, as we are supposed to be, had enough ingenuity to create a
situation of that kind. Now, I ask you, if women can do that, is there any limit to what we can do except the limit we put upon ourselves?

"Put them in prison," they said, "that will stop it." But it didn't stop it at all: instead of the women giving it up, more women did it, and more and more and more women did it until there were 300 women at a time, who had not broken a single law, only "made a nuisance of themselves" as the politicians say.

They have said to us, government rests upon force, the women haven't force, so they must submit. Well, we are showing them that government does not rest upon force at all: it rests upon consent. As long as women consent to be unjustly governed, they can be, but directly women say: "We withhold our consent, we will not be governed any longer so long as that government is unjust." Not by the forces of civil war can you govern the very weakest woman. You can kill that woman, but she escapes you then; you cannot govern her. No power on earth can govern a human being, however feeble, who withholding his or her consent.

When they put us in prison at first, simply for taking petitions, we submitted; we allowed them to dress us in prison clothes; we allowed them to put us in solitary confinement; we allowed them to put us amongst the most degraded of criminals; we learned of some of the appalling evils of our so-called civilisation that we could not have learned in any other way. It was valuable experience, and we were glad to get it.

I have seen men smile when they heard the words "hunger strike", and yet I think there are very few men today who would be prepared to adopt a "hunger strike" for any cause. It is only people who feel an intolerable sense of oppression who would adopt a means of that kind. It means you refuse food until you are at death's door, and then the authorities have to choose between letting you die, and letting you go; and then they let the women go.

Now, that went on so long that the government felt that they were unable to cope. It was [then] that, to the shame of the British government, they set the example to authorities all over the world of feeding sane, resisting human beings by force. There may be doctors in this meeting: if so, they know it is one thing to feed by force an insane person; but it is quite another thing to feed a sane, resisting human being who resists with every nerve and with every fibre of her body the indignity and the outrage of forcible feeding. Now, that was done in England, and the government thought they had crushed us. But they found that it did not quell the agitation, that more and more women came in and even passed that terrible ordeal, and they were obliged to let them go.

Now, I want to say to you who think women cannot succeed, we have brought the government of England to this position, that it has to face this alternative: either women are to be killed or women are to have the vote. I ask American men in this meeting, what would you say if in your state you were faced with that alternative, that you must either kill them or give them their citizenship? Well, there is only one answer to that alternative, there is only one way out - you must give those women the vote.

So here am I. I come in the intervals of prison appearance. I come after having been four times imprisoned under the "Cat and Mouse Act", probably going back to be rearrested as soon as I set my foot on British soil. I come to ask you to help to win this fight. If we win it, this hardest of all fights, then, to be sure, in the future it is going to be made easier for women all over the world to win their fight when their time comes.
This extract is set in 1884.

The showman pulled back the curtain and revealed a bent figure crouching on a stool and covered by a brown blanket. In front of it, on a tripod, was a large brick heated by a Bunsen burner. Over this the creature was huddled to warm itself. It never moved when the curtain was drawn back. Locked up in an empty shop and lit by the faint blue light of the gas jet, this hunched-up figure was the embodiment of loneliness.

The showman – speaking as if to a dog – called out harshly: “Stand up!” The thing arose slowly and let the blanket that covered its head and back fall to the ground. There stood revealed the most disgusting specimen of humanity that I have ever seen. In the course of my profession I had come upon lamentable deformities of the face due to injury or disease, but at no time had I met with such a degraded or perverted version of a human being as this lone figure displayed. He was naked to the waist, his feet were bare and he wore a pair of threadbare trousers.

The most striking feature about him was his enormous and mis-shapened head.

From the brow there projected a huge bony mass like a loaf, while from the back of the head hung a bag of spongy, fungous-looking skin, the surface of which was comparable to a brown cauliflower. On the top of the skull were a few long lank hairs. The osseous growth on the forehead almost occluded one eye. From the upper jaw there projected another mass of bone. It protruded from the mouth like a pink stump, turning the upper lip inside out and making of the mouth a mere slobbering aperture. The nose was merely a lump of flesh, only recognizable as a nose from its position. The face was no more capable of expression than a block of gnarled wood. The back was horrible, because from it hung, as far down as the
middle of the thigh, huge, sack-like masses of flesh covered by the same loathsome cauliflower skin.

The hand was large and clumsy – a fin or paddle rather than a hand. The thumb had the appearance of a radish, while the fingers might have been thick, tuberous roots. As a limb, it was almost useless. The other arm was remarkable by contrast. It was not only normal but was, moreover, a delicately shaped limb covered with fine skin and provided with a beautiful hand which any woman might have envied.

From the chest hung a bag of the same repulsive flesh. It was like a dewlap suspended from the neck of a lizard.

The man also had hip disease, which had left him permanently lame, so that he could only walk with a stick. He was thus denied all means of escape from his tormentors. As he told me later, he could never run away. Also, there arose from the fungous skin-growth with which he was almost covered, a very sickening stench which was hard to tolerate.

From the showman I learnt nothing about the Elephant Man, except that he was English, that his name was John Merrick and that he was twenty-one years of age.
Chapter 1, The Letter ‘A’

I was born in the Rotunda Hospital, on June 5th, 1932. Mine was a difficult birth, I am told. Both mother and son almost died. I remained in hospital for some time, without name, for I wasn’t baptized until my mother was well enough to bring me to church.

It was mother who first saw that there was something wrong with me. I was about four months old at the time. She noticed that my head had a habit of falling backwards whenever she tried to feed me. That was the first warning sign.

Then she became aware of other defects as I got older. She saw that my hands were clenched nearly all of the time and were inclined to twine behind my back. At six months I could not sit up without having a mountain of pillows around me; at twelve months it was the same.

Very worried by this, mother told father her fears, and they decided to seek medical advice without any further delay. I was a little over a year old when they began to take me to hospitals and clinics, convinced that there was something definitely wrong with me, something which they could not understand or name, but which was very real and disturbing.

Almost every doctor who saw and examined me, labelled me a very interesting but also a hopeless case. Many told mother very gently that I was mentally defective and would remain so. That was a hard blow to a young mother who had already reared five healthy children. The doctors were so very sure of
themselves that mother’s faith in me seemed almost an impertinence. They assured her that nothing could be done for me.

She refused to accept this truth, the inevitable truth – as it then seemed – that I was beyond cure, beyond saving, even beyond hope. She could not and would not believe that I was an imbecile, as the doctors told her. In spite of all the doctors and specialists told her, she would not agree.

Finding that the doctors could not help in any way, mother decided there and then to take matters into her own hands. I was her child, and therefore part of the family. No matter how dull and incapable I might grow up to be, she was determined to treat me on the same plane as the others, and not as ‘queer one’ in the back room who was never spoken of when visitors were present.

That was a momentous decision as far as my future life was concerned. It meant that I would always have my mother on my side to help me fight all the battles that were to come, and to inspire me with new strength when I was almost beaten. But it wasn’t easy for her because now the relatives and friends had decided otherwise.

“For your own sake,” they told her, “don’t look to the boy as you would to the others; it would only break your heart in the end.” Luckily for me, mother and father held out against the lot of them.

But mother wasn’t content just to say that I was not an idiot, she set out to prove it, not because of any rigid sense of duty, but out of love. That is why she was so successful.
My disabilities are invisible. I shouldn’t have to prove them to strangers

Isabelle Jani-Friend
I’ve been told off for using disabled services as I ‘don’t look ill’. People with hidden illnesses need understanding and support
Fri 9 Aug 2019 14.33 BST Last modified on Fri 9 Aug 2019 17.59 BST

‘I managed to take the last priority disabled seat on a packed Central line train … until I was asked to give it up for an elderly passenger.’ Photograph: Alex Segre/Rex Features

I was recently on a packed Central line train into London. Luckily, I managed to take the last priority disabled seat. My osteoporosis and the fatigue I experience meant it would be hard for me to stand for the 40-minute journey to Oxford Circus. I felt a sense of relief that I had managed to find a space. That was until I was approached by a middle-aged woman, who quite confidently asked me to move in order to give up my seat for an elderly passenger.

Of course, I thought, the elderly passenger deserves a seat. But I do too, although it’s not immediately obvious why. With other passengers shaking their heads and murmuring comments of disapproval, and me too embarrassed to make a claim for the seat, I moved. It’s true that I appear well, but standing for a prolonged period of time left me feeling weak and in pain. That said, I am used to keeping quiet.

Invisible illnesses come in many different forms, from arthritis to ME and Crohn’s disease. They present themselves with varying degrees of severity and a wide range of symptoms, including chronic pain, weakness and mental health problems. Despite being a constant presence in our lives, they are not obvious to the onlooker.

I was six when I was diagnosed with cystic fibrosis, a chronic condition that affects the lungs and digestive system. It is caused by a defective gene that allows secretions to block passageways in the lungs and pancreas. It also affects bones, the liver, sinuses and fertility. Despite my rigorous daily treatments – which take up to three hours – regular hospital admissions, the huge list of other diagnoses it comes with and a shortened life expectancy, I do not look ill.

Of course, there are some obvious benefits to looking healthy. It can give people with illnesses control over how much of them we share with others; it allows us to go about much of our daily lives without facing certain kinds of prejudice and
discrimination. Knowing someone has a disability more often than not changes the way you perceive them. Whether the reaction is discriminatory or empathetic, this unwanted attention can make life feel suffocating. In being open about our disability, we unfortunately have to accept the reality that people will treat us differently.

Next time you see someone sitting in a priority space, remember there is often more to a situation than meets the eye

Even so, it’s clear there is a need to raise awareness of the existence and legitimacy of invisible illnesses. Using disabled facilities as a young person who appears to be well leaves me feeling stressed and ashamed: in the past, people have told me I shouldn’t be using the disabled toilets when in public places, as I “don’t look ill”. This, to them, means I can’t be disabled.

But we need to get better at recognising not all illnesses are obvious at first sight. More often than not I have felt I have to prove I am ill in order to get access to services I deserve; this leads to a feeling of isolation and even fear about going out. Schemes such as the “please offer me a seat” initiative on the underground are a step forward, as they give those living with invisible illnesses confidence that passengers will accommodate their needs, while avoiding the need to “prove” their disability to strangers.

Blue badges are also being extended to those with hidden disabilities. But having the law on your side isn’t the whole solution. Getting into trouble for using a disabled parking space because you “look fine” is a traumatic experience some of my friends with cystic fibrosis have been through and it’s the main reason I still haven’t applied for my badge, despite having had the right to do so for years.

Ultimately, more efforts to educate the public need to be made at a national level, with schools teaching children about the wide range of disabilities. For the moment, people with hidden disabilities need to talk about their conditions and stand up for their right to access services and facilities. That’s easier said than done, of course. So next time you see someone sitting in a priority space on the train or leaving a disabled toilet, remember there is often more to a situation than meets the eye.

• Isabelle Jani-Friend is a recent graduate of the University of Southampton

Solo travel is about freedom, in every sense of the word

Solo travel is on the rise, but Rosita Boland has always found it the most adventurous and rewarding way to see the world

Rosita Boland

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For years, decades in fact, I’ve puzzled over the knee-jerk response most people have when I tell them I (mostly) travel alone.

“You’re so brave.”

Why is it that a woman travelling alone, as I have often done for months at a time, is perceived to be “brave”, whereas men who travel alone are entirely unremarkable? Besides, in my case at least, it’s not true. You are only brave or courageous when you are afraid of something but still do it anyway. I have never been afraid of travelling alone. It doesn’t mean that there aren’t things along the way that cause me deep fear, such as overloaded buses with bald tyres on mountain roads with sheer drops, but being by myself out in the world has never scared me.

The chief joy of travelling alone is the simple act of just doing it: crossing that invisible border in your head before you ever leave home, by deciding you want to see the world anyway, even if it means doing it by yourself. What’s the alternative if you don’t happen to have a partner at certain times in your life but still long to travel, as I do? Stay at home and never go anywhere? Deny yourself all those incredible experiences you will definitely have, in addition to the more difficult ones, which you will also definitely have? It’s that prospect, the one of self-imposed stasis, that has always incited true fear. Travel has always been far too important to me to sit around waiting for a partner in crime to come along and join me.

The first time I travelled alone was by default, when I was 19. I was due to go Interrailing with a friend at the end of the summer. She was an au pair in Germany at the time, and announced by letter two days before my departure that she would be ditching me halfway through the month, at Vienna. She had made a more-exotic new friend, Freya, a fellow au pair, who had invited her to Finland. It was too late by then
to rope in another friend, so it was either go home after Vienna, or keep going by myself. I kept going. I got on trains by myself, checked into hostels by myself, found my way around by myself. It was weird, initially, and then I got so subsumed by the atmospheric glory of Venice and the exhilaration of the overnight trains that I stopped fretting about travelling alone without even noticing.

When I got back to Ireland after that trip, I felt proud of myself. I had done something I had assumed would be hard and not much fun, and it had turned out to be not hard at all and mostly astounding. My one souvenir was a necklace of colourful gold-infused glass beads I bought at a tiny shop in Murano, from an Italian woman I somehow communicated with in my dire French. She explained her son sourced the beads, and she strung them. I survived on bread and bananas for two days after buying them, so tight was my budget.

Years later, while browsing at a London market, I came upon a stall run by an Italian couple selling Venetian-sourced items. The man spotted the beads, which I wore coiled around my wrist as a bracelet. He asked to examine them and, thrillingly, pointed out six beads that were more than 100 years old. I still have those precious, storied beads; evidence of my first solo adventures.

That was three decades ago, and since then I have travelled all over the world, usually alone. I’ve carried the same rucksack I have had since the age of 25: a modest 45-litre-capacity one, that is now more or less knackered, but I cannot bear to replace it. It has become as familiar to me as a carapace. It’s small and light enough, even when full, to walk for miles with but large enough for all the essentials.

Travel to me is about freedom, in every sense that the horizons of that immense and beautiful word suggests. Hence the small rucksack that I don’t have to depend on anyone else to carry. I don’t like carrying anything valuable and until I had an iPad, never did.

The greatest gift of solo travel has been those I’ve met along the way. I may have set off alone each time but I’ve encountered many people who became important to me: other travellers, whom I would never have met had I stayed at home; people who changed the course of my life. I met my ex-fiance in Kathmandu and a long-term partner in Palenque, Mexico. I met lifelong friends in Australia, Poland, Hungary, Turkey, India, Indonesia and many other places.

When you’re travelling alone, you have to make an effort to talk to other people. I have always loved this part of travel. (Or rather, loved it until everyone started looking at their screens instead.) You might know from guidebooks what you can expect to see but you can never know who you will meet. In Bali, halfway through my last extended period of travel (six months), I saw a sign outside a cafe that read, “We have wifi so you don’t have to talk to each other”. It was one of the most depressing things I’d ever seen. But I kept on talking to people anyway.
In 1992 the writer, Anne Mustoe, cycled through India. Here she has reached Bombay.

**Two Wheels in the Dust**
The starving millions of India overwhelmed me as I cycled through the outskirts of Bombay.

As India’s boom city, it draws the poor like a magnet from the countryside. Many of them end up sleeping on the streets in utter destitution, while others live in cardboard and sacking shacks on waste ground further out. The ones who succeed in scratching a living move into shantytowns. There, they settle among the rubbish tips, by some fetid black stream, and build their hovels of mud or packing cases, roofed with corrugated iron. Until I cycled through them, I would never have believed that people could survive in such abject conditions. On the waste ground, they were filthy and bedraggled, starvelings without hope. But when I got to the shantytowns, I noticed a difference in the air. By some miracle of ingenuity, families emerged from their hovels looking neat and clean. There was faltering electricity and even a few television aerials. These people were on their way up in the world. As I approached the city from Thane, I passed through every gradation of poverty. People stared at me, but nowhere did I meet with hostility. I was not a voyeur. I was a cyclist. And I didn’t take photographs.

To keep your sanity in India, you have to switch off from the poverty and squalor, because there’s nothing you can do about it. Until the Indians control their population growth, and until their amazingly wealthy minority takes more responsibility for the welfare of the majority, they will never be able to raise their standard of living. The population has more than doubled since Independence and the infrastructure left by the British is crumbling under the weight of numbers. Government schemes for education and welfare drown in the sea of children. Although they educate more of them each year, the proportion of illiterates grows. Meanwhile, corruption in many states syphons off what little money is available.

So not through callousness, but as a kind of self-protection, I averted my eyes from the beggars and street-dwellers when I went for a stroll along Strand Road to Apollo Bunder. The evening air was balmy and there was a sliver of new moon. Peanut-vendors, snake-charmers and performing monkeys clustered round the Gateway of India and along the harbour walls. India’s most famous hotel, the Taj Mahal, blazed with lights at one end of the promenade, while a dance at the Yacht Club lit up the other. Families were out enjoying the cool of the evening. Some were Indian, but they were almost outnumbered by the white-clad armies of Arabs, who flock to Bombay with their wives and children for business, liquor and shopping. It was all very cosmopolitan, even Mediterranean, and I felt really at home there. To complete my enjoyment, I went to Leopold’s, the tourist hang-out on Colaba Causeway, for a plate of fish and chips – a gastronomic delight after six weeks of curry!
Is Instagram ruining travel? The short answer is it’s a bit hysterical

Bridie Jabour
We’re ruining the entire planet so, as ever, there’s something more worthy to fret over
@bkjabour
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‘I cannot say for sure whether Instagram, or social media for that matter, is a net good or a net bad because it probably isn’t either’ Photograph: sharoncudworth/Getty Images/RooM RF

When I moved to Sydney five years ago, I found out about a magical place called Gordons Bay from my friend’s boyfriend’s friend. I went to explore and found a stunning inlet with crystal-blue water and only a few people sitting on the rocks. I went most weekends that summer, enjoying swimming, snorkelling and general lazing at what felt like far from the enormous eastern suburbs crowds.

It wasn’t exactly a secret place. It’s along the Bondi-Coogee coastal walk, but the path passes above it and it doesn’t have any lifeguards. I assumed that’s what kept many people away.

Instacrammed: the big fib at the heart of New Zealand picture-perfect peaks

Read more

Last time I was there you could barely move on the rocks, and there was not one, but two, giant pink flamingoes in the water.

Did I mention how picturesque Gordons Bay is? Really picturesque. Instagram-worthy picturesque. So Instagram-worthy it’s become one of the photo-taking meccas of Sydney. I have no scientific evidence but the rise of Gordons Bay has coincided with the rise of the phenomenon of “going places for the ‘gram”. I suspect the bay’s popularity may have something to do with that.

People also seem unable to visit the McIver Women’s Baths (as close to a spiritual place as I have ever experienced) or Icebergs in Bondi without declaring
via Instagram they were there and it’s still as attractive as the last time someone visited. But Gordons Bay has got off lightly it seems.

Hyams beach village in Jervis Bay, which is said to have the world’s whitest sand, has had to employ traffic controllers and turn people away as up to 5,000 cars per day try to visit a village with 400 car spaces. Why so suddenly popular? It’s become a “social media phenomenon”.

In New Zealand people are queuing for up to an hour to create a photo that has the illusion of seclusion at one of the most spectacular spots in the photogenic country.

A barely-known beach in Japan had 50,000 visitors in July and August last year as they sought a “mirror-effect” shot with the fiery dusk.

TripAdvisor and Instagram may take some of the imagination out of travel but who has time to have imagination?

There’s an endless supply of articles bemoaning Instagram “ruining” photography and even “ruining” travel. Is the Instagram generation ruining these locales? The short answer is it’s a bit hysterical and, anyway, we’re ruining the entire planet so, as ever, there’s something more worthy to fret over.

But the longer answer: well, maybe Instagram is ruining some things.

It is easy to lament the sensation of visiting places just for the ‘gram as a sign of an increasingly self absorbed society at worst, and unoriginal at best. But we cannot just blame Instagram for these places being mauled by people. Instagram is just the natural progression of what was begun by Lonely Planet and then TripAdvisor – giving people a guaranteed AMAZING/ INCREDIBLE/ BEST EVER travel experience to brag to everyone at home about.

As people have become wealthier and air travel more accessible, the world has grown smaller. It’s not a a particularly revelatory observation to say we are travelling more but in the Instagram and TripAdvisor age what many people seem to have lost sight of is: travel can be a bit shit.

There’s the actual flight, the airline queues, paying $50 in your own currency for an incredibly ordinary breakfast, bad weather, boredom in art galleries, fatigue, sore feet, underwhelming iconic sites, enforced checkout times hours before you have to be somewhere, heavy luggage, dirty underwear, missing your bed; the list goes on.

So why risk a bad Schweinebraten in Berlin when you can go to Clubrestaurant am Wannsee? TripAdvisor and Instagram may take some of the imagination out of travel but who has time to have imagination? We have an expectation of ourselves to wring the productivity out of every moment, even in our down time.
People are hungry for social media to be evil, because if it’s bad then it must be the reason for a lot of bad in our world – such as the rise of Nazis, rigged elections and a bone deep malaise, and not, say, human nature and late-stage capitalism.

I cannot say for sure whether Instagram, or social media for that matter, is a net good or a net bad because it probably isn’t either. Every morning many members of my family – my siblings, my parents, my cousins, my aunts and uncles – take a photo of wherever we are and send it to each other with GM written on it for “good morning”. My uncle said at Christmas that he feels like he has watched my son grow up over the year despite only actually getting to see him twice in that time.

Those are good things about social media. The bad things are potentially manipulated elections through collusion with Russia, hefty personal data breaches and beautiful beaches becoming overwhelmed with tourists.

It doesn’t seem a particularly balanced ledger upon close inspection but people are not going to stop using social media. Instagram could be ruining some beautiful places, but people have been ruining beautiful places on Earth since the beginning of time.

Cash Peters is a British journalist living in America. Here he is on a remote South Sea Island making a TV programme.

Stranded on Vanuatu

Despite the hotel being a mere few feet from the water’s edge, where you’d think there’d be a breeze, there isn’t. The air in the main bar-lounge is unbearably hot and sticky, another harbinger, I suppose, of what lies ahead. Seriously, you could steam broccoli in here. And of course, that makes the place a magnet to flies. Bluebottles especially. Big chubby ones carve a zigzag path between tables, coming in to land like ghastly winged tumours in my hair and on my bare arms to get at my sweat.

Settling down in a chair on the deck, I watch the sun slide dramatically into the ocean in a tantrum of citrus hues, before finally throwing itself over the horizon. In its wake a dense, hostile darkness descends, the likes of which I’ve never encountered before.

Once the light fades in Vanuatu, you’re as good as blind. It’s coal-shaft black out there. Ghoulishly, back-of-your-closet black. Convulsing flames in small kerosene lamps distributed among tables in the restaurant do their best to provide occasional golden pockets of reassurance, but it’s not enough to make the slightest dent on the monolithic emptiness of the world beyond this one.

At my feet, a lazy surf gurgles and eddies into rocky inlets barely visible through the gauze of night. After that, several yards out and just below the surface, lies a ring of coral one hundred metres deep. Then nothing. You don’t touch land again for another four thousand miles - four thousand! - not until you hit the Great Barrier Reef. That fact alone has me totally creeped out.

With the onset of night, I feel a slight chill skitter across the back of my neck. A fleeting, barely perceptible breath, like the icy touch of winter.

A warning? Telling me I’ve committed to something I shouldn’t have.

‘You idiot, signing that goddamned contract! You know you didn’t want to. Now look at the mess you’re in.’

Suddenly, the world I’m used to and feel comfortable in - of leafy suburbs, of food stores open around the clock, movie theatres, Starbucks on every corner, my beautiful home – feels like it’s in a different galaxy.

Once, when I was a little kid in England, I lost my parents in a department store. They walked off in one direction and I got side-tracked and ran off in another. Before I realised I couldn’t see them anymore, it was already too late; they’d gone and I was lost.

Every child has moments like that. Most, by the time they get to be adults, have assimilated them and moved on. For some reason, I never did. That sense of abject abandonment, the helplessness, the distress I felt sitting in the rug department crying my eyes out that day, has stayed with me all these years: the dread of going unmissed, the fear that nobody knows I’m here, nobody cares, and nobody’s coming back for me. And that same thumbprint of anxiety returns to haunt me once again now, as I look out from the deck of the hotel at...well, nothing.
Our tents were pitched right at the water’s edge. Water hyacinths floated in front of us, and across the inlet we could see Mwanza, a vibrant African city that seemed to grow even as we watched it. I sat there on an inlet of a huge and beautiful expanse of water and thought about the role this mighty lake had played in the great explorations of the past.

The next morning, at 6:00 a.m. exactly, the fish eagles screeched their mocking cry. It was a wonderful way to wake up. An ibis bird also made its hideous shriek as it flew across the bay in front of our camp on the water. A few minutes later, we were treated to a spectacular sunrise. At first, a few glimmers of golden light; then the huge, red ball rose over the hills behind Mwanza. Apart from the occasional fishing boat, the scene was undisturbed. Little egrets and kites silhouetted themselves against the rising sun. An idyllic spot. This would be a good way to start every morning. No other sounds. Just the birds and the water lapping quietly on the shores of Lake Victoria.

Our plan was to go by the local ferry to Mwanza. We managed to get to the ferry terminal well before 9:00 a.m., but already the crowds were so thick that we were not sure we could get on. The ferry, with us on it, eventually left at 9:30 a.m. The day got hotter and hotter with each minute. The ferry was packed with buses, petrol tanks, vans, land cruisers, jeeps, fuel tankers, cars — and people. The people pressed up against the front of the ferry, along the sides and against the rails. They favoured brilliantly coloured clothing: shirts, T-shirts, dresses of red, violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, and orange. It was as hot as hell — and getting hotter. People took refuge in the shade of the buses. We would be heading eastward into the sun and into the glare.

A year or so earlier, one of these ferries went down just outside Mwanza, and people were killed. How do they gauge the weight? There seemed to be no organized method. I wondered how much this decrepit old ferry boat could carry. The engines started with a low rumble, and the ferry moved hesitantly forward and slowly entered Lake Victoria, a floating mass of metal and people. The engines vibrated; the passengers waited patiently. I could not believe that they could get this huge, heavy weight away from the slender landing pier and out onto the lake, but somehow the craft stayed afloat. We felt a bit of breeze at last as we slowly chugged into a little bay.

We travelled northward first, out among a bevy of fishing boats, turned until the bow pointed back towards the ferry terminal, then headed east to Mwanza — apparently stern first. The journey across the gulf took about an hour. When we arrived in Mwanza at about 10:30 a.m., another teeming mass of people waited at the pier.
If the first gale was unpleasant, this one was appalling. Not only was I feeling unprepared for another blow so soon, but I was already exhausted from changing sails throughout the night. And, needless to add, I was soaking wet. But at least I could do something about my wet clothes and, full of anticipation, I went below to search out some dry ones. It was an impossible job. Every time I put my hand into a locker it came out wet and, as I discovered more and more dripping garments, my heart sank further and further. Out of piles of wet jeans, soaking sweaters, and clammy socks I salvaged one suit of polar underwear and a jersey. These I carefully hung on the clothes line over the stove where I defied a wave to reach them. One day when all the world was dry, I would put on those wonderful clothes and feel that life was approximately a hundred times better.

The movements of the boat were severe. She would rush at a wave, leap off the top, and then crash down on to the other side, give a quick roll or flip, then rush at another. Sometimes she found nothing but air as she leapt off a crest and there would be a ghastly moment of silence before a terrible juddering crash as the bows hit water again. At times like that it was easy to imagine that the mast had just broken or the hull split in two, for it seemed impossible that any boat could take such a beating. Water was streaming over her decks and her motion was as wild as a washing machine’s. Like a dirty dishcloth I was spun rinsed, and tumbled about until I should have been whiter than white. I tried wedging myself in my bunk but nearly got thrown out, so I tied myself in and lay there in a state of mental paralysis, allowing no thoughts to enter my mind. I heard a banging and crashing sound above the racket of the gale as the boat jerked and gyrated but was too tired to go and investigate. Even if I had known that the loo had broken loose I wouldn’t have minded much. But then another noise came to my bleary attention and this one could not be ignored. Something was hitting against the hull and even before I looked I knew what it would be.

I had tied a sail down along the deck and, sure enough, the weight of water had pulled it free so that most of it was trailing in the sea. Five minutes later I had the sail below and another boot full of water.

If life was bleak then, it was bleaker three hours later. I allowed myself to become excited at the sight of a clear sky ahead and, quite certain the wind would drop, waited expectantly. The sun came out, the clouds disappeared, and then, to my dismay, the wind blew as strongly as ever, if not stronger.
Sir, the next subject to which I shall request your attention is the nature of the employment in the coal mines. Now, it appears that the common practice is to make young persons and children of a tender age drag carts of coal by means of a belt and a chain. This practice is common in Shropshire, in Derbyshire, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, in Lancashire, in Cheshire, in the east of Scotland, in North and South Wales, and in South Gloucestershire.

The child, it appears, has a belt bound round its waist, to which is attached a chain, which passes between the legs, and is attached to the cart filled with coal. The child is expected to drag it on all fours, and the chain passes under what, therefore, in that posture, might be called the hind legs; and thus they have to pass through passages not as good as a common sewer, quite as wet, and oftentimes more unpleasant. This kind of labour they have to continue for several hours, hours in a temperature described as perfectly unbearable. By the testimony of the people themselves, it appears that the labour is exceedingly severe; that the belt blisters their sides and causes them great pain. “Sir,” said one old miner, “I can only say what the mothers say, it is barbarity - absolute barbarity.”

Robert North says: “I went into the pit at 7 years of age. When I drew by the girdle and chain, the skin was broken and the blood ran down. . . . If we said anything, they would beat us. I have seen many draw at 6. They must do it or be beat. They cannot straighten their backs during the day. I have sometimes pulled till my hips have hurt me so that I have not known what to do with myself.”

In the West Riding, it appears, girls are almost universally employed to do the same work as boys. They commonly work quite naked down to the waist, and are dressed - as far as they are dressed at all - in a loose pair of trousers. These are seldom whole on either sex. In many of the coal mines the adult miners, whom these girls serve, work perfectly naked.

Near Huddersfield the sub-commissioner examined a female child. He says, “I could not have believed that I should have found human nature so degraded. Mr Holroyd, and Mr Brook, a surgeon, confessed, that although living within a few miles, they could not have believed that such a system of unchristian cruelty could have existed.” Speaking of one of the girls, he says, “She stood shivering before me from cold. The rug that hung about her waist was as black as coal, and saturated with water, the drippings of the roof.”

“In a pit near New Mills,” adds the sub-commissioner, “the chain passing high up between the legs of two girls, had worn large holes in their trousers. Any sight more disgustingly indecent or revolting can scarcely be imagined than these girls at work. No brothel can beat it.”

Surely it is evident that to remove, or even to mitigate, these sad evils will require a vigorous and immediate change to the law. That change is demanded by public reason, by public virtue, by the public honour, by the public character, and, I rejoice to add, by the public sympathy: for never, I believe, since the disclosure of the horrors of the African slave-trade, has there existed so universal a feeling on any one subject in this country as this.
CHILD LABOUR: INDIA'S HIDDEN SHAME

Two child protection officers hold her on either side as she walks into the police station. She was abducted four years ago from her village in north-east India. Until her rescue, she had been working in people's homes across West Delhi - cooking, cleaning and taking care of children.

"I was not allowed to rest," she says. "If I did something wrong or it was not what they wanted, they hit me. If I wanted to sit down for a bit because I was so tired, they would scream at me. I was never allowed to leave the house, so I didn't realise that I'm in Delhi. My employers told me that we are in Madras in South India."

As the police and counsellors question her, Lakshmi breaks down. She tells the police that she was sexually assaulted by the men who kidnapped her. She was threatened that if she told anyone about it, they would tell everyone back home in her village and her honour would be destroyed. And then, when she started working the agent who arranged her work withheld all her wages leaving her with nothing.

Her uncle is just relieved to have found her. A tea garden worker from Assam, he says her parents died when she was young and her grandmother is worried sick about the young girl. He is also angry about the abduction. "What can we really do? We are poor people - I didn't have enough money to come to Delhi to look for my missing niece. Unscrupulous agents and middlemen just come into our homes when parents are away working at the tea gardens and lure young girls with new clothes and sweets. Before they know it, they are on a train to a big city at the mercy of these greedy men."

He is not alone. One child goes missing every eight minutes in India and nearly half of them are never found. Kidnapped children are often forced into the sex trade. But many here feel that children are increasingly pushed into domestic labour - hidden from public view within the four walls of a home. The government estimates half a million children are in this position.

At a rehabilitation home in northern Delhi run by a charity for children, many families have gathered. They are all tea workers from the north-east state of Assam and have come here searching for their missing daughters. They estimate that just from one particular area - Rangpura in Assam - 16 girls have been lost in the last three to four years.

Helping these families find their daughters is Kailash Satyarti, the head of one charity: "This is the most ironical part of India's growth. The middle classes are demanding cheap labour," he says. "The cheapest and most vulnerable workforce is children - girls in particular. So the demand for cheap labour is contributing to trafficking of children from remote parts of India to big cities."

Offering them a ray of hope is the case of 18-year-old Sumila Munda, who was rescued earlier this month. The information she provided led to police arresting a couple of alleged traffickers. She says she still has nightmares about her employers: "I don't want anyone to go through what I did. I often wondered if I will ever escape from the hellish life I was stuck in. I had dreams of being in school, studying. Now I will get back to my studies."
‘A recess on a London Bridge’ 1879, Augustus Edwin Mulready
I Need A Dollar
Aloe Blacc

I need a dollar dollar, a dollar is what I need
Hey hey
Well I need a dollar dollar, a dollar is what I need
Hey hey
And I said I need dollar dollar, a dollar is what I need
And if I share with you my story would you share your dollar with me
Bad times are comin' and I reap what I don't sow
Hey hey
Well let me tell you somethin' all that glitters ain't gold
Hey hey
It's been a long old trouble long old troublesome road
And I'm looking for somebody come and help me carry this load
I need a dollar dollar, a dollar is what I need
Hey hey
Well I need a dollar dollar, a dollar is what I need
Well I don't know if I'm walking on solid ground
'Cause everything around me is falling down
And all I want is for someone to help me
I had a job but the boss man let me go
He...
I had a job but the boss man let me go
He said
I'm sorry but I won't be needing your help no more
I said
Please mister boss man I need this job more than you know
But he gave me my last paycheck and he sent me on out the door
Well I need a dollar dollar, a dollar is what I need
Hey hey
Said I need a dollar dollar, a dollar is what I need
Hey hey
And I need a dollar dollar, a dollar is what I need
And if I share with you my story would you share your dollar with me
Well I don't know if I'm walking on solid ground
'Cause everything around me is crumbling down
And all I want is for someone to help me
What in the world am I gonna to do tomorrow
Is there someone whose dollar that I can borrow
Who can help me take away my sorrow
Maybe it's inside the bottle
Maybe it's inside the bottle
I had some good old buddy his names is whiskey and wine
Hey hey
And for my good old buddy I spent my last dime
Hey hey
My wine is good to me it helps me pass the time
And my good old buddy whiskey keeps me warmer than the sunshine
Hey Hey
Your mom of mayhem just a child has got his own
Hey Hey
If god has plans for me I hope it ain't, written in stone
Hey Hey
Because I've been working working myself down to the bone
And I swear on grandpas grave I'll be paid when I come home
Hey Hey
Well I need a dollar dollar, a dollar is what I need
Hey hey
Said need a dollar dollar, a dollar is what I need
Hey hey
Well I need a dollar dollar, a dollar is what I need hey hey
And if I share with you my story would you share your dollar with me
Come on share your dollar with me
Go ahead share your dollar with me
Come on share your dollar give me your dollar
Share your dollar with me
Come on share your dollar with me
Why are so many people sleeping rough on Britain’s streets?

Beside a glamorous retail centre, a new community is forming. The growing homelessness crisis is the legacy of austerity

Jamie Doward and Amy Walker

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A homeless person’s tent on the Regent’s Canal in London, left; and, just down the towpath, Coal Drops Yard shopping centre

Composite: Getty

They share the same postcode but are very different developments. Coal Drops Yard, a new retail district boasting some 50 designer outlets and restaurants, opened last week in the gentrified area spreading from London’s King’s Cross station, a landscaped urban redoubt of Victorian warehouses and glass apartments bisected by the Regent’s Canal.

Home to corporate tech titans such as Google, the area, which only a couple of decades ago was synonymous with drugs, prostitution and warehouse raves, has become one of capital’s most desirable places to live. Flats in the new blocks mushrooming along the canal sell for millions, reflecting a housing market out of control, one that is stretching the term “affordability” to breaking point, with devastating consequences for those right at the bottom of the ladder – people such as Obi Ojang.

A resident of the second new development to open along the canal this month – a makeshift camp visible from the Observer’s offices – Ojang, 47, has been homeless since January, when he came out of prison having served a sentence for drug dealing. Ojang lived on the streets in King’s Cross before the turn of the century, when it was a much rougher area: “King’s Cross was the place back in the day. It’s where a lot of homeless people grew up very quickly. Many then moved on to the West End.”

Now, as Westminster pushes back against street begging, many like Ojang are leaving the borough and returning to where they started out. This time round, though, a gentrified postcode offers fewer places to set up home unobserved. It’s a similar story in other major cities. The street homeless population is becoming increasingly visible.

Ojang is typical of many who have been street homeless for a long time. By 14 he was in care, having been used as a courier by drugs gangs. His teenage cannabis use switched to cocaine and then to crack. He was diagnosed with acute personality disorder and paranoia in 1999.
Obi Ojang has been homeless since he came out of prison in January. Photograph: Amy Walker/The Observer

“The year before last I got nicked for attempted murder. I believed I was being set upon, people were planning to set upon me. I took a chopstick and it ended up in someone’s neck. Ended up in Thameside prison on remand.” The police dropped the case.

“There’s a huge number of [homeless] people with real significant mental health issues like schizophrenia, bipolar,” said Kevin Porter, chief executive officer at Signposts, an organisation that provides supported accommodation in Luton. “There just isn’t the sort of support for those people like there used to be. You could give them additional support about 10 years ago – the money just isn’t available for it now.

“We’re finding that people are a lot more challenging in terms of their mental health,” said Kevin Merry, concierge officer at St Anne’s hostel in Birmingham.

“I can only presume that there’s no specialist places for them so, unfortunately, instead they’re put into just everyday hostels now.”

These are the luckier ones.

Ojang and his partner, Donna, who has just lost her social housing accommodation for reasons he won’t explain, can’t get into a hostel. They don’t want to be separated, which is a problem for local housing teams who can find them separate housing but nothing as a pair. He shakes his head, points at his clothes: “I bought these about two weeks ago. I’ll go and change them next week and put them in a bin. No point buying stuff because you’ve got nowhere to put it.”

He gestures around the camp, towards another tent: “Guy who lives in there, he’s up at the crack of dawn, goes somewhere, don’t know where.”

A few yards away is some flattened cardboard. “Got an old boy who lives there – he’s 69. He rolls in about four or five in the morning, has a little sleep until six or seven and is gone by eight,” said Ojang.

Ojang is supposedly in a diminishing group. Official estimates suggest that there was a 169% national increase in street homelessness between 2010 and 2017, a period when the number of people sleeping rough in London for at least one night of the year rose from 3,673 to 8,108. But for the year up to April 2018, the number in the capital had dropped to 7,484, the first decline for 10 years.
Ojang, though, doesn’t believe the figures. “I’m seeing more and more people on the streets who are homeless. They’re getting younger and younger. They’re getting older and older.” Rough sleepers in other cities also believe their numbers are growing.

It won’t be until the results of next month’s official homelessness count are published that the true picture of what is happening on Britain’s streets will emerge. But evidence from homeless charities, hostels, outreach teams and shelters across the country suggests demand for their services is rising just as temperatures are starting to fall. Last winter, at least 78 homeless people died on the streets and in temporary accommodation, according to figures compiled by the Bureau of Investigative Journalism – a national total that is likely to be a significant underestimate.

Back in the makeshift camp in King’s Cross, Ojang said he didn’t know what he would do when the weather worsened: “We used to stay further down there, by the bridge, but it was a bit too full on there so we’ve come in here and it’s only now you see us. But where were you in February when it snowed?”

His eyes were glazed and his speech a little slurred. While he had been talking, several well-dressed young men with backpacks had entered the camp and made their way to one of its tents. Within seconds the deals were done and the men were back on the Regent’s Canal, walking towards St Pancras, walking towards Coal Drops Yard.
What is life really like on a zero-hours contract?

When MICHELLE DORRELL entered a zero-hours contract she found herself experiencing a black hole of uncertainty

MOST of us in the Labour Party and elsewhere know about zero-hours contracts. Yet, knowing about them and living with them are two entirely different things. It’s only when you’re living with the consequences that you really understand what it’s like — not just the financial side of things but also the emotional and mental impact.

This August, I had to re-enter the world of employment after five years being self-employed, running my own little home-based salon. Things have dramatically changed since the last time I was searching the jobs market. Back in 2011 very little was available, but now there seem to be plenty of jobs. However, of the jobs suitable for my skills and experience, nine out of 10 are zero-hours contracts.

Within days, I secured a position with a high street retail chain. My first shift was described as a “trial run” — three hours of work and a chance to show my capability. It went well. I found the job easy to pick up and got stuck in. At the end of the shift, I approached the manager to see how things went and complete any paperwork for bank account and national insurance details.

I was surprised to be told we wouldn’t complete anything that day. “I’ll call you,” is how the conversation was left. Standing there, I just thought: “Well, what do I do now?” I’ve still not been officially offered a job or even another shift. Am I going to have a job from this?” I thought.

Walking home, I continued to mull those thoughts over and over, getting more anxious and feeling silly about what had just happened. I’d never been in such a situation before. Even when I was a 14-year-old pot washer, I was paid for any hours worked. By the time I got home, I was close to full-scale meltdown. Tears and everything. I felt embarrassed for myself.

For the next six days I waited for any news from either the shop I’d worked at that week, or anything from the multiple applications I’d made daily. Then, I got a call from the shop manager, giving me 12 hours of shifts for the next working week. Finally, I had a job!

I love the job. The staff are all fantastic to work with. Working face to face with the public has always been something I’ve enjoyed. It’s nice to see people going about their daily lives and talking with customers.
I need this job to work out, as I really like it. But eight to 12 hours of shifts isn’t enough to financially support my family at minimum wage — £62-£96 per week isn’t going to go far. We buy the barest of essentials when we do our weekly shop as it is, yet still that’s £80 per week. I might not even be able to cover that. I’m constantly gripped with worry that I’m not earning enough, but I really want it to work out.

Thankfully, the majority of shifts have so far been during school hours, and when I have been shifted for times outside then, my family and friends have been able to help with school runs and caring responsibilities.

Yet again, I’m constantly worried about what will happen if I can’t get help. This certainly doesn’t help. It’s already had an impact on my stress levels, as I don’t do well with last-minute arrangements regarding the kids. And it doesn’t give them stability or consistency.

I’m still applying for different jobs on a daily basis. I’m trying desperately to find something more financially suitable in the long term for both me and my family. I’m genuinely worried that writing this is only putting the position I currently have and any future position at risk, because I dare to speak out about the truth of living with zero-hours insecure work. I can’t let that stop me!

I’m lucky. Others out there are facing this challenge and these working conditions without the support of another income into their household. My husband works hard and increases his hours to make up for my shortfall. But he shouldn’t have to, especially as he’s nearly 50 and isn’t a robot. I don’t want to be afraid to use my voice, if it helps others understand why we must change this culture.

“Flexibility,” some call it. In my experience a black hole of unknowns is the reality when you’re living it — and I’ve only been doing this for four weeks.
Children ‘are being denied sheer joy of the outdoors’

Oliver Moody

Children are out of touch with nature and need more freedom from health and safety for the sake of their well-being, the head of the National Trust, Dame Fiona Reynolds, has told The Times.

Dame Fiona is calling for schools to “take the initiative” and change the way they teach children, with a block of time spent in the outdoors every week.

Dame Fiona said that dependence on the computer and anxious parents obsessed with their children’s safety were keeping young people shut up indoors more than ever before, with “worrying” consequences for their health. “Children are missing out on the sheer joy and physical and mental well-being of being able to play outside and experience nature in all its messiness,” she said.

The creep of urban sprawl had destroyed many places where children could once play safely, she said. “When I was a child, we used to play in spaces which have now all been built on. There isn’t that slightly tatty countryside at the edge of a town which you can go off and explore.”

The National Trust, which represents nearly four million members, believes that the cloistered upbringing of many children could be harmful. It says there is evidence that keeping children indoors gives them weaker immune systems, and that figures show children are three times more likely to injure themselves by falling out of bed than by falling out of a tree.

But Dame Fiona said it was also bad for their happiness. “We did a lot of interviews with people about their childhood memories and the things that made them happy, and actually it’s amazing how often they are associated with some kind of outdoors experience — taking a boat out on a lake, or rock-pool fishing on holiday, or something like that,” she said. “But for many, many people those experiences just aren’t there. Young people today in some of our interviews said, ‘Oh, I don’t go to the countryside’. They were almost frightened of the experience. They certainly have no idea where to go or why they would want to go.”

Children needed to take risks, and it was wrong to apply health and safety culture to the countryside as though it were like the city, she said. “It’s a matter of knowing where the risks are, but not trying to wipe them away.”

The National Trust also says that unpaid outdoor work helps young people who are seeking a job. Dame Fiona said that work experience with the Trust helped young adults. “What gives people dignity is purpose, a sense of focused energy where you can see what you’re achieving.”
Forget the X Factor... Mongolia’s got talons

Tucking in: A golden eagle grabs a bite in the far west of Mongolia

It’s sometimes worth remembering that not everyone in the world regards entertainment as watching talent contests on television. In Mongolia, they are awfully proud of showing off their golden eagles. The huge birds, which can have a wingspan of more than 2.5m and claw-like talons to tear at their prey, go on display at the Eagle Festival.

The annual event promotes the preservation of the eagles and helps maintain the culture of the ethnic Kazakh minority. In one challenge, a bird is perched on a mountainside as its master gallops off on a horse. When the eagle is called, it must land on the owner’s outstretched arm. Points are awarded for the speed and agility of the bird.

Hunting with golden eagles is an integral part of Kazakh culture. Chronicles from the 13th century record Kublai Khan’s outings with 5,000 falconers.

Known as the ‘King of the Birds’, golden eagles are at the top of their particular food chain and the predators rarely find themselves as the prey. The dark golden-brown plumage on their heads and necks gave them their name and with their impressive wingspans they can hover in the sky for hours while eyeing up their next meal.

The golden eagles’ extra keen eyesight means they can catch a glimpse of their ground prey such as rabbits, marmots and squirrels from miles away. And when they spot something that takes their fancy, they can fly at speeds of up to 150 miles per hour when diving to catch it. Meaning not much stands a chance once this eagle-eyed beast has its sights set on the prize.
**Motorbikes and Pyramids**

_Ewan McGregor and Charley Boorman are making a TV film about riding their motorbikes from Scotland to South Africa. Here they are in Egypt but are behind schedule._

Charley was on my outside and I rode with one hand on the bars and one in my lap; the asphalt true and grippy. For a while it seemed the land was greener, farming country perhaps, but before we knew it there was the sand again – the rubble, piles of rock littered across the horizon.

I’d been in a very bad mood and it was only just beginning to ease. I wasn’t quite sure how our planning had gone so awry; it hadn’t been like this when we rode round the world. I don’t remember this level of tension either; we’d had our moments but this time we seemed to go from one petty squabble to another.

Giza came up quicker than I expected, so preoccupied was I with my thoughts. All at once the driving worsened, the cars came thick and fast and we were on the outskirts of the town. Cars were hooting, kids yelling from donkey carts and bicycles.

And then there they were. Just a glimpse to begin with, they seemed to grow up from the middle of the town itself. It took a moment to dawn: the pyramids. My God, I’d ridden my motorbike all the way to the great pyramids of Egypt.

Excitement gripped me. We funnelled into traffic; the buildings stained a dirty yellow; apartments, stalls, people everywhere peering at us and waving. We came to a checkpoint and stopped. It was early evening, the sun just beginning to set.

People wandered over to look at the bikes; mine was hot and sounded pretty gnarly. I switched the engine off.

‘Hey, Ewan,’ Charley said, ‘there’s a golf course over there. Imagine having a round of golf with the pyramids as your backdrop.’ I could hear the enthusiasm in his voice. Suddenly all the tension seemed to lift. There’s nothing like witnessing one of the great wonders of the world if you want to put your troubles into perspective.

Moments later we were moving up to a chequered barrier and the pyramids were right ahead of us and not quite as deep in the town as I’d thought. The road was wide and dusty; it snaked a few hundred yards to where the massive stone structures dominated the skyline. As I passed his truck, Ramy, our fixer, was standing there in his Indiana Jones hat.

‘All yours,’ he called.

Initially I didn’t understand what he meant. Then I realised – the area was closed off for the evening, and we were the only visitors. I couldn’t believe it. Not only had I ridden my bike to the pyramids, now we had them to ourselves. Two colossal structures, they lifted from the desert with Cairo on one side and an ancient expanse of nothingness on the other. I was speechless, standing on the foot-pegs of my bike as if in homage.

Ewan McGregor
Tripoli at dusk is a dispiriting place. As I cycle from the boat into the city centre, around me loom a series of sombre, grey tower blocks, rising like skeletal sentinels among a wasteland of debris. Several are sprinkled with bullet holes, I note with mild alarm, and I nudge Maud (my bike) along a little faster. I’m fairly sure the local mercenaries have downed tools for the time being, but I’m already far too far behind schedule to risk being shot on my first day (though it would admittedly do wonders for my social media profile).

I’m hoping to stay with the friend of a friend of a friend, but am yet to hear back from him. It’s worrying, as the motels look poky and miserable, oozing an aura of indecency and regret. I distract myself from my plight by buying a tea in a grimy café and counting the perplexing number of passing Mercedes and BMWs, which seem by far the most popular car in this far-from-affluent city.

Two hours later, I finally hear from my contact, B. I am hugely relieved, and almost immediately the city’s shadowy nooks seem sunnier, its sharp edges softer. Within ten minutes, I’m being warmly welcomed by B and his Filipino housekeeper (apparently all houses have one) in his carpet shop just half a mile away. The sectarian conflict in the city is under control now, I’m told, and I feel a little foolish for conjuring spectres out of the undergrowth. How different everything seems when you’re no longer alone and abandoned in the dark!

B is a 27-year-old Australian who moved to Lebanon seven years ago. He enjoys the ‘freedom’ here, he says, which seems to boil down to driving without a licence and not paying his taxes. I ask him about the cars and he tells me it’s due to people’s idolisation of Germany and their superficiality. Plastic surgery is reportedly huge, and often deliberately conspicuous. Everyone wants to flash their cash and status.

In Tripoli, curiously, this showiness goes hand in hand with a strong social conservatism. Most women wear hijabs, and B tells me he wouldn’t want to be seen drinking in public. Another friend later tells me that the city is surprisingly tolerant, despite its image. ‘You sometimes get burkinis and bikinis on the same beach, and nobody minds,’ she says. ‘But all people remember are the jihadists splashed across the papers.’

The next morning, as I prepare for my cycle to Beirut, B warns me that ‘the biggest storm of the year’ is due to hit today. ... As I stand drowning under a lashing sheet of rain that soaks me instantly to the core, following yet another puncture 30km down the road, I can’t help feeling that it may have been the wrong decision. For half an hour I wait, helpless and sodden, as the sky turns
leaden and swampy and slowly engulfs the entire Mediterranean Sea. Then, just as I'm losing hope of rescue, a car finally stops beside me and two textbook murderers (dirty trousers, rakish facial hair) get out and offer me a ride – an offer I know I should on no account accept.

Minutes later, we're zooming down the road to Byblos. The men give me a satsuma, which I devour like somebody who hasn't eaten for ten years (it's been about ten minutes), and stop every mile or so to check Maud hasn't fallen out the back (she hasn't). They then drop me directly outside the restaurant where I've arranged to meet a friend; and, with a wave, they're gone. Once again, human kindness trumps doom-laden distrust, I think relievedly. Is the world really crawling with as many psychopaths as the media would have us believe?

Maud – the name of Rebecca Lowe's bicycle
Byblos – a city in Lebanon
Baghdad’s bazaars, which many people regard as the finest in the East outside of Istanbul, are of enormous extent and very great variety. Many are of brick, with well-built domed roofs, and sides arcaded both above and below, and are wide and airy. Some are of wood, all are covered, and admit light scantily, only from the roof. Those which supply the poorer classes are apt to be ruinous and squalid—"ramshackle," to say the truth, with an air of decay about them, and their roofs are merely rough timber, roughly thatched with reeds or date tree fronds. Of splendour there is none anywhere, and of cleanliness there are few traces. The old, narrow, and filthy bazaars in which the gold and silversmiths ply their trade are of all the most interesting. The trades have their separate localities, and the buyer who is in search of cotton goods, silk stuffs, carpets, cotton yarn, gold and silver thread, ready-made clothing, weapons, saddlery, rope, fruit, meat, grain, fish, jewellery, muslins, copper pots, etc., has a whole alley of contiguous shops devoted to the sale of the same article to choose from.

At any hour of daylight at this season, progress through the bazaars is slow. They are crowded, and almost entirely with men. It is only the poorer women who market for themselves, and in twos and threes, at certain hours of the day. In a whole afternoon, among thousands of men, I saw only five women, tall, shapeless, badly-made-up bundles, carried mysteriously along, rather by high, loose, canary-yellow leather boots than by feet. The face is covered with a thick black gauze mask, or cloth, and the head and remainder of the form with a dark blue or black sheet, which is clutched by the hand below the nose. The walk is one of tottering decrepitude. All the business transacted in the bazaars is a matter of bargaining, and as Arabs shout at the top of their voices, and buyers and sellers are equally keen, the roar is tremendous.

The Arab women go about the streets unveiled, and with the aba covering their very poor clothing, but it is not clutched closely enough to conceal the extraordinary tattooing which the Bedouin women everywhere regard as ornamental. There are artists in Baghdad who make their living by this mode of decorating the person, and vie with each other in the elaboration of their patterns. I saw several women tattooed with two wreaths of blue flowers on their bosoms linked by a blue chain, palm fronds on the throat, stars on the brow and chin, and bands round the wrists and ankles. These disfigurements, and large gold or silver filigree buttons placed outside one nostril by means of a wire passed through it, worn by married women, are much admired. When these women sell country produce in the markets, they cover their heads with the ordinary chadar.

The streets are narrow, and the walls, which are built of fire-burned bricks, are high. Windows to the streets are common, and the oriel windows, with their warm brown lattices projecting over the roadways at irregular heights, are strikingly picturesque. Not less so are latticework galleries, which are often
thrown across the street to connect the two houses of wealthy residents, and the sitting-rooms with oriel windows, which likewise bridge the roadways. Solid doorways with iron-clasped and iron-studded doors give an impression of security, and suggest comfort and to some extent home life, and sprays of orange trees, hanging over walls, and fronds of date palms give an aspect of pleasantness to the courtyards.

The best parts of the city, where the great bazaars, large dwelling-houses, and most of the mosques are, is surrounded by a labyrinth of alleys, fringing off into streets growing meaner till they cease altogether among open spaces, given up to holes, heaps, rubbish, the slaughter of animals, and in some favoured spots to the production of vegetables. Then come the walls, which are of kiln-burned bricks, and have towers intended for guns at intervals. The wastes within the walls have every element of decay and meanness, the wastes without, where the desert sands sweep up to the very foot of the fortifications, have many elements of grandeur.

**Istanbul** – now the capital of Turkey
**Aba** – a loose over-garment which covers the whole body except the head, feet and hands
**Bedouin** – a nomadic tribe
**Chadar** – a long garment worn by Muslim women which covers the body and obscures part of the face
**Bazaar** – a market
**Oriel window** – a type of bay window that juts out from the wall
'Our house is on fire': Greta Thunberg, 16, urges leaders to act on climate

Edited version of her speech.

Watch the speech here:


Our house is on fire. I am here to say, our house is on fire.

According to the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change), we are less than 12 years away from not being able to undo our mistakes.

At places like Davos, people like to tell success stories. But their financial success has come with an unthinkable price tag. And on climate change, we have to acknowledge we have failed. All political movements in their present form have done so, and the media has failed to create broad public awareness.

But Homo sapiens have not yet failed.

Yes, we are failing, but there is still time to turn everything around. We can still fix this. We still have everything in our own hands. Now is the time to speak clearly.

Solving the climate crisis is the greatest and most complex challenge that Homo sapiens have ever faced. The main solution, however, is so simple that even a small child can understand it. We have to stop the emission of greenhouse gases.

Either we do that or we don’t.

You say nothing in life is black or white. But that is a lie. A very dangerous lie. Either we prevent 1.5 degree C of warming or we don’t. Either we avoid setting off that irreversible chain reaction beyond human control or we don’t. Either we choose to go on as a civilisation or we don’t. That is as black or white as it gets.

We must change almost everything in our current societies. The bigger your carbon footprint, the bigger your moral duty. The bigger your platform, the bigger your responsibility.

Adults keep saying: “We owe it to the young people to give them hope.” But I don’t want your hope. I don’t want you to be hopeful. I want you to panic. I want you to feel the fear I feel every day. And then I want you to act.

I want you to act as you would in a crisis. I want you to act as if our house is on fire. Because it is.
School climate strikes: 1.4 million people took part, say campaigners

Activist Greta Thunberg, 16, says action proved ‘no one is too small to make a difference’

Damian Carrington Environment editor

Students take part in a demonstration in Düsseldorf, Germany, on the global day of action last Friday. Photograph: Wolfgang Rattay/Reuters

More than 1.4 million young people around the world took part in school strikes for climate action, according to environmental campaigners.

Greta Thunberg, the 16-year-old Swedish student whose solo protest last August prompted the global movement, said: “We proved that it does matter what you do and that no one is too small to make a difference.”

Children walked out of schools on Friday in 2,233 cities and towns in 128 countries, with demonstrations held from Australia to India, the UK and the US, according to the Fridays for the Future website. Further strikes are planned for 12 April.

Eyal Weintraub, an 18-year-old from Argentina who took part in the protests, said: “We have reached a point in history when we have the technical capacities to solve poverty, malnutrition, inequality and of course global warming.

“The deciding factors for whether we take advantage of our potential will be our activism and our international unity.”

The strikes inspired by Thunberg drew widespread praise, with UN Women saying on Twitter: “She is proof that we need to listen to the young generation for a sustainable future.”

The executive director of Oxfam International, Winnie Byanyima, said: “Our children are walking out of school saying we have failed them. This is the kind of clarity and energy we need now.”
However, education ministers in the UK and Australia condemned the strikes and some commentators were critical. Madeline Grant, formerly of the Institute of Economic Affairs thinktank, asked: “Just how kind is it to shower praise on children who are fundamentally wrong?”

Thunberg posted a response on Facebook to “people who wants us to go back to school”. “The favourite argument here in Sweden, and everywhere else, is that it doesn’t matter what we do because we are all too small to make a difference. [But] Friday was the biggest day of global climate action ever, according to 350.org,” she said.

“People keep asking me ‘What is the solution to the climate crisis?’ They expect me to know the answer. That is beyond absurd, as there are no ‘solutions’ within our current systems.

“We need a whole new way of thinking. The political system that you [adults] have created is all about competition. You cheat when you can because all that matters is to win. That must come to an end.

“We need to start cooperating and sharing the remaining resources of this planet in a fair way. We are just passing on the words of the science. Our only demand is that you start listening to it, and then start acting.”

Should Married Women Work?

1924, Good Housekeeping

Mrs Alfred Sidgwick (edited version)

No, they should not. They should sit at home while their husbands work for them. The nursery and the kitchen should be their kingdoms and the church their solace. We all take pleasure in the picture, but know in our hearts that it does not fit the bill. Some of us think the question itself tomfoolery. Who is to lay down the law for a class, the members of which are so diverse? Not public opinion in an age that is trying to liberate women, and not legislation in a country that no longer places them with children and lunatic.

At the end of the last century, a well-known novelist, interested in social questions, said that women did not want to work. They wanted to marry a man who worked for them. In the Ideal Home the man earns the money in the market-place and the woman spends it in the house. His wishes are her law and his comfort her preoccupation. Where there are children, she devotes herself to them night and day, having neither wishes nor business of her own, but, becoming by marriage the contented slave of her family. This, again, is a picture we accept without question. A very pretty picture and, for all sorts and conditions, greatly to be desired.

The troublesome truth is that most pretty pictures bear an imperfect likeness to real life. They turn a blind eye to all the cases that are not pretty. If married women must not work outside the home, what are those women to do who have little mouths to feed and whose husbands fail them? Some men are ne’er-do-wells, some spend, some drink, some inconsiderately die. Their wives cannot sit at home, their children on their knees, singing little songs to them and teaching them their letters. They have to go out and earn what they may at any work they can do. I know one such who was a first-rate cook, earning high wages in rich men’s houses and living in great comfort. She married a sickly little man, bore him three children, lost him, and now works as she never worked before, to add a little to the parish relief she gets and so keep her poor home together. For she cannot go back to her cooking because, even in these servantless days, people will not take a cook with three children attached: and the valiant creature will not leave them.

In short, the question is unanswerable in terms of yes and no. Some married women should or must work, and some should not. It stands to reason that a woman who undertakes to make a home for a man, and rear as well as bear his children, should fulfil her contract: but it does not stand to reason that she will in all cases do this best by refusing to earn money.

But women have never taken a step forward without a dust and a pother being raised around them. They have had to fight for education, for admission to trades and professions and, in our memories, for the Vote. Whatever they wanted was going to unsex them. A compromise needs to ensue. The woman finds her man and goes on with her work, too, because she wishes it, or because together they need what she can earn, or because she is sane and sees work to do everywhere, outside her home as well as in it. Let women settle this question for themselves, each woman doing the duty nearest to her, after which the next will have become clearer. If her home fills her time and thoughts, so be it, for that woman. If her neighbour chooses otherwise, more power to her. We must live and let live.
31st January 1874

Dear Diary,

I am sat in our overcrowded dormitory, we are supposed to be asleep but I can’t. It is too cold. It is extremely difficult to see the page; I am holding this diary up to the window so that I can see the light from the reflection of the moon. Today has been as miserable as any other day, if not worse.

The master stormed into our room to wake us up at 4.30am and ordered us outside to wash our face using the outside water pump. However, it was so cold that the water formed little icicles at the end of the pump. All of the boys were stood huddled together in a line, trying to stay close for warmth. I tried to look for my sister, Charlotte, as boys and girls are separated at all times. We haven’t seen each other since we entered this place, but I will not give up hope.

Breakfast was water and a small piece of bread left over from last night. I can tell it was left over because it was extremely tough to bite. Soon after we were ushered into the bustling workroom, where I was ordered to unpick old rope and separate it into threads to be resold. The material is so tough and scratchy that my fingers are crimson and blistered. The pain was so incredible that I wanted to cry, but I didn’t dare. If the Master catches somebody crying he beats them with the cane.

To think that we do this all day, every day, for 5d a week. It isn’t much, but I send what I can home to Ma to look after the baby. She needs it more than I do.

Dinner was exactly the same tonight, too. Small piles of stale crusty bread were on the table tops and bowls of cold gruel were slammed down before us. I spotted some of the boys sneakily stuffing pieces into their pockets to eat later. We are all so hungry.

When will this end? I feel weak and tired. Sometimes I wish I could run out of the doors and escape, but the last boy who tried was beaten in front of everybody. I can still hear his cries.

I had better get some rest. I will write to you tomorrow.

Goodnight.

From

Peter
Today I’m going to speak about men, which I know isn’t necessarily the theme of the day. But while I acknowledge that they have been our greatest enemy, I truly believe that they can be our greatest ally going forward. And so I’ve written something about how perhaps that could happen. It’s called “Tell Him.” So I suppose while talking about feminism, I can’t help but feel that it’s not only us who should be learning and growing, being armed with motivation and understanding. I think so many women have the power to infiltrate misogyny from their own homes, and it starts by never taking for granted how poisonous society can be to the male psyche and protecting boys from the onslaught of misinformation that is everywhere. They are bombarded with dangerous imagery, song lyrics, peer pressure and often quite damaging, violent and frankly entirely intimacy-free pornography, all of which are sold to them as a glamorous and realistic norm.

Men are throttled with toxic masculinity and given made-up ideals that they are forced to subscribe to. They are belittled and rejected when they show signs of sensitivity. They are mocked and insulted when they show their pain or care too much. Just the mere fact that music that is kind to women or talks about their feelings is considered wet or labelled sad boy music. It is such a potent, rotten marinade that boys grow up soaked in.

Don’t get me wrong, this isn’t some poor boys’ appeal. This is a call to arms for the women who have boys growing up in their houses. We have a lot of work to undo. Mothers, sisters, and aunties, I implore you to take this little sponge and render him sodden with humanity and an understanding of women. It will send him into this delusional world with an armour of empathy and self-assurance that a strong woman is something to be celebrated and not feared, crushed, undermined, spoken over, stopped, humiliated, shamed, blamed, discouraged, controlled, and told that to be worth anything in this world, she just has to be thin and beautiful and look young forever.

All you have to do is tell him the truth. Tell him what happened to us. Tell him our whole story. Tell him how only very recently we were able to fight, protest, beg, and starve our way to basic human rights. Tell him that a long time ago, as far back as you can imagine, men became afraid of women. Women could make people inside their bodies. They could then feed those people using only their bodies. They had an extreme and quite scary tolerance for pain, and were distracting and beguiling for man. On top of all of this, we were equally able to learn, to hunt, to keep ourselves and our kin alive. Men feared that other than their semen, women had little need for them. And actually, we were very self-sufficient and tough, while at the same time being able to arouse men and sometimes drive them quite mad with love, lust and possessiveness. We held quite a lot of power. And so using the only thing they had over us, physical power, they fear-mongered an entire generation into submission and controlled us for thousands of [BLEEP] years.
Tell him that we worked the same hours with the same skill sets and same qualifications for less money just because of the chromosomes that we were born with. Tell him we were only recently allowed to choose who we love rather than be sold by our fathers to the highest bidder, however unattractive, unkind, unsafe, boring, or old that man may be, with no question as to what we wanted or what sexuality we were. And tell him this is still going on in many parts of the world. We’re still second-rate citizens. Make him sympathise with us and feel protective over us. Tell him to cry when he is sad. Tell him how important it is to talk about his feelings. Tell him it is better to be soft and strong than to be hard and weak. Never let anyone tell him to stop being a girl when he’s showing sensitivity. By narrowing these ridiculous prescribed gender roles, we will come closer together and no longer be such a mystery to one another, which I believe will dilute the fear and mistrust that men have towards us. And by making him a more mentally stable and secure person, you will far lessen the likelihood of him being infiltrated by our insecure and pathetic patriarchy. Treat him with kindness and empathy. Make him feel safe. Do not betray his trust. Your relationship with him will shape his entire outlook on women. So that in every girl he looks ar, he will see you and feel love and respect. Make sure he confides in you from a young age, that you will have a sense of what poison is pouring into him. And do not judge him – at least to his face.

Build a man who understands that we are only human and we have needs and sometimes we need help. Tell him that we are smart. Show him smart women that you admire. Tell him to look for that in a girl. Show him films with though female leads from when he’s young. Tell him that we’re funny and show him funny women. Tell him we are strong and tell him that’s a good thing. Tell him its coll. Tell him it’s sexy.

Show him how strong you are, and don’t just pick up after him and do not pick up after a man in your household. Command the respect that you deserve. Do not ever sell yourself short. We may have to fight our generation of men and the one before that and the one before that for our rights, for our safety, and for our voices to be heard, which is sad and frustrating. And I know that I am asking you for even more labour, but we have a golden window of opportunity here to completely reshape the future of our entire society from our living rooms. Build these men from scratch to fit women rather than just taking up all the space and forcing us to compact ourselves to a little corner allocated to us by them. God, we must be pretty amazing to have overcome all of this [BLEEP]. Tell him. Thank you very much.
I came into this world in the rough and ready year of 1923. I’m from Barnsley and I can tell you that my childhood – like so many others from that era – was not like an episode from Downton Abbey. Instead it was a barbarous time. It was a bleak time and it was an uncivilised time. Because public healthcare didn’t exist... No one in our community was safe from poor health, sickness and disease. In our home, TB came for my eldest sister, Marion. Tuberculosis tortured my sister and left her an invalid that had to be restrained with ropes tied around her bed. My parents did everything in their power to keep Marion alive and comfortable. But they just didn’t have the dosh to get her the best clinics, find her the best doctors or the right medicines. Instead, she wasted away before our eyes until my mother could no longer handle her care and she was dispatched to the workhouse infirmary where she died at the age of 10, 87 years ago.

Mum and dad couldn’t afford to bury their darling daughter, so like the rest of our country’s indigent, she was dumped, nameless into a pauper’s pit. My family’s story isn’t unique. Sadly, rampant poverty and no healthcare were the norm for the Britain of my youth. That injustice galvanised my generation to become, after the Second World War, the tide that raised all boats.

Election Day 1945 was one of the proudest days in my life. I felt that I was finally getting a chance to grab destiny by the shirt collar and that is why I voted Labour and for the creation of the NHS.

We must never, ever let the NHS free from our grasp, because if we do, your future will be my past. I am not a politician, a member of the elite, or a financial guru, but my life is your history. And we should keep it that way.

**DEFINITION:** *Emotive language* refers to words and phrases that have been chosen by a writer to evoke a particular feeling or emotional reaction in their reader.
Extract 1

My head in my hands, choking out words, tears rushing down hot, humiliated cheeks, I raised my head to look at the array of varying expressions looking back from the other side of the room; a Labour MP, two Conservative peers, and a Conservative MP looked back, a mixture of horror and sympathy as I publicly crashed and burned. Fear and humiliation and self-loathing leaping on me like a set of hyenas, as I sobbed: “I can’t even answer my telephone, any more. If it’s an unknown number, if it rings early in the morning, or I don’t know who it is. I can’t even open my own front door. It’s not the same front door, as the one I sat with my back to, morning and afternoon, cowering as bailiffs battered on the other side of it. It’s not the same phone number. It’s not the same front door. I’m not in debt. There are no more final demands, no more red capital letters, no more threats. But ... I can’t even open my own front door.”

Extract 2

I gave evidence at the all-party parliamentary group inquiry into hunger and food bank use in the UK a few months ago, one of over 1,000 pieces of evidence heard by the committee – expecting to recount a story told and retold at party conferences, charity events, radio interviews, to journalists, again and again and again over the past two and a half years. But the APPG wanted more than ‘hunger hurts’. They asked, probed, dug, questioned, opening up the old wounds, and made notes as I trembled in my seat, recalling nights of wrapping a baby up in a vest and a babygro and a dressing gown before putting him down to sleep. Of going to bed shortly afterwards because there’s nothing else to do, and it’s dark, and cold, and you sold the telly, so you go to bed at 7pm and curl up beside him and hold him, because it feels like the only good thing you have. Of being asked, very quietly, by a member of staff at my local children’s centre if a food bank referral form would help us out “for a little while”, as she noticed us having seconds at lunch, and thirds, and three or four sugars in endless cups of tea, of offering to wash up and boxing up the leftovers to take home, away from the eyes of the other mums in the group.
Don’t get me wrong. I love kids, and I think babies are truly a blessing. Just please don’t ask me to hold one; they are little savages. Whenever I am in a situation where I have to hold a baby, I feel like a helpless antelope in the Lion King and the babies are hungry tigresses in the Serengeti, sensing my fear and pouncing on it with lightning speed. My reluctance is met with ‘Oh, but she’s adorable!’ Adorable? They are an ear-shattering monster from the void, wrapped in yellow flannel to confuse your sentimental adult eyes. So, there I am, holding this baby. Suddenly, I’m drawn to her hands. ‘They’re small,’ I think to myself. Then I get a look at her fingernails - Jesus! Those tiny hands are attached to not-so-tiny fingernails. Talons of torture, jagged, deceptively strong and ready to tear flesh at any point. Is it any wonder I’m afraid? This kid could literally gouge my eyes out and get away with it. But then, sensing my displeasure, the baby turns red and her cheeks begin to puff out. Oh no. I swear, her head is going to spin 360 degrees at any second. I call to her mother. She scoops her up, just in time to deal with the screaming. Thank God.
**Persuasive Anecdotes**

I know that many of you think the homeless are bedraggled addicts draining our resources. That might be true for some of them, but let me tell you about David. I went to school with David for three years until Year 11. He was an intelligent, polite senior student, a beacon for the school! However, just before our exams David's parents went through a bitter divorce. From then on, life began to fall apart for David. He just wasn't able to cope. Court hearings and a hectic home life meant his work began to slide. By the time he was eighteen, when I was sitting my A-levels, David was on the streets...
1. Jimmy Kimmel Anecdote – what is the difference between the language in each box?

| “I try not to get emotional...” | “It was an easy delivery. Six pushes and he was out.” |
| “He appeared to be a normal healthy baby.” | “I’m standing in the middle of a lot of worried-looking people. Kind of like right now.” |
| “My wife and I assumed it would be nothing.” | “He did some kind of magic.” |
| “…more doctors and nurses and equipment…” | “Not only did he get a bad heart, he got my face.” |
| “It’s a terrifying thing.” | “He peed on his mother today.” |
| “She has no idea what’s going on.” | “As if we gave birth to the Easter bunny or something...” |
| “… what our options were...” | “As far as she knows, the baby is signed up to Amazon Prime.” |
| “It was the longest three hours of my life.” | |

Read the extract.

1. Identify the serious tone and funny tone by labelling in the margins with a ‘S’ for serious or an ‘F’ for funny.

I can remember being hyper-aware of my body as a little kid. I was 8 years old and refused to wear trousers because I was worried about showing everyone how chubby my thighs were. I felt like the Michelin man in Ghostbuster, swiping down buildings while terrified New Yorkers gazed on in terror. It’s amazing I didn’t smother my classmates to death as I walked down the corridor. The darker reality is that I was bullied, a lot, for having baby fat and that was a stigma I carried through my entire adolescence.

As I grew older I became more obsessed with my body. Boys started coming in to play and as a 15-year-old who still hadn’t been kissed, I felt like there was something wrong with me. At first, I assumed it was my more obvious flaws: bad breath, lady ‘tache, owning Crocs, liking N-Sync... but I finally started to worry about my size. Looking back, I wasn’t overweight at all, but whatever the scale said wasn’t enough to drown that little voice, telling me I was too fat to be of any value, to anyone. God, I even thought my fingers were fat like little pork sausages that my dog stalked across the lawn when we had family barbecues.

So I started to diet. I started to run - in a bin bag no less, to ensure maximum sweating. Can you imagine that smell? Sweaty bin bag? But it’s what I had to do to...