

A young life is cut short when he takes on too much responsibility based on too little information. But that is neither the end nor the beginning of his larger story. Meet Danny Anderson, the youngest son within a damaged family.

Fuller Sight

By John Stone

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JOHN STONE

FULLER SIGHT

A METAPHYSICAL NOVEL



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Introduction

(As told by Sadé Okoro, Danny Anderson's dearest friend, on
Saturday, August 1, 1971.)

Why do certain people always have hardship in their lives? Is it a self-fulfilling prophecy? Do they bring it on themselves? Or are they just unlucky? I realize that sad things happen to everyone but why should Danny have more than his share? It is like the story of Job. It seems that tragedy stalks him.

I have been Danny's best friend ever since he moved in with us for a while nine years ago. My mother loves him like he was her own son but worries that the events in his life are too cruel and needs us in order to cope. To me, Danny is the most rock-solid person I know. I have always counted on him to give me his honest opinion and to back me up whenever there is something going on in my own life. We could not be closer if we were related.

(As told by Dr. Okoro, father of Sadé, at 12:10am
Sunday, August 2, 1971.)

In my practice I have seen many broken families. It's the children who most often have the hidden injuries, missed by the adults around them. Parent problems are passed on to their sons and daughters along with the secrets that accompany them.

Tonight, Danny was the clear victim and I resolve to do whatever I can to protect him going forward even if that means imposing myself, which is contrary to my belief in one's privacy. But I must do this because I have come to love this family and especially Danny. Perhaps if I had spoken to his father sooner...

Prologue

(As told by Ezinne Okoro, neighbor on August 1, 1971.)

This is Danny's story, his family's, and - as it happens - mine as well. I came to know Danny when he was just a little boy, eight years old. He came to live with us for a time when his Father was out of his depth. I was glad to pitch in and it made sense that he should stay with my family as we were neighbors, he was the same age as my daughter, and staying with us allowed him a modicum of stability.

Back then, Danny was always shy around me but there was a sweetness about him from the very beginning. Danny would walk to my home after school let out during the school year as well as after Bible school during the summer and if there were any flowers in bloom along his route, he would always present me with a bouquet upon his arrival, never mind if many of these flowers were yellow dandelions. In the Spring and Summer, it got to be that we had these little groupings of flowers in jelly jars on every windowsill in the house. I could never bear throwing them out even after the flowers were no longer standing upright on their own.

From what I have heard and observed, he is still that same sweet boy. But there is a void where his feelings should be. It breaks my heart what he has gone through. But somehow he always manages to rebound.

I guess you could say he is resilient. For instance, just before he came to live with us on a hot July day when his mother was visiting her brother out of town, his father forgot that he had left Danny alone at the Elementary School's wading pool in the hot blazing sun. Danny became so sunburned that he had these water blisters all over his little body. I cared for him with menthol cream and a fan. It must have been terribly painful, but he never complained. He would just ask

me to apply the cream on his back and to position the fan to cool him. I would do that and stroke his hair which was the only part of him that was not burnt.

I asked him at the time, ‘how did it make you feel to be left alone like you were at the pool?’ But Danny just looked at me bewildered. He said he loved being at the pool and in the cool water on such a sweltering day. He never blamed his father and instead wondered aloud why it never hurt until after the day was over. He vowed never to make that mistake ever again. He is as sweet as they come. But not so sweet to himself. His biggest challenge is that he is very self-judgmental.

Chapter 1:
Danny at 18
Sunday, August 8, 1971, 6:00am/∞

As I drive my father's car, it occurs to me how odd today's trip is, when just last year I was so excited about getting my driver's license. I lorded it over my brother, Sam, that while it took him two tests to pass, I scored a perfect written test on my first attempt and scored a ninety-six out of 100 on the driver's portion.

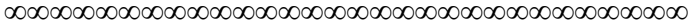
Amazingly, Sam never got angry at me for the jab. Instead, he took pride in the fact that it had been him that took me out to practice driving while I still only had my permit. He tested my skill by having me drive the car, which was his pride and joy, back from the drive-in restaurant located just south of Bloomington in Eagan, Minnesota by way of very narrow multi-span steel truss bridges over the Minnesota River.

To get us there he always enjoyed driving extremely fast over those bridges causing us to become airborne on the hill just after exiting the last steel bridge and cranking the steering wheel sharply to the right in order to make the quick turn once the tires hit the pavement. If not done properly we would be sure to hit the bridge guards of a final small concrete bridge. I always yelled at him to slow down, which was part of the reason he did it, to get a rise out of me.

Now I am on that same stretch, driving south on Cedar Avenue, flying through the narrow bridges toward that very same concrete bridge. Moving toward the abutment and cement railings at 75 miles per hour...my thoughts quicken. My adrenaline races through my heart, courses through my brain, to finally overwhelm my entire body. The sensory acceleration matches the speed of the car, all the while I

think, “I need to do this to protect Sadé! This is how I discharge my debt to Dr. Okoro.”

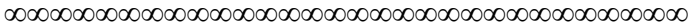
The car is in the air, and I purposely do not crank the wheels right, so there is no escape. Before the tires even touch down I close my eyes. I feel nothing but adrenaline and sheer terror.



Just before the car hits, time slows down. In fact, time ceases. Another reality reveals itself and I hear my mother’s voice, “You will need to forgive yourself now Danny. I am here with you, just as I have been since the days after I passed. You are going to lose yourself and be disoriented. But know this, it is not the end of your existence and we will be together soon.”



Then, I am back in the moment. The point of impact is like a still shot. There is a distant sound of a crash and a split-second vision of the car’s front end crushing into solid concrete. Glass shatters and the force throws my body forward and out through the windshield. Then, I am no longer in my familiar body.



I thought I would feel tremendous pain, but I feel nothing...nothing at all. I find myself somehow above the wreckage looking down at my own smashed and lifeless body. None of this makes any sense. I think, ‘If that body is me and I’m dead, how is it that I am still here?’

Someone takes my ‘hand’ and says, “Danny, you are not alone; you are loved.”

I have so many questions, but it is all too much. I am overwhelmed. The crashed car and my lifeless body blink out of sight. Then, my

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vision clears, and I find myself in a kind of void where there is no sensory experience at all. I do however feel ... loved. The words spoken to me ring repeatedly in my 'ears,' "Danny, you are not alone; you are loved." Those words are enough to sustain me.

About the Author

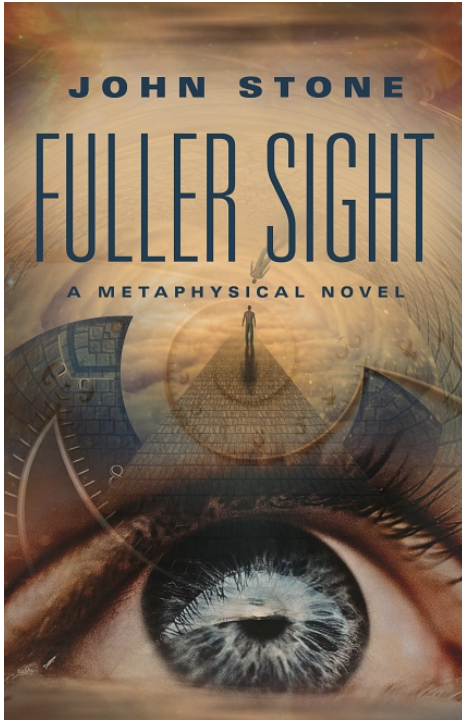
John Stone is providentially married and enjoys as much time as he can with ‘family’ including their daughters, sons- in-law, grandchildren, extended family and friends who become more important with the passing of every single day.

He holds a Bachelor of Education degree from Mankato State University and a Master of Industrial Relations degree from the University of Minnesota’s Carlson School of Management. Between those two schools he also attended United Theological Seminary (UTS), a Minnesota ecumenical seminary and while there served as Interim Minister at Zion United Church of Christ in Long Prairie, Minnesota; Assistant Chaplain with the Minnesota Department of Corrections in Sauk Centre, Minnesota; and Youth Minister at the Church of Christ in Richfield, MN.

In his professional life he had the privilege of working with churches, schools, government agencies, nonprofits, and many organizations founded and run by people of color including Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC); NAACP; Latino Communities United in Service (CLUES); The St. Paul Foundation’s El Fundo and the St. Paul Urban League.

More recently he raised money from individuals as well as public, government and private sources to serve causes benefiting people who are economically disadvantaged, veterans, neighborhood watch organizations, higher education and medical research.

Currently, he is retired and pursuing a new career as an author.



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