

Shouting into the Silence

“I have never read anything like this! Shouting into the Silence will take you on an incredible journey with Danny, as he quite literally fights for the rights of other human beings across the world. Looking at some famous cases and some lesser-known tales you won’t be able to put this moving and shocking book down. Shouting into the Silence inspired me and it will inspire you – a must read.”

Marc Carey, European Marketing Director, Hard Rock

“This is an amazing book, telling the most riveting stories of many people from all walks of life, who are passionate about human justice and who work tirelessly to achieve it. It is beautifully and sensitively told by Danny Smith, whose determination ‘to set the prisoner free’ has never wavered. No one can read this book and remain unmoved. With humility and admiration, I salute you Danny.”

Fiona Castle OBE, Author and Broadcaster

“If you ever doubt that one person can make a difference to the world you should read this book. It reminded me that if you act with courage, are driven by belief in justice and a big and kind heart, you can be the change you want to see in the world. Danny Smith’s story is an inspiration and this book is a must read for a new generation of activists.”

**Christopher Davis, Director of International Campaigns and Corporate Social Responsibility, The Body Shop International;
United Nations Business Leaders Award January 2011**

“Danny Smith is a leader of action with true compassion for the persecuted. In 1997 when he heard my family’s freedom would have been in jeopardy if my wife and I, along with our two month old baby son continued to be trapped in Hong Kong before the imminent handover to China, he acted swiftly by flying to Hong Kong. I still remember what he told me and my wife: that he was determined to see our freedom, otherwise ‘I will stay with you as long as you need.’ To those who wants to make a difference for the lives of persecuted, this is a must read book. Encouraging, empowering and edifying.”

Bob Fu, Founder and President, ChinaAid

“Thank you for campaigning for me when I was in prison. Such campaigns are an effective way to take action for human rights and I hope your book will be successful and inspire others to get involved with the fight against injustice. I want to tell you about a Chinese proverb: ‘One action is much better than a hundred words.’ Let’s work together for human rights.”

Chen Guangcheng, Chinese lawyer and human rights activist

“An eye-opening mega-motivating story that will inspire vision, faith and action. Salt and light ministry at its best. Let’s not just read this but give it to others. If this does not inspire you, then you may want to see your doctor.”

George Verwer, Founder, Operation Mobilization

Shouting *into the* Silence

*One man’s fight for the
world’s forgotten*

DANNY SMITH



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Published by Lion Books
an imprint of

Lion Hudson plc

Wilkinson House, Jordan Hill Road,
Oxford OX2 8DR, England
www.lionhudson.com/lion

ISBN 978 0 7459 5600 8
e-ISBN 978 0 7459 5726 5

First edition 2013

Cover image © Charlie Barnwell/Corbis

Text acknowledgments

Every effort has been made to trace the original copyright holders where required. In some cases this has proved impossible. We shall be happy to correct any such omissions in future editions.

Editorial note

Some names in this book have been change to protect identities.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Printed and bound in the UK, July 2013, LH26

To
Jessica –
the world changed the day you entered my life.

.....

To
Joan,
Rachel, Matt, Seth, and Eden
Luke, Holly, and Lily –
you remind me of the important things in life.

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Acknowledgments

I owe so much to so many – people who inspired me, worked with me, supported me, stood with me when things got rough, loved me...

Father Shay Cullen, Reverend KK Devaraj, Petru Dugulescu, Valeri Barinov, Alexander Ogorodnikov, Shoba and Sandesh Kaddam, Timothy Chmykhalov, the Vashchenko family, Peter Sewakiryanga, Vincent Mugisha, Bob Fu, Chen Guangcheng, Yuan Weijing – you enriched my life beyond measure.

Lizzie and David Alton's commitment never faltered from the first day Bill Hampson asked David to get involved, and Jubilee Campaign's accomplishments within Parliament can be traced to his door. Early in the journey, Peter Benenson was my mentor, and George Verwer a true friend through the years.

The compassion of people has been humbling. I wish I could list everyone who responded to the campaigns and projects I raised. It's heartening to know that there's so much goodness in the world.

I'm grateful to Ali Hull, whose dogged persistence ensured we reached port safe; to Julie Frederick for final manoeuvres; and to my son Luke for important contributions in navigating the changes in the manuscript.

Many of the exploits recorded here wouldn't have happened without our crack team including Ann Buwalda, Rosie Till, Richard Warnes, Howard Taylor, Ali Kimber-Bates, Kate Thomas, Emily Swain, Mark Rowland, Malcolm Grainge, Robert Day, Stephen Andrews, John Anderson, Wilfred Wong, Rachel Bader, Jennie Cain, Alice Diamond, Naomi Weeks.

Family, friends, and colleagues, only a few are mentioned: My mother always put me first, Clement Dameron, Pam, Melanie, Tim and the Macmarquis clan; Janet and Craig Rickards, Wannu Haneveld, Roley Horowitz, Dr Wai Sin Hu, Hazel Thompson, Bill Hampson, Bernadette Charehwa and Ronald Mazengera, Jim and Kitty Thompson, Olivia Harrison, Steve Brown, Billy Connolly, James Parry, Paul Diamond, Patricia Hitchcock, Reg Wright, Steve Neill, Bonnie Ryason, Dave Muir, John Quanrad, Peter Kirtley, Liane Carroll, Bryce Cooke, Frank and Marlene Rice, Lois Brown, Rajiv Hanspal, Vinoth Kumar, Chris and Linda Denne, Christine Lock, Dave and Mathilda Armstrong, Ron and Lilo Penny, Fred and Helen Holmes, Andrew Smith, Alan Clemence, Sue Tatum, Micha Jazz, Ian and Rosemary Andrews, Dirk Jan Groot, Gerald Coates, Aninha Capaldi, Brian Woods, Deborah Shipley, Kate Blewett, Sarah de Carvalho, Chris Rogers, Mal Whitely, Kirsty Jones, Dave Dorey; the Reverends Ben and Chris Beecroft and members (both past and present) of St Paul's Church Addlestone embraced us at the toughest time of our lives – you will always have a special place in my heart.

Joan; Rachel, Matt, Seth, and Eden; Luke, Holly, and Lily; and Jessica... I love you.

Foreword

As a teenager I felt especially challenged by the killing of Dr Martin Luther King. King warned of the danger of silence in the face of the evil of prejudice and bigotry, and he made a passionate case in defence of liberty and of life itself. King warned that “our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter” and that “in the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies but the silence of our friends.”

Danny Smith could never be accused of silence or complacency when faced by the things which matter and no-one will ever be able to say of him that he was a fair-weather friend, with nothing to say and nowhere to be seen, when the going got rough. Anyone reading the gripping and inspiring stories in *Shouting into the Silence* will be struck by his selfless and sacrificial devotion to those to whom he has dedicated his life.

They will also be struck by his refusal to be deterred by seemingly impossible odds or daunted by the scale of the battles in which he has become involved.

Just over a decade after King was murdered, and now serving as a young MP at Westminster, to remind myself of the importance of doing what you can to make a difference – I pinned the words of King to my office wall in the House of Commons.

And it was here in Parliament, not long after, that I met Danny Smith and we discussed the plight of the Siberian Seven – whose story is in this book. It was the beginning of a fruitful partnership, which helped me crystallise my own thinking on the indissoluble links between human life, human rights and human dignity.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who was executed by the Nazis, also knew the other consequence of remaining silent – “Silence in the face of evil is itself evil: God will not hold us guiltless. Not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act.”

Danny Smith has spent three decades speaking and acting, shouting into the silence. This book will inspire another generation to do likewise.

David Alton

(Professor the Lord Alton of Liverpool)

Introduction

I pressed my hand against the window of Apple’s flagship shop just off Oxford Street in London. My fingerprints left a faint outline on the cold luminous glass as I peered inside.

The Apple Store was teeming with people, and there was a buzz in the crowd. It seemed that everyone wanted an iPhone or an iPad or one of their cool, iconic products that had turned Apple into the world’s most valuable company ever, setting a record \$623 (£395) billion for its shares in August 2012.

I scoured the customers inside but couldn’t see her. Hazel Thompson, the dynamic young contract photographer from *The New York Times*, had sounded urgent on the phone. “Can you meet me at Apple immediately?” I was intrigued.

* * *

Some months earlier, we had talked about the explosion of Twitter and Facebook and discussed how new media could be wielded to help children at risk. I always believed in using the media and our campaigns had been featured on television, radio, and the front pages of the biggest selling newspapers in the country. But times were changing. Tablets like Amazon’s Kindle had become best sellers and electronic books were outselling fiction hardbacks and paperbacks. Apple’s iTunes site was responsible for nearly 30 per cent of all music sold worldwide. By October 2012, Apple had reportedly sold 100 million iPads and expected the same number to be sold in 2013. The US’s second largest selling news magazine, *Newsweek*, had decided its December 2012 issue would become its final print edition, closing to concentrate on its online edition. An

editorial in *The Guardian* newspaper in January 2013 called the end of print a digital mass extinction and compared it with the disappearance of the dinosaurs millions of years ago.

“I’ve got some ideas,” Hazel had said, eyes twinkling. “Wouldn’t it be amazing if we could do an iBook and get Apple involved?”

I smiled at Hazel but stayed silent. It would be amazing. It was also most unlikely. Apple’s genius was to create must-have products and everyone wanted to link up with them. Why would they get involved with us? Besides, they had never done anything like this before.

“I’ll call you,” Hazel said.

Hazel covered the London Olympics for ABC TV News (a US television station), and when the Games was over, she telephoned. She sounded both mysterious and excited. She wouldn’t say much on the phone, just that it was an important meeting and I had to be there.

* * *

Over the past four decades, I have walked the streets of some of planet earth’s mega cities, from Manila to Moscow to Mumbai. While media pundits documented global conflicts directed by madmen, bandits, freedom-fighters, rebels, tyrants, and terrorists, I have detected another battle in this geography of disgrace, hidden from view, moving invisibly but spreading fast: a war against children.

Tortured. Trafficked. Exploited. Prostituted. Enslaved. Starved. Burnt. Maimed. Sacrificed. Abused. Forced to work. Compelled into violent conflicts. Murdered... This has become the terrifying experience of millions of children worldwide. Across the globe it is the children – those who are vulnerable and in need of our care – who are most at risk.

My journey into this “war zone” has led me to some extraordinary people – warriors who inspired me and joined me in campaigning to protect children at risk. As the founder of Jubilee

Campaign, combining lobbying and transformational charitable action, I think my role has been easy. I was both a witness of the injustice children faced and a designer – I designed ways for people to make a difference. The response has been humbling. Friends, neighbours, supporters, politicians, journalists – people from all walks of life took a part; many sent sacrificial gifts, some gave generously and asked nothing in return, including George and Olivia Harrison, and Billy Connolly. Princess Diana sent us a personal message and we’d heard that she planned to get more involved before her untimely death in a car crash in 1997.

It’s been an unforgettable journey, with some chilling moments, such as that memorable night in Epsom, when I stripped off for my first undercover assignment.

CHAPTER 1

Wired for Sound

Trying to Change the Law on Sex Tourism, 1994

It was late in the evening and Epsom's multi-storey car park was deserted. We drove in a convoy up to the third level and pulled over into one of the empty bays. Fast Eddie was the first out and ambled over, carrying a heavy silver case.

"OK, this is it," he said. "Take off your clothes."

I took off my shirt and pulled down my trousers. Goosebumps came up on my body as I felt the cool evening breeze.

The squeal of tyres startled us. A black Golf GTI came into view. It hit the curve of the exit route and cruised by. We froze for an instant and must have had the collective look of a fawn caught in the brights of a car's main beam. The driver of the Golf seemed to be a prim, no-nonsense career woman. You could read her quizzical expression as she took in the scene, setting her mental clock to be sure to catch *Crimewatch* the following Tuesday. "Yes, officer, there were six of them. They looked really mean. One was stripped, almost naked."

"Come on guys, let's get to work." It was Fast Eddie, and in the next twenty minutes we realized how he had earned his nickname.

Fast Eddie pulled open the silver case to reveal a cascade of electronic gadgetry. His blonde assistant, Jade, strapped a miniature tape recorder to my lower chest and a sound box to my side. I pulled on my shirt and a loose-fitting jacket that I had bought for £1 from

Oxfam earlier that day. They traced the wires through my clothes and plugged me in. Jade checked sound levels. At first, it was hard to breathe with the multi-flex heavy-duty tape cutting into my skin and the equipment strapped so tightly to my body. Adam Chadwick, who was in charge of the operation, pointed to my reflection in the car mirror. "You've put on a lot of weight," he smirked.

Meanwhile Fast Eddie was putting the final touches to something in the high-tech gizmo from his bag of tricks. It was a necktie. Attached to it were wires linked to a sleek-looking box with flashing lights. He carefully eased the tie over my head and placed it around my neck. Jade traced the cable through my shirt and plugged it into the sound box taped to my waist.

"OK, we're live," Fast Eddie announced. He twiddled with some buttons and static burst out from the sound box. "Let's hit it."

With deft, precise strokes, they wired me for sound and pictures. A low light flicked from the small television monitor that Jade was holding and Adam's image appeared on the screen. Adam stood in front of me and waved. And there he was on the monitor, waving. But where was the image coming from? Jade pointed to my necktie.

The tie wasn't going to win any design awards. Little diamond-shaped motifs the size of a tiny button were set tight against a silvery silk material. At the centre of the pattern of one of the diamond shapes was a tiny camera lens.

Fast Eddie's work was immaculate. The camera was virtually undetectable and the floppy coat covered the recorders taped to my body. He was in constant demand by television journalists and had worked on many undercover investigations. Adam had chosen this particular day for our operation because he wanted Fast Eddie for the job. He told me, "It's going to be dangerous and I want to be sure we have the best."

"You know what you have to do, don't you?" Fast Eddie said, talking me through the best positions to capture the target on the secret camera.

* * *

In November 1994, a producer at Independent Television News (ITN) wrote and asked if they could join us on an undercover operation that we had started, investigating travel agents in the UK who were selling “child sex” tours overseas.

Since 1992, Jubilee Campaign had been at the forefront of a battle to change the law so that sex tourists who abused children around the world could be prosecuted when they got back to the UK. We worked in partnership with Father Shay Cullen, an Irish Catholic priest from the Columban missionary order in the Philippines, who was the first to call for this new legislation.

Father Shay and his organization, the Preda Foundation, had spent several years investigating sex offenders, and his own files rivalled those of the authorities. Shay passed us a list of suspects and offenders while we were researching material for a report into child prostitution that we intended to publish as part of our campaign to convince the government to change the law.

Under existing legislation, men could videotape themselves violating children overseas but if they were caught at Heathrow Airport on their return to the UK, they could only be prosecuted for carrying obscene videos. The sex acts against children were not punishable. It was absurd.

I woke up in a sweat one night while working on the material that Shay had sent over, worried that people on the list could sue us. I telephoned Shay immediately, and sounded the alarm.

“We could end up in court,” I said, clearly panicked.

“Great,” Shay thundered down a crackly line from the Philippines. “Can you imagine the scene? You’re in court and the paedophile offender is suing you for exposing him?”

“But he could file a case against us,” I countered.

“Don’t worry if you get sued, I’ll raise the money for your bail!” Shay chuckled.

He calmed me down. “Keep your nerve,” he counselled. It was a dangerous strategy but the right one.

Soon after this, I had an appointment with an MP to seek his support for our campaign. As I was waiting in the hallway of an anteroom in the House of Commons one rainy afternoon, I picked up a leaflet that had been dropped by the occupants of an earlier session. It revealed that a group of jazz enthusiasts met regularly in Parliament. At first it was funny. I imagined a smoky room late at night, filled with MPs and their cohorts bopping to the rhythms that came off the riverboats that sailed up the Mississippi through New Orleans and Memphis, with the beat carried over on the slave ships from Africa. After the amusement had passed, I became inquisitive. If jazz fans met regularly in the Commons, could we have a parliamentary group dedicated to street children?

There were some immediate hurdles to overcome. Who would handle the administrative backup? Problem solved: Jubilee Campaign would serve as its secretariat. How could we choose a chairman without displaying any political bias? Easy, we’d have three.

David Alton, at the time the Liberal MP for Liverpool, eased the passage for the formation of the group, and recruited Nigel Griffiths (Labour) and Ian Bruce (Conservative) as co-chairmen with him. Olivia Harrison, the wife of former Beatle George Harrison, and Jim Capaldi’s Brazilian wife Aninha, invited their friends Jimmy Nail, Wimbledon Football Club chairman Sam Hammam, among others, and the All Party Parliamentary Group on Street Children (APPGSC) was launched in the House of Commons later that year, dedicated to using the political system to defend the rights of vulnerable children on the streets. If the parliamentary group thought they wouldn’t have much to do, they were wrong.

The new APPGSC’s first meeting was in November to launch our campaign to change the law to prosecute sex tourists who abused children overseas. The materials in our campaign toolkit included a petition to the government, postcards to local MPs, and the 132-page report that I’d been working on with Shay. He flew over for the event at a packed room in the House of Commons.

Our message was clear: we wanted child prostitution outlawed, declared a crime against humanity, and extra-territorial jurisdiction legislation introduced for sex crimes against children. At the time, no foreign government or Western nation had ever arrested any of its citizens who had abused children overseas and there was simply no mechanism in place to prosecute offenders.

The statistics proved sobering for everyone at the meeting. Every year, about 1 million children were lured or forced into prostitution. This figure was documented in a Norwegian government report, confirming that young children were trafficked and held as bait for a thriving attraction: sex with children.

Globally, as many as 10 million children were thought to be enslaved in the sex industry, prostitution and pornography. Child prostitution tended to be higher in Asia and Latin America, although an alarming growth rate had been recorded in Africa, North America, and Europe. Eastern Europe and the former communist states were emerging as a new market in the sexual exploitation of children.

The UN Rapporteur on Child Trafficking remarked that the children being tricked into prostitution were getting younger and younger. “These are nine-, ten-, eleven-, twelve-year-old kids,” he asserted. The experts warned that the trend would increase unless action was taken.

Shay combined eloquence with clarity at the parliamentary meeting as he outlined the historical context from which to view this crime: “Sex tourism and child prostitution is the ultimate in exploitation. Peoples of other nations have exploited the raw materials of poorer countries for centuries. Now they’re coming back to exploit the bodies of our children.”

Our campaign emphasized that the authorities had failed to bring paedophiles to justice. Instead, these sex tourists had used the system to evade capture, putting more children at risk. It was time for a new law.

Several television journalists attended the meeting and later a documentary was commissioned. Hundreds of copies of our report were sent to MPs, the police, the press, and others. But the government’s initial response wasn’t encouraging.

At a meeting led by MPs from the APPGSC, the Home Office said that the problem was too complex and the law couldn’t be changed to accommodate our demands. It would never happen. Their explanation was that such laws would be unworkable in practice because of the difficulties in gathering evidence from foreign jurisdictions to facilitate a successful prosecution. The Home Office insisted that it was not for the British government to impose its laws abroad. That was that. To strengthen our efforts we joined ECPAT (End Child Prostitution and Asian Tourism) but continued several independent initiatives over the next few years.

In 1994, our parliamentary officer, Wilfred Wong, drafted a bill setting out the laws we sought and put a requirement of double criminality in the proposed legislation. This meant that the alleged child sex offence had to be considered as a criminal offence both in the foreign territory where it occurred and within the UK before the accused could be charged and prosecuted in this country. He explained:

I did this because there was no way the British government would agree to imposing its laws on another jurisdiction if the crime in question was not even considered an offence in that foreign jurisdiction.

Furthermore, I put in the requirement that nothing in the bill would contravene the legal principle of Double Jeopardy. This meant that if the defendant had already been prosecuted and either convicted or acquitted for the offence while abroad, he could not be prosecuted for the same offence again when he returned to Britain.

We used every opportunity to lobby the government. They expressed sympathy but performed the ceremony of the folded arms. They would do everything they could but there was nothing they could do. Britain once led the world in ending the slave trade, but by the early nineties, it became one of the only major tourist-sending countries (alongside Japan) to refuse to introduce a law prosecuting its own nationals for exploiting children overseas.

The government's feeble excuses effectively left them on the side of the sex tourists. It was hard to understand why more was not being done to protect children at risk. How could we allow children around the world to be enslaved and held captive for adults to jet in and defile them? How would history judge us? I was determined we should do everything possible to fight this.

Getting my hands dirty

I was sure that the fast track to the government's attention was to get the story into the press. When Father Shay showed me the videotape of the arrest of a suspected paedophile – a foreigner – on a boat with young children (some aged seven) in the Philippines, I was convinced that the story would cause a sensation. After screening the video, the media groups we approached were enthusiastic, but when they learned that the suspect, Victor Fitzgerald, was Australian and not British, the decision was swift and emphatic: the offender had to be British or the story wouldn't run. But Father Shay continued to work closely with us on new investigations into the dark, sordid, claustrophobic world of sex tourists and several leads emerged. With the backing of ITN, we knew the story had legs.

But it also meant I had to get involved, get my hands dirty. ITN wanted me to focus on a specific target: Mike Stones, the boss of a Surrey travel agency called 747 Travel. When I phoned him to make contact in November 1994, he talked enthusiastically about the sex industry abroad and promised personally to escort

me around the bars and brothels of Thailand and the Philippines – after I had bought a ticket from him, of course.

"We can get you anything you want," Stones said convincingly, "including young girls."

"How young?" I asked.

He replied, "Just tell me how young you want the girls. Just give me an age. Give me a number. No problem at all. You can do anything you want with the kids."

He wanted a cheque in the post for my ticket but I insisted that we meet, and the lure of my payment proved too enticing. I had tape-recorded a few of our telephone conversations but I needed his words on camera, if the story were to run on television.

We were clear that there could be no entrapment or manipulation or the story would be discredited and open the door for us to be sued. All I had to do was ask the questions. All the suspect had to do was repeat his everyday conversation – on camera. The risks were obvious. If Stones suspected that I had been filming him secretly or that he'd been exposed, he'd probably erupt in fury and turn violent. Worse, the investigation would be jeopardized and he would escape and be able to cover his tracks.

When ITN learned that Stones worked from home and sold his sex tours within a mile of Chessington's World of Adventures, they had the hook for an important story.

* * *

I liked James Dean and Marlon Brando and harboured secret dreams of becoming an actor, but playing the role of a paedophile soliciting children for sex was one of the toughest things I've ever had to do. I would give my life for my children, who were safe at home, given all the love and care that our hearts could afford. But here I was, late at night, in leafy, tranquil Surrey, about to meet a sleaze bag who had already told me that he had sold airline tickets to perverts so they could travel abroad to abuse children.

From the car park in Epsom we drove the short journey to 747 Travel, situated in an elegant suburb near Epsom Station. The film crew set up their equipment in the bushes at the side of the road and focused their camera on Stones's front door.

I walked down the quiet avenue and pressed the doorbell. I was sweating, both from nervous tension and the equipment strapped to my body. The tape cut into my flesh and the decks and the wires under my clothes felt uncomfortable. Curiously, I felt a sense of calm, despite my obvious anxiety.

Somewhere to the left, I caught a glimpse of a woman being pulled along by a dog straining on its leash. In the distance, a car engine started up, followed quickly by the crackle-crunch of tyres on gravel. The door opened and I walked inside.

Undercover

Campaign Against Child Sex Gathers Momentum, 1994–95

I closed the door behind me and followed Stones inside. He walked in short, jerky steps. He looked to be in his late thirties, thickset, with tousled hair and glasses. He wore trainers and dressed casually.

The next forty minutes were excruciating as he went into explicit details of his sordid business of sex tours. Stones made it clear that my apparent interest in young girls wasn't unusual: anything that I wanted was easily available, and he knew where to get it.

It was almost over. We walked back to the front door. He slouched forward as he turned the latch and opened it. It was dark outside and there was a dampness in the air. The glow from a street lamp shone into the hallway where we were standing and cast long shadows down the passage. Somehow I had to get over these final moments together, get past him, out of this place. But he had blocked the door.

I could feel a fresh breeze blow gently into the hallway where we stood. The equipment under my clothes felt heavy and clumsy. Stones was staring at me. Could he see something? A wire sticking out of my collar at the back? A lead dangling from my trouser pocket? Bumps under my shirt?