

# Afraid

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At the age of four years old Sharon McGovern knew that her new stepfather was doing something he shouldn't, touching her in the wrong way and threatening her so she wouldn't tell her Mummy. At the age of ten Sharon was raped by this monster, Michael Garvey, in a bed where her older and younger brother were sleeping. It was an act of unspeakable cruelty. And it was the beginning: every night Sharon would hear the floorboards creak; every night Sharon lay awake, praying tonight he would be quick and the nightmare would be over. The abuse Sharon suffered went on for thirteen years. She reached out to a councillor, the very first adult she had ever told of the abuse, and he told her not to tell such lies and never to speak of it again. And she didn't until the day, forty years later, a fellow victim of Garvey - his own younger brother - arrived at her door to tell her he was going to the police to report his brother for raping him. The report went nowhere and Sharon knew it was up to her to cage this paedophile for good. With unprecedented bravery, Sharon went to the police and faced the terror of her life in the dock. She looked into the whites of his eyes and proved - beyond doubt - that this man was a threat to children everywhere. Garvey was jailed and convicted of seven accounts of rape and numerous indecent assaults. He still remains in prison today.

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