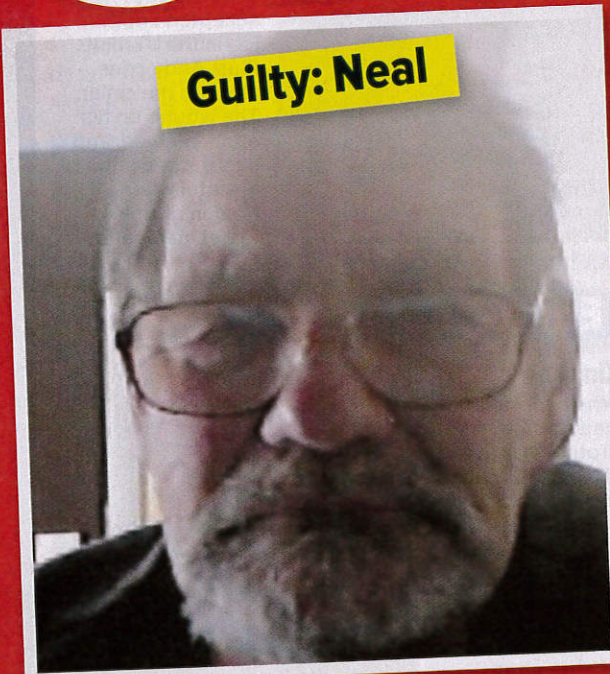


SICK MICK

ABUSED US BOTH



Guilty: Neal



Years of hurt
Finally, I've
been believed



Tony had been going through the same agony

CALL THAT JUSTICE?!

- Sexually abused by evil neighbour
- Denied justice for decades
- Pervert walks free

Trusted neighbour sexually assaulted my big brother, too



By Allie Short, 41, from Milton Keynes

Half asleep, I felt strong, safe arms scoop me up. 'Goodnight,' my neighbour Mick, then 43, whispered, carrying me outside. It was about 1979, and my mother had taken me, then 3, and my brother Tony, 5, to Mick's to watch a film on his colour telly. But I fell asleep during the film. I liked Mick. He spoilt me, made me feel special. Life at home was tough – my mum was a single parent, had no time for me and Tony. But we were always welcome at Mick's. He'd make us waffles, let us watch telly. Only I didn't like what he did

when we were alone. He'd touch me under my clothes. His fingers crawling over my flesh, between my legs. But it'd gone on for as long as I could remember, so I was used to it. And Mick never scared or threatened me. After, he'd even reward me with a mint imperial. 'Better get home,' he'd grin. Or we'd sleep over, and I'd wake to find him in the bed molesting me. I was so young I didn't know it was wrong, and didn't think to tell anyone. Only, when I was 7, Tony went out with a friend, so

Mick took me into his bedroom. He undid his trousers, made me give him oral sex. I was choking, in pain as Mick forced my head down. After, I was shaken. But I was scared, had no-one to talk to. Mick would abuse me several times a week. As I got older, learnt about sex and chatted to mates,

I understood it was wrong. *This isn't happening to them,* I realised. So I tried to avoid Mick. But my mum would send me round to buy rabbit food – he kept huge sacks of it. I'd hand over the cash, then Mick would attack. When I was 9, Tony, then 11, moved in with our grandma. I didn't know why. I missed him. And I was at Mick's mercy. One afternoon when I was 13, I was desperate to watch *Crufts Best In Show* on telly. So me and a friend went to Mick's. Only, when she went home, Mick pounced. 'I've always fancied you,' he leered. He started touching me, grabbing my clothes, pawing at me. I worried he'd rape me. For the first time, I pushed him away. 'Stop!' I cried, shoving him with all my might. We tussled and my jacket tore. 'I'm going to report you,' I cried. 'No-one will believe

you,' Mick growled as I fled. The next morning, I walked into Bletchley police station. 'I've been sexually abused,' I said. That evening, an officer came round, took a statement. *It's over,* I thought, relieved. Except, a few months later I was told there'd be no charges. 'It's your word against his,' an officer said. There wasn't enough evidence. I was crushed. Sadly, my mum wasn't

supportive, and because I'd reported abuse, social services sent me to boarding school. I felt abandoned, let down, and went off the rails. Started self-harming. I was in so much pain inside, I wanted it to show outside. Me and Tony stayed in touch, but weren't close. Life was tough. I suffered from anxiety, agoraphobia. Stayed in with the curtains drawn. At 19, I had a

declining health, he was deemed unfit to enter a plea. Still, in March, a 'did they do the act' trial was held at Aylesbury Crown Court. Michael Henry Neal, 80, faced six counts of indecently assaulting me, plus five indecent assaults and one charge of gross indecency against Tony. My old statement was used in evidence, and Mick was found guilty of all charges. *Finally!* Only, because of his age and health, Mick was handed a 12-month supervision order, and banned from having contact with children. He's placed on the sex offenders register for five years. 'It's a disgrace,' I wept to Tony. That sick paedo put me through hell, ruined my childhood, gave me a lifetime of trauma. He deserved to rot. But at least I had finally been believed. For years, Tony and I suffered in silence, alone. Together, we got justice.



Stolen childhood
I thought abuse was normal

PLUS

'He's a monster'



Tony says, 'I was 6 the first time Mick picked me up from school, took me to his flat and molested me. I'd stay over, too, sleep in his bed with him. Mick was clever, manipulative, and I'd been groomed and taught how to keep secrets from a young age. And I'd no idea he was abusing Allie, too. Even when I moved in with my grandmother, I'd go back at school holidays and Mick would pounce. It stopped when I was 13, and I have struggled emotionally as an adult, had counselling. I wanted Mick to go to jail, but I'll have to settle with telling the world he's a monster. I'd encourage any other survivors of abuse to come forward.'

son, and being a mum forced me to face the world. But it wasn't easy, I couldn't forget what I'd been through. Then, in 2014, I met Richard. For the first time, I felt safe, happy. And with his support, I texted Tony. *I'm thinking of getting the case against Mick re-opened,* I said. He replied: *If you do, I'll speak out, too.* I froze. My jaw dropped as Tony confessed Mick had abused him as well. All those years I'd felt alone, but Tony had been hurting, too. We both poured our hearts out to police – and, this time, Mick was charged. Because of his age and

That sick paedo gave me a lifetime of trauma