

## Violent Crime: Shad's Story

In July 2008, I was the victim of a very violent attack, which left me hospitalised and needing major reconstructive facial surgery. I now have half a face full of titanium as a result of the attack. I started thinking about my attacker, I couldn't believe what had happened to me, I didn't understand what had happened to me, why suddenly a complete stranger randomly would inflict so much pain onto another human being, onto me. And for some strange reason I just began to look at things from his point of view, I began to think well what's happening in this guy's life? What did he do that day? Did he wake up that day thinking that he was going to be violent? Did he walk down the street knowing that he was going to attack me? Is there a story to this man? One of the things that crime doesn't allow to happen, when a crime has been committed is for the two parties that have been most affected by the crime to actually communicate with each other at any point. The only way that I could find some peace or some understanding was to visit Glen, my attacker. On the day that I met Glen, I was picked up by Colin from the Restorative Justice organisation Rebuilds, he was a facilitator for the meeting. And yeah, I remember the journey to the prison, I was incredibly anxious and nervous. When he walked into the room I stood up, I walked towards him, I shook his hand and we continued to shake hands for what seemed a very, very, very long time, and neither of us felt able to let go of each other's hand, it was quite strange. So from the handshake, suddenly next minute we were kind of hugging each other like long lost brothers. I could feel in his body as he hugged me, I could feel a relief and a release, and I could feel the same in my own body. To the point where I kind of broke down immediately and started just crying and found myself being comforted by Glen. It was a very, very kind of surreal experience because I never would have expected, you know before I went into the room for that to have happened. I would very, very strongly and actively encourage all victims and offenders actually, to be part of a Restorative Justice process. I think as difficult as it is, and it is a very, very difficult thing to do, to get your head round, it was only when we were allowed to meet each other that actually we could repair the damage that had been done by that crime that had been committed, and I think that is what Restorative Justice conferencing really is about more than anything else, it allows some of the damage that's been done to be repaired by the two people who have been most affected by it.