

And he said, "Son, this world is rough
And if a man's gonna make it, he's gotta be tough
And I know I wouldn't be there to help ya along
So I give ya that name and I said goodbye
I knew you'd have to get tough or die
And it's the name that helped to make you strong"

Yeah he said, "Now you just fought one hell of a fight
And I know you hate me, and you got the right
To kill me now, and I wouldn't blame you if you do
But ya ought to thank me, before I die
For the gravel in ya guts and the spit in ya eye
'Cause I'm the son-of-a-bitch that named you "Sue"
Yeah what could I do, what could I do Johnny Cash

A BOY NAMED SUE - DUTY OF CARE AND - OR ELDER ABUSE

Peter Adamis Abalinx 8 March 2017

How often do we hear of people taking advantage of those close to them for financial reasons? How often do we hear of emotional abuse and neglect of elders because of past ill feelings being held against those who were once responsible for their upbringing? I am sure that we all have stories to tell and yet we only discuss it amongst ourselves ad in a whisper in the event others accuse us of gossip or speaking ill of someone. It sometimes reminds me of the song called "A boy name Sue" by Johnny Cash.

I am of the opinion that within our society, greed plays a greater role that previously thought and the greater the assets, the greater the greed. It matters little whether it is a loved one, a relative, a friend or institutions responsible for the duty of care of elderly. I am aware that it happens all the time and I must confess that I am concerned at the hidden emotional costs associated with such matters occurring on a daily basis throughout our society as we know of it today. I wonder how many of the elderly feign Alzheimer's in order to safe guard themselves against elder abuse and find havens in aged care homes where they are allegedly supposed to have 100 percent all round care.

Why is it that we have so much compassion, care and a positive attitude to new born babes while at the other end of life's spectrum we don't have those same attitudes towards the elderly? Is it because we reconcile our negative thoughts that the elderly have lived their life and it's time to move on. Is it because we just don't care anymore and/or we are no longer tied emotionally to that individual who was once a very close part of our family and community.

Yes, I stand to be attacked, criticised and even abused for my comments regarding the elderly. Comments like, I don't I now what it is like! You don't have to be there for them all the time. Life is not as you make it out to be. It is difficult on the carer. The elderly who have Alzheimer's don't know us anymore. They the elderly cannot understand where they are and probably don't care. These and many other comments are used to justify someone's actions. Then what about when we were young babes. We expected our parents to look after us did we not? We had no choice in the matter. Well it's the same for our elderly. Whatever our life has been, tough or otherwise, we have a duty of care towards the elderly and especially if they are our parents. After all, it was not that long ago when we relied upon them.

Readers will probably question my motives and where am I going with all of this. It is very simple. I would prefer that society come to grips with the people around us and take an active interest in those elder citizens and ask yourselves whether they are happy their environment. Does the reader know that on average, not many of the elderly last long in an old aged facility and that many die off very quickly when taken out of a familiar environment even though they have been diagnosed with Alzheimer's.

What about those who have partners diagnosed with a deadly disease or illness and they are not expected to live long. What about those who ae carers, close living relatives, family members, husband, wives, defacto, partners, living together and other forms of relationships that have an element of emotional bods so to speak. What goes on their minds when one is nearing death or is at deaths door? Are they making plans to ensure their own survival? Are they making plans to isolate other members of the family? Are they making plans to sign away assets in their name? Will they take advantage of the goodwill being demonstrated in order to gain a financial advantage? It happens all the time. ALL THE TIME so let us not kid ourselves.

What drives people to do this is probably fear, greed, jealousy and all other negative emotions and forces that go hand in hand to drive a person to take such drastic action. No morals or values are attached to the dying wishes of the individual, only what can be of value to the living. I remember one chap, called Peter Henderson who did not know he was dying. He was an elderly chap whom I met whilst we were both involved in a political party. Peter was an ex merchant seaman and had travelled the world. When he returned, he married a lady who loved him and was with him for many years. Unfortunately she fell ill and she died. Peter was left alone and attended our meetings being as vocal as ever. He enjoyed our meetings as it gave him the opportunity to communicate with others and also to express his point of view within a closed forum.

Peter also fell ill and it took a few weeks to try and find out where he was. He had been taken by ambulance to a hospital and left to the care of the nurses. When I finally found him, he was happy to see a familiar face as he had no relatives living in Victoria and his closest sibling lived in Cairns in Far North Queensland. I visited him as often as I could, as I was still a single Dad looking after my own four boys and had not been out of the Army for long. One time when I went to visit him, he had disappeared and no one knew where he was. As I was not a relative, the hospital was reluctant to give out his where he had been relocated. For the life of me, I cannot remember how I found out his new residence but when it became known to me, I went to see him.

Again he was pleased to see me and wanted to know why he was being given lemonade to drink and not the food that he wanted. When I asked the nurse the reasons why, she was non-committal and said only that he was on a liquid diet. This information I relayed back to Peter and advised him that it was on doctors instructions who were trying to ascertain what was wrong with him. Little did I know at the time that he was in palliative care and that he was dying? Well Peter certainly did not look like he was dying to me at the time. Peter said he wanted to live. In fact he gave me instructions to get in touch with the Government department responsible for his will and assets. I contacted the responsible department who said that they were looking into it. I found out that they were also responsible for his care as his other relatives were not available. When I rang again to find out what was happening to Peter, I was advised that Peter had died that same day. I was shattered.

We attended his funeral in a cemetery located North of Melbourne amidst a hill overlooking the city and surrounded by trees giving his final resting place a look of peace. Peter was buried next to his wife and when I think of him, I am sure that if there is an afterlife, he would certainly be very happy as his final wishes would have been taken care of. Now this is the crux of the whole article. Peter's wishes were carried out in accordance with what he had written in his will. He had no enemies that we knew of, no other relatives that lived close by and his siblings in Far North Queensland paid their respects accordingly without any negative strings attached to the funeral.

That was Peter Henderson, God Bless his soul. Now what about those relatives, friends, siblings, and other associated relationships that wait until an individual is close to death's door to take advantage of the individual. What do you do under the circumstances when you find out that the husband, wife, brother, sister or partner exclude, not allow, dissuade, neglect others who knew of the individual dying to come to pay their last respects irrespective of the relationship they had with the dying individual. Society is the judge of those who take advantage of those unable to speak or communicate their final wishes. But sometimes society's judgment is not enough and people need to apply subtle pressure in order to ensure that the right thing is being done on behalf of the dying individual. Maybe there should be a watch dog of sorts to ensure that the dying person is not being taken advantage of.

It does not take an Einstein to work out that I am writing about events that have occurred in the past and even more so recently. My main bitch is the elderly serviceman and woman who for one reason or another through life have changed partners and found themselves in a situation where their new partner takes control of the day to day care and makes decisions without consulting other family members to the detriment of the dying individual. I am referring to those who leave their partners because they can no longer care for them and seek new relationships as they cannot bear to stay and become a full time carer. I am talking about those who pack up all the furniture and store it elsewhere away from other family members, I am talking about family members being excluded, and not allowed to pay their last respects. I have no respect for such individuals and I for one believe that what goes round comes round. We don't live for ever.

I realise that I am merely expressing my anger in a manner which does not identify recent events, but some things must be said. No man or woman deserves to be treated shabbily when they have reached their final destination. Each individual is precious in their own right, no matter what they have done in their life. Death with dignity should be the catchword, not death with ignominy. I hope those individuals who treat others with indifference come face to face with their own mortality one day and reflect upon their actions. I ask that each person be treated as one would like to be treated. With respect. After all, is that not the Australian way. I expect to carry out my parents' wishes as I expect my wishes to be carried out by my wife and sons.

In conclusion, I take my hat off to all those dedicated carers, husbands, wives and partners who unselfishly look after those under their care. They are the true heroes in our old age and not enough is being done by society to help alleviate their unselfish acts of kindness. WE ONLY LIVE ONCE. 2015 and 2016 for me were years of reflection, treatment and recovery. Not to dwell on what could have been but to ensure that whatever time we have left is not squandered in futile objectives that lead to nowhere. I intend to make life more meaningful and worthwhile, worthy of those who had a hand in making me who I am today. Life as we know it can only be sustained by vigilance and with that vigilance comes responsibility. Let us hope that 2017 is a good one.



Peter Adamis is a Journalist/Social Media Commentator and writer. He is a retired Australian military serviceman and an Industry organisational & Occupational (OHS) & Training Consultant whose interests are within the parameters of domestic and international political spectrum. He is an avid blogger and contributes to domestic and international community news media outlets as well as to local and Ethnic News. He holds a Bachelor of Adult Learning & Development (Monash), Grad Dip Occupational Health & Safety, (Monash), Dip. Training & Assessment, Dip Public Administration, and Dip Frontline Management. Website: abalinx.com Contact via Email: abalinx@gmail.com or via Mobile: 0409965538