



# Ronnie and Lovejoy: A Narrative of Giving and Remission of Suicidal Intentions



**Hani Raoul Khouzam\***

*Monterey County Behavioral Health, USA*

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**\*Corresponding author:** Hani Raoul Khouzam, Monterey County Health Department, USA, Email: [Khouzamh@co.monterey.ca.us](mailto:Khouzamh@co.monterey.ca.us)

## Adopted at Birth

His name was Ronnie. His parents called him Ronnie Runabout and nicknamed him "Run Ronnie Run." They told him that he ran before he walked. At the age of 11 months, he was running in the house, and they couldn't stop him to even teach him how to walk.

Ronnie was a lovely little boy who was adopted by a childless couple, after the tragic death of his parents in a house fire. He was told that his ancestors were Native Americans from New England. With immigrants settling to the New World, his ancestor's tribe, lost its identity and distinct culture. Ronnie adoptive parents were Anglo-Saxon Protestants with a sense of pride, honor and valor. They were established and settled in the foothills of the North-Eastern Mountains. They managed a ski resort part time; and the rest of the time operated a quaint bed and breakfast accommodation. Ronnie became the joy and the center of his parents' life. Due to his unmatched ability to run, his parents thought that he would become a famous athlete and one day competes in the Olympics as a runner. Throughout his school years, Ronnie competed in many races and won them all. He had a dream that one day he would run and win the Olympic Marathon.

At the age of 18, Ronnie's parents died in a car accident by a drunken driver; as the sole heir, he inherited all their wealth including the prime skiing hills, the bed and breakfast accommodation, and a twelve acres mansion. Ronnie, however was devastated by his parents' death. He stopped running and did not go to school for weeks. He was not eating and became extremely thin and weak. At that time, he had a high school friend named Dianna. She was a ballerina and was described as the prettiest girl in her class. She dearly loved and cherished Ronnie but never told him. She was quiet and reserved. She did not tell him that every night she dreamt of dancing with him. When Ronnie sank deep in his grief Dianna told her parents. They went with her to his mansion and told him how dearly and fondly Dianna loved him. This love brought hope to Ronnie. He resumed his schooling. Dianna's beautiful golden-reddish hair inspired Ronnie to call her the

'sunshine of his dark days'. Ronnie graduated from high school with both academic and athletic honors. He was offered scholarships to join prestigious Ivy League Universities.

Ronnie's parents had raised him as a patriot and during their lifetime had taught him the principles of duty to God and to Country. Because of his sincere sense of patriotism, he declined the scholarships, and volunteered to join the United State Army. He was sent to the Korean War. Where he fought with honor and valor and gained the highest degree of respect by his fellow soldiers and supervisors.

On a Winter day with ice and frozen rain surrounding the American troops, Ronnie and his closest friend almost froze to death in their foxhole. Despite his tireless efforts and tremendous courage, he could not save his severely frozen friend. Ronnie felt guilty and responsible for his friend's death. He sank into deep despair and wished to die. The thoughts of his "sunshine" Dianna kept him alive. He was almost frozen to death when he was rescued and sent for medical treatment. Ronnie had sustained a prolonged episode of extreme cold exposure and suffered frostbite leading to the amputation of all his toes. He was honorably discharged from the Army with Medals of Honor and Valor.

Sadness and depression accompanied his journey home. He could no longer run. For Ronnie, running was living. He felt that without running his life lost its luster. However, Dianna had remained his shining light of hope. He returned to his hilly estate, his mansion and his bed and breakfast. He realized that he had all this wealth awaiting him and contemplated the idea of beginning a new life journey without running.

There was no hero's welcome; even Dianna wasn't there to welcome him home. Astonished, shocked and surprised, he wondered what could have happened, Hanging on his front porch there was a little note posted on his door. He opened it; and in it was a 'Dear John letter' from Dianna. Before catching his breath,

he limped as fast as he could to find what had happened. When he reached Dianna's home, other people that he did not know were living there. He inquired about Dianna and her family. He was told that they moved away and that Dianna was engaged, ready to be married within three weeks to a friend that she met during Ronnie's service in Korea.

Ronnie became deeply sorrowful. He had come back to an empty home surrounded by twenty acres of beautiful hills, materially wealthy but friendless without a family. His sunshine Dianna had gone forever. He lost hope and meaning and his life had no luster. One day while contemplating suicide, he felt that his parents' spirit and his Korean War friend's soft voice were whispering songs of hope, inspiring him never to give up. He even heard his parent's telling him "Ronnie Runabout Run Ronnie Run." He was seized by a divine love. He rediscovered the awe-inspiring beauty surrounding his home. A deer would walk by and look through the window of his kitchen. A wild turkey would be attempting to fly over his roof. A bear brought newly born cubs and dropped them at Ronnie's feet.

Ronnie's gained a new meaning for his desperate life, believing in nature with its majestic beauty and wild animals. He decided not to seek out people but to live a solitary life surrounded by his hills, woods and wild animals.

Ronnie lived seemingly content for several years until one morning he awakened with a sharp pain on the right side of his belly. The pain was so sharp he couldn't breathe. He was transported by ambulance to the nearby hospital. After a thorough evaluation the examining doctor concluded that there was no serious medical reason for this pain. Ronnie's pain had resolved and he was deeply moved by the doctor's kindness. He noticed that the doctor had next to his name tag a lapel pin that read "God is Love". He felt a deep sense of calm and a new cause for reflection. He asked "How can I find God's love and after moments of silence he humbly requested the doctor to pray for him. The doctor said I will pray for you so you can find it- and added- God says in His words, "If you seek me with all your heart and all your mind you will find me" [1]. Ronnie then asked where is God's word found? The doctor replied in the Bible. Ronnie remembered that he had a Bible at home which he received as a gift from his parents when he was baptized during a youth Summer camp. He felt a sense of joy and peace engulfing his being. He thanked the doctor and asked him to keep him in his prayers.

On his way home, Ronnie felt a sense of love engulfing all his being. He realized that life is short, at 65 years of age he had been living a solitary and lonely life, which had been self-centered and self preserving. As he read the Bible the words became alive "he who gains his life must lose it," "give," "serve," "tell" and "you are forgiven," for by Christ's wounds you are healed" [2]. He then made a conscious decision to share his wealth with the poor, the disadvantaged and the afflicted ones. Without understanding how this change happened his mission became "Never to take more than you give".

For the first time in his life, he purchased a truck, equipped it with special handicap devices to allow him to drive safely despite

his lost toes. He visited food banks, homeless shelters and every salvation army establishment in the Northeastern region and gave generously to all that were in need. He recognized God's love and knew that the doctor's prayer was answered. He gave of everything he had, even from the crops he planted, always giving to others more than he took for himself. He became skilled in fishing Salmon. He was fascinated by the Salmon life cycle. Where the adult Salmon go through a treacherous journey from the ocean, going through dams, rocks and all kinds of natural obstacles to reach the river stream where they can lay their eggs. Many adult Salmon never make this trip to the river either because they are fished out or killed or eaten by bears or destroyed by rocks and dams. Then the school of new born fish make the trip back from the river stream to the ocean to begin a new cycle of new life. Ronnie knew that his life may end soon He was not married he had no children, and will be like the adult Salmon who do not bring new life and die in their treacherous upstream journey. He decided it was time to have his last will and testimony.

On his way to the attorney's office he was struck by the lively colors of Spring in a nearby park. He walked to pick up a rose that had fallen to the ground. Looking up he saw a lady with reddish golden hair.

### Could this be Dianna?

Hello she said. Ronnie looked up. It was not Dianna, he gave her the red rose, Thanks she said. Asked "what is your name?". Ronnie, he answered with a quivering voice and what is yours? Lovejoy, she replied. She noticed that Ronnie walked with a limp. She asked if his legs were hurting. He told her his journey and what happened to his toes and his lost dreams of being a runner. Tears dropped like rain and Lovejoy could not control her sobbing. Ronnie apologized for making her sad. She kissed him on the cheek, and asked if they could meet again. Ronnie was hesitant to agree since Lovejoy appeared much younger than him. As if she read his mind, she said, I know what you are thinking, no matter how old you are I care about you. She kissed him on the other cheek. Ronnie felt that he was touched by one of God's Loving Angels.

As time passed they met many times in the same spot in the park. One sunny day Lovejoy confided her deep secrets to Ronnie, she was an unwanted child and was, abused by her parents and grew up in various foster homes. She became pregnant at age 16 and underwent an abortion which made her infertile. She had 3 failed marriages due to her inability to conceive. Now at the age of 55, she has no family, no children and living on social welfare.

The first day Ronnie offered Lovejoy the red rose she was considering suicide. Tears fell like rain down Ronnie's cheeks and he could not control his sobbing. Lovejoy wanted to leave and run. She said she could not cope with his sobbing. Ronnie would not let go of her hands. That day they held hands for the first time. Ronnie realized he had not held any person's hand since the death of his friend during the Korean War and Lovejoy related that she has not held hands with anyone since her last divorce 10 years earlier. Ronnie invited Lovejoy to come live in the guest wing of his

mansion. Without hesitation, she agreed, she felt safe, secure and spiritually fulfilled.

Three years passed, Ronnie and Lovejoy enjoyed each others company and introduced themselves to others as having a platonic love relationship. One day Lovejoy was babysitting a neighbor's baby girl and was uncontrollably crying. She wished she could raise children that she could call her own. Ronnie felt her deep sorrow as if a sharp knife had pierced his heart. That evening it was raining. Thunder and lightening caused the house to be engulfed with brightness. Ronnie was thinking he too had a deeply felt longing to be called a "daddy". He had been demoralized with lost dreams of becoming an Olympic runner, and he had never contemplated ever having a family. The bright lit room brought with it a vision. With all the blessings and the wealth, he was given, he could bring joy and fulfillment to hundreds and hundreds of children. He shared his vision with Lovejoy who was tearful, since she had an identical vision. Moments of silence passed. Coincidentally a documentary appeared on the television set which was turned off following the lightning storm and now it had come back on. At that moment, the program showed an adolescent girl pleading someone to come to a village in Africa. In that village, all unwed mothers were kept in a rundown facility and were forced to abort their unborn children.

Without saying a word, Ronnie and Lovejoy hugged and the following week they flew to that village. They were struck by the high number of unwed mothers who wished to keep their unborn children. They were told that there are no financial means to care for these mothers and their expected newborns.

Ronnie came back to his mansion, liquidated all his assets, sold his property and belongings and returned to the village. He lived in a small cottage and initiated a special trust to oversee all the needs and expenses of these mothers and their children. Lovejoy became his trustee and sole inheriting person.

Joy, peace and multiple babies filled Ronnie's and Lovejoy's lives. Ronnie taught the villagers new ways to hunt, to fish and to grow crops, as well as raising family units. God's love was revealed to the village inhabitants, to the mothers and to the multiplying scores of newborn children. Over the following years, there were no unwed mothers. Engagement followed by festive weddings abounded, All the villagers prospered and felt God's presence in their midst.

One bright, crispy day, the village had planned with Lovejoy an extravagant, festive carnival to celebrate Ronnie's Eighty fifth birthday. Although he was frail and weak, Ronnie felt young and healthy, strong and fit. He felt his soul was seized by a divine power and he "heard" an inner voice, his parents encouraging whispers, his coaches cheering voices and saw all his trophies and his medal of honors before his eyes. He heard the distinct sounds Run Ronnie Run Run Ronnie Run and he ran, ran, ran until his last breath. His spirit was liberated and flew to the heavens. He had a funeral that had the joy of a birthday. Children, fathers, mothers and the entire village with its birds, its land and its ocean sang Run Ronnie Run. They sang good bye and farewell. Their voices were heavenly and angelic. His tombstone was placed on the highest hill surrounded by flowers and inscriptions from all the village inhabitants.

Lovejoy carried the torch and lead the village in living a fulfilled earthly life with a spiritual link to the heavenly. She applied her wisdom to help the villagers become economically self sufficient, with her shrewdness the village assets were multiplied by many folds.

One day while holding a newborn baby girl Lovejoy kissed her, hugged her and caressed her tiny face. Lovejoy felt the joy of motherhood and gently sang to the baby girl "my baby my baby". Lovejoy's spirit flew like a dove to the heavens while she was singing this lullaby. Lovejoy's tombstone was placed next to Ronnie's. The children, their mothers, their fathers, and their grandparents sang their farewells and good byes all night long. The village had learned and applied the principles of God's true love, and the values of generosity, always giving more than you receive. Ronnie and Lovejoy victorious lives had brought joy, love, peace, hope, prosperity and a new dawn to this African village and to the world.

### Dedication

To the delights of my life my wife Lynn and my children Andrea, Andrew, and Adam, my sisters Hoda and Héla, my brother Hadi and my late parents my father Raoul, and my mother Jeannette.

### References

1. Jeremiah 29:13, The Jerusalem Bible, 1968 RANDOM HOUSE / 2000.
2. Isaiah 53:5. The Jerusalem Bible, 1968 RANDOM HOUSE / 2000.



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