

Chris Fillion - My Narrative

Prepared by Adefemi Aderounmu

Brandon University

My name is Chris Fillion. I was born at St. Boniface Hospital on March 20, 1985. I have two brothers. I didn't know much about my biological father when I was growing up as he lived and worked outside Manitoba. He has 11 other children outside my family. My birth mom struggled with severe alcoholism and epilepsy. I lived in Pinefalls, St. George, St. Anne, Niverville, and Oakbank, Manitoba at different ages of my life. I moved every year until age nine when I got into a foster home in St. Anne, Manitoba. In 1996, I was fostered by parents with three other foster kids. My foster parents were a doctor and a nurse. They were very strict and psychologically abused us, using shaming a tool get us o do what they wanted. I spent 90% of my time in their house in the bedroom because foster kids were not allowed to use family spaces. In 1999, I moved to Oakbank with different foster parents with eight foster kids.

On a typical day, I wake up two hours before I have to leave home. I watch cop shows while I make and eat breakfast. My favourite cop shows are Chicago PD and Live PD. My favourite breakfast is cereal, eggs and toast. I drive, park and bus to work. At home in the evening, my fiancé makes dinner. I hang out with her, watch TV and go to bed afterwards. I enjoy board games at home and in the community with my fiancée and friends. If I could plan the perfect day, I would have no notifications from work, drive to Kenora, and sit by water.

I currently live in a subsidized one bedroom apartment in Maples area. I have a washer and dryer, cable, internet and all the bells and whistles. My apartment is pretty good, although I pay a lot of bills and I wish I could plan more financially.

I am currently working at McDonald's. Although, the City Place branch is my home branch. I bounce around 11 branches in the city. I work as a full-time Guest Experience Leader. I manage guest complaints and ensure they have the best experience. I love my job, though sometimes it is stressful, I get tired, and want to quit, but I keep pushing on. I volunteer at New

Directions sometimes, where I help out at socials and picnics. I talk at Red River College about mental health and challenges that come with it. In the past, I worked at Life Touch, in their shipping and receiving department. I did produce stocking at Save On Foods also. Of all the places I have worked at, McDonald's has offered me most support. The staffs understand my disability and challenges and are supportive.

Some years ago, I started a program called 'We Are You' with the goal of advocating for people with special needs who are aging out of Child and Family Services system. There was no adequate transitional service for many of these individuals, and as a result increased their risk of becoming negatively involved in law enforcement. The aim was to connect them with proper services and supports, so that they could hopefully be kept from going down that path. The program was supported by a board of eight directors. We advocated for alternative justice or diversion for cases where neither individual nor public good would be served by incarceration. Unfortunately the program was put on hold as the political climate did not support funding of the program at the time. The principles of the program are applicable to anybody with special needs and transitioning out of foster care. I applied these principles to myself and it has helped me become a better person.

When I was a kid, it was my dream to become a policeman or a vet because I loved helping people and animals. School was easy for me. I didn't get picked on. I handled conflicts well. My favourite subject was wood working.

My source of income is my job at McDonald's. I manage my finances myself. I am generally healthy, although I need to rest more and eat better. I don't have a lot of time to exercise and I am often tired when I have the time. I walk from the New Directions to City Place at times, and walk around work all day. I stopped taking my medications because I was a

vegetable when I was on them. I had no sense of myself, or motivation to do things I wanted to do. I discovered myself, my strengths and abilities to do these things when I stopped taking the medications. Some days I feel very good and question my mental disability, other days I feel down. I am grateful to my fiancée and New Directions for supporting my mental health. I attended a lot of therapies and I'm involved in CMHA programs. The rest of my family is not supportive of my mental health. My mother refuses to take any responsibility for my disability. She says my brothers turned out fine and blames it on my biological dad's drinking. Regardless of her perspective, I have forgiven her so as to have a relationship with her. She already deals with a lot of blame from extended family and CFS system. I reconnected with my biological father last year and we talk on the phone once in a while. He has 11 other children apart from me and my brothers.

I get around town by driving, busing and walking. I drive a Chevrolet Trax. People describe me as easy to talk to, helpful, loyal and friendly. Something I will not change about myself is my perseverance. I am most proud of getting my driver's license, buying my car even though I was told I could not and being in a relationship. I'm also proud to be working at McDonald's. I have a dirty, dry, and untasteful sense of humour. I am most at peace when I am in the shower. Having chances to express my feelings helps me to make it through the day when I am down. I help people out by giving them my time and it makes me feel good.

I am not afraid to speak and I stand up for myself by voicing my concerns. In addition to buying my car and finding love, I recently got a cat and made a random trip to BC in August.

When I was younger my foster parents and respite workers made all my decisions regarding daily activities recreation and how much I was involved. I felt safe when people made choices for me because I spent a lot of time and energy on deciding on my own. However I participated

less in activities because people decided for me and they underestimated my abilities. It also made me give up on activities quickly.

The most important people to me right now are my fiancée and friends. My fiancée believes strongly in me and is my source of encouragement. I don't feel understood and sometimes depending on when, where, or what I am dealing with. When I need someone to talk to or lean on, who I talk to depends on what the situation is. My fiancée and coworkers always have my back. My coworkers depend on me and I am there for them. I look for faithfulness, understanding and family in close relationships. I am loving, a great chef, and I bring fun to close relationships. I have been in a good relationship with my fiancée since June 2018. I am currently living the moment and not making big future plans. If I went to bed and a miracle happened, when I wake up there will be world peace and Trump will not be in power.

Once again, my name is Chris Fillion and I live with Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.