

My Life in Foster Care

By Josh Baker

It all started when I was about 9 years old, when my father and mom got divorced. My mom had drinking problems so my dad made her go to rehab. She didn't mind that, but while she was away, my father started seeing another woman. When she first started seeing my father she was the nicest person I had ever met. That didn't last long because about six months later my father decided to propose to her; at that time I always thought that it was awesome my best friend would become my brother.

About three months after my father proposed, my soon-to-be stepmom and dad went down to tell my mom that she wasn't able to come back and that it was time for her to move on. He was getting married in three months. From that day forward, my mom would never call or visit.

I always thought it was my sister's and my fault for her not wanting to come around or that she was too sad to come around because my dad was getting married. So one night I asked my father, "When is mommy going to come and see me?" He never answered me with an actual reason. He would always make up an excuse so I just stopped asking after a while.

The next few months before the wedding we were always busy doing things to get ready, but it was still on my mind: What ever happened to my mom? At night I would always look up to the biggest star and ask it, "If you ever see my mom tell her I miss her."

The wedding went fast and so did the party. One minute we were at the wedding, next thing you know it's over and I'm in bed wishing that my mom was there to see how good I looked in fancy clothes. But I already knew that she wasn't coming back.

About a year after my stepmom married my dad, she became very mean to me and my stepsister, always getting us into trouble for things we didn't even do like saying bad words or hitting. That wasn't even the worst thing that she did. After months of using little things they started getting bigger like they started saying I was threatening to kill my stepsiblings, but the worst lie that she ever used was when she went around and told my father, the school and all of my friends' parents that I was sexually touching her 7-year-old daughter. I was 10 when she started, and she kept it up until the day DHS came to the door to take me away.

Everyone always asked me if I was scared when I left. Yes, I was scared. Who wouldn't be? Even though my

stepmom was making up all these lies about me, I still didn't want to leave the comfort of my home to go live with complete strangers. But at this point DHS wasn't asking to remove me – they were demanding it.

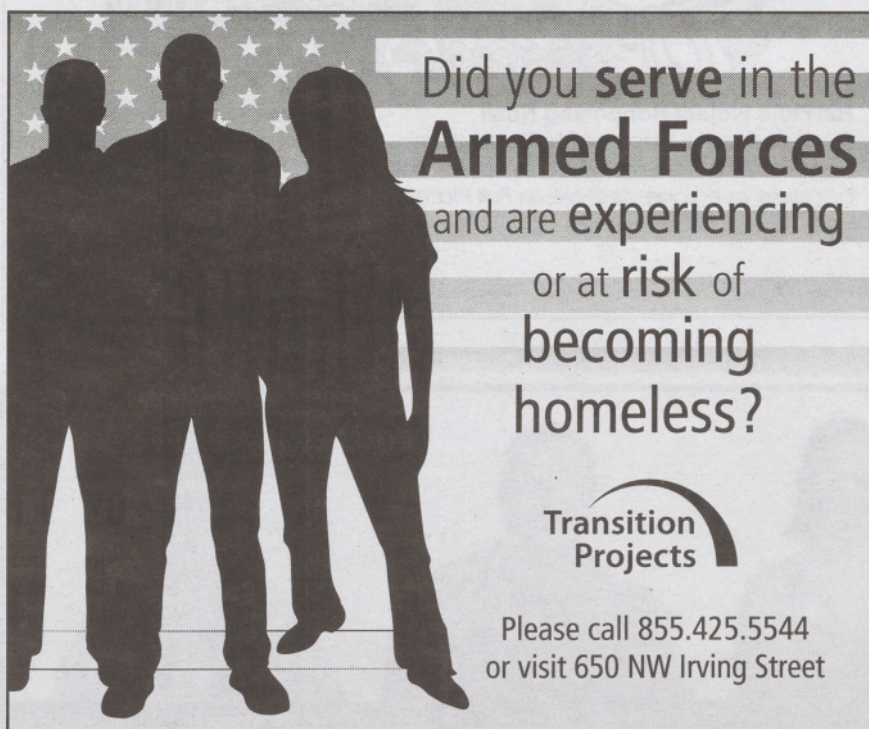
The first place I went to was in Hillsboro. It was a group home so there were a lot of us there. I didn't know what to do or say to people so I would always keep to myself. I was always described as the quiet child who didn't talk to anyone. After being there for about three months, I finished the fifth grade and they moved me to another placement in Portland. I hated it there. It was one of the worst placements ever. The lady I was living with would always yell at me and then go drop me off at her friend's house. When she would drop me off there her friend would always come out and walk around with no clothes on. She told me that if I ever told someone, she would beat me to death, so I did what any 12-year-old kid would do and kept my mouth shut.

After about two weeks of living there, I couldn't stand it anymore. I grabbed a bag and threw all of my stuff in it and left while she was sleeping. It was the first time I had ever run away in my life. It was hot out, and I was scared. I was just walking around Killingsworth by myself, hoping not to be seen by people who were probably looking for me. So there I was, just walking around a town that I have never even been in before, alone. So while I was walking, I had to stop at random small restaurants like Pizza Hut to get some water. It was really hot out that day. It got up to 97 degrees when we left at around 1:30 that afternoon. After a while I was so hot that I ended up going to this retirement home, and told them what had happened. About 10 minutes after I had arrived, the police showed up. I told them everything that my foster mom had done to me in the two weeks I had been there. He sat there and listened – the first time anyone had ever listened to me. After I was done explaining to him what had happened, he told me that I didn't have to go back there ever again. You could tell by the way his voice had changed that he was not happy with her.

After we left the retirement home, he told me that we were heading to a new home on the other side of town, and that if I ever had a problem to call him. So I took his card and when we arrived at the house that I had thought I had never been to before, but it was never that easy. It happened to be my previous foster's good friend. I didn't say anything because I knew that if I did they would try and move me. I was tired and hot and just wanted a good night's sleep.

By Glayz Welch

I wonder if you know
That I am doing fine
I usually don't
Understand why
Why did you leave
After promising so much
Mommy, Mommy, please
I just want one more hug
I know it seems silly,
But no one has asked why
Why it hurts so much
And why I always cry
Because the one thing in this world
I've wanted since I was young
Is for my bio mom
To save me from my tongue
I put myself down
I mess my world up
I hate it when I do these things
But I am not done
Mommy, could you tell
That I was hurt so bad?
That no matter what happened
I could not be saved
Unless I put my mind to it
And learned a different way
I won't be sure until I know
That I will be okay
Consistency is what I need
But it can't be that way
I miss my family
I miss the way
That we could act
Like it's okay
Because what I've gone by
My whole life
Is
Fake it till you make it
And it'll be all right



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or at **risk** of
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