

How Holy Spirit Radically Rescued One Little Girl From Horrific Abuse and Fear

I quickly hid a used crack pipe under the big blue sectional couch. My big brother was at the door, and I knew he could not hold them off any longer by saying "My mom told us not to let anyone in." I was only 7, but I remember that the DARE officer had warned us how dangerous drugs were. I had every intent to bring home some pamphlets to share with my mother and stepfather but just could not build up the boldness. I hated the smell of that stuff. Mom would always wake us up to look for something white on the floor; she even would do this funny dance while flicking imaginary things out of her hair. She promised us popcorn if we would find something that was the color of rice embedded in the carpet. We never found anything, and I, for one, was tired of looking.

"BOOM BOOM BOOM."

"Let us in or we will let ourselves in." My brother who usually was fearless was shaking, he did as they said.

Three or four policemen came into the house. My four brothers and sisters and I huddled into the living room. What was going to happen? I hoped they wouldn't find that pipe under the couch. I knew my mom could get in trouble. I did not want her to go to jail. I could hear the police whispering and talking into their walkie-talkies. They informed us we would be leaving and to grab something quick. I went into my mother's closet and took her silver sequin Michael Jackson hat. I loved that hat.

That evening, my twin brother and I were taken to a Mexican family. We didn't see our mom for a few weeks, and during that time, I remember them making us stay outside in the playhouse

while their family was inside the house, or making us eat different food than the other children. The Mexican kids would make fun of my kinky hair and ashy skin until I cried. I even tried to style my hair like theirs, but it was short and brittle. I could only use Aqua net so much without my hair breaking off.

We later found out that Bonnie, the drug dealer, had called foster care on my mom. She noted that our lights were out and we had been eating from a barbecue pit. The interesting thing is that the drug dealer had moved us to that house. She knew it wasn't hers. It was someone else's, but we stayed until we would have to move to another "rental home." In those times, people would often stay in abandoned homes until the police caught them.

In the span of three years, we were taken away three times. During this time, my mother had a child with my caseworker, so we were taken away again. I lived in several foster homes and even a children's shelter; the five of us were always separated. I was afraid, but I earnestly prayed to God. I knew about Him. My mother would have groups of women to come over the house and pray in tongues of angels when we lived in England. Every night before I went to sleep I closed my eyes and prayed to that same God.

"Hello God? Where are you? Are you ever gonna let me out of here? Am I ever gonna see my family again"?

I returned back to my mother's care in 1992. I was 10 years old. Nothing could have prepared me for what I was about to endure. From 1994 until 1997, I wasn't allowed to attend school. My mother said it was a privilege, that I would have to earn back. I spent three years raising my siblings. During that time, I endured extension-cord beatings, attempted rape by my stepfather, verbal and mental abuse. My faith kept me strong. For some strange reason, the same woman who abused me was the same woman who taught me about Jesus. Jesus kept me

sane. I told my twin that one day I would leave that house and go on to become educated. A year later, after my stepfather again tried to sexually abuse me, my mother sent me away to my father's house, she said "to hide the evidence." She had already made a police report but loved her husband.

The police never found me. I started my new life in Centreville, Illinois with my father's side of the family. I was 15 years old. I went on to receive a Ph.D. in education. I now travel the world speaking to inspire other people who had lives similar to mine. Many children who were in the foster care system turn into drug addicts, homeless or end up in sex trade. Another way presented itself to me, and I fought forward.

If you or someone you know is interested in becoming a foster parent, please contact your local child protective services.
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This article is an excerpt from Trapped by Alexis C. Maston.

Alexis C. Maston grew up in and out of foster care. Due to her mother's struggle with bipolar disorder, she was not allowed to attend school from the ages of 11-14. Alexis went on to get a Ph.D. in adult, professional and community education in 2014. She has since went on to work in administration at the local school district and in a nonprofit organization with foster children. She also speaks at conferences and meetings, sharing her story around the world.