

Fight or Flight

Student Advocacy Center Performance 2016

This is my fourth time getting the privilege to listening, crafting and sharing someone else's story... of trying to giving a voice hopefully to someone whose voice has been silenced or challenged...

In my own story, I was rarely silent or silenced. I speak up, walked in and walked out.

And one time in second grade, I walked out/ left the class, deuces and instead of going to the bathroom I went and knocked (2 knocks) on Mrs. Rosenblitt's, a school counselor's, door, and as legend goes, I said to her, " *I think I need some help my dad belongs in a cracker factory'*

My dad, larger than life:

Fancy cars,

young leggy women

Marlboro Reds, and an unmarked bottles of pills, that he would pour into his mouth and his soul,

while we drove to the:

- museum!
- Opera!
- the race track

where on my very first race I put \$2.00 to down to win

on a 10 to 1 odd horse named

'*Spotted Cat, Daddy*' because his name had the word cat in it

And Spotted Cat Wins! My my dad collects my cash and gives me

(count out buck) \$10 bucks! which is actually 12 bucks less than I won, but I'm only 9 and bad in math; and he probably must have needed it for his

own bets, his own races, his own realities ...

We see the worlds you bring us into ... they seep into our bones and our poems, we are witnesses to your revolutions and evolutions, and in some lives your stories... become ours.

This is Fight or Flight. The story of a SAC Parent and her Child, a witness to her life.

(creating room/space through 4 chairs, giving the idea of being safe yet confined).

Found a place in Livonia, but it took 3 months just to clean it, but I could afford it. Never received child support and started over with nothing.

We had a PO Box in another city blocks on our phones and did not tell anyone where we lived. We thought we would be safer.

He found us in 2 weeks after moving (chair goes up as defense...)

We, my best friend, how to say my husband's ex wife, both became victims of domestic violence ,

and the last straw was instead of going after me ... he went after her son ,

and I got in the middle to protect him,

and I got the brunt (4 counts) of it.

Her son got out of the house, but my daughter and my son Preston witnessed it.

I had nowhere to go. I lived in a shelter a couple of times, even though people tell you, you need to leave, it doesn't mean anyone's going to help you.

I mean I had to leave, because he'll get out of jail, and he'll come back, they wouldn't make him go somewhere else, so I had to go... Saline.

My ex, Preston's dad would always find us, peeking in our windows, leave a shovel on the lawn to tell me he was going to bury me,

said there were cameras on our phone,

he would move stuff, we know he'd been in the house,
he stole my van, cause he had a key, we had all the locks changes,
it was just a nightmare,... and Preston... had witnessed all this, treated
him for PTSD.

Preston has always had this **fight or flight** syndrome... That he felt he
was the man of the house and he needed to protect us, two girls, since
he was ... like 5.

So, apparently he had a pocket knife in his wallet and he went to class
and the wallet was uncomfortable

and he put in the desk and he switched classes and left the wallet...they
tracked him down

he'd always find us

The middle school suspended him for 10 days and the principal was really
supportive,' and sayin' ' *we like Preston he's a great kid, he has never done
this, he's never done that...* "

Right before that... we just put him on medications, all these I tried not
to, but I didn't know then they diagnosed with him bipolarism, going
untreated it just gets worse I guess...

there was post traumatic stress, ADHD, you just take him so many
different places, but his extremes were extremes, he would get so mad,
where your scared of your own kid, you're thinkin' who do I call?

I had nowhere to go

I leave for work by 6. Preston gets himself to school. One morning he
grabbed his Beats case thinking it was for his headphones, he has two ,
puts it his backpack.. gets to school, realizes what's in there,

there, all his knives

Shows his friend, 'oops' and then goes to his locker, I have these in my
backpack, puts it in his locker..." his friend tells on him..

he didn't threaten nobody. Didn't take them out of his bag. He's on these medications... he don't think right.

His father had started following him, showed up in a park, Preston his scared of his dad, the knives were just to

Protect him... protect us. (4 beat movement)

Thru all of that the principal was all on our side, *I hate to see this happen to Preston, but this is just a procedure, he is not going to get expelled...*

When he went to the expulsion hearing, the principal, he just turned, the Student Advocacy Center was shocked, he was always so supportive

and when we got in front of the board, he PUSHED for him to be kicked out

Preston never threatened, never hurt anybody.

180 Days out of school.

The first time he got caught I was mad. The 2nd time I was devastated. I just cried in the principal's office, I came to you guys saying I needed help

He has never threatened ... never hurt anybody.

(move chair set back during this section)

worst thing you can do is expel a child at that age...to put them that far behind when there already struggling academically,

that is no punishment to a kid because they get to sleep in; it's like an extended vacation. Make them go on the weekends, but to send them back at that rate... is HUGE.

It's a punishment to parents. Being a small school, small town I was humiliated; felt like it was my fault.

I got the brunt of it

I was a failure as mother... there was no one I could talk

Even my own family would say he needed boot camp or severe consequences

He witnessed everything...

I tried to get him involved in many things: Ozone House, a horse farm, tutoring because I knew he would get depressed just staying in bed.

SAC provided 2 tutors and paid for a class over the summer

180 Days.

He was still trying to adjust to the medicine.. full of anger, "why am I being punished didn't hurt no one...!" There was a local drop in center where he used to go but was told he was not "welcome there anymore"

I had no place to go....

He didn't not want to tell people he brought knives to school. Was going to just tell them, 'I was home schooled'. I was like don't lie. This whole thing was in the paper....

Now? He's back. He's okay.

doesn't even go to lunch. He goes to the office and he'll sit there and eat. sits

lost most of his friends. There some girls that like him, I don't know if I want him to have a girlfriend ...

I told the school in the months preceding what was going on with him. Mental health does not work overnight. It fell apart, he fell apart before it even had a chance to work, he never hurt anyone.