

The Story of My Life

by Travis Kirkman

I was born in 1984. My mother was young when she had me. I can only imagine how she felt giving birth to a bastard.

I don't have too many memories early on. I do remember Todd. This is the man who married my mother, and after having my sister Tabatha, the two divorced.

My mother bounced around for a while. A couple of times my mom moved in with a boyfriend, but the relationships never lasted long. Within' a year or so, we would move or go stay with relatives.

I think I was six years old when my mother fell in love with Lanny. What a disaster this relationship would end up becoming. It was hard watching my mother get beat on by this man. I just couldn't take it.

I finally ran away. Ran straight to the police station and notified them that Lanny was hitting my mother and that he hit me as well. In the ensuing years to come, my sister and I were taken from our mom and custody was placed in the hands of our fathers.

This is when I first met my father. I set my eyes on this stranger for the first time inside a small courthouse. I was nervous, but he had a car salesman pitch and he won me over fairly easily.

I moved in with my dad when I was nine. I had two new sisters; Stephanie and Paige, which my father had had with a different woman. It was okay at first I guess; however, I began to miss my mom.

I rebelled a lot against my father because I felt like he was keeping me from seeing my mom. I didn't realize that child protective services were the reason being.

By the age of fourteen, I had rebelled so much, that my father finally washed his hands with me and sent me to live with my mom.

At this time, my mom was with a new man who took really good care of her. His name is Keith, and he accepted me with open arms. For all that he has done for me, I wish I had acted a little better, but I had already mingled in amongst the wrong crowds at school and was smoking pot.

I ended up dropping out of school in the tenth grade. The only thing I wanted to do was numb my mind with weed. All day long, I smoked pot. I was going nowhere fast.

Right after my 18th birthday, my friends and I got busted trying to break into a pop machine. Mom bonded me out, however, I went right back to jail for trying to break into a construction business.

I did a short stint in prison, and came back home on probation. I did okay for a while, but I started smoking pot again and I began to drink alcohol.

While out drinking one night, I ran into a guy, who back in high school, jumped out of my car with a bag of weed that belonged to me.

Oh we had words. I even made him pay me back right there on the spot. Unfortunately for me, I was charged with robbery. Back to prison I went, this time for theft and probation violation.

I did two and a half years and once again I was released, but this time on parole. I kind of got off to a bad start right away because the D.O.C screwed up my paperwork and paroled me to my grandmothers' address. She lived in a nursing home, so I was using her address for parole, but was staying at numerous houses of family and friends.

Everything was really rough this time around. My fresh start didn't feel so hot. Our country was going through some hard times and all the factories in my town were laying everyone off. I couldn't find a job anywhere, so I had to rely on odd jobs.

I eventually picked up a lawn care position for a couple months. During this time, I rented a small apartment, furnished it with furniture that I picked up here and there, and fell in love with a girl named Rachel.

Around the beginning of August, I was laid off. My boss advised me that the grass just quit growing. I was devastated. What was I going to do now? Oh best believe I worked my ass off trying to find a new job. I even spent a lot of time at the unemployment office with a lady named Dorothy Fox. She is the individual who gave me the W.O.T.C (Work Opportunity Tax Credit for Felons on Parole) paperwork.

Even with this form, I still couldn't find a job. Things had gotten really bad around town. The whole country was crumbling, and there wasn't a single business doing any hiring.

To make ends meet, I began to peddle prescription pain medication. Selling drugs wasn't something that I had ever been into, but I was doing whatever I could to keep my apartment and beautiful girlfriend happy.

Less than a month or two after I entered the drug dealing business, I got busted. An old friend of mine set me up and framed me as some sort of huge drug pusher, and consequently, I was caught up with serious charges of dealing heroin.

At this point, my life was over. I was thrown in jail on trumped up charges and wasn't able to post bond. It was hard on me and all that was involved. While I was being held in solitary confinement, Rachel shot and killed herself. Around that same time, an old fling unexpectedly had me paternity tested. Come to find out, I was the father of a one-year-old baby boy named Draven.

After nine long months of sitting in the hole, I was finally able to post bond. Not long after I was released, my attorney coerced me into signing a thirty-five year plea bargain.

Instead of turning myself in for plea and sentencing, I was sitting in the back of an airport under a new alias. I was waiting for my planes departure to Puerto Rico.

It was crazy, because not until my life was over did I realize that I wanted to live right. I finally found myself and ran with it. I wasn't on that foreign soil more than a year and I accomplished more than I had throughout my whole life.

My true potential came out. I discovered the entrepreneurial spirit and will to survive inside me. I arrived in San Juan with less than a few hundred dollars in my pocket and by the time the U.S Marshalls caught up to me I had already established two different businesses, moved into a house on the beach, and had purchased a vehicle.

Unfortunately, reality came crashing down. After spending some time inside a Puerto Rican prison, I was extradited back to Indiana to execute the 35 years that I had agreed to before I skipped town.