



I Finally Knew That I Was Safe

*M*y name is Krista-Lyn Stephenson and I am the daughter of Keline Kahau and the step-daughter of Dayne Kahau. I am a senior at Nanakuli High and Intermediate School and I live in Waianae.

When I think of a nice childhood, I think of a mother and a father with children that are all happy, no drugs or alcohol involved, and no laws are broken. Maybe this kind of childhood is what I've dreamt of all my life because I never had a "normal childhood." From 9 years old, growing up was difficult for me. I thought it would never end; he would never stop haunting my life. I asked myself, what is this nightmare that I'm going through? What is happening? Is this love? Why do I hurt inside? Why?! Why?! My father Carl Stephenson raped and molested me and took what was rightfully mine.

In 9th grade, I met this boy and we liked each other a lot but never did anything, which I'm thankful of. I was so afraid that my father would find out. I had my first cell phone that year and my father would text or call me and ask where I was and what I was doing. I could never go anywhere with my friends. In the end, my father found out about the boy and I got lickers until I told him we don't talk anymore, which I lied. I cried for the longest time; for a year.

Then my father went away to work in China; those were the happiest days of my life. He came home because he got hurt and to be honest, I wish he died instead.



*"...for the very first time,
I could sleep in my bed
without any troubles,
any worries."*

That was my sophomore year, September of 2009. That's when everything just turned upside down. My brother's ex-girlfriend told her mother that she had sex with my father and he yelled and raged about it and told our family that she was lying. My mother is a strong faithful person but she was confused and didn't know who to believe. She did Ho'oponopono with the girl's family and we all talked and cried.

I really wanted to tell my mom then, but something was telling me "not yet, just wait!" So many things were going through my mind. I had questions about CPS and what would happen if I had told a friend or my mom. Would I be a foster child? Would I ruin my family?

Would my mom believe me? Would my father hurt me more? Would he hurt those whom I loved dearly? Every time I was on the verge of telling someone, questions like that would pop into my head and I would hesitate.

I remember the very last time my father touched me. My mother was working in town and wasn't going to be home until six thirty at night. My father told me that I had to go upstairs but I got to the point where I couldn't take it. I fought him, I told him no. I took hits because I fought back, although he was too strong. A week later, my mother put a TRO on my father. I was so happy that she did that. After the TRO officers left with my father, my mother was on the phone crying to my grandmother; her mom. She said she didn't like kicking people out of

the house and leaving them on the streets, but she had to because he was dangerous. She said that she was trying to protect her babies; which meant her children.

At that point I got up and went outside to the other side of the house and just started crying. I asked my Heavenly Father to give me the strength and courage I needed to tell my mother. My mom saw my face and asked me what was wrong. I was so ashamed of telling her that I tried to give her hints. Then my mom asked if he touched me, I said "yes." Then she asked how long and I told her "ever since I was nine." I kept telling her "Mommy I'm so sorry! I'm sorry I lied to you! Please don't be mad at me." Then she pulled me into her arms and said "I could never be mad at you, you're my baby. I love you." We both cried, but I was crying so hard that I was shaking and I couldn't stop crying, no matter how much I tried.

My mother immediately called my grandmother and told her that my father raped and molested me. Next thing I know, my grandma and grandpa came down and bought McDonald's. All I remember at that particular moment was the love my family and everyone around me had for me and the hate they had for my father. I decided that I wanted to do a police report, so my mom called the police. I filled out a statement and after that night I tried to go to sleep.

For the very first time, I could sleep in my bed without any troubles, any worries. Although, I woke up with puffy eyes, and my hair messed up, I finally knew that I was safe. But I still had a hard time sleeping from the memories and flash backs. My family kept convincing me that I was a beautiful person. Sometimes it worked, but most times it didn't. When people I knew started to ask me questions and found out more about me, I felt ugly all over again. Within less than a month, I was referred to the Sex Abuse Treatment Center. My therapist Dr. Tran was so nice to me and I felt comfortable speaking with her. The other doctor I see is Dr. Patel and she prescribes my medicine that helps with my depression and my sleep.

The Sex Abuse Treatment Center helped me and my family and I thank my Heavenly Father for putting wonderful people in my life. I thank my mother for everything she does for me. We still have some wounds to heal together, but I love her. My therapist is so wonderful, patient and understanding. Now maybe that was her job, but she showed compassion in her work and the way she likes helping people. I stopped hurting myself and just thank her so much and everyone else who work to help people that have gone through similar difficulties in life.

My mother began seeing this guy and he was really nice, although at first I didn't really dig him. My mom certainly loved him though so I respected him. My mother and step-father got married and just to be honest, all my life growing up, I hated men because I thought they were all the same. I always felt uncomfortable with them but around my step-dad, I didn't feel like that. He is like the dad I always wanted and never had. Our family was torn into pieces and he was there to help put us back together, every single piece.

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