

## Impacts of Abuse

To whom this concerns,

Hello, you may call me Solomon. This is not my real name. Sadly, for fear of reprisal, I cannot use my real name. I write to you in representation of not only myself, but the many souls from past and present, that either refuse to come forward, can no longer come forward due to a condition of slavery, or because the worst has already befallen them. I hope to impress upon you the widespread nature and the severity of sexual abuse, not just its initial impacts, but the never-ending impact that is carried by the spread of online media containing it. I am only one man, but I promise you, I am the voice of many.

Like so many others, at a very young age I was abused by a man that ingratiated himself into my family unit as a man of high moral character that seemed only to be trying to help. My family situation was a similar story heard from many others: broken, dysfunctional, and recovering. In and of itself, my childhood was a difficult one, but it wasn't the actions within my family unit that ended up being the true danger, it is what it left me open to in the aftermath. I know now my abuser sought these types of circumstances specifically; broken families with young male children. In this way it was a perfectly calculated scenario by my abuser, he was able to infiltrate my family unit without having to verbally or physically abuse anyone, as it had already been done for him. We were accustomed to abuse both verbally and physically, and conditioned into a submissive disposition. This is what made him seem appealing, he appeared to be the opposite of everything we had recently experienced, so our already damaged defenses were easy to bypass. He proceeded under the guise of being a helper to my family, but he had no interest in my family as a whole, he only wanted to hurt me... a young boy. This way he was able to groom my mother and siblings with very little effort, he could spend all that energy just on me. It worked out well for him, or at least he thought so. Over time however, his facade was exposed, and as a result, there was a poor broken young man left at the mercy of despair and ruin with no idea of the struggles that were to lie ahead.

One would think that this initial abuse was bad enough and that there could not possibly be anything worse that could happen to a person. That thought is wrong. During the span of my captivity and abuse, the man responsible decided to film and photograph some of the abuse he perpetrated against me. He then tried to sell it to other pedophiles online. I will spare you the details, they would put you off your lunch, and honestly, it hurts too much to think about... Ugh, my stomach hurts... The bottom line is, he was extorted by those he tried to sell the photographs and videos to, and by extension, this poor little boy was also extorted, and because

I was helpless to defend myself I was forced to do unspeakable things... It does not end there unfortunately. It turns out, this media depicting my abuse has been spread throughout the world on a mass scale. Blah, there my stomach goes again, burning... This occurrence, I assure you, is as bad, or worse, than the abuse I underwent initially. I now have to relive these events forever, like a skipping vinyl record on the record-player of eternity, this sad song plays over and over. I am a prisoner.

I will now try to express to you the psycho-physiological impacts that these abuses had on me, and continue to have on me, to this very moment. This is an extremely difficult task, it is like trying to explain the meaning of the word "love." Yes we know what it means when it is expressed to us in a sentence, but if we were asked to define "love," I imagine we would all have a difficult time coming up with a universal definition. This is how I feel about explaining these impacts on my life. While I know there are many, some easily spoken to, there are many others that dwell in the realm of feeling and psychosis, abstract aspects of myself outside the realm of logical reason that will be hard for me to define. But I will try my best to explain.

My initial abuse started when I was very young. I was at a stage in my life where I had yet to develop past my need and dependency upon my social unit; mother, father, siblings, etc... So when this abuse started, I wasn't an individual, and I could not see the world in that manner. As a kid I was an extension of whatever adult I was with at any given time. I was still learning, absorbing, and evolving from examples I gleaned from those in positions of authority in my social sphere. I had not yet developed any concept of how I related to the world. In fact, my whole world was about "we," my social support unit and my relation to it. My vision of the world did not go past the boundaries of my social unit. It was my protection, my only means of survival, and my system of education and growth. So, when my abuser infiltrated into my social sphere he took the role of an authority figure, and I looked up to him. He knew I had no identity so he used his developed adult intellect to alter and corrupt my young undeveloped one. Being so young with no identity of my own, I was unable to separate from the collective bond he initiated with me, leaving me unable to speak about what was happening. I was just an extension of him, he wanted secrecy, and as the authority figure, I had no choice but to consent. He knew I needed care for survival so when I was in his care he used that time to abuse and sodomize me. This lasted until I was a teenager. All of my formative years, the years in which I needed proper guidance to develop my independence, were polluted, manipulated, and controlled, forcing me to adopt these same traits into my personality. It was the example that I was given, so it is what I absorbed, and so I reflected back out to the world around me. Needless to say, these traits did not serve me well in my growth. Due to my young

age, these traits were embedded at the most base levels of my developing individuality. They were imprinted in the years before sexual maturity, so they permeated and influenced all aspects of my growing personality. The only way I can describe it is, “they are located in the deepest parts, before my concept of “me” ever existed.” Looking on it now, I am not sure I ever actually existed... I am just the shell of a man, an amalgamation of neurotic symptoms derived from traumatic abuse and a failed attempt at brainwashing.

I have manipulated, lied, and cheated... These actions have led me to fights and perversions... Eventually to alcohol and drugs... For the longest time, drugs and alcohol were the only way for me to suppress these feelings long enough to forget about my plight in life. I know now this was only a temporary and illusory reprieve with nothing substantial or lasting that could benefit me. I became dependent on alcohol and marijuana in my teens to avoid acknowledging my past. My physical and psychic developments were stunted at their most crucial stages. I had no idea how to cope and I was too scared to seek help from fear of exposure. And this is how life went for me into adulthood; self-medicating, sacrificing health for escapism, and an unhealthy manipulation of all my interpersonal relationships. I was a terrible mess.

When I began college, at least for the first 2 semesters or so, I was adamant on trying to get a degree and make a better life for myself. One day however, I received a letter in the mail from the DoJ (Department of Justice). It asked me if I wanted to be made aware of ongoing criminal cases involving me so that I may pursue restitution. At this time I wasn't aware of what I was getting into by telling them “yes.” I wasn't even sure what exactly what these criminal cases involved (though I had some idea). What happened next almost led me to my death. I started to receive dozens of letters weekly, stating that I was victimized by child exploitation and distribution of media containing my initial abuse. They were from every state and from multiple countries around the world (US military bases from Japan, Germany, etc)... My abuse was everywhere, and now I knew it. I had always feared this moment. I imagined it over and over as one person exposing it to a few others with me standing there white-faced and frozen, petrified by fear. Unfortunately, this turned out to be far worse than I could ever have imagined, thousands exposing me to thousands more. I was numb, my entire body felt like it had been injected with novacaine. “My life is over,” was all I could think, and I started to live my life like it was. I began taking Oxycontin, Xanax, ecstasy, and drinking heavily. I was so scared, I didn't know what to do to feel safe, so I went back to self-medicating. I could no longer be in large public arenas, like a university, for fear of being recognized, so I dropped out leaving myself in financial debt and without any care or clue as to what to do. I tried getting jobs, but after a short time I would always be fired or I would quit out of anger or fear. I

wouldn't even admit to myself what was causing the fear and anger. I would just create reasons to hate my job and to demonized the people I worked with. I didn't know how to trust, and I was angry, so I created scenarios in my thoughts about others that would fit my narrative of anger and mistrust. It was the worst time of my entire life. I became a recluse and began to think about a world without me in it. "No one would miss me," "better to be gone than face the shame of my rape." These were the types of things I contemplated in those days. Even to this very day, in moments of weakness, I have these types of contemplations. I have never consciously attempted suicide, but I have lived life like I didn't care if I lived or died. I almost overdosed on multiple occasions, and I flipped my car going 70 mph on a busy highway during traffic. I think, unconsciously, I have checked out of life many times. I think I really just want for all of this to end, it is so exhausting... I am so very tired... I go from the extreme thought of, "I must have survived all of this for a reason, I must have a purpose," to "I must be cursed to have to live life like this, torture with no end." I am pulled to extremes with no concept of balance. Everything is life or death or completely irrelevant, I cannot seem to find any in-between for perspective. My life feels like a giant schism, an impassable canyon with a different version of me on each side fighting for dominance over a shattered husk of a man.

These symptoms have caused behaviors in me that have ruined my perspective on relationships. I am in a constant state of anger and fear. This is no way for a person to live. I see everyone as a threat to my security, knowing that at any moment someone could bring up pictures and videos of the worst moments of my life and show them to anyone around. I can only explain it as living life with a knot in my stomach 24 hours a day 365 days a year. When anyone asks a question about my past, or says a keyword (sex, rape, jack-off, internet, etc..) it feels like someone grabs that knot in my stomach and twists it, my breathing stops, and I start looking for a way to manipulate the situation away from what is being discussed, or I try to manipulate myself away from the situation entirely. This way of living hurts me on many levels, but even a degenerating life is still a life, and I do want to live, but sometimes I think, "all of this has to be forgotten eventually." Sometimes, I even believe this to be true... but the inevitability of my situation always catches up with me. Nothing is forgotten, and I fear it never will be. I am a slave to a cycle of abuse, helpless in stemming its destruction upon my life. I just want it all to stop.

I want to focus now on my recovery process and the insights I have gained throughout my years of therapeutic studies and my experience being a patient. Almost all therapists or psychologists would agree that the first steps to recovery for any patient involve a catharsis; a type of acknowledgment of what happened and an understanding that they need help, a type of closure of the traumatic

experience, putting it in the past where it belongs. The patient also needs to feel safe so that they may express themselves truthfully and freely in the therapeutic relationship. For me, and for anyone who has, or is, enduring the online spread of media containing their abuse, it is almost impossible to reach either of these initial phases of recovery. This is because none of us can find any type of closure when there is a new abuser caught with the pictures or videos of our abuse on an almost daily basis. How can we ever put this problem in the past when it is constantly occurring? Also, how can we feel safe? We know the media is out there, and we know there are many abusers out there that are pleasuring themselves to it and wishing it was them that was raping us instead of whoever was doing it in the depiction. It is a terrifying thing to contemplate... trust me. I have experienced what it is like to be stalked and harassed, and I assure you many others have too. Perpetrators that become obsessed with their fantasization with the act of abusing me. Knocks on the windows in the middle of the night, rocks hitting my window, and creepy phone calls at any time of the day or night. It is an abysmal disposition to live through. It is such a hard process and I promise I speak for all of us when I say, "We need help!" This is where the courts and justice systems come into play. I have been through therapy, I have been to groups, but the one occurrence that has always brought me reprieve, is when my lawyer tells me of a perpetrator being sentenced and forced to pay restitution. Knowing that the ones who have hurt you are having to give recompense for what they did to you... it is a rapturous feeling! On just a therapeutic level, when I hear about a massive sting operation that takes down a distribution network, or even just a single individual spreading media containing child pornography is busted, it brings me peace. It works on more than just that one level of satisfaction, it also works on a more practical level. The restitution ordered on my behalf gives me the time and resources needed to work through what is a very detrimental and painful set of circumstances that are ongoing within my life. I personally believe that my attorney, in accordance with the justice system, has given me the only real catharsis I have ever had. It isn't permanent, but it has helped me to get this far. As far as safety goes, it is hard to say that I have ever felt safe in my entire life... Maybe when I was a small infant or toddler, I really don't know. I do know, however, the knowledge that there are men and women out there finding and punishing these abusers is helpful in feeling some sense of safety. It isn't permanent but I know they are there to protect me, and others, against these devils. All this being said, therapy and groups have also been very helpful for me, and have shown me that there are people who care and that want to support me, but I believe the real, true help, comes from the courts and the justice systems. You guys are the heroes that give us the ability and resources to help ourselves. You are our fighters in the ring against these wrongdoers. You are the vehicle for change in these dark times.

The effects of sexual abuse and its spread all over the world have permeated every aspect of my personality, emotions, and every relationship I have ever had. It is an all-consuming darkness that slithers secretly in the underbelly of society. It is time for it to be exposed, brought to the awareness of the masses, and have a light shined on those that choose to hurt children! This is the biggest fight of our age. In all this, I would settle for just the smallest glimmer of hope. I don't feel like I am asking for much. Thank you.

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**Solomon**