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TEARING DOWN THE WALLS

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By Hilary Weaver

IN THE FALL OF 2010, LYSAUNDRA CAMPBELL CRIED HARD FOR THE FIRST time in eight years.

As she was leaning against the shoulder of a stranger at the Impact National Conference in Atlanta GA, she cried out six years of pain and feelings of betrayal toward a father she loved. What she found was peace from the aftermath of domestic violence and the desire to help others find it, too.

Campbell says she spent much of her childhood building walls against the hurt that her father, Nathan, instilled when he abused her mother. Now as a 22-year-old senior at Mizzou, she says she and God are working on tearing them down.

“I don’t think I understood grace until I was 20,” she says. Once I did, I realized it didn’t matter what happened; I could come back from anything.”

Campbell became familiar with the concept of abuse and its effect on families when she was just in the second grade. In 1999, after several violent disputes between her parents, Campbell’s mother Saundra, moved Campbell, her sister and her brother to her home state of Virginia . Campbell says all she understood at the time was that her mother had split up their family. More here on the background of her family; where were they living, how did her parents meet, what did they do, what was the family like? How did the abuse start and how did it progress? Did LySaundra notice it when she was a kid? Was it hid-den or overt?

“I didn’t really know what was going on, but at the same time I did want the image of a two-parent home,” she says. “I didn’t want anyone to look at my life and think anything was different.”

Saundra and Nathan, who had recently resigned as a police officer at the Kansas City Police Department, decided to make things work for their family, but Saundra says the abuse never stopped.

Saundra and Nathan, a police officer at the Kansas City Police Department we need to verify this; the police records may be able to confirm decided to make things work for their family, but Saundra says the emotional and physical abuse never stopped.

“I’d come to work where did she work? with my eyes red from crying or staying up late,” she says. “People at work knew and said, ‘You’ve got to do something about it.’”

Then, in April of 2002, after several fights, Saundra took her children to her brother and sister-in laws where her husband arrived a few days later and demanded she go home with him. She says she heard him come through the door as she was doing laundry in the basement and knew something wasn’t normal. What does that mean? When he came into view, she saw that he had shotgun.

“I came to the top of the stairs and he said, ‘Bitch, you’re gonna die tonight,’” she says.

From a bedroom upstairs, Campbell what age was she? called the police to their home in the same neighborhood, where Nathan held Saundra hostage. She says the irony of mak-ing call on her own father, who at the time aspired to regain a job with the police force, still strikes her today.

“He taught me as a little kid that if something goes wrong, you call the cops,” she says.

Saundra says the twelve hours of the hostage incident felt like days. What happened in this time?

“I had a feeling I was going to die, like he told me,” Saundra says. “Whatever he wanted to hear, I told him.” What does this mean?

She says that at about 3 or 4 a.m., Nathan complied with the police what does that mean? and she and the children stayed one night at a local shelter. And then what? Explain what happened to the mom and kids and to the father.

Thinking back on that experience, Campbell only remembers feeling scared, and then angry.

“Initially, I had the deepest hate for him you could have for somebody,” she says. “I didn’t want anything to do with him.”

She remembers receiving a birthday card from her father in September 2002 what’s the significance of this date? how old was she then? but says she did not speak to him until November. Then, on December 27, she received the news that her father had hanged himself in jail. In the days that followed, mixed messages from relatives continued.

“I didn’t feel guilt, but people kept saying, ‘This isn’t your fault.’ It made me think, “Wait, is it my fault?”

Although Campbell went on to be a successful and motivated student, she says she con-tinued to erect barriers against her emotions, citing the youth conference in Atlanta (if we go with lede one or something similar) as the first time since 2002 she let tears fall about anything involving her father. what was the conference about?

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