

Elden gives a disturbing account of what really happened.

He speaks to Edges from the USA

# The Tragedy of Abuse –

**I am a thirty-six year old male whom you would think would have it all together. I don't. The reasons are as numerous as there are days that have passed since I was a kid. For me growing up was not to be an easy task. My start in life was shaky. I was born the third of five children. My parents were poor at best. They had their own problems. Now here was one more. At least this is what I was to come to think about myself. My earliest memory was at three, crawling to the foot of the bed where my father was waiting on me. Instead of being picked up by him, I was the one to be doing the picking up. I was not offered a baby bottle, but his genitalia instead. I do not know how early this started except to say I knew what I was doing. The sounds around me were not sounds of Love and Joy. Instead they were drunken words of hate, anger, rage, and bitterness, and as far as my young ears knew, they were all meant for me. I learned at a very early age what it felt to feel physical pain.**

My father was the type of man who thought that to be a man one must express pain without crying. This was taught to me first hand. One of the many beatings that I can remember was when I asked to go to the restroom in a public place. My father ripped off my shirt and shoved me across the store, causing me to urinate on myself. When we got home I had to take a bath. Before dressing he made me come out in front of company and ask for my punishment. I am not sure which hurt more, being hit on my bare skin or the humiliation that I felt standing there with no clothes on in front of people.

I had heard some kids at school laughing about calling their fathers old men. So in a child-like way and wanting so badly to hear my father laugh, I called him "Old Man". What I got instead was a fist in the face that put me over the porch railing. My father came after me, kicking and screaming names: "stupid, ugly, lazy, crazy," and yes, that one they liked the most "We brought you into this world; we can take you out". He almost did. While this was going on my mother was just standing in the door watching, not helping me in any way. I didn't understand. I felt so alone and unwanted. I thought that if I could just die everything would be OK. There were many nights I lay awake listening to my father call my mother "slut", "whore", and "bitch". He would accuse her of sleeping with this person or that. Then I would hear him hitting her. I wanted to come to her aid, only I didn't know how. I learned that no matter what I did it was not the right thing. I was soon to learn what being shamed meant in a way that was both physical and mental.

We travelled to many places to get booze for my parents. On one such trip we stopped so my mother could go to the bathroom. With curiosity I watched her as she went into the woods. When I turned around I was met with a fist in the face and was told I was a pervert. My father taught me never to look at women that way again. One morning I woke up with my father staring me in the face through the window. He was all bloody from God only knows what. I remember him telling me that when he got his hands on me he would kill me. To this day I do not know why he said this. What I do know is that for a very long time I was terrified to look out of windows. Though I have talked a great deal about my father, my mother was by no means innocent. She had me commit acts on her that, honestly, are too hard to talk about.

By around the age of six or seven I still had no concept of what normal, healthy friends or playmates were. I was still searching vigorously, even desperately for something I had no understanding of: healthy love and affection. There was a neighbor who took advantage of my great need. He showed me attention by offering to introduce me to a game. This game required me to lie face down on the bed and not look back. To my young mind and starving heart, this was no game, but an adult who cared. Again I was raped under what I understood as care and love.

By the time I had reached age nine a schoolteacher took notice of the battle scars on my back and reported them to the Department of Social Services. They did an investigation, and we were put into temporary foster care. We stayed in the foster home for about a year. During this year whenever I would find out we had a weekend visit with my biological parents, I would get physically sick. I had to be placed on nerve pills. This by no means stopped my other siblings from going. They would come back and tell the foster parents and me what a wonderful time they had, along with how much things had changed. This led us to go back home. All of this was a result of my oldest sister saying everything was OK. Of course it wasn't, and we all found out the hard way ... more beatings and being left alone for long periods of time.

We were taken for the final time, and our parent's rights to their five children were terminated. I was to carry the responsibility for the break-up of the family. My father said it was my fault and I still believed him. I then went back to the original foster home where I stayed for four years. No harm came to me from them; it was outside of the foster home that the abuse was to continue. I did not understand the care that was coming from my foster parents. The only kind of affection I'd had was perverted. I felt my foster parents did not love me because they were not using me as my parents and others had done. I was sure something was wrong with me.

Perhaps that is what attracted me to Jim. We meet him at a flea market where we would go on the weekends. After a time he was able to befriend both my foster parents and gain their trust. It was no surprise to us when he asked permission for me to stay overnight. He then offered me beer. I got drunk and passed out. The next morning when I woke I found my clothes were bloody. My first thought was that I had fallen during the night. My next thought was I am going to get in trouble with my parents not only for messing my clothes up but also for getting drunk. It did