

Keyana Marshall

I was born and raised in Anchorage, Alaska. My mother was just turning 16 when she had me. She was still in high school and so was her boyfriend, who became my stepdad. He got involved in drug dealing to support us, and that brought with it enormous dysfunction in the family. At the age of 11, my stepdad went to federal prison for drug dealing. After that, I was being asked to cook, clean, take care of the other children – basically become the parent for our family - and if I didn't do it, or didn't do something right, I was punished. It was too much for me and I started running away and acting out when I was 12 or 13.

During that time, I also was babysitting for a woman who was a friend of my mother's. I called her "Auntie." I knew she was into the fast life, but I didn't know at the time that she was a prostitute who worked at "The Chateau" in Anchorage, Alaska's brothel district in the Spenard area. She introduced me to my first trafficker, who owned an "escort agency." I started babysitting for the trafficker when I was 14. She acted more like a friend than an adult. She secretly gave me marijuana and alcohol. She let me have friends over to her house and throw parties. Though I didn't know it at the time, she was grooming me for the sex industry. At first, she just shared what all the money could buy. She bought me clothes, snuck me into clubs at night, and left her keys out on the table so I could drive her fancy car. She kept talking to me about boys and asking, "What's he doing for you?" "Is he taking you shopping?" "Is he buying you things?" But later, she began asking me to help with the business, which included answering the phone in her house, booking "dates" with guys, collecting service fees for her "escort" business, and advertising the business. She promised me \$10 for every call I booked and sometimes gave me drugs and alcohol in payment.

The business was listed in the phone book and in the Anchorage Press as "Preference Escorts." When cell phones and the Internet came along a little later, she was listing on Craigslist, backpage.com, and bunch of other "escort" and "erotic services" sites. When cell phones came out, she got multiple cell phones, and shortly after that she sent me out on my first "outcall."

I was 15 years old. I didn't know what I was doing, and they had me drink alcohol and smoke and I was really out of it. So, something went wrong, and I didn't collect the money like I should have. She used that to force me into other "dates," convincing me that I owed her big money. By the time I was 16, I was living in her apartment, and she was taking all the money – first her "cut," then agency fees, booking fees, money for rent and food and all my sundries. And that's how I got into debt bondage with her and couldn't get out.

One day she sent me on a short walk to the store with her cellphone. I started talking with a friend on the phone and ignored her call, thinking I would be back at her house in no time. When I got back, she started screaming at me that she was trying to contact me because I had a customer waiting in the apartment complex near the store where she had sent me. She got violent when I objected. After that she was violent a lot: she punched me in the face, lured

me into limos with clients where they would be having orgies, and even tried to rape me herself. Sometimes I was doing as many as 11 calls in one day. I got sick and broken – physically and mentally - during that time. After that, I didn't know any other life. There were no rescue centers, no shelters for trafficking victims, no help that I could see in those days. That lasted until she went to jail. Then I was sold to another trafficker – a really vicious pimp named Sabil Mumin Mujahid. He is in jail now until 2052, after being charged with 35 felonies including weapons trafficking, drug trafficking, sex trafficking of children, sex trafficking by force, fraud and coercion, and child pornography, but he wasn't convicted for any of the sex trafficking charges because the women and girls he trafficked were afraid to testify against him.

Alaska has a lot of military installations. Fort Wainwright, a U.S. military installation in Fairbanks Alaska, is our first line of defense against Russia and North Korea. In Anchorage, Fort Richardson is the largest US base in Alaska and the hub of a network of bases in the area that includes Fort Greeley and Fort Wainwright. Between them they are two of the largest military bases in the country. A large part of my trafficker's "clientele" was from Fort Richardson. They came in uniform before work, after work, and honestly even during work. My trafficker liked military men because there was this notion that if they are in the military then they can't be plainclothes police officers. He tracked the payment schedules of military men. We were "hired" for parties on base and off base. Most of the time I was going I would have to be dropped off in front of the base and someone would meet me there and take me in to the base as his girlfriend or guest. It seemed like sometimes the military police even knew or suspected what was going on but turned a blind eye to it. Some military men would "gift" girls to each other to celebrate rank promotions, returns from deployment, birthdays, and other special occasions. We also went to hotels and private residences. Some of these guys only purchased me once, but some were "regulars" that came back again and again. I would say that I myself was sold hundreds of times to military men. My traffickers exploited hundreds of women and children over the years.

Most of the violence I experienced was from the traffickers, but I did have some very scary experiences with some of the military men who were customers. Oftentimes if a guy was deploying out or coming back to Anchorage after deployment, they reserved hotel rooms. One time, in a hotel a guy who was obviously suffering from PTSD got frightened and dangled me out of a window of the Hilton Hotel, threatening to drop me. Sometimes guys intimidated me or threatened violence, but most of the time it was because they themselves were having a mental breakdown. A customer from the military tried to blackmail me with naked pictures of me once but then I told him I was a minor and he let me go and never released the photos.

This terrible industry still has a grip on me. I was arrested for the first time when I was 18. I was 21 when my trafficker was finally arrested, but I was arrested along with him and charged as a "co-conspirator." I didn't have a good lawyer. I didn't know how to tell the jury what had happened to me. I wasn't able to make the case that he was violent, threatened and beat any of his "girls" who didn't do what they were told. I didn't even understand that I was a

trafficking victim at that time. I ended up taking a plea deal for two years in jail because I was afraid I would go to jail for 50 years along with him. Now it's on my record that I was a co-conspirator in a sex trafficking case. Alaska has no vacatur laws, so I would first have to get laws passed before I could have those charges and conviction expunged from my record. Recently, I moved from Alaska to Ohio where I am working to help others who have been trafficked and to prevent minors from being lured into human trafficking.

Anywhere there is a military base there are going to be traffickers and pimps selling women and children. We need to get the word out to military men and especially to their commanders not to turn a blind eye to commercial sexual exploitation. Most of the time, like in my case, when a military man purchases sex, he is putting money in the pocket of and enriching a violent exploiter. That's why I'm telling my story – so we can stop sex trafficking of women and girls and end the cycles of violence.