

My Impact

To understand what it means to be something extraordinary is an understatement especially when describing the contributions of a child. A noble man, Norman Schwarzkopf, once stated "It doesn't take a hero to order men into battle. It takes a hero to be one of those men who goes into battle". That statement does not only refer to soldiers, but is also truthful when describing the actions of a child. It's validity comes from incredible strength as one perseveres even when the odds are stacked against them. Darryl and Ryan Tsatsos were two young men of extraordinary character that often thought of others and made the ultimate sacrifice to save another. I have not previously spoken of my actions as a young child. Those actions helped save my family and have shaped my future and that of my mother and siblings.

From a very young age I experienced extreme violence and dysfunction. From having an abusive biological father, to moving constantly, and to watching over my siblings and mother. I observed my mother being severely abused and I always felt like there wasn't anything I could do. At the age of seven, I knew that I couldn't let that happen any longer. I protected my mom from getting harmed by standing in front of her when he was trying to hit her or when he would scream abusively at her. My biological father was not only abusive towards my mother, but was abusive towards my siblings and me as well. Eventually he was arrested for Domestic Violence and threatening to kill my mother in addition to other charges. He held all of us against our will and tortured my mother for hours.

Once arrested I had to testify in court regarding everything that happened. I felt extremely afraid at this time and as if I was doing something wrong. Although, I knew that I had to in order to protect myself and my family from further continued abuse. As the case continued,

my biological father was no longer my father. The judge stripped him of all parental rights, my mother was granted a divorce and we all had our names legally changed. After a prolonged trial he was sent to prison to serve for all of his wrongdoings.

By the age of nine, I had survived the battle that seemed like it couldn't be fought. My siblings and I were the heroes that helped make this happen. Like General Schwarzkopf had said, I had to do battle even at a young age to stand up to the enemy, even if that enemy was my own biological father. If I didn't have the willingness to stand up to help protect my family, I'm fairly confident that we would still be in the same position to this day. I helped give my family a second chance at feeling secure in life. This was an act of strength and courage that while extremely stressful was absolutely necessary. I write this essay today, not only to share my story, but to help others realize what it truly means to be remarkable, extraordinary or in other words, an unlikely hero.