

Subject: Coping, Surviving and Finally Thriving - Tracy Fabre's story

Born into abuse, youngest of 7. Father was diagnosed a psychopath. Older sister Tamara. Father would torture them. Physical beatings, punishments, sexually subjectify, shame - beginning at age 3. If they spoke out he'd beat them. Terrified of basement, was locked there alone in the dark for hours. **Physically left the basement, psychologically have not.** Tamara became an alcoholic, felt guilty not able to protect Tracy, traumatized her, she turned to alcohol. Started drinking and drugs at 18. Overdosed once, died and came back. She had night terrors, both girls did. Taken out of the home around 12 put into foster care. Her aunt called CPS, after Tracy wrote to her begging for help. Tamara was left in the home. Tamara had night terrors of a demon coming to her, father ridiculed and mocked her for them and encourage siblings to turn on each other, mentally, physically and emotionally. Mother was also abused, didn't protect them. Later had stage 4 lung cancer, father literally pushed her aside - caused her to soil herself.

Entire family knew - aunts, uncles, etc. but nobody said anything - conspiracy of silence. He would react extremely violently to anything that upset him even a little. Forced to prostrate herself for beatings, not allowed to bath alone - had to bathe together one day a week, lice, scabies, chronic strep throat, nobody ever reported, CPS didn't notice any of it when they came to the home. Never actually did a proper home visit even when Tracy was taken out of the home - she only got out for 6 months in foster care when hospital reported the stitches in her head and aunt called them. Tracy told them her dad did it but her mother said a boy did it at school. Everyone in the family was protecting the abuser. Mother did this her whole life - used her kids as a shield because as long as they were getting hit she wasn't. She had a nervous breakdown at one point. She would try and keep the peace by giving father whatever he wanted. One time the soup was too hot and he poured it over her head - she just stood there doing the dishes, didn't even flinch. Strong message to not fight back. Kids were blamed for 'provoking the abuse'. Teachers were aware but looked the other way, nobody wanted to get involved they were just 'the Fabre's, they're dirty, stinky, bad children, etc' ..only had 2 outfits they had to share. Eventually turned into a bully and was disruptive in class as had no friends and always made fun of. They were just seen as a bad family. Very isolated - nobody ever came to the house. No friends or relatives. Starved - father took most of the food and kids were barely given food. Tracy developed lifelong anorexia and bulimia. Only way to have some control when dealing with stressful issues. Every sibling has an addiction as an adult now. Using everything from clothing to hygiene to food to control and abuse. That kept the abuse ongoing while they went to school. Killed their pets - stomped their dog to death in front of the children. One time Tracy broke his pencil while doing homework and he held her down and beat her with a 2x4, body and head. Then after he beat her bloody he said 'you fucking bitch you got blood on me', then he washed his hands. He did the same thing after he killed her sister.

Parents were fanatical about religion - twisted Catholic faith and interpret the bible. Taught them in the living room. They preached that it was 'doing god's duty', 'honor and obey the father', get on their knees and beg his forgiveness when he was angry. Threaten the kids they would burn in hell, etc. Made them believe everything that was happening to them was god's will and it was their fault when he got angry and abused them.

At after only 6 months in foster care was returned to the home, she was found responsible and called the problem by CPS. CPS did not offer any counseling for family, siblings would deny abuse because scared and ashamed. It was a house of secrets. Possibly sexual abuse going on, Tracy has fragmented memories there with herself and other siblings. Every one of them have detachment and intimacy problems, can't bond or have healthy relationships or friendships. Can't trust anyone. Can't maintain a relationship.

Tamara left home right after graduation, 1984 didn't come back until mother was diagnosed in 2015.- came home to take care of her. Wasn't even given a place to sleep. When she returned home father started to abuse her again. All siblings left in their teens. Tamara moved to Texas and had a successful home renovation company. Eventually drug and alcohol addiction overcame her and she lost her home, health, relationships, everything. Never married, no kids. Couldn't even recognize her the last time she saw her...literally she was destroyed...turned up at her door black and blue, skin and bones, broken jaw, grey skin, looked 100...used to be stunningly beautiful and vivacious. Couldn't escape her childhood or overcome her addiction. She mentally never left that basement or that house. Torn up with guilt for not protecting her sister.

Tracy moved to New Mexico, originally got into martial arts, sixth degree black belt. Married, had children - marriage failed because of childhood issues and inability to trust and attach to her husband. She felt like she was living with a stranger for 22 years - feel numb most of the time, only feel anger, hard to resolve conflicts. Felt her behaviours were toxic and negative, learned lifelong patterns of behaviour that were detrimental to relationships. Not even able to form strong bonds with her children. Holding her children and unable to feel anything. Was a young mother, but couldn't bond. Also the focus on her eating disorder got in the way of everything else in life - she was masked and numbed and not present. In 2011 she went to school to train as an addictions counselor and masters in social work. Started an advocacy group for victims of domestic violence - counseling, court support, children in trauma, etc. She now is living her life to be the adult she needed to have as a child.

In October 2014 mother was diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer. Moved incredibly fast. She didn't tell anyone until January 2015. Tamara was told in February because she was hard to track down. Tamara came in March and stayed with Tracy for 3 weeks - when she was unrecognizable and heavily addicted. She saved up money to go see her mom and take care of here. Went home in April. Trauma in coming back to the house she never really left, and the abuse started again, even as an adult but siblings and family kept the family secret and denied it - 50 years later still keeping the secret. The health care worker and siblings saw he was beating Tamara but kept it secret and took it to the Catholic priest instead, who also did nothing. She had bruises on face, body, neck, father had bandaids on his hand but everyone hid it.

In October the mother died, Tamara was caring for here. That night father called the police and tried to have mother and Tamara thrown out of the house so she didn't die in there. Sister had to be called as she was the executor. Mother died. Tamara stayed in home to take care of father, as she promised her mother. Also take care of mothers affairs. They were fighting (father and Tamara). New Years Eve dad went to church, Tamara stayed home, dad came back saw she'd been drinking and locked her out of the house. Went across the street to her brother's house - was

too cold to stay outside, was upset about her father. He came back home and she followed him into the house. Within 12 minutes she was dead. They appeared to have a physical confrontation, then he stabbed her 17 times with a kitchen butcher knife and slit her throat - 3 stab wounds in her back and defensive stab wounds in her arms. Defensive injuries on her, none on him - not a mark.

When it went to court Tracy was the only family member who spoke out about the abuse in the home and what really went on with the father. She gave a victim impact statement. The judge said 'in my 41 years of sitting on the bench I've never heard such a story and I believe every word of it'. 5 page statement, first time she ever spoke out, so freeing, then validated by the judge. Charged with Manslaughter but should have been Murder 2. Because of his age he only got 8 years in jail.

She lost her mother, father, sister and siblings that day but gained insight into herself and a passion to help others in situations like the one she was in.

Links to news coverage of the murder:

https://www.google.ca/search?q=tamara+fabre+murder&rlz=1C1GGGE_CA630CA632&oq=tamara+fabre+murder&aqs=chrome..69i57.8652j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8

Deborah Maddison, Eugenea Couture and the NAASCA Team