

Excerpts from *From a Cry to a Shout*, by Pastor Robert Hendricks

I was eleven years old, and very small in stature....

My ears were first met with the sounds of a barking dog, and to my surprise it was Ramón and his German shepherd walking towards me. Immediate fright and eeriness crept over me as Ramón and his barking dog got closer to me.

There was a cunningness that permeated out of the eyes of Ramón as he knelt down placing both of his sweaty clammy hands on my cheeks, whispering "nice." In his whisper I could smell his foul breath giving out the scent of alcohol. His hand would travel down to the crotch of my pants as he began to fondle my private parts, while trying to unzip my pants.

I resisted, backing away and saying, "No Ramón, No Ramón." His dog barked louder, masking my plea for him to stop. He firmly placed his hands on my shoulders. Young and small, I was no match for him and his dog, as he maneuvered me into his adobe living quarters.

It would be there that my senses were stunned by the smell of smoke billowing from his fire pit used for cooking, the smell of his sweaty foul body odor which he tried to disguise with cheap cologne. He sexually molested me with his dog barking all during the process. I could do nothing but comply, fearing his dog would bite me at anytime.

Once Ramón got his cheap thrill, which took just a few moments but seemed an eternity to me, he allowed me to walk away. His dog still barking, I left guarding my steps, walking backwards until I made it out of his adobe dwelling. With a sickening pounding in my head, once out of the sight of my perpetrator, I rushed to our trailer.

With all my strength I tried to wash his scent off my body, but the scent would become a fixture of memory, triggering flashbacks for too many years of my life. What started out to be a simple ten-minute walk to retrieve my sweater would be a secret scar in my life for the next twenty-six years...

Timing is everything-your survivor story can break the silence

- I have outlived my perpetrator (physically and emotionally)
- Outlived blaming myself (It was not my fault, it is not your fault)
- Outlived my fear
- Outlived the silence of my secret
- I have become a voice of Survivorship
- I have become a voice of Empowerment
- I have become voice through writing

While timing is everything-your survivor story can break the silence of sexual abuse and addiction.