



Maria Posters the Subway and Confronts Her Family

I'm the mother of a son and a daughter, and I was in a relationship with a man whose job was a correction officer, and I think that that's important that I mention. Who sexually molested my daughter. Now my daughter did not disclose this until she was 22 and had a daughter of her own. But, throughout those years, she became very estranged from me, you know, separated from me. And I think that what hurt me the most out of all of that was that all of those years that she did not disclose, she thought that I knew that this was happening and, um, was not doing anything about it. And I want you to know that when I did find out, I did try to reach out to the systems to help me, that I really wanted to prosecute him, but because so many years had passed, the statute of limitations did not allow me to prosecute, because I was ready then to collaborate with my daughter and to really, you know, use the systems to, you know, make him pay for what he did, but the district attorneys didn't respond. You know...it was too late.

I went to his job, and I was pretty desperate. You know, I went to the police. I was pretty desperate then. And at the time, the only thing that I could really think of in terms of holding him accountable for what he did and now that I look at it, really protecting a community from somebody like that. So what I did was – at that time – I was in this business, I was doing, you know, work around – working with women and what have you – I um I took his picture, and I remember putting with his picture a warning sign with his picture on it and writing on there something like, “A Warning – Beware of child sexual abuser unable to prosecute due to statute of limitations.” And I made sure it was posted from his house all the way to where he needed to take his train and where his community needed to take the train. There were hundreds of them. And I remember, you know, sharing that later on and some therapist telling me – you know, I put myself at risk and at danger. But now when I look at that, I really see that as something I needed to do.

I later found out that not only did he sexually abuse my daughter, but so did my brother. You know once you started disclosing, and I think that this came much later once her and I came together as mother and daughter that she could see that she could talk to me about these things, that she really started to disclose not only that abuse but all of the abuse – the sexual abuse in her life.

So then I found out that my brother had sexually abused. And I was really determined to demonstrate to her that this is the way I would have handled it, had I known. And so I called... my brother, my brother doesn't live here. My brother's also a correctional officer, by the way. And I confronted him with it. I told my, I told my other siblings who also live in California with him about it, and then I told him I needed to talk to him about it. And I told him. I says, you know, “my daughter says you did this, this, this, this and this, and I believe her.” His response was a quiet one. There wasn't much response verbally or otherwise except that he was quiet. His wife was at this meeting. She was there. But there wasn't any denying.

We have a good relationship, and she's really moving you know,...She's a teacher. But now, because of our relationship and the work that I do, she's really, really moving towards doing work around social change, which could not make me more proud. And that has been something that has come from her, because she sees all the good that has come out of our experience, and she's taught me so much about forgiveness (cries) and has given me, I mean, she pulls my coat and gives me permission not to hate the perpetrator. She says, “Mom, we gotta forgive and we gotta move on. I've forgiven him. I've forgiven him, and you cannot remain there because that just hurts you.” So it's all been so worthwhile, you know, to hear





my daughter say, “Ma, I’m just not there anymore, and I’m not gonna base my entire life around what happened to me.”

So we’ve moved and we’ve grown, and we’ve developed together. And all... and what it required of me was to, you know, to hold myself accountable. And holding myself accountable doesn’t mean blaming myself. It means, looking at the choices that I made, acknowledging those choices, and talking to her about, you know, my intentions and things like if I had known. So I have I have the trust of my children.

