

Liam's Story — A Survivor Composite Story  
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Liam, age 17

Liam's father is an organized crime boss and confidential police informant who labor traffics undocumented people in the construction industry who he has convinced owe him a debt. Liam's father forces him to steal cars for his chop shop. If Liam refuses, his father beats him and locks him in a cinderblock building on his property. Liam is worried he won't graduate high school or be allowed to attend homecoming if he is "grounded" and misses classes if he is locked in his dad's cinderblock building again.

One night, police noticed Liam attempting to hotwire a car for his dad. Police chased him until he jumped out of the moving car. Liam ran into the desert. He was frightened as he hid among the cactus all night, thorns covering his body as he evaded the police. He feared what his father might do to him if he was arrested. He was more afraid of his dad than the police. Liam fell asleep in an arroyo dry riverbed, behind a boulder. When he woke in the morning, the police were gone. Liam was afraid his dad would be mad at him for failing and almost getting caught.

Liam decided not to go home. He began sleeping in a doorway near his school so he could continue going to class and finish high school. He had to be careful that his dad didn't find him while he was attending school. One night, as he was sleeping in his doorway, a man woke Liam and asked him if he was hungry. Liam followed him to a nearby restaurant. He felt grateful to the man. The man offered to let Liam stay in his guest room until he finished high school. Liam felt grateful. After a few months, the man asked Liam for a massage. Liam felt like he had to because the man had helped him so much. The next week, the man asked Liam to do sexual acts with him. Liam felt like he couldn't say no because the man had helped him so much. He also didn't want to anger the man because he had nowhere else to go. A few months later, Liam came home from school and found another man in his room, the guest room. The man said that Liam needed to perform a sexual act. Liam felt like he couldn't say no. Every day after that, when Liam returned from school, a different man would be waiting for him in the guest room.

One day at school, Liam was injured while playing football. The coach called an ambulance. At the hospital, nurses and doctors discovered that Liam had a fever and an infection in addition to his football injury. After further testing, Liam was diagnosed with an STI. Liam began shaking and vomiting from anxiety when the doctor asked him if he was having sex with any girlfriends at school. A therapist and social worker were paged at the hospital and asked Liam a series of questions. They soon learned that Liam was not living with his father, that his father labor

trafficked him with forced criminality to steal cars, and that Liam was being sex trafficked by the man who found him while he was homeless on the street after escaping his father (first trafficker). The social worker helped Liam connect with services and find safe housing. An attorney is working with Liam to figure out how to prosecute the multiple cases and perpetrators.