

Hi, my name is Aubree Thompson. I'm Deaf. I grew up in Utah, and went to the Idaho School for the Deaf and Blind (ISDB). I have a son named River who is almost 19 years old now. He's my world.

I wanted to tell you what happened back in 2003. I was a victim of domestic violence. My ex-boyfriend assaulted me and I suffered a great deal. So, I tried to look for help, but I couldn't really because I was terrified of him. I had people who tried to provide me with resources, but I rejected their help and life became very dark.

Then, a few months later something happened to my son. He was just 15 months old – still a baby in diapers. He was a victim of many things including both physical abuse and rape. I had no idea this was going on. One day, I got home after running some errands and I noticed that something was different about my son. I saw some marks on him.

I questioned my ex-boyfriend about what I'd seen and he said nothing had happened, but he knew that I knew something was going on with him. He then took my keys and my phone and when he left, I went over to my landlord's place. My landlord was the Chief of Police. Unfortunately, he wasn't home. So I hurried back home because I saw my ex-boyfriend heading back home and didn't want him to catch me.

Later that day I waited for River's father to come visit him. When he arrived, I got him alone and told him he had to take River to the hospital immediately because something had happened to him. I had to beg my ex-boyfriend to allow River's dad to take River out of the house. My ex-boyfriend allowed this and gave River's dad my car keys so he could go.

After River was checked out at the hospital, the police arrived at my place and arrested the man who had hurt my son. After he was arrested, he was eventually sentenced to 20 years to life in prison for 3rd degree child abuse.

After going through this experience I didn't want any help. My family knew I needed help but I didn't want it. I didn't want help from anyone. I just wanted to deal with things on my own. I finally got help from a hearing therapist who was a native ASL signer. As I worked with him I felt a bit better but I ultimately left therapy.

I tried to get help through taking medications, but that didn't suit me either. Later, I started MMA kickboxing because I felt that fitness would be an outlet for my short fuse. This had helped me and my son in the past, so I focused on kickboxing and it helped me a lot.

MMA has helped me become the person I am now: happy, able to persevere, and able to help my son. I know a lot of self-defense techniques as a result of the various MMA styles I've learned. I'm here to help people out because I know what you've been through. Even though the details of our stories may differ, I understand you.

If you are ready to look for help or resources, contact Bridges Oregon.