

I was sitting alone on the porch swing of my house, watching the fireworks go off. It was the 4th of July and I was finally free. My parents were killed by an intruder when I was 6 and now at 17 I have been in the Witness Protection Program (Witsec) for 10 years. I had lived by myself since I was a freshman in high school. Nothing had changed until I got a call a year ago telling me that the man that killed my parents had escaped and probably would be coming after me. I thought I was finally free from that man. Before I was put in Witsec I had a twin brother and a baby sister. When that call came to me I knew what was coming next. This is my story, starting exactly 1 year ago.

I was sitting at home watching TV waiting for a call from my best friend, Logan. When my phone started to ring I quickly grabbed it, but then I saw the number on my cell phone. It was from Witsec. I knew that they would freak out if I didn't answer, so I picked up the phone and said hello.

"Hello Marina" My Witsec officer said

"What's going on" I replied

"The man that murdered your parents escaped jail" She told me

"No" I exclaimed knowing what was coming next

"No what" Officer Trombosky asked

"I know where this is going, and I will not move again" I advised her

"Suit yourself, but we have a meeting tomorrow so see ya there" With those words she hung up.

What a great way to ruin a night I thought. Now nothing will make me happy. Just then my cell phone rang. I saw the number and this time it was my friend Logan so, I picked up.

"Hello" I grumpily answered

"What's wrong with you, sunshine" Logan exclaimed

"Wonderful, Terrific News" I replied sarcastically

"I'm coming over there right now." He answered

"Wa-Wait" I said those words just as I heard the click of the phone being hung up. Ok he lives 5 minutes away, why does he feel like he has to come over here every time there is a problem. But I do have to admit that if he didn't come over every time I would be kindave sad. I walked to the window of my apartment and looked out. There was a red blinking light a couple of feet away. I heard this sound like a car back firing. I saw something come towards me.

I ducked then I heard my window shatter. I crawled to my room and locked the door and called Kaitlyn Trombosky, my Witsec officer. Then I heard a knock on my door. There was no way it could be anyone but Logan. So I quickly threw open the door. That was when I came face to face with a knife.

“Hello Marina” He spit

“You” I emphasized

“So you remember me” He inquired

“How could I forget you, you're my parents killer” I spit at him

“Don't say that don't ever say that” He yelled to me

I saw Logan through the window. I knew that I only had several minutes before Logan might be his next victim.

“God I need protection” I mumbled

Daughter I am with you.

“Fine I'll go with you” I quietly answered

As Logan was walking up the stairs into my townhouse I took a note and wrote help, call officer Trombosky and her number. I quickly crumpled up the paper and threw it at his car. Then the man put a blanket over my head and shoved me in his van. I didn't know what was going to happen. We drove around for a while and he started to mumble.

“I should... kill you.....Arizona... money” He was mumbling

It was getting hot very hot and I needed air. Suddenly I saw black dots appear in my vision and my head started to spin. It was getting harder and harder to breathe. Suddenly I heard the door slam. It was getting hot and being stuck in a van in Texas under a wool blanket is not a good thing to do. I suddenly needed air, lots and lots of air. I felt like I was being strangled. I scrambled to get the blanket off my head and I could feel the blood rushing to my head.

I got the blanket off my head and realized that the car was full of smoke. I tried to kick open the door but it was locked. My head was spinning and my eyes were red and itchy.

“God I need help” I cried

Daughter be still and know that I am there.

My head was spinning and I couldn't get any oxygen. There were black dots in my vision. I gave the door a final kick. It didn't open but then the window broke. I scrambled threw the window and felt my feet hit the sand. It was then that I realized that I had no shoes. I was

running across scorching sand. I could feel my feet start to burn. I just kept running but there was a pain in my foot. I looked and saw that it was red and bloody with sand and glass stuck in it.

I knew that if I stopped running I would die. It seemed like forever when I saw a tree. It seemed like a God had put the tree there for me to rest. I plopped down under the tree and looked at my foot. I saw that it was swelling along with my ankle. I rested for a couple more hours. It was starting to get dark and I knew that if I had any chance to survive I would have to keep going.

I got up and started walking towards the north. I soon came upon a road. I started to follow the road until I came upon a lake. The lake was crystal clear and beautiful. I started to go in it when I realized that my cell phone was still in my back pocket. I hid my cell phone in some grass that was a couple feet away from the water. Then I went into the lake, soon though that man came to the lake. I swam down towards the bottom of the lake. I could see him on the phone and kind of make out what he was saying.

“Money... No I don't know where she is... yes I'll find her...”

With those words he threw a rock into the lake. I tried to stay flat on the bottom of the lake but then, an air bubble went to the top of the surface. I quickly swam away. I say that he had left but I still felt unsafe. I swam to the surface and saw that my cell phone was still in the grass. I turned it on but, I was able to connect to Kaitlyn Trombosky and make out a few words.

“It's me Marina... I'm by a lake.... Help... kidnapped..” I scrambled into the phone. I threw my phone onto the sand and not a moment too soon. I felt a sharp pain in my back and the instant cool of the water. I tried to scramble to get to oxygen but there was a hand holding me down.

“I got you finally.” He yelled

There were starting to be black dots and I couldn't get any more oxygen. I started to fight with him but I knew that it was a hopeless cause.

“God, I need you help me.” I said as I blew the air bubbles out.

Daughter I am with you, I will protect you

With that last thought I just started to sink. My vision was going out and I had no more oxygen in my lungs. I felt my hair streaming past me in a daze. I saw the man above me. Then I felt a hand grab out and touch me. The hand pulled me up then I felt a knife to my throat. I started to

sputter. Then I started to come to. I saw Officer Trombosky and more Witsec officers on the sand. I could feel the coldness of the knife. I saw Logan on the sand then, I heard a gunshot.

I walked onto the sand and into Logan's waiting arms. I put pressure on my foot and fell into Logan's arms. I knew that I needed to have my leg checked out. Then I felt Kaitlyn's arms come around. I was put onto a gurney and got my leg checked out I had a broken ankle and an infected foot.

Many more nights followed with nightmares coming and going. I was in my cast for many more weeks and had to take an antibiotic for my foot. I had to wear crutches after my cast came off. I was sitting in Kaitlyn's office when she gave me wonderful news. I could meet and see my brother and sister again. Now back to the present. I'm sitting on the porch all alone when I get a call.

“Hey Sunshine.” Logan exclaimed

“Hey” I responded

“Come down the steps and say hello to me” He asked

I raced down the steps and there was Logan sitting on the ground next to Miguel (my brother) and Maria (My little sister). I could have screamed I haven't seen them in a year. They looked up to me and for the first time in a long time I got to give my siblings a hug. I was finally free. My siblings and I could talk and see each other and we wouldn't be in danger. That was the best 4th of July ever. I wouldn't have had it another way. I was free and had a family. It was the one thing I had always wanted.

