

STORM TOSSED

**HOW A U.S. SERVICEMAN
WON THE BATTLE OF
SEX ADDICTION**

Jake Porter



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Published pseudonymously.

This is a personal memoir based on the author's experiences and surrounding events as he remembers them. Many other individuals were involved in these events. Because of the sensitive nature of many of the events and conversations recorded herein, many names, physical descriptions, and circumstances have been changed to protect the privacy of these individuals.

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FOREWORD

In Isaiah 61 the prophet gave a remarkable picture of the anointing that would be on the coming Messiah. He uses a phrase, “the year of the Lord’s favor.” We have been living in that “year” for close to 2,000 years now. Jesus quoted from this passage at the start of His ministry saying that He was the fulfillment of this scripture. I believe this same anointing that was on Jesus is to be on His people today.

Consider some of these phrases from the passage:

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD’s favor. (Isa. 61:1-2)

The further our society moves away from Christianity, the more we are finding people who are in need of the provisions mentioned in this scripture. As my wife, Linda, and I moved into the ministry mentioned here in Jake’s story, we had no idea as to the immensity of the pain, shame, and guilt the average person is walking around with in our society here in North America. Most of the ones we pray for have been going to church for much of their lives and are still carrying burdens that were paid for at Calvary. The provision is there for all of us. The problem is not with

the Redeemer. He has done His work. What are missing are the place and the time for us to off-load these weights.

I was on a flight a few years ago, and as I sat down the gentleman next to me volunteered that he was searching the great religions of the world for the answers to life. He was a university professor and had come to a crossroads in his life where he was honestly searching. He had been going to church and it seemed pointless.

“What do you do?” he asked.

Laughingly, I told him I had been in missions for the past twenty-five years.

“Give me your best shot,” responded the inquirer.

“Okay. Here is your life,” I said while holding my hands about eighteen inches apart. “Here is your birth and here is today. Back here, before today, is a messed up life—pain, sin, shame, and guilt. Right?”

“You said it!” he replied.

“What do you do with all this stuff?” I asked.

“That’s why we’re having this conversation,” he said.

“That’s why reincarnation is looking really good to me right now.”

“Right,” I agreed. “If you only have one chance at life, you’re in big trouble. That is one of the things that is so profound about our faith. We have a Redeemer who paid the price for all of this—the sin, the pain, the shame, and the guilt. He takes the load off of us and places it on Himself. This is what the Cross is all about. Then He gives us a new life and we walk in freedom.”

The man pondered this in silence for about thirty seconds. Then came his summation. “That’s a hell of a deal!”

That man saw the truth of the Cross that day.

Jake Porter experienced this truth personally. I have known Jake since he was in the fifth grade with our own son. Consequently, it was all the more wonderful to be able

to watch his transformation take place. Even though this is Jake's story, I have heard this story replayed thousands of times. Oh yes, each story differs a bit here and there. However, the result is always the same. The teller has ended up encumbered to the point of wondering if there is ever such a thing as freedom from his or her load.

We never tire of the experience of watching a person come into this marvelous freedom. We have witnessed it thousands of times in the last decade and with the release of each prisoner we rejoice as we did with the first people we prayed for. What a wonderful Redeemer! Thank You, Lord Jesus!

Jerry Praetzel
Polson, Montana

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RAT POISON

No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money. Matt. 6:24

THE .357 MAGNUM pointed in my face looked more seductive than any woman I had ever been to bed with. Oh, how I wished for the tenacity to pull the trigger. Outside, it was another cold gray day with an inch of snow on the ground. I was alone in my room. Around me were mementos of shattered dreams and unfulfilled ambitions. What had happened? I was feeding my family with food stamps, the government was paying my rent, and I was on academic probation at the University of Montana.

Shooting myself seemed like an easy escape route, yet each time I tried to end my life something stopped me. An indescribable fear of the unknown would hit me as I approached the brink of death. Why the constant failures? And why did I, a Christian, desire to kill myself? What brought all this on? Where was God, anyway?

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At the age of four, I had become angry, confused, and afraid of the dark. It was June 28, 1970—a warm and pleasant Sunday evening in Glendora, California. Night brought

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I WANT TO LIVE

If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. Rom. 14:8

FOUR MONTHS LATER I moved to Alameda, California and got a job with a security company guarding the former Naval Air Station. Going from a police officer to a security guard was humbling, but I took it on faith God had something better in mind for me. Felicia and the kids came out in October and we moved into a small, expensive apartment and started attending a local church.

I drove a small white pickup truck around the base from 10 P.M. to 6 A.M. When I got tired, I'd park on the tarmac, pour myself a cup of coffee, and gaze at the lights of San Francisco and the Bay Bridge. I was shocked to hear radio talkers mocking God in the name of tolerance, promoting perverted lifestyles, and encouraging hatred towards Christians.

“Oh Lord, why do You allow that wicked city to mock You and fester in sin? Why not destroy it?” I prayed.

My question was answered immediately. I sensed the Holy Spirit saying to me, “Your prayer is like that of Jonah. Just like the people of Nineveh, I do not wish for these people to perish, but to repent. What if I had pronounced judgment on the world when you were still in sin? Pray for the salvation of the city, rather than its destruction.”

My attitude changed. Instead of despising the people of San Francisco, I felt sorry for them. The gay community is enslaved to the power of Satan, so my prayers for them changed. The radio stations I listened to also changed. I found a couple of good Christian stations that provided solid teaching. At the end of my eight-hour shift I'd feel invigorated.

Over time, I also felt the Lord was telling me not to be ashamed of my past, because there are so many others who are trapped by sexual sin. If they knew my story, it would be possible for them to know there is hope.

The job at the base was enjoyable, but it could not meet our financial needs, and I felt the Lord was saying it was time to work someplace else. In December I was hired by Brinks Incorporated to work in their armored cars.

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While working at the naval air station, I was able to be alone in my thoughts while listening to Christian radio. Things were different at Brinks. Along with the increase in pay came more responsibilities, deadlines, and interaction with my co-workers. My ATM run started about noon, and after delivering the deposits at the bank's cash vault in San Francisco, all of us would meet on Market Street for a break. The messengers and guards would visit while eating fast food meals. Usually the language was coarse, like it had been in the Navy, but now I was uncomfortable with it.

Rick Wisler had been the first person in my hiring group who had become a messenger, and now we were working together. As much as he tried to perfect the job, he just couldn't get the hang of it. Rick was twenty-two, but had already been married five years and had three children. He was about six feet and skinny with wavy blond hair. One night, after an especially difficult day, he confided in me that he was unhappy with the hand life had dealt him. This was not the first time he had

done this, and usually I'd just listen to him in silence. On this occasion, I could feel the Holy Spirit prompting me to speak.

I was afraid to share my faith, but in obedience I opened my mouth and said, "Earlier today, you said something which indicated to me you believe in God. Am I right in assuming that?"

"Yeah, I believe in God. I used to go to Sunday school when I was a kid," he answered.

"It's possible He's trying to get your attention," I continued. "I know you've been through a lot, but God has saved others with problems just as bad or worse."

I told him my story, about how I'd been trapped in the snare of pornography and how I'd nearly killed myself, because those demons wouldn't let go of me. He was contemplating every word. Then I went on to tell him how Jesus saved me from the powers of hell.

"You were once suicidal?" Rick asked.

"Yeah."

"That's incredible. You've got everything together. I didn't think anything bad had ever happened to you."

He went on to admit that he'd struggled with pornography as long as he could remember and was sexually active in his teen years. The only reason he'd married his wife was because he'd gotten her pregnant in high school. They'd dropped out, and she cared for the baby while he worked at one job after another. From the sounds of it, there wasn't much love in the marriage. Each of them had been unfaithful to the other at least once.

"I don't have any magic solutions, but if you commit your life to Christ you'll be off to a good start," I said. "You also need to join a Bible-believing church, spend time in the Word, and get as much Christian teaching as you can from TV or radio."

"I've really tried not to go into adult bookstores and not to lust for other women, but I can't help it," he said in desperation.

“Then you may have to do what I did, and that’s confess your sin to other Christians,” I answered.

“Why is that necessary?” he asked.

“Because pride is a powerful sin, and any sin in your life will keep you from receiving the blessings God has for you. When you confess those sins, it’s humiliating and that’s what kills pride. You don’t have to go before a group like I did, but you should at least make your confession to a pastor or church elder. Afterwards, he can pray for you and give you counsel. I’m not saying this is the only way to break free from your sin, but confession is what worked for me.”

Over the next couple of weeks Rick and his wife joined a Baptist Church and made an appointment to meet with the pastor privately. Every day after that conversation, he’d have a series of questions for me. I answered them as best I could and would sometimes look up scripture for him. Rick eventually left the company and completed the police academy in Eureka, California. He called me one night to tell me his brother had accepted Christ while watching *The 700 Club*, and he was now counseling him.

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In mid-November 2002, I was sitting in the back of Brinks truck 982124 with my guard Dana Jackson while drinking coffee in the town of Hercules. The gray truck with blue trim was becoming a regular sight in the small shopping center’s parking lot. Dana was from an inner city neighborhood in Oakland and had worked with me at the Naval Air Station. When she heard I was going to Brinks she wanted to come with me.

We always took our break in that parking lot before finishing our last two stops. I’d discovered the coffee shop while attending a Christian writer’s conference in Hercules the year before. That afternoon, Dana told me about a friend of hers

who was running an escort service in San Francisco. The woman she was talking about had been terminated from Brinks, but they had remained close friends.

“So what do you think?” Dana asked me.

“I think it’s a dangerous job, and she should find something else to do.”

“It’s not that dangerous; she doesn’t actually have sex with the men. She just supervises the girls who do. She’ll only go out with the men if they’re really shorthanded.”

Once again, I felt the Lord prompting me to speak. “Let me tell you something. I know a little more about that type of work than you may think.”

“You?” Dana said surprised.

I told her my story. She became teary eyed and told me things about her own past. Dana was a single parent with a six-year-old son, and she was hoping that someday she would meet a decent man to marry.

“I’ve been going to the same church, off and on, since I was a kid, but it’s hard to live a godly life in my neighborhood,” she said.

“Believe me, I know being a Christian isn’t easy,” I assured her. “You said the pastor keeps wanting to talk to you, so get with him and let him help.”

“Okay Jake, I will,” she said cheerfully, wiping her eyes with a tissue.

A week later, on Thursday the 21st, the truck made its way to our last stop in Berkeley. It’d been a tiring day. The driver was the fourth one I’d had that week. It was his first time driving solo and he was so afraid of making mistakes, he kept making them. If I said left he went right, if I said reverse he went forward. That’s how it went all day. Finally, he parked the truck on Potter Street in front of the small Wells Fargo Bank that served as a local business center.

While exiting the truck, with my coal bag and a night drop

bag, which were both empty, Dana talked about her family. Other than a confused driver, it had been a typical workday, the weather was sunny and pleasant and I hardly noticed the white SUV backed up to the bank lobby on our right. Windows at the south end (street side) and east end (parking lot side) of the lobby made the inside feel like a greenhouse, so the front door had been propped open for air. Inside the lobby, I could clearly see the truck through the open door and the surrounding windows.

While entering the code into the alarm keypad above the ATM, I listened to the customers and tellers in the bank to my right. Dana stood by the open door on my left, still talking. The girl talked so much, I'd have to tune her out so I could concentrate on the alarm code. I didn't mind her talking, though, since it helped the day go faster. Everything was routine until Dana stopped in mid-sentence.

"Watch out!" she said in an ominous tone. Running footsteps could be heard outside.

Fear gripped me as I turned in her direction. There was a medium sized black man standing in the doorway only inches from Dana. He was dressed in black sweats, white running shoes, and white gloves. Through the slit of his black ski mask, wide brown eyes looked at Dana, then at me. In his hands he held an AK-47 assault rifle with a banana clip.

Several things happened in a matter of seconds and a million thoughts ran through my mind. I could surrender, but since I didn't have money on me I would've been forced to open the safes at gunpoint. For all I knew, they would kill us anyway. Giving up to some punks violated all the criminal justice training I'd gone through over the years. Although out-gunned, I pulled my revolver from its holster and decided to fight.

The gunman in the doorway was quickly trying to aim his rifle at me while I attempted to align the sights of my .38

special on him. At the firing range, we're given several seconds to pick our target, but in reality there isn't time for aiming. I started shooting, but was only able to get off two rounds. The window by the door shattered. There was another gunman standing in the parking lot who fired from a carbine.

The window to my left exploded, and I felt as if a three-hundred pound defensive lineman had hit me. I was knocked off my feet and suddenly was looking up at the ceiling. My body went into shock and the .38 slipped out of my hands. Now for the first time in my life I thought I was going to die, and I didn't want to. After all those numerous thoughts of suicide I couldn't believe it was actually going to happen.

Is this how it ends, Lord? I prayed. I don't want to die yet, there's still too much to live for. Please Jesus, I want to live.

The first draft of this book was finished, query letters had been sent to Christian publishers across the country, and I refused to believe this is how it was to end. My life didn't flash before my eyes, but I could see the faces of my children pleading with me not to go. I could no longer fight, though, and I felt like a wounded deer waiting for the hunter to finish him off.

A loud burst of automatic gunfire came from the AK-47, hitting Dana twice in the back and blowing out most of the plaster around the ATM. Our driver drove off with the truck and called for help. The gunman in the doorway ran over to me, grabbed the empty bags, and jumped through the broken window to the waiting SUV. The getaway vehicle sped out of the parking lot and turned onto Ashby Avenue. Just as quickly as it began, the attack ended. I was covered with glass and plaster and there was a smell of cordite in the air. A crimson circle was expanding on the right side of my shirt.

Dana lay in the doorway. Her breathing was loud, raspy, and rapid. The sound was terrible, and I could tell she'd been shot through the lungs. Then her breathing stopped. After a

couple of seconds, the people in the bank came over to check on us.

A customer knelt beside me and asked, "What's your name?"

"Jake."

"Jake, I'm Carrie. Hang in there, help is on the way."

Carla, the bank manager, ran into the lobby and said, "Oh my God, no, this can't be happening." She was a thin black woman with gray braids who immediately took charge of the scene. "Erica, call 9-1-1, Brinks has been shot!"

I've met some pretty calloused characters in my day, but this one customer took the prize. This man from outside was filling out a deposit slip and tried stepping over Dana's body. "Sir, get out! We're closed for business," shouted Carla.

Erica, the teller, came over to check on me. Only recently had we discovered we attended the same church. She was still in her twenties, with dark skin and long brown curly hair. She said my name, but that was all. The carnage was too much for her; she hurried back into the bank.

A fireman came and looked at Dana then came over to me. When a second came in, the first said, "Leave her alone and give me a hand with this guy."

The two paramedics snipped away the laces on my boots and cut away my uniform.

A police officer secured my gun, then walked over to the doorway. Looking down at Dana, he spoke into the shoulder microphone of his radio. "Dispatch, you better send out homicide."

When the firemen and ambulance crew loaded me onto the gurney they had to lift me over the corpse. They loaded me into the ambulance, which took me to a hospital in Oakland.

At first, nothing made sense. Why would God rescue me from one tribulation, just to throw me into another? A single .223 round had grazed the back of my right thigh, ricocheted

off the ATM wall, entered my right side below the rib cage, and exploded. The surgeons removed two fragments near my spine, but left the others for fear of doing more damage.

I lay in that hospital bed for a week re-living the incident in my mind. My fears were alleviated by the overwhelming love and concern from so many people. Most of my hospital stay was spent on the phone with co-workers, relatives, friends, and Wells Fargo employees. A security guard at the hospital, who I didn't know, gave me a note of encouragement, and our church made sure there were hot meals at the apartment. I felt like George Bailey at the end of *It's A Wonderful Life*. Memories of my past came to mind, and I comprehended how selfish and devastating suicide is. And I realized that there are guardian angels. That bullet fragmented into about twenty pieces, but not one of my internal organs was damaged and no bones were broken.

The love between Felicia and I grew stronger that week than at any other time in our marriage. Her employer was kind enough to give her the necessary time off, and she spent every night at my side. I kept thanking her for being there and for her obstinate devotion to me. She helped me in and out of bed, bathed me, and emptied my white plastic bottle when it was full. It still perplexed me how God could bless me with such a faithful wife after all my terrible sins. The love God has for us cannot be grasped by the human mind.

During the day, my mom and the kids stayed with me so Felicia could go home for a shower and nap. Mom was having a terrible month. Two weeks earlier, Dad was almost killed while hunting with a friend. The camper they were sleeping in exploded from a leaking propane tank. He suffered third- and second-degree burns, and my mom was still caring for him when Felicia called, and she came. On Thanksgiving Day I was released. Mom prepared the dinner. But I had no appetite.

When I returned to work in February, my co-workers

continued to show their support for me. There were numerous handshakes and hugs. I returned to my old route as a guard, and received the same treatment at the banks. At the small Wells Fargo business center in Berkeley, I stood on the spot where I had lain bleeding. The spot where Dana had died and where the first gunman had stood was seven feet away. Briefly, I was alone with my thoughts. *How could I have missed? If I had hit him maybe Dana would have lived. What was this all about, Lord?*

I still don't have a definite answer, but my eyes have been opened to how God has blessed me with a great wife, children, parents, and friends. Everything is in God's hands. I believe He decides when it is time for us to die and not anything or anybody can alter that. Since He allowed me to live, it has reaffirmed my commitment to share my story with others. God can take us from this world at any moment.

And I'm at peace with that.