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Inner Spark

"Unbreakable Spark: A Texas Kidnapping True Story"

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PART I: THE UNEXPECTED STORM

"Survival begins the moment you decide to fight back."

Today started normal, or what I thought was normal in my world. Not understanding that this day's events would change my life forever. You see, I was a functioning drug addict. The best addict you have ever seen. I could function in society while enjoying the highs of my favorite drug, "Crystal Meth." 9:45 a.m.—I took a nap. 12:00 p.m.—I woke up from my nap. I realized I was having left-sided weakness. Having this kind of weakness was familiar; I thought to myself, "Okay Roxanne, shake it off, you can do this, get up." I tried to get up again then fell flat on my face. I immediately got scared and thought, "Oh shit. Am I having a freaking stroke? This is just great." I slowly crawled towards my phone located on the kitchen counter; my left side was completely nonfunctional at this point. I was in panic mode. I thought, "Stay calm, stay calm, don't freak out Roxanne, breathe."

I called 911 and was rushed to Grossmont emergency room. When I finally arrived at the ER, I was so sleepy I could barely keep my eyes open. My father and stepmother arrived before I got to the hospital. When the doctor came in, they informed me that I survived a bleeding brain aneurysm and a stroke and how lucky I was to be alive. A few days later I talked to my Auntie Rita who convinced me to move to Houston, TX where I could get a fresh start on my life. I agreed to be in Texas no later than July 20th of 2015. On July 15, 2015, I set off for Houston. Just me, my belongings packed tightly in the U-haul carriage attached to the back of my SUV. I arrived on Wednesday the 23rd of July in Houston, Texas.

💡 SURVIVOR TIPS: MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

1. **The "Drop & Dial" Rule:** If you lose mobility, do not try to stand up. Crawl or drag yourself to the nearest phone immediately.
2. **Voice Activation:** If you cannot reach your phone, yell for "Siri" or "Google" to dial 911.
3. **The Door Strategy:** If you are alone and feel a stroke coming, try to unlock your front door before you lose consciousness so paramedics can enter.

🆘 PART I RESOURCES

- **American Stroke Association:** 1-888-478-7653
- **SAMHSA National Helpline (Substance Use):** 1-800-662-HELP
- **Crisis Text Line:** Text "HOME" to 741741

✋ PUBLIC SIGNAL: THE "EYE CONTACT"

In a medical crisis where you cannot speak, maintain intense eye contact with a passerby and point to your chest or head. This "silent stare" often triggers a stranger to ask if you are okay.

PART II: THE TRAP IS SET

"Predators wait for the door to close."

From the time I moved to Texas, I felt the pressure to hurry up and get out. I found a caregiving job and within three months, I saved up enough money to move out and decorate my own apartment. It was about a week since I'd been in my own apartment, so I decided to go on Craigslist for a quick look. I clicked on an advertisement that stated "Lonely in Texas." I started talking to him and in about 2 hours he was on his way to my apartment.

His name was Broderick Tyrone Turner. He appeared ideal for what I wanted to accomplish. As time went on, the red flags started to pop up. He was one minute nice, the next minute aggressive. I had to "gage" him. The first incident started at Bed Bath and Beyond; he became outraged over a small verbal spat. The first time he got drunk, he lost his temper and slapped me around. I didn't realize it at the time, but I was in the ring with a professional terrorizer of all women. The beatings continued until one day he bit me on my right cheek. He took me outside without any shoes on, made me take him to his car, blindfolded me, and told me to get in. He raped me and sexually assaulted me that entire night and took me home the next morning. I did file domestic violence reports, but he started stalking me through phone calls and text messages, constantly threatening me and even contacting my children, Dana and Danisha. It was becoming a living nightmare.

💡 SURVIVOR TIPS: ESCAPING DOMESTIC ABUSE

1. **The "Public Meet" Rule:** Never invite a stranger from the internet to your home. Meet in a place with cameras and witnesses.
2. **Document Everything:** Even if you don't call the police immediately, take photos of bruises and save every threatening text to a hidden cloud folder.
3. **Trust the Gut:** If you feel the need to "gage" a partner's mood to stay safe, the relationship is already dangerous. Leave before isolation begins.

🆘 PART II RESOURCES

- **National Domestic Violence Hotline:** 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)
- **StrongHearts Native Helpline:** 1-844-762-8483
- **The Bridge Over Troubled Waters (Houston):** 713-473-2801

✋ PUBLIC SIGNAL: THE "HELP ME" HAND SIGNAL

Hold your hand up, palm facing out. 2. Tuck your thumb into your palm. 3. Fold your fingers over your thumb. This signal was designed specifically for domestic violence victims to use silently.

PART III: THE LONG NIGHT

"The will to live becomes your only weapon."

I went from having a stroke in February 2015 to getting beat on a daily basis. I moved into a shelter called The Bridge Over Troubled Waters in Houston. Broderick wouldn't let me breathe. He threatened to kill my children and family. Broderick called and told me he wanted to talk. Even though two restraining orders were in place, I went along with it because if I didn't, he would beat me. He promised a brand new car for my birthday. Instead, he took me against my will across state lines to Memphis, TN. He f***ing kidnapped me. For the next 72 hours, I was at his mercy. He held me hostage in a hotel room and tore my left ear partially from my head.

He drove me into the country where the grass was very high. He kept saying, "It's time." He started whispering, "I have to kill you." I began to panic. I thought, "F*** this, get out, jump out of this car." He began to toy with me, speeding up and slowing down, saying, "Do it you scary b****, jump." The next time he slowed to about 15 miles an hour, I unbuckled my seatbelt and fell from the car. I started dragging myself through the tall grass. He eventually caught up with me and hit me in the head with an unidentified object, splitting my head wide open. He dragged me back to the car and punched me in the eye so hard it broke my cheekbone. I was unrecognizable.

💡 SURVIVOR TIPS: KIDNAPPING & CAPTIVITY

1. **Humanize Yourself:** Speak about your children or family to the kidnapper. Making them see you as a person rather than an object can sometimes delay violence.
2. **The "Slow Jump":** If forced into a car, wait for the vehicle to slow down (under 20mph) before jumping. Protect your head with your arms as you roll.
3. **Leave Evidence:** If you are in a hotel or house, try to leave "biological" evidence (hair in a drain, a hidden note) that could help police find you later.

🆘 PART III RESOURCES

- **National Human Trafficking Hotline:** 1-888-373-7888
- **National Center for Missing & Exploited Children:** 1-800-THE-LOST
- **FBI Tip Line:** 1-800-CALL-FBI

✋ PUBLIC SIGNAL: THE "MOUTHING" TECHNIQUE

If you are near a car window or in a store, mouth the word "HELP" or "POLICE" repeatedly without making a sound. This is often more effective than screaming, which may cause the kidnapper to react violently.

PART IV: THE FORCE OF SURVIVAL

"A spark that wouldn't die."

By the third day, the pain was unbearable. He finally decided to take me to a CVS Pharmacy. He told me to put makeup on to cover the bruises. Inside the store, I heard a faint voice in my head: "Now's the time, run!" I turned around and ran toward the pharmacy counter at full speed. I lunged over the counter. I screamed, "Please call the police, I'm kidnapped!"

The staff protected me. The paramedics took me to St. Francis Hospital. My phone was still dinging with threats. I called my ex-husband, Diogo. He booked me a flight to LAX. On the plane, I took the SIM card out of the phone and tossed it in a trash can. I walked to a second trash can and threw the phone in that one. A burden was lifted. I met a woman on the plane who prayed with me. When I landed, she put money in my hand and a note: *"This is your new beginning. Pay this forward."* In San Diego, I got a new phone and number. I went to a shelter in El Cajon and started counseling. Broderick Tyrone Turner is now facing life in prison. I am a force to be reckoned with.

💡 SURVIVOR TIPS: THE AFTERMATH

1. **Digital Scrubbing:** Throw away your phone and SIM card immediately. Abusers can use "Find My Phone" or spyware to track you even after you escape.
2. **The "Safe Haven" Flight:** If you are fleeing, go to an airport. They are highly surveyed, have 24/7 security, and provide the best chance of safe transport.
3. **Professional Counseling:** Trauma lives in the body. Seek specialized domestic violence counseling to address the PTSD and night terrors that follow.

🆘 PART IV RESOURCES

- **RAINN (Sexual Assault Support):** 1-800-656-HOPE
- **Safe Horizon:** 1-800-621-HOPE
- **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline:** Dial 988

✋ PUBLIC SIGNAL: THE "EMERGENCY TAP"

If you reach a counter (pharmacy, bank, or grocery), tap three times rapidly on the counter and then hold your hand flat. This is a subtle way to alert staff that you are in distress without looking at them.

"Unbreakable Spark: A Texas Kidnapping...

In "Unbreakable Spark: A Texas Kidnapping True Story," Roxanne's woman's harrowing journey from addiction to survival unravels as she faces the chilling realities of domestic violence and kidnapping. After seeking a fresh start in Houston, she finds herself ensnared by a manipulative predator, battling for her life and freedom against overwhelming odds. This gripping tale of resilience is interwoven with vital survivor tips, empowering readers to confront their own challenges and emerge unbroken.