

## Summer 2012 – RAINN Interview with Gregg Tyler Milligan

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1. Briefly describe three times in your life when you did something nice when no one else was watching.
  - a. Adopted and nursed a newborn tiger kitten back to health with an eye-dropper when only a child
  - b. I hid a St. Valentine's toy heart underneath a church altar at 16
  - c. Slipped a letter under a dorm room door in college of a girl who lost her mother, letting her know she was not alone and that everything was going to be okay
  
2. Describe three characteristics that define you.
  - a. The love I feel for everyone who suffers for any reason
  - b. Relentless hope I have in a weary world
  - c. I know without a doubt we are here to save one another
  
3. If you feel comfortable, please share with us your experience with sexual violence and your healing process. Feel free to share as much or as little as you would like. Keep in mind that your answers to these questions will be shared publicly. Below are some optional questions that might help to guide you.
  - a. How old were you when you were sexually assaulted?
    - i. 7
  - b. Who was the offender and did you know them?
    - i. My mother, male strangers I was sold to, and a female babysitter
  - c. Where did the assault occur?
    - i. In the home I shared with my mother and two siblings
  
4. Every survivor's experience after an assault is different. Please explain what happened during the immediate aftermath of the crime (i.e. shock, feeling the need to keep things silent, speaking with loved ones or others, seeking medical attention, reporting to law enforcement, etc.)
  - a. Excerpt from my book(s), *A Beautiful World and God Must Be Sleeping*

*"My mind was not able to justify, nor comprehend, what took place in Mother's bed. Reason stopped dead against a wall of shame and confusion, and there was no punching through it. No answers to any of the abuse as to why. Only a sharp reminder, every time she raped me, that I was one more step closer to complete and total insanity. Soon, I thought, a trapdoor deep within my mind would be raised, and the horror I'd kept locked up all these years would climb through. In the corner of my mind, there was a mirror, and the reflection was not my face, but something distorted and angry. It took great effort to push the sight away; however, the rage building inside of me was becoming even more powerful. What was once love became hate."*

5. If you disclosed the sexual assault to one or more people after it happened, please describe their reaction. (This can include law enforcement, medical personnel, friends or family or other service providers.)
- a. Excerpt from my book(s), *A Beautiful World and God Must Be Sleeping*

*“During all of our sessions, Ed spoke as if he had known me a lifetime. He covered each emotion I was suffering gently, and in spite of himself, his eyes always showed brightly the love he had for me. There was something incredibly special about Ed.*

*A few weeks into our sessions, I broke into a racking sob that made my nose bleed. Ed saw the look of desperation on my face. “What haven’t you told me?” was all he asked. It was all he needed to. My voice barely a whisper, with the crimson stain of blood still around the small circles of my nostrils, I felt the choked grief rise up inside as I began to tell of the first molestations by Mother, the prostitution, the strangers. Taking Ed through the first of the incest and over the secrets I was afraid to admit – even to myself. I should have told him the first night he saw me in desperation, but I did not know that until afterward. After I trusted him.*

*While I spoke it was as if he stopped breathing. “Keep talking,” Ed said in his usual gentle way, but this time it had a bit of an edge to it. A firmness. As if he were telling me not to stop now. Ed reached across his desk and took one of my hands. I went to pull it away, but he detained it within his. He was crushing both his thin, warm hands in my own, but said nothing else. He just waited, fighting to stifle the sobbing grief that hitched in his breath. When Ed spoke again, it pulled years of remorse from my heart. “You were good to her –good –good to her,” he repeated weakly. “You loved her –and it was right, because you were innocent and only a child.”*

*“I’m glad you loved her. You’ve been good and honest and I want someone like you in this world.” Ed then watched my face in earnest and then spoke some more. “I’ll let your hands go, but not until I’ve told you something, Gregg.”*

*“This isn’t your fault.” I read the same words in books secretly scanned in the university library about sexual abuse, but they meant nothing to me. They never struck any real chord. However, this time, while Ed held my hands from across his desk and looked at me with those bright, shiny and kind eyes, the words finally made sense. All of his words made sense.*

*“You’re not going crazy,” Ed continued. “And, you’re not going to die ... not today anyway.” He smiled and I even managed one too. Ed gently let my hands go free and his face was tense, staring straight into my eyes. “I’m not going to give up on you, Gregg,” he said. “You need someone and you are so goddamn alone.” I started to cry softly, but when Ed rounded his desk, bent on one knee and laid my head on his shoulder, I wept until it echoed off the walls of his office. Still on his knee, he swore to me that together we would make it through. My rigid body relaxed, and I sank into Ed’s arm with a sign of relief. I always believed in God –regardless of all the terrible things done to me, He sent me Pat, and now Ed.*

*A sudden light of hope came into my heart. I rose from the edge of death while Ed held me and my sobs turned to stuttered hitched breathing. In a few minutes, we both were giggling which turned to a thrilled, half-silly laugh. My eyes were still closed when Ed tenderly pushed me from his shoulder. Ed spoke and his voice was as though*

*the words he were uttering came from out of a dream. I saw the end was not near, but it was only the beginning.*

*Ed bent down one last time to catch the look on my face. His hands were again holding mine. His eyes were red and shiny and then Ed whispered: "You did not lose your innocence –it was stolen," he said. "Gregg, you're not a bad person –you are good." Ed smiled and bent lower so that now our mouths were almost touching. "I'm going to help you."*

*I made no answer. I did not really hear what he was saying until later I was playing the words over and over in my head and even wrote them down. The smile never faded from Ed's lips and I knew we had made a great deal of effort together over the past several weeks. With a glimpse of anticipation of better days, I gripped Ed's hands in return. He let go one hand and patted my back. We laughed, and suddenly Ed caught me in his arms one more time, just before I crumpled forward from exhaustion and relief – sobbing severely. There he stayed, kneeling on the floor of his office before me. And now, Ed sobbed just as hard as well."*

6. How did you seek out help? Did you use any of RAINN's services?
  - a. *Dr. Edward. Skinner, a professor of psychology at my undergraduate university after suffering a nervous breakdown my sophomore year*
7. What were the obstacles you faced in your recovery process?
  - a. *Severe panic and anxiety*
  - b. *Fear of intimacy*
  - c. *Chronic nightmares I still suffer from today and require medication in order to gain at least six hours of functional sleep*
8. If you reached out to RAINN, please describe your experience in as much detail as you're comfortable with.
  - a. Which of RAINN's services did you seek? The Online Hotline? The telephone hotline? Statistics and information on recovery?
  - b. Describe how your experience with RAINN did or did not help you.
    - i. *My experience has been as a member of the speaker's bureau and working with RAINN has given me an incredible feeling of comfort knowing I am not alone*
  - c. If you utilized RAINN's Online or phone hotline, how would you describe the volunteer that assisted you?
  - d. If your experience with RAINN was positive, please name three key take-aways that you got from our services.
  - e. Do you feel that reaching out to RAINN was important in your recovery process? Why?
9. During your recovery process, what did you see as the ideal outcome of your experience?
  - a. *Excerpt from my book(s), A Beautiful World and God Must Be Sleeping*
    - i. *"... my greatest accomplishment is having raised a child to know only love and compassion."*

- ii. *"... I would know what it felt like to be loved by someone."*
- iii. *"And, together, not alone, [we] have broken the cycle of abuse. We fighters: known to each other, and to the world, as Survivors."*
- iv. *"... I am still here and as long as I am, I will be doing my best to make this a Beautiful World."*

10. What difficulties do you continue to face as a survivor?

- a. *I still suffer from chronic nightmares each and every night*

11. What is your life like now and how did you overcome some of the obstacles you faced in recovery?

- a. *My life is beautiful and I am falling more in love with the possibilities of a beautiful world every day*
- b. *It began with using education as the key to obtaining control over my life, advancing myself both academically and athletically.*
- c. *Choosing love instead of hate*
- d. *Accepting responsibility for my actions*
- e. *The most important and effective manner in which I have overcome the obstacles of abuse and which has allowed me to recover exponentially is simply: Giving Back and knowing without a doubt we are here to Save One Another*