



WEATHER



WATCH

# Sexual Abuse Survivor Breaks Silence

by Kristin Dickerson  
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*Sexual Abuse Survivor Breaks Silence*



Tulsa, Oklahoma —

The flag outside the state capitol was fluttering only half as hard as the heart of the woman sitting in the gallery for the meeting of the House committee on Criminal Justice and Corrections.

"I was extremely nervous, I really was," said Virginia Lewis.

A school teacher for 20 years, she's normally calm in front of a room full of people.

"Recognize Representative Rousselot for House Bill 2292," said Representative Pam Peterson.

But this was no ordinary room. Today she would be both teaching and testifying about sexual abuse.

"This is the first time I have gone public with my story," Virginia testified.

A story which begins 34 years ago with an 11-year-old girl known as Ginger.

"I was probably like every other little girl. I adored my Dad," she said.

The smiles in the pictures from her childhood are genuine. But these photos were all taken before it began.

"The sexual abuse began when I was eleven years old and continued for five years, on a nearly daily basis. Usually, a horrifying visit in the early morning hours as the rest of the family slept," she said.

The room sat in a stunned silence, that would someone grow louder when she read some quotes from a handwritten letter.

"I knew what I was doing was wrong and was

I knew what I was doing was wrong and was criminal but I did it anyway. I knew you trusted and adored me and I exploited that so I could keep on doing it without getting caught or without having to figure out what was wrong with me. I was satisfying my own sexual needs at your expense." Those are the words of my father, George Michael Lewis, written to me," testified Virginia.

It's a letter signed "Love, Dad" and she has preserved it like evidence for a case that never came to be.

Michael Lewis received what's called a Deferred Prosecution Agreement, requiring an "acknowledgment of his misconduct," and "psychotherapy." In exchange, he would never face criminal charges. But, says Virginia, even if he hadn't gotten that deal...

"Even if he hadn't, he would probably still be free anyway because of the statute of limitations," she said.

Which is what House Bill 2292 is all about, extending the amount of time that child victims of sexual abuse have to come forward from 12 to 18 years.

"There is no time table on my recovery, there's no statute of limitations on my recovery, and there should not be any statute of limitations on the time in which an individual has to come forward," she said.

And that is the main theme of her new role as an advocate for survivors of sexual abuse, launching her website [ToPrevail.org](https://ToPrevail.org) in conjunction with her testimony before the House.

"I welcome the opportunity to speak to any group, schools, churches, anybody who wants to hear my story," she said.

As for Michael Lewis' story? His life as a high-powered attorney would take a turn recently as Tulsa's Channel 8 launched an investigation. On Friday, March 4th, he was scheduled to teach a class called the Ethics of Representing Children for the organization Tulsa Lawyers for Children whose mission statement is "Protecting Rights of Abused Children."

When Tulsa's Channel 8 contacted TLC and informed them of Virginia's testimony, they replied; "Mr. Lewis is a well-respected attorney and supporter of TLC. In light of these allegations, he

has voluntarily removed himself as lecturer for the March 4th TLC training,"- Elizabeth Carroll Hocker, Executive Director

When we reached out to Mr. Lewis himself he emailed that he "would appreciate it if you could put off airing this story for a couple of days..." Shortly after that, his profile page on his law firm's website was removed. And when we then contacted Doerner Saunders, Daniel & Anderson, they told us "Mr. Lewis is on an indefinite leave of absence from the firm." Mr. Lewis then emailed us again only to say he had no comment on his daughter's testimony.

But Virginia's testimony has received comments from survivors of sexual abuse.

"Even just since Wednesday I've heard from several survivors who have told me their story for the very first time," she said.

After her testimony at the capitol...

"I just, you're a modern day hero so thank you," said Rep. Peterson.

Lawmakers voted unanimously to pass the bill on to the next stage, as Virginia contemplates the next

to the next stage, as Virginia contemplates the next stage of her life.

"Well, I can tell you this, I'm in the best spot I've ever been," she said.

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UPDATE : Tulsa's Channel 8 has received an email from Doerner Saunders, Daniel & Anderson stating the Mr. Lewis has resigned from the firm.



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