# 24

June 28, 2011 By Aundaray Guess

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1, 2, 3, 4, 5,6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12,13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23,

24
I am HIV and I'm free. 24 years that I have been HIV positive. Yes I'm putting my bizness out there. You see for too long I have been living in shame. Shame of what was part of me. Shame of what was in me. Shame for who I was. Shame for turning my back on the one person who never turned their back on me, God.

All those years I felt like there was steel in the bottom of my shoes. Making it difficult for me to walk forward. My steps burden. Trying to catch up to my dreams which were fading into black and white before they disappeared altogether. What is a person without dreams?

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24 years ago he saw me.

"I guess I should have known
by the way he parked his car sideways
that it wouldn't last.
You're the kind of person, believing making love once,
love them then leave them fast"

And he saw a person who walked with no self worth. No worth which was stolen by his cousin who was supposed to be babysitting him. Self worth stolen by a mother who renamed  him, "IwishIneverhadyoustupidmotherfucker" Jr. He saw my worth as I walked with my head to the ground not feeling I had that worth to look people in the eyes. Unknown to me he would see me walking home from school and I was his target. He fed off the dim light that shined from me.

He was a smooth operator.

He was so smooth he got me to get into his car. He was so smooth, that I followed him into an abandoned store, down a dusty basement to a dirty mattress. He was so smooth that when it was painful, I took it for affection as it seemed no one else cared. He was so smooth I never knew what his name was.

He didn't stay to watch me give birth to the gift he left me. Only instead of nine months I bared his gift for years.

# 24

24 years of finally reaching a place where I can say I no longer have any shame. Where I can name it and claim it. Of finally reaching my place of acceptance of what I had by walking through rivers of my own tears. Weaving my way through depressing clouds and finally seeing my refection in the pool of life and facing the demons I ran from.

I finally reached a place where I accepted God’s open arms, arms that were never closed but there waiting for me to accept. Where I finally heard his message-Don’t give up/Don’t give in.

I am HIV and I’m free.
I repeat I am HIV and I’m free.
To be free of the shame you have to name it to claim.

There are those who say they have HIV but HIV doesn’t have them. If you’re walking around denying what you have or you have an online profile and in your status you say you’re negative when you know you’re positive. It has you.

I now dream in color.
I once again have learned to laugh. To love and most importantly, to live!
To live!
I’m HIV and I’m free!
1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29.....

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