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Raised on the Sex Offender Registry



As told by Nicole Pittman, Soros Senior Justice Advocacy Fellow with Human Rights Watch

Brandon and his wife, Marguerite, sat on the couch across from me in their dimly lit one-bedroom apartment in Bryan, Texas. Brandon looked down at his hands, resting in his lap, as he told me his story.

He was 11 years old when he was charged with sexually touching a 7-year-old playmate. She was a family friend and one of a group of children Brandon's two teenage sisters were watching while their parents were out to dinner. A few days later, the police investigation began.

Despite his age, Brandon was put into the system as a sex offender. Brandon is 26 now, and like nearly all young offenders, he hasn't committed another sex crime. But he has spent nearly half his life behind bars for failing to adhere to the rigid requirements that come with being labeled a sex offender.

After the incident, Brandon was taken from his home and eventually placed in a Texas juvenile facility. He was released at 17, but he had nowhere to go. As an adjudicated youth sex offender, Brandon couldn't legally live near a "child safe zone," like a school or park. This ruled out his parents' home, which was near a park. He could no longer legally live with anyone who had children younger than 14, ruling out his older sisters' homes. Brandon soon became homeless.

[Read Brandon's story >>](#)

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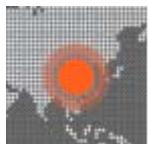


[In Nigeria, Massive Destruction, Deaths From Military Raid](#)

Satellite images reveal massive destruction of civilian property from a military raid in the northern Nigerian town of Baga, undermining the military's claim that only 30 houses were destroyed. The images of the town, analyzed by Human Rights Watch, identify 2,275 destroyed buildings.

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[In Bangladesh, Tragedy Shows Urgency of Worker Protections](#)

Given the long record of worker deaths in factories, this tragedy was sadly predictable. The government, local factory owners, and the international garment industry pay workers among the world's lowest wages, but didn't have the decency to ensure safe conditions for the people who put clothes on the backs of people all over the world.

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[In Lebanon, Tit-for-Tat Kidnappings Near Syrian Border](#)

The Lebanese government needs to end a situation in which families desperate to have their kidnapped or detained relatives released resort to vigilante kidnappings in return. The government should keep working to secure the victims' release but must also send a clear signal that these abductions are crimes that will be investigated and prosecuted.

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