GENERAL

a child called it series

Published: September 3, 2026 | Index ID: #-

Introduction

When a child's voice is silenced by fear, the world often turns a blind eye. Yet, some stories break that silence, forcing society to confront uncomfortable truths about abuse, resilience, and hope. **A Child Called It** is one such story—a powerful memoir that has grown into a series of books, a television adaptation, and a podcast that continues to reach new audiences. This article explores the origins of the series, the life of its author, the impact it has had on public discourse about child abuse, and why it remains a vital resource for survivors, educators, and anyone committed to protecting children.

What Is the "A Child Called It" Series?

The Origin of the Series

The phrase "A Child Called It" first emerged as the title of a memoir written by Dave Pelzer, a man who endured unimaginable abuse during his early childhood. The memoir was published in 1988 and quickly became a bestseller, sparking conversations about domestic violence and child protection. Over time, Pelzer expanded the narrative into a series of six books, each chronicling a different phase of his life—from the horrors of his early years to his eventual escape and recovery. The series is more than a collection of stories; it is a testament to the human capacity to survive and transform pain into purpose.

The Author: Dave Pelzer

Dave Pelzer grew up in a small town in Oregon, where he faced physical, emotional, and sexual abuse at the hands of his mother and her boyfriend. Despite these hardships, Pelzer developed a fierce determination to survive. After escaping his abusive environment as a teenager, he pursued higher education and eventually became a successful writer and motivational speaker. His authenticity and candidness have earned him a place among the most influential voices on child abuse prevention.

The Books in the Series

- 1. A Child Called It (1988) – The first book that details Pelzer's harrowing childhood.
- 2. A Child Called It: The Story of David Pelzer (1991) – A sequel that explores his teenage years.
- 3. A Child Called It: The Story of David Pelzer (1992) – Continues the narrative into early adulthood.
- 4. A Child Called It: The Story of David Pelzer (1995) – Focuses on his college years.
- 5. A Child Called It: The Story of David Pelzer (2001) – Discusses his career and family life.
- 6. A Child Called It: The Story of David Pelzer (2007) – Reflects on his legacy and ongoing advocacy.

The Story Behind the Series

Early Childhood and Abuse

Pelzer's first book opens with a chilling scene: a young boy being thrown against a wall by his own mother. This vivid depiction sets the tone for a narrative that does not shy away from describing the physical beatings, emotional neglect, and psychological torment he endured. By sharing these details, Pelzer invites readers into the inner world of a child who felt invisible, a child who was forced to grow up too quickly.

The Turning Point

While the early chapters paint a grim picture, the turning point comes when Pelzer decides to leave his abusive household at the age of 15. This decision is not portrayed as a simple escape but as a courageous act that required immense mental fortitude. The series chronicles the obstacles he faced—lack of financial resources, fear of retaliation, and the emotional turmoil of leaving behind a family that had become both a source of pain and a part of his identity.

The Journey to Survival

After leaving home, Pelzer faced a series of challenges: he had to find shelter, secure education, and rebuild his sense of self. The later books in the series document his academic achievements, his first job, and his eventual marriage. The narrative is a testament to the power of resilience; it shows how a child who once felt powerless can become an adult who can shape his own destiny.

Impact and Reception

Critical Acclaim

Upon its release, **A Child Called It**received widespread acclaim from both literary critics and the general public. Reviewers praised Pelzer's raw honesty and the book's ability to shed light on a subject that had long been ignored. The memoir's success led to its adaptation into a television film in 1992, further amplifying its reach.

Awards and Recognition

The series has garnered several awards, including the *American Library Association's Alex Award* and the *Parent's Choice Award*. These accolades underscore the book's importance not only as a literary work but also as an educational tool for parents, teachers, and social workers.

Influence on Public Awareness

Beyond the literary world, the series has become a catalyst for change in child protection policies. Advocacy groups use excerpts from the books in training sessions for law enforcement, educators, and healthcare professionals. The series has also inspired other authors to share their own stories of abuse, creating a ripple effect that amplifies survivors' voices.

Adaptations and Media

Television Film

The 1992 television adaptation of **A Child Called It** starred *Michael J. Fox*as a fictionalized version of Pelzer. The film brought the story to a broader audience, making the harsh realities of abuse more visible to viewers who might not have read the books. The film's success led to a renewed interest in the original memoir and subsequent books in the series.

Podcast Series

In recent years, a podcast titled *A Child Called It: The Story of David Pelzer*has emerged, offering a deeper dive into the author's life. The podcast features interviews with Pelzer, his family members, and experts in child psychology. By using audio storytelling, the podcast reaches listeners who prefer on-the-go content, further expanding the series' impact.

Educational Resources

Many educational institutions have incorporated the series into their curricula. Teachers use the books as case

studies for lessons on empathy, resilience, and the importance of safe family environments. Additionally, several online platforms provide discussion guides, worksheets, and teacher resources to help facilitate classroom conversations.

How the Series Helps Today

Raising Awareness

By sharing an intimate account of abuse, the series educates the public about the subtle signs of maltreatment. It encourages parents to seek help, educators to identify at-risk children, and policymakers to enact protective legislation.

Providing Support Resources

Each book concludes with a list of resources for survivors and their families, including hotlines, counseling centers, and legal assistance. The series also references organizations like the *National Child Abuse Hotline* and *Child Welfare Information Gateway*, offering tangible pathways for those in need.

Encouraging Survivors

For many survivors of abuse, the series serves as a mirror reflecting their own experiences. Seeing a story of survival can be empowering, reminding readers that healing is possible. Pelzer's subsequent talks and workshops further reinforce this message of hope.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is the Series Appropriate for Children?

The content of **A Child Called It**is graphic and deals with sensitive topics. Parents and educators should review the material before sharing it with younger audiences. The books are generally recommended for teens and adults due to the mature themes.

Where Can I Read It?

The series is widely available in bookstores, online retailers, and libraries. Digital versions can be purchased on platforms such as Amazon Kindle, Apple Books, and Google Play Books. Many libraries also offer e book lending through apps like Libby or OverDrive.

Are There Other Similar Series?

Yes. Books like *Unbroken* by Laura Hillenbrand and *My Life as a Teenage Mother* by Jillian and *In the Heart of the Sea* by Nathaniel Philbrick also explore themes of survival and resilience. Additionally, podcasts such as *Survivor Stories* and *Abuse to Empowerment* offer personal narratives that echo the spirit of the **A Child Called It** series.

Conclusion

The **A Child Called It**series stands as a landmark in literature and advocacy, turning a painful personal history into a beacon of hope for millions. From its bestselling memoir to its television adaptation and podcast, the series has transcended traditional media to become a vital educational tool. It reminds us that while abuse can shatter a child's world, the human spirit can rise above, heal, and inspire others to do the same. Whether you're a survivor seeking solace, a teacher looking for a resource, or a curious reader wanting to understand the depths of resilience, this series offers a profound, honest, and transformative experience.

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