



# **A Survivor's Journey: From Victim to Advocate**

*Natasha Simone Alexenko*

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**A Survivor's Journey: From Victim to Advocate** Natasha Simone Alexenko

**An inspiring true story of love, hope, and victory—and of one woman who was determined to make a difference in the wake of a crime.**

On August 6, 1993, twenty-year-old Natasha Alexenko was assaulted at gunpoint. After nearly a decade, her backlogged rape kit was finally tested and her rapist, who roamed free for ten years, was brought to justice. On the day he was sentenced, Alexenko vowed that she would no longer be a statistic and would do whatever she could to help police on behalf of other rape victims. In 2011, she founded Natasha's Justice Project (NJP), a nonprofit committed to ending the rape-kit backlog.

This unflinching memoir chronicles her journey from trauma to triumph. Despite personal setbacks and bureaucratic obstacles, Alexenko refuses to give up on her determination to raise awareness of a problem even worse than she imagined, as tens of thousands of untested rape kits languish in crime storage facilities across the country. Written for fellow survivors, their families, law enforcement, and anyone impacted by rape, her deeply personal story is a testament to the power of one person to make a profound change.

## A Survivor's Journey: From Victim to Advocate Details

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# **From Reader Review A Survivor's Journey: From Victim to Advocate for online ebook**

## **Liz Sergeant says**

I first saw this authors story and "Megyn Kelly Today" What an inspirational woman! Then I got the book and was more intrigued about this woman's journey and what made her so strong and to have the outlook and wherewithal that most don't. This was an excellent read. Highly recommend.

"On August 6, 1993, twenty-year-old Natasha Alexenko was assaulted at gunpoint. After nearly a decade, her backlogged rape kit was finally tested and her rapist, who roamed free for ten years, was brought to justice. On the day he was sentenced, Alexenko vowed that she would no longer be a statistic and would do whatever she could to help police on behalf of other rape victims."

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## **Jen Juenke says**

WOW! I sat down and read this moving memoir in one sitting. IT was an easy enough read, the subject was tough. I felt so bad for her. Its always amazing how one moment, one incident can derail your life, your plans, your dreams. I thought that the author dealt with all of the circumstances of her rape in her own way and in her own time. I loved that she was determined to keep going and trying new things., having boyfriends, trying out love.

The only thing I wish, was that I knew more from her mom. How her mom dealt with everything. Otherwise a remarkable story of survival.

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## **Ana-Maria Bujor says**

This can be a very tough book to go through due to the nature of the events described, but it never gets hopeless or depressing. I like the way the author portrays her journey from one dreadful night to being able to advise those creating legislation. It's all written with honesty and sensitivity, not claiming to have the final answer. This is how one person chose to deal with her pain.

Besides the life story herself, there is the infuriating story of the thousands of rape kits that went untested for more than 10 years, some even being destroyed to make room. That meant thousands of victims getting no justice and thousands of dangerous attackers free on the streets. Luckily this is being slowly tackled. Not the same can be said about overall attitude towards victims - if you don't cry enough, cry too much, if you drink, all of these can suddenly make you less of a victim. I was shocked that the defense lawyer found it fitting to ask Natasha whether she was a virgin when the attack occurred. This is an important book to understand a systemic problem, as well as the effects of one crime.

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## **Roni says**

I finished reading this book at the end of March, however, I wanted to take at least a few days to review.

This book definitely brings to light how many rape kits are untested in the US, thus not giving survivors their chance at some sort of closure or answers to what happened to them as well as predators not being caught, so they can go on committing more crimes.

This book is amazing. Natasha's story is very compelling. As a Rape Crisis Counsellor, I agree that people may experience the same type of trauma, but each experience is different. Each survivor has their own feelings and reactions to trauma, making each experience and individual experience, however, everyone wants to say that all reactions to trauma should be basically the same.

I also learned something about myself from this book. I experienced trauma at a young age and have always had to have various things going on to concentrate. I call it multitasking, but now I can see how it is a coping mechanism I developed and is now ingrained.

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### **Samantha Luce says**

Inspiring. To go through this sort of traumatic event and survive is quite an accomplishment. To not only survive, but fight, advocate, and win legislative changes is nothing short of amazing.

Natasha Simone Alexenko is brave, persistent, and a woman to look up to. She is the founder and CEO of Natasha's Justice Project (NJP), a national nonprofit organization created to expose and eliminate the nationwide rape-kit backlog and to bring justice to survivors of sexual assault.

There are tens of thousands unprocessed rape kits collecting dust in evidence labs. Lack of funds, workers, and other issues continue to make the backlog grow rather than dwindle. The NJP is dedicated to helping all rape survivors get justice. This is the story of one woman's courageous fight that is really making a difference.

An excellent, eye opening read.

Netgalley ARC received for an unbiased review.

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### **Kandi Lopez says**

Inspiring book from a fellow survivor. Thank you to the publisher for sending this to me for my honest review.

I thought this book was great. It is inspiring to see this survivor of sexual assault overcome, gives me hope.

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### **Erin says**

**Thanks to NetGalley for an advanced ebook in exchange for an honest review.**

Author Natasha Simone Alexenko is certainly a courageous woman as she puts to paper her traumatic sexual

assault and the journey of coping with PTSD and handling the politics of the justice system as an advocate.

This book is not for the faint of heart and I suspect in the coming days, weeks, and months Natasha's story and those of other survivors will linger in my memory. This book is also a rallying cry for more people to join the movement towards having sexual assault victims better supported in our communities, in our courts, and in our countries.

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### **Katie says**

This book is ok. It is inspiring that this woman has taken her bad experience and has shared it for others to read. I am appalled that her evidence sat for so long without it being touched. I had no clue that this happens. I love that she is being an advocate now to stop this from happening in the future. The book itself just kind of abruptly ended. There are some good statistics in this book for anyone interested.

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### **Kelly says**

This was an incredible read. Very tough subject, but written in a matter-of-fact, easy to read style. Natasha's story about her assault, the aftermath, and what she has created is absolutely inspiring. I had heard about the rape kit backlog, but I didn't know about Natasha's Justice Project, and this helped me understand it better. It really struck me every time there was an antidote and she said that this was just how things were for her, and that she was not speaking for all survivors. I appreciated the inclusive, non-judgmental perspective. I received a copy as a Goodreads Giveaway.

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### **Trudy Johns says**

Good book, lots of tips.

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### **Shari says**

Wow! Thank you to Natasha for sharing your story. Thank you for your work in getting rape kits processed. So unbelievable to think about so many that just sit on shelves, get lost or in some cases get destroyed. And the people that those kits represent.

Natasha shares the story of her assault, the PTSD as a result and her work of getting rape kits processed. She has made an impact and will hopefully continue her work in this field.

I received a free copy of the book in return for an honest review.

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### **Brittany says**

We are in a mess, but fortunately for Natasha and others, progress is being made to right this injustice. May I help bring awareness to this issue and fight alongside these victims...and not let it slip from my mind as something else competes for my attention.

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### **Heather says**

This book is a memoir written by an honest and courageous woman. Natasha Alexenko writes her story from the night she was attacked, through the years, and the advocacy work she does today with Natasha's Justice Project. She is honest about her life and what happened to her. I appreciated her trigger warning before she described her rape and that night. Sharing her story is part of her healing process and I thought that she did a wonderful job through out the book acknowledging that everyone processes differently. I was shocked as I read this memoir at the statistics regarding the amount of untested rape kits across the country. I naively assumed that they were being processed in a timely manner not sitting in storage for YEARS. Natasha Alexenko is working hard to change laws and advocate for women and men who deserve justice. Hopefully this book will continue to raise awareness about this issue

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### **Jane Thompson says**

#### **Rape Kit. Story**

This a very interesting and useful book. I dam stilll amazed that rape kits are ibgnored and backlogged. This book makes you wish that you hadoney so you could give it to her cause.

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### **Lee Benkers says**

I'm glad the outcome for this author was a positive one. It's great that she became an advocate for others.

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