

BUSINESS INSIDER

Here's One Heartbreaking Bullying Story That Has A Happy Ending



AMANDA MACIAS

OCT. 7, 2013, 3:12 PM



October is [National Bullying Prevention Month](#), so we thought it was a good time to revisit the powerful 2011 documentary "[Bully](#)" to remember just how hard life can be for those who are bullied.

"Bully" explores the subject of school bullying from a personal angle, telling the stories of five different families whose children are struggling to defend themselves on a near-daily basis.

Bullied because of his physical appearance, 12-year-old Alex Libby's nightmare began before he even got on the school bus.

Every year an estimated 160,000 students skip school for fear of being bullied. Alex tolerated and even denied the way he was treated at school because he was not willing to miss class.

It has been a few years since "Bully" was released, so check out the slideshow to revisit Alex's own personal nightmare and to see what he's up to now. His is at least one story that has a happy ending.

The word “bully” originates from the Dutch word 'boel' meaning "sweetheart." Around the seventeenth century, the term began to mean “harasser of the weak.”



Bully/Netflix

Source: "Bully"

Alex, 12 years old at the time of filming, is the central character in the documentary "Bully." He said that children at his school in Sioux City, Iowa called him "fish face." "I don't mind," he later says.



Bully/Netflix

Source: "Bully"

Born prematurely, Alex was diagnosed with a mild version of autism and attention deficit disorder. It's difficult for him to relate socially to others and focus in class.



Bully/Netflix

Source: "Bully"

Children with medical conditions that affect their appearance are more likely to be bullied in school. Alex's mom Jackie believes his premature birth was the reason he was bullied in school.



Bully/Netflix

Source: "Bully"

Filmmakers spent one year capturing Alex's experiences by using a "fly on the wall technique." Director Lee Hirsch said students quickly adjusted to the cameras and "had no fear of consequences."



Bully/Netflix

Source: "Bully"

Alex is the oldest of five children and has a reserved nature, which is why his family was at first largely unaware of Alex's daily torment at school.



Bully/Netflix

Source: "Bully"

Most bullying happens on school grounds and a reported 8% happens on a school bus. The documentary shows Alex's worst bullying episodes happening on his way to and from school.



Source: "Bully"

It's his first day of seventh grade, the school bus hadn't even arrived yet and Alex was already receiving death threats from the students waiting at the bus stop.



Bully/Netflix

Source: "Bully"

"People think that I'm different. I'm not normal. Most kids don't want to be around me. I feel like I belong somewhere else," Alex said.



Bully/Netflix

Source: "Bully"

Alex did not reveal much about his day to his mom other than that nobody hurt him that day.



Bully/Netflix

Source: "Bully"

But it isn't like that every day. "They punch me in the jaw, strangle me. They knock things out of my hand, take things from me, sit on me. They push me so far that I want to become the bully," Alex told filmmakers.



Bully/Netflix

Source: "Bully"

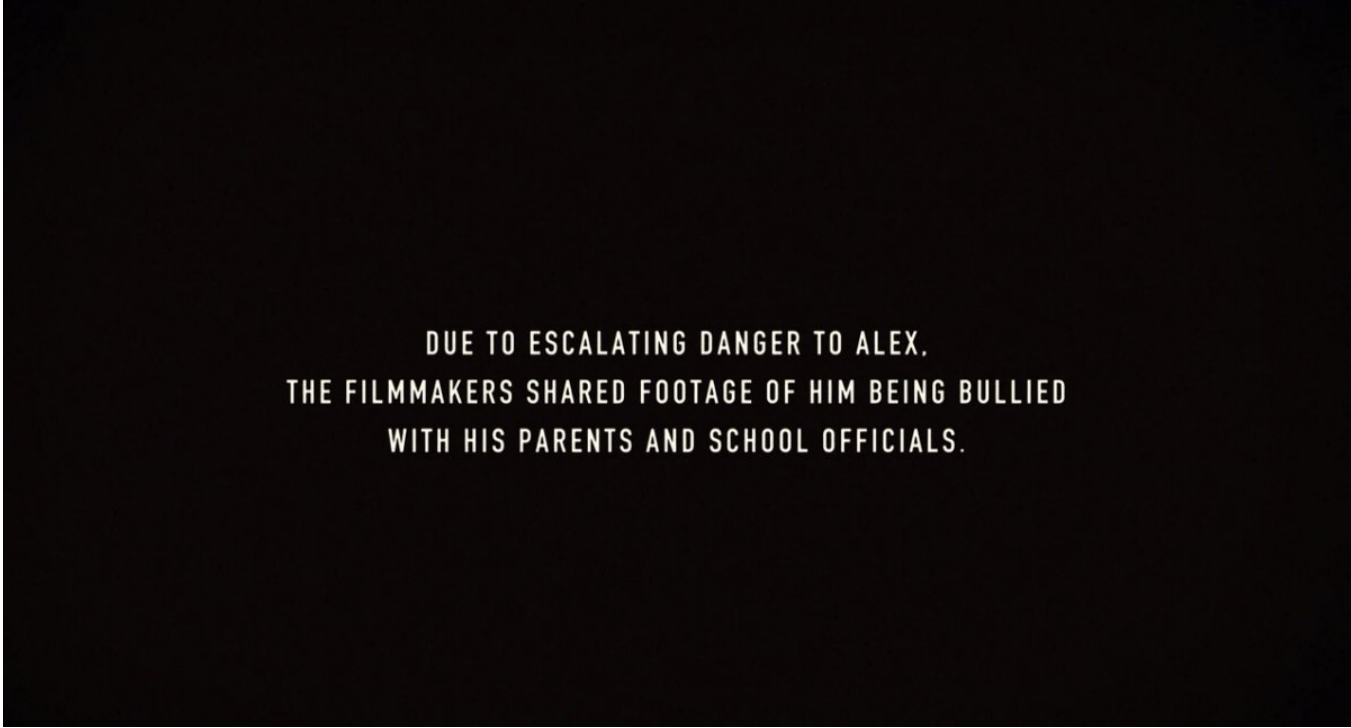
According to an American Justice Department school bullying statistics study, 86% of students said, "other kids picking on them, making fun of them or bullying them" motivates them to consider turning to lethal violence in schools.



Bully/Netflix

Source: "Bully"

Fearing for Alex's safety, filmmakers intervened.



DUE TO ESCALATING DANGER TO ALEX,
THE FILMMAKERS SHARED FOOTAGE OF HIM BEING BULLIED
WITH HIS PARENTS AND SCHOOL OFFICIALS.

Bully/Netflix

Source: "Bully"

Alex's parents met with the assistant principal Kim Lockwood and were told the students on Alex's bus were "as good as gold" and there was nothing she could do to stop the bullying.



Bully/Netflix

Source: "Bully"

Frustrated and unsatisfied with the school administration, the Libbys decided to move their seven-member family to Edmond, Okla. It ended up being a great decision.



Bully/Netflix

Source: "Bully"

Alex is now a sophomore at Edmond Memorial High School and no longer a victim of bullying. "It's hard to believe that this exuberant [now-tenth]-grader used to be the trembling, lonely victim at the center of the recent documentary," reports the Des Moines Register.



Bryon Houlgrave/Des Moines Register

Source: Des Moines Register

In his spare time he works on several anti-bullying campaigns.



Bryon Houllgrave/Des Moines Register

Source: Des Moines Register

Since the documentary came out, Alex has even received apologies from some of the students who bullied him on the bus.



Bryon Houlgrave/Des Moines Register

Source: Des Moines Register

Alex supports the "Stand for the Silent" campaign started by the father of another child in the "Bully" documentary.

Since the release of the documentary, Alex has appeared on national television programs to share his story and advocate for a "zero tolerance" attitude toward bullying.

Tony Les of the Des Moines Register reports that Alex has taken steps to fit in at school. Alex says he doesn't let his mouth hang open like before and he tweaked an odd laugh.



Stand for the silent

"Well, the movie has definitely made me a hugger since people come up to me and hug me all the time. It's also made me a better speaker and it's also made me not as shy," Alex said.

[For shocking facts about bullying in America, click here »](#)

* Copyright © 2014 Business Insider Inc. All rights reserved.