



VICTOR RIVAS RIVERS

Actor, Best-Selling Author and Violence Prevention Advocate

Topics: Domestic Violence

A veteran film star, best-selling author, renowned advocate for violence prevention, and the first Cuban-born football player to land a tryout with the Miami Dolphins, Victor Rivas Rivers has achieved extraordinary success in numerous arenas. But given his violent upbringing, few of those achievements were ever likely.

“His story is about being saved by love at a time when most people considered him beyond rescue.”

Victor Rivas Rivers, his mother and siblings experienced unspeakable physical abuse at the hands of his father. At the age of 12, he visited his local police department to report a lifetime of violence. Though the officers were horrified, Victor was told it was ‘private family matter’. At 15, Victor’s abusive father kidnapped him and his siblings, transporting them to a different state, without their mother.

Victor ran away, living briefly on the streets before taking an unprecedented legal action against his father. With a restraining order to protect him, the court allowed Victor to become an unofficial foster child. With help from his high school, Victor went on to live with a series of families, who oversaw his transformation from rage-filled gang member to senior class president.

Victor subsequently achieved success as an athlete, actor and author. He secured a full football scholarship to Florida State University and was the first Cuban-born football player to land a try out with the Miami Dolphins. After being dubbed ‘The Longest of Long Shots’ by the Miami sports media, he pursued another long shot in Hollywood. In one more unlikely turn, he has since attained a global following with roles in over two dozen movies, including *The Mask of Zorro*, *The Hulk*, *Blood In/Blood Out*, *The Lost City*, *Distinguished Gentleman*, and *What’s Cooking?*, as well as roles on multiple TV series, including *LIFE*, *Law & Order LA*, *CSI Miami*, *JAG*, and *Star Trek*.

He chronicled his story of survival in his memoir *A Private Family Matter*, acknowledging his “angels” – the educators, coaches and families – who helped him survive and succeed. Without these individuals, Victor doubts that he would still be alive.

Victor serves as a national spokesperson for the National Network to End Domestic Violence, regularly speaking to policy makers and members of Congress. He lives in LA with his wife and son.