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VICTIM'S IMPACT STATEMENT #4

As I prepare my victim's impact statement, it is October 3, 2024. It has been more than 32 years since my daughter, Kristen, was abducted, sexually assaulted, beaten to within an inch of her young life, tormented, humiliated and murdered, then dumped by the side of a road like a piece of trash! As of this date it has been 11,680 days that I have had to live without my sweet, beautiful daughter. Each day I'm not able to hug her, kiss her, tell her how proud I am of her and how very much I love her. For a mother, that is an agony for which there are no words. My daughter who was such a sweet, loving, caring and compassionate person was deprived of her high school graduation, the opportunity to attend university and achieve a career, have a wedding, children and a life full of happiness. Our family has been deprived of the joy of seeing her grow and develop her own life and complete her dreams.

I will never know if she would have chosen to study law, where she hoped to help those in need, or fulfill her love of animals by becoming a veterinarian, or may be decide on something totally different, something she had not yet thought about because of her young age. I will never know what path she would have taken, but I do know she would have succeeded in whatever path she chose because that was her nature.

I never got to see my daughter, dressed in a glorious white gown, walking down the aisle, on her father's arm, to meet her future husband. Never got to hold her beautiful babies in my arms, or watch them grow up, enjoying the fun things like sports, music, dancing, and skating that children enjoy. Never know what path they would have taken in life. This loss is like a hole in my heart, it's a piece of my life that will never be fulfilled.

I've longed for the girlish giggles of Kristen and her friends at her birthday parties, the sleepovers, the skating competitions, the pool parties, school concerts, and family vacations. Kristen's friends are all now married and have children. Her boyfriend is now a grandfather; and one of her best friends is a grandmother. They are GRANDPARENTS! Kristen never even got the opportunity to become a MOTHER! I see her close friends often and rejoice that they have been blessed with children and grand-babies but I can't help feel the void in my heart because Kristen was denied this wondrous miracle.

The years have passed and our family has grown even closer since Kristen was so brutally taken from us. Our love, support and comfort for each other, the love and support of our friends and from so many people we have never even met, has helped us survive a tragedy I we never thought we could have or would have survived. In that way we have been very blessed. However, even though life has gone on, we are constantly aware of what we have missed without Kristen. The family parties, barbecues and vacations have never been the same without her. This loss is something that will be with us as long as we live.

It was not easy to learn to live and have meaning in our lives after such a senseless and brutal loss. They say that time heals but I don't for a minute believe that for I have NOT healed. What time does afford you is the ability to learn to cope with the continuing thoughts of what Kristen went through and her death. With the amazing love and support we have as a family and our friends, we have been able to survive. We have received letters, phone calls, and visits from total strangers, some as far away as England and Australia. These wonderful people have warmed our hearts and supported us in so many ways.

Although our family has learned to live with the void of not having Kristen in our lives, we still struggle with the invasive thoughts that constantly come to mind. Now there is the younger generation – the grandchildren and great-grandchildren. We still don't know how this tragedy will affect them as they grow into young adults.. So far the older grandchildren, although they struggle with what this evil crime has done to our family, are doing fine but the younger grandchildren and the great-grandchildren are too young to learn the whole story yet. Only time will tell what the result of learning the ugly truth will be.

I never thought I would survive the horrific evil that Kristen lived through and her death. I truly thought it would be impossible. However, as the time went on, I realized that to not live as full a life as I could and to not try to make a difference in this world, would be another victory for evil.

The worse nightmare I still have to contend with is the thought of another sweet, innocent child having to go through what Kristen, Leslie and all the other victims went through. As long as there is any possibility of that happening, they will be no peace of mind for me or my family.

Donna French

October 16, 2024