

How do I explain what affect the loss of my daughter has meant in my life?

When we first found out that my daughter Kristy age 22 was shot twice in the head and left for dead in a railroad yard we were devastated. She was working as a bonding clerk for Kent County Jail and was leaving work when she was accosted by these two young men who wanted her car. They kidnapped her at gun point, drove her to a bank ATM and removed \$300 from her account. Then they took her to a railroad yard and shot her twice in the back of the head and left her for dead. She lay in the hospital hooked up to life support for four days until the doctors told us she couldn't survive. Forrest her husband, her father and I made the terrible decision to take her off life support. She died an hour later. She was four months pregnant and had only been married for seven months. During that four days, we stayed in the hospital eating and sleeping there and going through hell, until she died. Then our hell was only beginning. We then had to content with the news media, a funeral, and after that the court system. This is something that never ends and we never get over.

I lived in isolation because no one understood what I was going through. Some people would come up to me and say, I don't know how you can stand it. **Like I was given a choice!!!** My job suffered because I was not able to control how I felt. I would suffer road rage on several occasions and I didn't understand how I could be that way. I went to therapy, but they didn't know how to relate to a victim of murder. I went to work one day and my boss told me about a group called Parents of Murdered Children and I started attending. I had to go all the way to Lansing to attend. It was time consuming and expensive to drive two hours from my home. There isn't a day goes by that I don't think about what our life would have been like if this hadn't happened to us. We still suffer the effects of her loss. When someone asks how many children I have it is a very tough question to answer. If I want to open myself up to give the answer that I have three children, then I have to explain that one child is dead. Then the next question is how did she die? Then we relive it all over again.

My home life suffered as I couldn't relate to what my husband was feeling and he couldn't understand what I was feeling. In that time we didn't have any sexual relations for at least six months to a year. We almost got a divorce. It probably would have happened except that it would have taken too much energy of which I didn't have. Five months after my daughter Kristy was murdered my mother died of cancer. My father needed my help and I couldn't help him because I was unable to help myself with yet another loss.

My second daughter Heather had just started college in September and was doing great until November when her sister was murdered. She was unable to deal with her sister's murder. She was an honor roll student in high school and she was flunking out of college. Then to make matters worst she had roommates that didn't understand what she was going through and made her life hell. She couldn't stand to live with these girls and had to leave the housing that she was in. We had to deal with another problem of getting her out of a lease and finding another place for her to stay at college. Then she had to leave college because she just got so far behind that she couldn't cope. She went to therapy also. It changed her life by not being able to live at home because she couldn't bear to watch her mother greave.

My son Nick was seventeen a senior in high school when his sister was murdered. He started drinking and staying out late. During his senior year he was chosen as a homecoming class representative. During the selection process he was asked the question that if he and his date were accosted by a carjacker what would he do? I was there when that happened and I couldn't believe that these students could be so cruel. He gave an answer, but I can't remember what it was because I was so upset that I couldn't think. He finished his senior year and started drinking. One night he was arrested for drunk driving and spent the night in jail. We had to bail him out the next morning. Then he had to go to court. The judge was lenient and reduced the charge to reckless driving because he knew of Kristy's murder. Also Nick was going to go to college in the fall and major in criminal justice. He graduated from a two year program but couldn't bring himself to work in that system. He also went to therapy but said that they couldn't understand what he was going through.

It's my understanding that people who suffer traumatic events in their life suffer lots of physical ailments in their life also. This is what my husband and I both suffered. His took its toll by him suffering a heart attack when he was only 51 years old. He now has 9 stints in his heart and high blood pressure. He also has kidney damage due to the heart problems. For several years I was a workaholic because I didn't want to come home to the mountain of grief that surrounded us and I still suffer from depression.

There is no way to fill a hole that is left in all our lives that the loss of our Kristy left.

Monday July 16, would have been her 41st birthday.

Laural Ann

How does the constitutional ruling on life without parole affect me? This is a question only an idiot would ask or a person totally unrelated to a situation like this.

Parents want their babies out of prison and home. These are men now and that isn't going to happen they are living in a dream world. These young men were on a criminal road that could only lead to bigger things and that's where they choose to go. Their path was already set in motion.

They were juveniles and didn't understand? They knew exactly what they were doing. They just didn't realize they could be caught. In times past young men married got jobs served in the military and yes even died for their country.

The churches say "Oh we must forgive them". One of my daughter's murderers claimed that he was a good Catholic boy. It made me sick at the trial. Why? Because I was an altar boy in the Catholic Church for years. I was raised in the church, and know what it was really like. He may have been a good boy at one time, but that is long past. He choose another path. My daughter was a Christian and tried to do a good deed by stopping her car to help them. It cost her everything. She and my grandson are at peace in heaven now, but I can have no peace until I join them in heaven.

Anyone who argues to let them out and give them another chance has no connection to a murder.

One hundred years ago there would be no question. They would have been hung.

Today we are a nation of too many laws, but have relied on these laws to give Kristy and my family justice. If this system fails me then we really haven't advanced so far, because now my family and I are victimized.

Can they be rehabilitated? Look at your own statistics. These men are in their 30's. What do you think they will be able to do? They only know violence and crime. They may try to snowball everyone but they are bad. If they are released I can only hope the next victim kills them.

Their next victim could be your son or daughter, or pregnant daughter.

My family sat in trial and heard it all. They had a trial and a judgment by their peers. Kidnapping, armed robbery, carjacking, 1st degree pre-meditated murder. Does this sound like we should let them out?

Every time news or things like this come up it opens it all up like it was yesterday. Yes, I am a victim too. What do I think? I just know that its every parents nightmare to get a call that your child is laying in the hospital with two bullets in her brain. Where were those parents and do gooders when it was time to teach their sons what was right in life.

I was there for my children. My child knew right from wrong.

Can I ever forgive them? I will when my Kristy and my Grandson walk through my back door and say "Dad" I'm home.

William (Bill) Auw