

## Rosanne Abramenko Maitland's Victim Impact Statement

May it please the court that I am here to represent my Dad, Bill Abramenko, who cannot represent himself. More than anything else, I do this to honour him, because if the roles were reversed, he would be doing the same. Of this I am certain. I also owe this to the other victims of violent crime who either stand by silently or who speak and are not heard. I owe this to the public. I owe it as well, to Eric Fish, who may yet not understand the magnitude of the losses he inflicted on the night of August 2, 2004. When my father was murdered by Eric Fish, life as I knew it suddenly stopped. Our family has always been good, decent, law abiding people. We never imagined violence would roar in on us, and come close to destroying us; but three years and 3 months ago, our world came to a complete stop.

One of ours was taken from us and the comfortable, peaceful life we had lived came to an abrupt stop. There are really no words to describe the feeling of going to bed at night believing everything is all right in your world, and then waking up the next day to find your world, as we knew it, is gone. Words seem trite in describing what follows when your father is murdered and is stripped from your life. The horror, the agony, the emptiness, the despair, the chaos, the confusion, the sense, perhaps temporary, but perhaps not, that one's life no longer has any purpose. There is doubt and hopelessness. There are not words that can possibly describe it and all it entails. But being the victim of a violent crime such as this is least all these things.

While it is happening, and in the seconds and minutes thereafter, it is the sheer horror of realizing how defenseless my mother was, and what my father must have been thinking when he was attacked, and when Eric called by mom to come upstairs. It's what must be the terrifying realization that my father must have felt when he was first about to be, and then actually being, murdered.

It is fear of my mother's own life, and the condition of my father in the other room. It is being frightened out of your mind as my mother placed the call to the 911 operator. Within hours, it's feeling your body go limp in shock upon receiving the call early the next morning from my sister. No words need ever be spoken for you know that the worst thing in life has happened; the pain of seeing dad in the hospital bed with his defensive wounds, knowing that this will be the last time that I will see him; the sinking feeling when he took his last breath in the days that followed. It's arriving close by the home of my parents to see the television cameras in their front yard; to see their house cordoned off by police lines; police conducting forensic tests and studying the crime scene, as if it were set for a television production. It's the frustration of dealing with the funeral home that is not being very cooperative until we have to get upset with them. It's living in a hotel room because what other choice do we have. It's my husband entering into the eerie still quietness of the home to acquire some personal things for my mom. It's the shock of finding out the circumstances of the individual who committed this murder, and how he never should have been back on the street to have done this. It's the ultimate despair of learning that my dad was indeed killed for nothing more than a few dollars and some household items in an act so random it defies comprehension. It's hearing and reading about the crime on television, and every time you pick up a newspaper in the weeks following the murder. It's watching my parent's home being packed up, item by item, memory by memory, as if all of the lives that were there only hours before are no more. It's watching your mother do this, in your mind, begging her to stop for you do not want to accept what is, but the pain is too great and the memories are too fresh.

In the months that followed, it's putting the house up for sale because my mom could not think of living there because the murder took place in their house. It's all day, every day, and all night racking your brain to the point of literal exhaustion over how this could have happened, and was there something that you could have done. It's having to tell my mom that Dad's work pension would not continue. It's the crushing anxiety of awaiting the trauma and uncertainty of a public trial. The day arrives, and it's feeling the strain placed upon my mom having to testify during the preliminary hearing where she had to relive that fateful night again and again. As the trauma subsides, it's sitting down to Easter dinner with the newest great grand children that dad would never get to see and hold. It's telling them that the meal was great when you could barely keep it down and hardly wait to finish. It's the memory of visiting your father on his birthday so that he would not be alone, in the larger sense. It's shaking every time you drive into a darkened driveway, and feeling nervous every time you walk to your car, even in open daylight. It's being scared to answer the door at night, or even in the daytime.

Finally, it's the long-term effects – the inexplicable sense of embarrassment when you tell someone that your father was murdered, almost a sense of guilt for injecting ugliness into their lives. It's living the rest of my life knowing that my father suffered one of the most horrific deaths possible. It's amazing that I will never get a chance to dance with my father again, and it's knowing that this is only the beginning. The worst is yet to come. The haunting images, the emptiness, the sickening sense that it all ended some time ago, and that you are but biding time.

Of course, for my mother, sisters and my husband, the sun will shine again, but it will never come up again for the real victim of this crime. We live by laws in this country so that, ideally, no one will ever have to know what it's like to be a victim of such a violent crime. If I had any wish in the world, it would be that no one ever again would have to go through what my mother and father experienced that fateful night.

Crimes such as this are intolerable in any society that calls itself not only free, but civilized. The law recognizes as much and it provides punishment that will ensure at least that others will not suffer, even if it does not prevent recurrence at the hands of others. On behalf of my dad, and my family, I respectfully request that Eric Fish, who committed this brutal crime, receive the full punishment that the law provides. 'No pie. Good bye'.

Thank you

Rosanne Abramenko Maitland

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