

Victim Impact Statement, Jane Doe #10 & John Doe #9

On an October evening in 1978 our lives went from the task and concerns for being a responsible/caring parent of a 1 year old, concerns for career and life direction to a fight for our lives and the survival of our family. It would change how we looked at our world. Where might we go to be safe and how we would respond to the trauma of personal violation, sexual and physical assault, and personal humiliation. There would be questions of who we could trust and if we had done something to bring this upon ourselves? What could we have done differently? Who would do this and why? How would we close our eyes at night, now knowing that being vulnerable could cost us our lives and the lives of those we loved?

I struggled with the personal guilt of should I have done more to protect my wife-our family. Was I a coward for not responding more aggressively, in-predictably or was I an example of self-control, discipline, doing what I needed to do moment by moment to stay alive and keep my family alive? Why wasn't I more observant of my surroundings? Why couldn't I remember the license plate of the vehicle on the side of the house?

I struggled with nightmares of violent, brutal acts that I wanted to inflict on this cowardly individual. I felt hate that I had never known and wanted him to suffer and feel my pain. It was pure evil!

We struggled as a couple and nearly lost our marriage-we were two wounded people attempting to find a way to heal, support and love each other when each other when each was trying to reconcile their own anger, fear, emotional and physical trauma. We each met with psychologist's in an attempt to work thru our issues. We struggled, got alarm systems, didn't go to bed without checking behind doors and in closets. We knew that we couldn't stay in the home where were traumatized so I took a job in Fresno where we moved hoping to close this terrible chapter in our lives.

We were committed and determined not to let these hours in October 1978 define who we were and what we were to become. With continued spiritual work, periods of counseling, many self-help books and couple's workshops in combination with the tincture of time the pain was not as intense. The nightmares weren't as frequent, and we were able to continue with what I would consider a healthy and normal life.

However, our family was forever changed – my sister won't go to bed without checking her doors and making sure she's not followed home. My niece wont keep her drapes open on the first floor because she's afraid of an intruder and yes, we still have an alarm system in our new home, I check doors before bed and look behind doors and in closets. I have a shotgun under my bed, and I run simulations of what I would do during the night if "he" were to come back.

Forty years later I wonder what we were mean to learn from this experience. How blessed we are to be alive. What does it mean to forgive ourselves and other's? What does it mean to be Christian – to "turn the other cheek?" If we are all created in God's image – how do I find that image in Mr. DeAngelo? If God is present in each of us, how can someone be so evil? I'm sure

that those hours in October did not define me or my family but it did change us, our view of the world and a deep realization of what evil the human spirit is capable of.