

To Whom It May Concern:

Society has always held women in a higher standard, yet when we are victimized we become an issue. We're supposed to be smarter, wiser, more responsible, but what happens when as victims, society turns their back? My friend and I are writing today to allow society a look inside lost lives because of mistakes that were driven by fear, hurt and painful pasts.

There is a Judicial system that has no qualms with throwing away lives of mothers, daughters, sisters, all on the basis of "They were there". And most of the time they weren't. We are two of hundreds of women who are currently serving life sentences on a theory. It's called "The Principal Theory". This theory contains and entails that being at the scene or near the scene of the crime indicates a guilty demeanor as much as the person who actually committed the crime. In our case, it was **First Degree Murder**, but it is used in robberies, theft, assaults and all kinds of crimes. To hand out sentences of such magnitude as if we have no chance of rehabilitation, they do not look at mitigating factors of trauma either. Theory in the dictionary is defined as Hypothesis, proposed as an explanation; reasonable guess or conjecture. So what about the mitigating factors of victimization that even leads women like us to be around the men who commit these crimes? Well, let's look at Florida's statistics. Majority of lifers without parole are women under 25, 75% are the co-defendant, 85% have a history of drug abuse, lowering the mentality of choice and covering up mental illnesses that exist. 95% are victims of sexual, verbal, physical and mental abuse. All mitigating factors which should have been taken into account during trial and sentencing, were swept under the rug.

Instead of facing the problem or neglect that these women suffer, their only concern is a conviction. The State of Florida Department of Corrections has become a human warehouse. Money is the only goal, not equality, justice or liberty. Nobody cares anymore in the Judicial System even if you weren't a part of the crime. The hopelessness in a natural life sentence is so mentally and physically crippling, that many have given up completely. But there is hope.

The programs that are available need to be taken into account. What we have done, the sobriety, the good behavior, the process of learning to become good, productive citizens, women of integrity and character. Most of us women did not have full time parents to show us that these things are or what we should be. Where is the sense that taxpayers pay millions to keep women imprisoned that are assets to other women?..... To their children,..... to their families? Where does the insanity stop. Where are and when do the people say enough is enough? Several women are willing to speak on this matter but when will society listen or show concern? We are real people, despite our ridiculous time. It's time to stand up. It's time to save lives. It's time to be a voice. We are women with a voice. We want the world to know that this "Principal Theory", these life sentences without parole or a second chance in life are not right. Where is the justice for truth? Where is the justice for those who are rehabilitated? The one's who wake up in the morning seeking, praying, strong enough to fight for the weak..... we open up to you. We are handing you a passion for women all over Florida.

The two of us are victims. Where was society, where was the judicial system when we needed them? There was no help until it was too late. We stand up as warriors for this cause. We scrutinize this ridiculous theory. A theory that has taken young mothers from their children, daughters from their mothers who need them and sisters from sisters. Where does any theory justify that to an extent of no hope. To the extent that we are thrown away like dogs at the slaughter. We are not useless. We are women. Women who choose to be heard. Now is the time.

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