

Jennifer's Statements

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This is the Victim Impact Statement I planned to read in trial, facing Bradford. Instead, I read this statement as I sat at his gravesite on the 20th Anniversary of my kidnapping, August 10, 2010.

DENNIS BRADFORD.

I waited nineteen years, 2 months, and 3 days to find out your last name and for you to be caught. I knew your first name was Dennis, because you told me before you raped and attempted to murder me on August 10, 1990. When you cut my throat from ear to ear, you assumed that I'd die, or if I lived, I wouldn't be able to talk. Well, you chose the wrong little forty-five pound, eight year-old girl to try and murder because for nineteen years, I've thought of you every single day and helped in searching for you. Every year that's passed, has given me more strength and drive for when I finally would be face to face with you as I am today. Some may feel sad for me that it took nineteen years to track you down, but I'm only sad for the others that have fallen victim to you.

Wondering how you could be capable of committing such horrendous acts on such an innocent and frail little girl as I was back on August 10, 1990, and knowing others could be harmed by you are what has bothered me the most all of these years. I didn't know who you were, or where you were, but in my heart, I KNEW you were out there, alive, either in prison or living a lie, and now I know listening to my heart all of these years, and never giving up on finding you, I was right. All of this time, you've been living a lie, keeping your secret of who you really are...to yourself. Every year I spent trying to find you and bring you to justice, you spent thinking that you got away with what you did to me. You thought you got away with creeping into the window of an apartment, lived in by a single mother and daughter, and then kidnapping, raping, and almost succeeding at murdering me, just an innocent little girl, peacefully sleeping in the middle of the night, on the first night in my life I had gone to sleep in my own bed...when I couldn't fight to get away from you. What a cowardly way to commit a crime. I hope you had sleepless nights filled with nightmares, and spent every day looking over your shoulder all of these years.

After telling me you were an undercover police officer, and telling me your gun was in the back seat of your vehicle, and me curiously leaning over the front seat to look into the back...I can still think back and feel the fear I had inside of me at that very moment when you ripped my panties off of me and laid me down in the front seat of that vehicle and started to lick me. As an eight year-old child, I didn't know what you were doing,

but I knew it was wrong. I knew at that moment that you didn't know my family, and I knew that you were NOT a police officer like you had said. I, in my mind, tried to imagine what I could do to escape you, because I feared for my life, but knew that I wouldn't be able to get away because I wouldn't be strong enough or fast enough. As if putting your grown-man hands around my little neck and choking me repeatedly and raping me wasn't enough, you continued to play out your nightmarish fantasy. You slit my throat and as you dragged me by my ankles through brush and thorns, I did what came as first instinct to me...I played dead. You thought you killed me. You thought you had won this sick game you started. But, again, you were wrong. You left me there, in a fire ant pile, like I was nothing. Like I was an old rag-doll you had discarded in a field as trash after having your fun torturing her. We all know the details, but as a reminder, for over fourteen hours, I laid there, in that field, bleeding to death, helpless but NOT ALONE. I had angels sitting next to me. Even though I could not scream, I could not get up, I couldn't do anything physically as fire ants stung me all over my body...there was one thing I could do: pray for strength and survive. Luckily, those prayers were answered.

The choices you made in the early morning hours of August 10, 1990 have impacted my life, and changed me forever. Before August 10, 1990, I was a free-spirited little girl. I can't remember ever even being afraid or living in fear besides always being afraid of the dark, as most children are at that age. You changed that. By the time I was released from the hospital, we didn't even live in our own home anymore. You put such a fear into myself and family, that I didn't get to go home to the home that I had known for almost five years. My mother and I had to move in with my grandparents, I had to be escorted to and from school, and instead of being my usual carefree self, I lived with anxiety and what I know now as post-traumatic stress disorder. I didn't know what those things were then, I don't even know if anyone ever explained it to me, for sure...but looking back on it, I realize now that me not sleeping in my own bed until fifteen, me living in fear of you coming back and hurting myself or my mother, and me not wanting to do anything without my mother, I wasn't like other "normal" children, even though my mother tried to make our life as normal as possible. When I would go in public, to the grocery store, doctor's appointments, or the mall, everyone, in my eyes, was a suspect, and it's remained that way until October 13, 2009. For years, I've studied the faces of every male that would pass by, because I was sure had I seen you, I'd recognize you. I was scared of my own bed, scared of sleeping...scared of the dark, as a child and teenager, but during the day, I was constantly looking for you, trying to save others from being attacked by the person that had so viciously attacked me. The only fear I DIDN'T have was doing anything and everything in my power to help in capturing you.

I had nightmares for a year or so after you attacked me, and for a short period of time can remember being afraid of men. I felt like myself and my family had been violated, but the drive and determination in me to find you has kept me going. Knowing one day I'd face you and know you'd never hurt another person, has kept me going. Also, from the age of five, my dream was to grow up, and be a mommy of eight boys. You also have changed that dream. For years after you attacked me, I knew something was medically wrong with me and I have gone to various doctors and I finally found out two

years ago, after undergoing tests and surgery, that my medical issues are a result of you brutally attacking me and that it is medically impossible for me to conceive children without help of an infertility doctor and treatments. As a child, I can also remember locking myself in the restroom and sitting on the bathroom counter, staring at the long, ugly, red scar on my neck, left by you taking a knife and cutting me from one ear to another, and asking myself what I had done for someone to do such horrible things to me. As an elementary student at the time, and having to have a tube down my throat for part of my 3rd grade year, children and adults were curious and I was constantly asked questions of what happened to me and why. How was I, as an eight year old, supposed to answer questions that I didn't have the answers to? Because of the tube in my throat, I couldn't participate in physical education like all of the other children, but instead would sit in the nurses office for an hour every day while the other children played. As a college student, I was nervous walking to and from classes in the parking lots, always frightened and worried about someone attacking or following me. I have suffered anxiety attacks at night in past years so bad that I cannot breathe, and sit up for hours trying to calm myself down.

But today, I sit in front of you as a twenty-eight year old woman, and would like you to know that I am not a victim because of what happened twenty years ago. Your plan the night of August 10, 1990, was not the same plan that God had for me. You may have taken away my voice for a short period of time, and you may have taken away a piece of my being and innocence I will never get back, but you've never taken away my strength or my will to survive. I have waited for this day for twenty years of my life, and hope you now feel as weak as you made me feel all of those years ago as a child. While you played out your fantasy on my tiny body, and attacked me, you made me feel "this" small. Today I hope you feel "this" small sitting in front of me, because I definitely feel like the strong one. In life we have choices, and I made a choice early on to not let this negative and traumatic experience define me. Instead, I turned the attack into something positive for not only myself, but others by using my voice to speak out against crime in hopes that myself and other survivors will conquer crime, one voice at a time.

Dennis Bradford, I am not your victim. I am Victorious.

May 10, 2010

Early this morning, May 10, 2010, I received a phone call that Dennis Earl Bradford, the suspect who was arrested in October of 2009 for kidnapping, raping, and attempting to murder me almost twenty years ago, took his own life at The Galveston County Jail. I am shocked and disappointed at the news of Bradford resorting to suicide, as I looked forward to facing him in the court room this Fall, and now feel as though I was robbed of that opportunity. I can say that I feel very blessed and grateful that I was able to find out who attacked me all of those years ago, and that he was arrested last year, and taken off of the streets so that he couldn't harm anyone else. I will continue to use my voice and advocate for other victims of crime, and ask for you all to please keep me in your prayers as I work through making it through this difficult time.

October 13, 2009

Thank you all for being here today, and thank you to my family, my boyfriend, Jonathan, my amazing friends, and everyone that has been so wonderful in supporting me throughout this long journey over the last 19 years. Above all, I'd like to thank any and everyone that has been involved in one way or another working on my case over the years, especially Detective Tim Cromie of the Dickinson Police Department, and Special Agent Richard Rennison with the FBI, for all of their hard work, and dedication over the last year and a half, and for, as promised from day one, never giving up on my case, and for hearing my voice, and seeing my determination. Throughout this journey, I have had two main goals, and that was to:

1) Find the man who kidnapped, sexually assaulted, and attempted to murder me 19 years ago, so that he could not harm anyone else.

and

2) To use my voice in telling my story to as many people as I possibly could over the years, in hopes that I may encourage other victims of violent crime to stand up and speak out against criminals.

Today, I can say, very proudly, that I have accomplished both of these goals, as today, I received a phone call that an arrest in my case had been made. And, over the last 19 years, as I've shared my story with others, they've so willingly shared their stories with me. I hope that my case will remain as a reminder to all victims of violent crime to never give up hope in seeking justice, no matter how long it may take, or how hard it may be. With determination, and by using your voice to speak out, you are capable of anything.

This event in my life 19 years ago was a tragic one, but today, 19 years later, I stand here and want you all to know, that I am okay. I am not a victim, but instead, Victorious! To the media and public, I appreciate your interest in my case, and thank you wholeheartedly for keeping my case alive throughout all of these years. Now that I have received news an arrest has been made, and while pending prosecution, I ask that you please respect mine and my family's wishes and give us some privacy, as the most important thing right now is seeing this case all the way through until the end. I want this to serve as my statement, and at this time, any future statements from me will be made in the courtroom. Once again, thank you so much to all of you for your support, I am forever grateful to all of you.