

VICTIMS OF CRIME

By Christopher Allen Balmer

When we suffer from the consequences of crime, we sometimes allow the rage of being victimized control the way we live or work. Our daily routines are disturbed by our own choices.

Carol L. Lavery, commonwealth of Pennsylvania Office of the Victim Advocate stated on July 12, 2012, before the Pennsylvania Senate Judiciary Committee in Harrisburg:

“Victims who have learned of the potential release of the offender who murdered their loved one, talk of being taken back to the day they learned of the death of their family member, of once again being unable to get out of bed, to eat, to perform normal daily tasks.”

This is a great comment, especially one from a victim advocate. But I disagree completely. Victims of crime need to understand that when they allow themselves to be controlled by someone else's behavior they never progress. They will always live in that moment of despair. Secondly, the laws of this land never ever stay solid. They always evolve. Juvenile lifers sentenced to life without the possibility of parole is clearly unacceptable. Someone felt the need to change the law and succeeded in doing such. This is another aspect of the American legal system that looks at one side of the coin rather than both. Crime victims need to take into account that when these young kids committed crimes they were just that: Children.

Their backgrounds play a big role in how they were taught to make decisions. My concern is not what they did but who was there when they were young to teach them that what they did was wrong. You have entire families out there that breed criminals. They introduce their children to drugs, prostitution, and illegal conduct. As they are growing up, they learn to be like mom and to be like dad. They pose a so-called “gangster image”. Money, drugs, cars, women, and clothes have become for a lot of them the center of their lives. How do you expect a child to act when all he knows and was taught was to go about getting money? The way some of these kids were taught to view women is sick. To a lot of them, women are whores, sex toys, and not worth respect. I don't blame the juvenile. I blame the juvenile's parents for allowing their own child to be subjected to irresponsible ways of life. Not every juvenile had a hand of cards dealt to them to win every poke game. Life was horrible to them.

I'm not saying crime victims shouldn't get justice, but never allow yourself to rely on any system that changes daily and must evolve for justice you seek. Because you suffer doesn't authorize you to allow someone else to suffer. When a child makes a decision that is irresponsible, the child is punished. But where is the justice for those that are kids who suffer from the psychological tortures of prison? Justice is not self-centered. You can't believe in justice for yourself and not for others. Justice goes both ways.

The U.S. Supreme Court made a very big decision in *Miller v. Alabama*, a decision that now forces every state to decide how to handle juvenile lifers. The Pennsylvania legislature will make a law for juvenile lifers without parole one way or another.

Crime victims and “victim advocates” must brace themselves to deal with any law passed by the legislature. To advocate against it would be a total waste of time. Pennsylvania is now forced to look at new methods of sentencing for juveniles. The only way that Pennsylvania can properly satisfy the decision in *Miller v Alabama* is to formulate new laws that give judges jurisdiction to review the sentence imposed and to change it.

Which I personally think should happen because Pennsylvania has a pattern of appointing corrupt, biased and racist judges to serve in the position of justice.

Sometimes people refuse to accept the reality of the situation. Justice never comes from a system that evolves around the vast changes in our communities. Justice is obtained from God. No human being appointed by another human being to make judgments can adequately provide genuine justice.

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