

Victim Impact Statement of Sandie Bellows

On January 22, 1990 my life as I knew it changed forever when I was abducted by Peter John Peters at The Family Savings Credit Union in St. Catharines. The nightmare of that instant still continues to this day. Please let it be abundantly clear, that my only reason I am here today, is to stop any chance of any type of parole from being granted. It has almost been 24 years, since I endured the most horrific crimes that one human being could commit against another. I will refer to the offender as Peter John Peters as that was his name when he committed the brutal crimes against me.

When I was abducted and forced into my car by the offender I was told to shut up, look like a married couple, talk to him and do as he said and he would let me go, once away from the heat. I was terrified and screamed as loud as I could to attract the attention of the 4 people who stood by and watched me being taken. Later I learned that the people who saw this thought it was a domestic and didn't want to get involved. How sad, it has taken me years to forgive their ignorance. However it has taught me that if something doesn't look right, to call the police and let them decide.

There is no need for me to go into the abduction, brutal rape, the beatings and stabbings, as you have all the details of the crimes committed against me by the offender. Court documents will have my victim impact statement from January 7th, 1991 from the proceedings at trial and sentencing hearing. I had made 2 requests, one an aids test and the other a letter from the offender to explain why he did this to me. It took almost 11 months to get the aids test, each day I worried that I would get the news I had aids. The wait was torture again. Why did I have to endure this? I wasn't the criminal!

What was taken from me the most was my trust and innocence. The offender said many times throughout our drive together that we needed to look like a married couple so that he could escape the heat. That if I did as I was told he would let me go, he promised he wouldn't hurt me. He told me to tell the police that he was a good guy. I was terrified throughout our drive together, but I took him at face value, that he indeed would let me go. I was a trusting soul. There were many times throughout the drive that he would take the weapon and hold it to my throat and neck area and tell me to talk to him and not to try anything stupid or he would kill me. I did as he said, to keep myself alive. Throughout the drive I talked to him about many things. I found out we were the same age, that his favourite food was fried chicken, that he adored his niece Chrystal, who he said got 32 presents at Christmas time, that his family wasn't close, that he got his girlfriend who was a stripper in Niagara Falls pregnant and that he had planned on getting married on Valentines Day, that he wanted to be like Jesse James, that the others didn't listen to him and that's why things went down bad.

When he slowed down as to let me go, I started to unbuckle my seat belt and then he put the pedal to the metal and drove into a wooded area. I screamed and repeatedly told him you said you would let me go. Nothing I said mattered, he turned to me with the most vicious look and told me where he was going he wasn't going to have any fun, and that he was going to rape me all afternoon.

He held the weapon to my throat and told me to take off my clothes. I begged him to stop and he told me to do it, as he watched me remove each article of clothing. I felt then, that I was a piece of meat on the butcher counter being examined. Once I had my top off he mauled me like a wild animal and made crude, ignorant comments. I was crying hysterically and continued to plead for my life.

I was forced into the back seat of my car when my clothes were off. I was beaten, my head slammed into the arm chair of my back seat. He kissed me like he was making love to me in a sick way and proceeded to do things to me that only a sick, demented bastard would do. He wanted me to tell him what a great big penis he had and that he was great, he constantly slammed himself into me while using his hands and his mouth on other parts of my body, between beatings. I begged him and pleaded with him to stop. I remember screaming to him, what if someone was doing this to his niece Chrystal, how would he feel? It didn't matter..... he still continued to rape me.

At one point I had floated above my body and was watching from above. Suddenly, he stopped the brutal rape and told me a stranger was coming on a tractor. He told me to get up, he pulled me by my hair and told me to get up again, he said not to do anything stupid or he would kill me. He said that if I was responsible for him going back to the pen that he would kill me.

As I got up I was terrified and extremely sore, my body was beaten and I was in a state of shock ...but I knew I had to make a run for my life. As he got out of the back seat, he went around the car, and that's when I decided to run. I didn't get very far, as he grabbed me, kicked me with his steel toed boots and stabbed me. I got up several times he threw me into the tree, kicked me to the head threw me down on the snowy ground and punched, kicked and stabbed me more. I passed out for a minute and then made another attempt to run, this time he laid several blows to my head , jumped on me, kicked me and started stabbing me, he was about to give me the final blow with the weapon to my chest area, when he stopped. The next thing I knew a very scary looking man was swinging an axe through my car.

The man came to my rescue and although scary with wild eyebrows and long hair coming out of his ears, he brought me to safety. I was terrified he too was going to rape and kill me. I was terrified that John was hiding in the woods waiting to shoot us booth. I was hysterical. We got to a house and a young boy answered-approx. 3 years old. He screamed when he saw a bloodied woman standing there with no clothes on.

I was terrified that the Offender was still hiding in the woods and was coming to finish me off. I tried to hide in their cupboards and under the table. Finally a police officer came with an ambulance. He assured me I would be safe. Still not clothed and bleeding, the ambulance driver was there to take me to the hospital. When I saw him I went crazy, as he was a clone of Peter John Peters. I refused to go, how could I, maybe he was a relative and he would finish me off.

I was given a wool blanket to put around me by Mr. Pikes daughter in law and a pair of wool socks. I went to the hospital with Detective Bob from the OPP.

As I walked into the hospital people stared at me, some screamed when they saw me. I was humiliated, but still in shock. I was taken to a room where I received treatment. I was given 23 needles, stitches

and an exam-a rape test kit exam. It was the first rape test exam they had ever done there, they told me. For the first time I started to feel pain. My Mom and my husband had come to see me and tell me that they loved me and that they were outside in the hall. I started screaming again as I didn't know whether the offender was somewhere in the hospital waiting to kill us all.

The nurses were fighting back the tears, trying to be professional, yet compassionate. I felt like the word rape was tattooed to my head. I felt ashamed, dirty, and full of pain and couldn't understand if this was a nightmare that I was having. I was told after many hours of questions, pictures, tests, needles, that I would be admitted. I shouted to everyone, that I was going home, that John was out there somewhere and that he was going to finish me off and I needed to go home, no matter how much pain I was in. I needed to be safe; I needed to wake up from this horrific nightmare. I needed to go home to my childhood home where it was safe.

I woke up the next morning, after having a night of screaming in my sleep. I was so damn afraid to wake up. I couldn't move I was in so much physical pain, my mind so twisted with what I had just lived thru. I heard my Mom and Dad answer the phone, both were also still in shock, my Dad and brother wanted to find him, prison they said would be too good for him.

I needed help to get up to go to the washroom. I was afraid to move, afraid to leave my room, I didn't want my family to see me, I was ashamed. I finally got up with assistance from my Mom to go to the washroom. That was the first time I looked in the mirror, I didn't recognise myself. I started to cry and scream, what was going on and WHY did this happen to me? I didn't do anything wrong, I had never hurt anyone, so why did I have to endure this vicious rape and abduction? Why? Why the rampage?

I found out that my description of my attacker had lead to the naming of the offender. His parole Supervisor told the police she knew who it was they were looking for. Only after his capture did I find out that he was having an affair with his parole Supervisor, and that she had slept with him days prior to his crime spree. I was even more victimized; a person of authority who is supposed to ensure the public's safety was indeed having an affair with her client. Sick and again very twisted.

While attending court I felt guilty when I met the other victims families. Their loved ones were dead. I was still alive. I still to this day carry that guilt. I learned that he had many offences that he was incarcerated for in the past. This was not a one time offence, he was a monster that needed to be put down.

The sentencing hearing gave me some power, I finally felt like I was getting a piece of my life back. I wanted the court to know who I was and that no matter how much was taken from me that day, I would survive. I wanted to be a victim with a face and a victim with a voice. I wanted people to know that I didn't have control that horrible black day, however I was going to fight my way back. And I did just that, that day during the sentencing. I walked out of that court room, feeling victorious. And he, well shackled and imprisoned for 3 life sentences and 30 years concurrent. I knew that a deal had been

made and that he would be eligible for parole after 17.5 years. I was told he probably wouldn't survive in prison, but my luck has it, he has.

These last 23 years have been difficult. I tried to hold onto my marriage, I had only been married a year and a half when this happened. I wanted to have children, this he wasn't going to take away from me. Well my daughter died at birth in 1991, but I went onto have 2 sons. Although I had eventually moved back into our matrimonial home, my marriage was on egg shells. I tried to hold on and be a perfect wife but I couldn't. I was so afraid all the time. Even when my husband and I were intimate, I felt like I was being raped all over again, I would float above my body and watch like I had watched that day. I was tired of being a prisoner, I was spiralling out of control.

After we split up, I buried myself in my work and in my children. I didn't even think of dating, how could I? I couldn't set myself up for failure. How would I react to someone, it was safer staying in my own little safety net. Ten years past, my children safe and secure and growing up, I needed more. I met a wonderful man. We talked for several months before our first official date. I remember we went on the Ferris Wheel in Niagara Falls and once the ride started I started to freak out. I was afraid he was going to try and kill me. I started to panic, but I couldn't stop the ride. Finally I told him why I was flipping. When we travelled and went to restaurants, I would sit in a certain seat and direction with my back against the wall so that no one could get me from behind. To this day I still do that. I always check places out before I sit, I need to always plan my escape route.

As my boys got older they got tired of me not allowing them the freedom to be a kid. I would never let them walk to school, or drive their bikes alone without an adult. I drove them everywhere. I was always so afraid they would be kidnapped and endure the pain I did. Finally as they learned what had happened to me they understood. To this day, I do not sleep until they are home and I am constantly questioning their whereabouts while they are out.

I still have panic attacks at times. I have big trust issues. I am constantly looking over my shoulder. I worry about the day he may be free.

As I have stated previously, I won't hide and I won't be silenced. I have become strong and have the fight in me to educate other victims of my survival and my ongoing journey. I am a victims advocate. I have spoken at police chiefs conferences, victim services conferences, and many other events. I have gone to court with victims of rape as a support person to encourage them through their victim impact statement and to face their offenders.

Just recently I have met with our Minister of Justice, Peter McKay in a round table discussion about the Victims Bill of Rights. I feel very passionately about it. I feel the wheel is turning and that finally victims are being heard. We have a long way to go but progress is being made. Sentences need to reflect the crime.

This whole exercise has dredged up so many horrible feelings and memories. I am so very grateful to Mr Pike for saving my life that day. Without him getting involved I'd be dead. I still see Mr Pike to this day, our bond is strong and I have become the daughter he never had.

Peter John Peters is a vicious animal who should never see the light of day. He should never have an opportunity to live in the community amongst law abiding citizens. He has threaten me that he would kill me if he ever got out. That it would be my fault if he went to prison.

Peter John Peters and Mr Philip's daughter wrote back and forth to one another. In one of the last letters I read he stated he had been on 276 escorted leaves, he worked around seniors homes, I believe gardening, and he spoke to students about his crimes and how he was a changed person. Changed, please, he conned the people who should have known better. Then a while later he escapes down yellow brick road. I was blown into the hell hole again. Why would a 3 time lifer be in minimum security prison? Didn't our suffering and deaths mean anything? Was his psychiatric report from the hearing not considered? This offender in my opinion has inflicted enough pain on so many of us and our families...let us live our lives now knowing he is behind bars forever. Remember he was given 3 life sentences for the 2 murders and the attempted murder and brutal rape of myself.

Should you feel the urge to grant him parole, please think to yourself and consider your family. Would you feel comfortable living beside this animal, who has conned, raped, kidnapped and murdered?

My guess is that you wouldn't, so why even contemplate giving him parole. He has nothing positive to contribute to society. Lock him up forever and throw away the key! Better yet bring back capital punishment or send him to a foreign country and let them deal with him and others like him, an eye for an eye! I am tired of the bleeding hearts, walk in my shoes step by step these last 23.5 years and then maybe just maybe you may understand how I feel.

I want to live a peaceful life with my family, I can't if you grant him parole.