

Victim Impact Statement:

Representing Donald W. Gore, Murdered April 17, 1981

Re: Perry Lee Herring Inmate # 69805

Introduction:

Good morning members of the Parole and Pardons Board. I am the eldest child of Donald W. Gore (initials DRG). I respectfully ask that I be afforded whatever time I need to make my presentation, as we have waited 26 years to finally have a voice in this process. I have a folder containing information I have compiled for your review prior to your final decision. As you have many years of documented records regarding Mr. Herring, it is only fair that you know a few things about me. In addition, I have questions for your consideration and a formal victim impact statement I would like to offer for the record.

I encourage you to listen to my questions, take them seriously, and to attempt to respond to them now or at a later date, as we deserve answers. I also appreciate your time in to read selected blogs which have been part of my personal journey.

Text of Victim Impact Statement:

Images That Never Leave Me:

- I imagine the terror my father felt as PLH appeared at the driver's side door of his van...shooting him five times to vital organs, ensuring his death;
- Hours of waiting, not knowing where he was throughout the night and into the next day;
- Learning of the death notification in a callous, haphazard and unprofessional manner, *via a newspaper article* .The Hartford Police had means to contact us and failed to do so;

- Sitting beside my mother as she called the Hartford Police and asked for confirmation of his identity regarding the “Man Missing “ article...and receiving it over the phone with the officer covering the receiver and saying “She’s just identified him.”
- Seeing a detective walk by with my father’s rain coat in a plastic bag;
- Viewing autopsy photos- not because I wanted to on an emotional level, but feeling compelled on an intellectual level to try to “understand all of the pieces” which other family members did not understand at the time;
- Waiting 6.5 years for trial due to the other crimes committed by Mr. Herring and being re-victimized yet again;
- Being surprised to learn that the legal concept of joinder was used during trial to alternate between the two perpetrators with one jury without prior explanation from an attorney or a victim advocate;
- Hearing Perry Lee Herring, upon conviction, have the nerve to make the ridiculous request through his attorney for an order of a hot meal as “his meal was cold when he returned to his cell.” My father would never enjoy a meal again!
- To witness the overwhelming pain and suffering of all family members; but in particular, my mother who had sacrificed and faced many, many challenges already with me a child with two medical issues- spastic cerebral palsy and juvenile papilloma of the vocal cords requiring 33 surgeries... totaling my 55 surgeries over the years AND a brother at 18 years of age, learning this news, flying home alone and taking over the responsibility of my father’s business;
- Going through many counseling sessions over the years to try to cope with the loss and become whole again...knowing that your life will never be the same again;

- Realizing that going through 55 surgeries as a happy, healthy child, not a chronically ill child (just someone requiring a lot of surgeries) was not enough dues to pay in this life.... Perry Lee Herring had to add a homicide to my resume;
- Developing vulnerabilities and not trusting others in the same manner as before. Feeling that my mother would also be killed; To this day, locking all doors in the house, at the mailbox, in the driveway; feeling more vulnerable “as a potential target” from the monster, an unremorseful cold blooded murderer;
- Finally, with “all good intentions, being lied to and betrayed by detectives, claiming that “this man would never get out.”

However, at some point in time, I made the conscious decision that PLH would not control my life. He would not be given the power. He deserves nothing. Instead, I got involved. I became a leader and Board Member and Officer of Survivors of Homicide, Inc. under Gary Merton as its initial President from the early 1980’s into the 1990’s.

For the intervening years, I was a crime victim advocate, attended many conferences, was a public speaker, applied for jobs with the State of Connecticut as a crime victim advocate. Often they said, as a crime victim, I “could never be an advocate”. I said who better?” I changed careers from a successful medically oriented speech language pathologist and have worked for state government for the past 13 years.

My father made an invaluable contribution as a good provider for his family with several successful businesses over many years. He loved to work (a trait which was passed on to me). Through my many, many childhood surgeries, he provided financially and ALWAYS made the effort to visit often as I spent much of my time at Newington Children’s Hospital and Hartford Hospital. In fact, I clearly remember him carrying me across the tarmac at Bradley Airport and onto a plane after having still another surgery during a holiday break before returning to graduate school in Kansas.

As a consequence of Mr. Herring's actions: My father has not seen: That I remain a happily unmarried person. I am a home owner and have I lived in four states, travelled often, managing my money well and chose to go on nine cruise vacations solo over 30 years. I have worked extensively professionally and as a volunteer with many medically complicated frail elderly patients and individuals with multiple disabilities. I have fought for rights and became a stellar advocate for those with disabilities, crime victims and the gay, lesbian bi-sexual and transgendered community. I have created and been instrumental with the passage of two laws in Connecticut, testified at the same table with former Attorney General Richard Blumenthal; and been invited to a bill signing at the office of our former Governor M. Jodi Rell. Currently I have a diverse group of friends in several states that love me and support my many efforts to help victims of crime. I am actively making plans to re-locate near friends and work hopefully with law enforcement and victim services in a state offering a warm weather climate in the near future.

However, my greatest achievement to date since October 2011, has been using my skills as a writer and expertise in victimology to assist victims through my website, through a public relations company in South Carolina and a very successful national -international weekly internet radio show broadcast for over a year called "Shattered Lives" focusing on the aftermath of crime, assisting and educating surviving families and the general public. I have exhibited what psychologists call "post traumatic growth."

The many failures of the criminal justice system in our case are well documented in a blog I have included for you entitled "History Can Only Be Written by the Survivors" as well as other examples.

As for Perry Lee Herring, regardless of his lack of tickets in the recent past, his track record reveals a total disrespect for human life. His lack of remorse or outreach to any of the families he harmed over the years, speaks volumes of his true character. It matters not if he has manipulated the system and taken programs available to him for the sake of looking good. Whether he has "recovered" or "found God," I don't

really care. He is a dangerous man who took lives and injured others causing irreparable damage to us all... Although I commend the good efforts of law enforcement and prosecutors at the time, given 2013 standards, our case was not handled well. Twenty six years and a concurrent sentence with a good time mechanism is not nearly enough time served for two murders, other attempted murders and major crimes.

It is imperative that Mr. Herring serve out his remaining years in prison without the possibility of parole. Please take the appropriate actions necessary to allow us to thrive and be safe without Mr. Herring in the community.

According to the research on your website in a study by Ralph C. Serin, there are a variety of considerations you as the Parole Board have to make in your "structured" decision.

"History is a strong predictor of future behavior - a pattern of early onset of crime, multiple incarcerations, prior breaches, and criminal versatility is all related to increased likelihood of future crime. Offenders whose crimes increase in severity are of increased concern."

Perry Lee Herring had a drug conviction in New Jersey which escalated to not one, but two murders and bank robbery, I believe. He went on the commit at least one additional crime while incarcerated. We know certain individuals can learn to live within an institution, but once released they continue their criminal life. As a family, we feel strongly Mr. Herring not only should serve his entire sentence, but further, he still poses a significant risk to our community and my family should he be released.

It is indeed ironic that we come before you today, during National Crime Victim's Right's Week and it is unacceptable to me that we are forced to take vacation days to appear before you!

There are only two ways to look at the future...with fear or hope. I chose hope for all survivors of crime. I refuse to be a victim, but am proud to be as survivor.

Donna R. Gore, M. A.
Homicide Survivor

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