

First of all, I would like to thank Melissa Nelson, Mark Caliel, Vanessa Wheeler and all of the fine people at the State's Attorney's Office for their amazing dedication to finding justice for my daughter Cherish. I would like to thank the Court, and the staff, and finally, I would like to thank JSO for their incredible work in this case.

Also, I would like to commend the defense attorneys Julie Schlax and Charles Fletcher for their professionalism, and acknowledge the difficulty of their job, and their commitment to a noble profession.

Unfortunately, I cannot be present, and I have asked my attorney and friend Gerald Wilkerson to read my victim impact statement.

I was asked to write a victim impact statement, about how losing my daughter so tragically has impacted my life. As I sit here thinking of the impact this senseless murder has had on me and my family, I realize that there is no way that words can describe the impact of losing one's child. I am fighting back tears as I write this, but I push through, because this is the last thing I can do for my child.

I never really believed in Angels until Cherish came into my life. She was sweet, kind, funny, and pure love. She had so much potential, and the little time that I had with her on this earth was precious to me.

Cherish was a light in my life, and in the lives of many people. Donald Smith took that light out of the world.

I used to wake up and think about our time together, the good times. When she would laugh. When she would throw her arms around me, and tell me she loved me, when she would play with my son, her younger brother. I used to dream big dreams, of a wonderful future. I would wonder, will she get married, what college will she go to, will she have children. Now, my life is filled with sorrow, dread, and nightmares of knowing she is gone, and especially how she died. How horrible those last minutes must have been for her, how she must have called out for help and this feeling that I wasn't able to help her.

I had so many regrets that I didn't have more time with Cherish, and I was looking forward to spending the summer together.

It all ended far too soon, and my hopes and dreams for Cherish and our special relationship was smashed on June 22, 2013.

I remember getting up that morning, and being so excited that I was going to pick up my daughter from airport. I couldn't wait to give my little girl a big hug.

Instead of a hug, I received the most devastating news that any parent can receive: That my child had been murdered. In that moment all the dreams of our planned summer, and every summer to come, every day, every moment were destroyed. Taken from me by the actions of Donald Smith.

Cherish isn't here to speak for herself. She will never again be able to speak, or laugh, or dream. And as her parent, I will never hear her voice, or know her thoughts, or see her grow into the incredible person I know she could have become. Her brother, grandparents, cousins, all of us will forever suffer from the void in our lives with her gone.

Donald Smith took that from her, and he took that from me, and all of us.

And I never really believed in monsters. I do now. And forever the images of my child's last minutes on this earth will play out in my mind like a private internal hell that never ends.

Respectfully,
Cherish's Loving Father
Billy Jarreau