

3. Victims' Impact Statement of Victoria & Sveinn Sveinson,

I would like to thank the court for allowing me to express myself. It is a difficult thing I have ever had to do, but, I feel that I must give a voice to the pain and consequences that have resulted because of this crime. The lives of my daughter and I of this crime have completely destroyed our lives as they exist

—Imagine hearing the most terrible dreadful news you could ever hear. This news would permanently ravage and devastate your life. That is the news I received on the morning of February 25th, 2005.

We were visiting some dear old friends on Vancouver Island. I was talking on the phone with the phone and handed it to my husband. Still half asleep, it was 7:25 A.M. Suddenly, I felt tense! Who would be calling? I could only hear my husband's side of the conversation and I heard him say, "Oh my God, is she alive?" I remember praying silently, "Dear God, please let him be talking about some distant old aunt." Then, he said, "We'll start for home right away," and hung up. Our friend was still standing there waiting as he could tell something was very, very wrong. As long as I live I will never forget the next horrifying words my husband spoke. He said; "Our little girl Crisy was killed in a car accident." Our friend wheeled around and left the room. We sat there stunned for some time, — I can't remember how long. Those horrible words still echo and re-echo in my head every single day, — "Our little girl Crisy was killed in a car accident! — Our little girl Crisy was killed in a car accident!" Our little girl was killed alright, but in an accident? — My mind was totally boggled. It seemed impossible to comprehend how such a horrifying accident could occur there at 7 A.M. in the morning? Most drivers have already slowed down in this area as there is another red light only a few kilometers ahead at Garven road, then several huge curves in the highway, passing over the flood way and by the town of Birds Hill where traffic is leaving and entering the road, a drop in the speed limit just before the weigh scales, the weigh scales themselves, and then amber blinking lights that warn of the upcoming red light, as well as our daughter's bright yellow car stopped at that red light. It is a well known fact that yellow is the most visible color for motor vehicles. Our daughter Crystal's own words come back to haunt us. She said, in reference to her bright yellow car, "Don't worry Mom and Dad, no one would ever run into me. They can see me a mile away!" That would be the obvious, common sense conclusion. But, she was rammed into from behind as she sat waiting at that red light at 7A.M in the morning. Every single day I see visions of that horrific scene running through my mind like an terrible horror movie. — I see the panic in my daughter's eyes as she watches through her rear view mirror what must have appeared like a maniac bearing down on her from behind!! I feel the panic she must have felt, unable to move out of his way because she was stopped behind another car!! I see an irresponsible dangerous driver recklessly wielding several tons of metal like a lethal weapon straight at my daughter's head!! I hear the horrific crash as his 3 ton vehicle ploughs head long into my daughter's car splitting her head open and breaking her small frail body!! I see things flying in all directions as the force of that impact demolishes her small car and snuffs out her exuberant, vital life. I can only pray that she was killed instantly!! Imagining her lying there in excruciating pain for who knows how long is more than I can bear. Any information explaining how this so-called accident could have occurred seemed absolutely astounding. Then, we got word that impaired driving charges were being laid and the situation began to make a little more sense. Only very severe impairment or extreme reckless negligence could explain how anyone could possibly ram into a bright yellow car that was stopped at a red light which is preceded by amber blinking lights.

Then, it is most distressing to hear that alleged criminals in situations like these have the right to refuse breathe tests. Such rights completely override their victims' right to the truth and to the attainment of justice.

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3. Victims' Impact Statement of Victoria & Sveinn Sveinson, parents of Crystal Ann Taman.

I would like to thank the court for allowing me to express myself here today. This is the most difficult thing I have ever had to do, but, I feel that I must give a voice to the tragic experiences and consequences that have resulted because of this crime. Devastating grief and the aftermath of this crime have completely destroyed our lives as they existed before.

—Imagine hearing the most terrible dreadful news you could ever hear, horrifying news that would permanently ravage and devastate your life. That is the news we received on the morning of February 25th, 2005.

We were visiting some dear old friends on Vancouver Island. Our friend walked into our bedroom with the phone and handed it to my husband. Still half asleep, I remember glancing at the clock. It was 7:25 A.M. Suddenly, I felt tense! Who would be calling us at this time in the morning? I could only hear my husband's side of the conversation and I heard him say, "Oh my God, is she alive?" I remember praying silently, "Dear God, please let him be talking about some distant old aunt." Then, he said, "We'll start for home right away," and hung up. Our friend was still standing there waiting as he could tell something was very, very wrong. As long as I live I will never forget the next horrifying words my husband spoke. He said; "Our little girl Crys was killed in a car accident." Our friend wheeled around and left the room. We sat there stunned for some time,— —I can't remember how long. Those horrible words still echo and re-echo in my head every single day,— "Our little girl Crys was killed in a car accident! — Our little girl Crys was killed in a car accident!" Our little girl was killed alright, but in an accident? — My mind was totally boggled. It seemed impossible to comprehend how such a horrifying accident could occur there at 7 A.M. in the morning? Most drivers have already slowed down in this area as there is another red light only a few kilometers ahead at Garven road, then several huge curves in the highway, passing over the flood way and by the town of Birds Hill where traffic is leaving and entering the road, a drop in the speed limit just before the weigh scales, the weigh scales themselves, and then amber blinking lights that warn of the upcoming red light, as well as our daughter's bright yellow car stopped at that red light. It is a well known fact that yellow is the most visible color for motor vehicles. Our daughter Crystal's own words come back to haunt us. She said, in reference to her bright yellow car, "Don't worry Mom and Dad, no one would ever run into me. They can see me a mile away!" That would be the obvious, common sense conclusion. But, she was rammed into from behind as she sat waiting at that red light at 7A.M in the morning. Every single day I see visions of that horrific scene running through my mind like a terrible horror movie. — I see the panic in my daughter's eyes as she watches through her rear view mirror what must have appeared like a maniac bearing down on her from behind!! I feel the panic she must have felt, unable to move out of his way because she was stopped behind another car!! I see an irresponsible dangerous driver recklessly wielding several tons of metal like a lethal weapon straight at my daughter's head!! I hear the horrific crash as his 3 ton vehicle ploughs head long into my daughter's car splitting her head open and breaking her small frail body!! I see things flying in all directions as the force of that impact demolishes her small car and snuffs out her exuberant, vital life. I can only pray that she was killed instantly!! Imagining her lying there in excruciating pain for who knows how long is more than I can bear. Any information explaining how this so-called accident could have occurred seemed absolutely astounding. Then, we got word that impaired driving charges were being laid and the situation began to make a little more sense. Only very severe impairment or extreme reckless negligence could explain how anyone could possibly ram into a bright yellow car that was stopped at a red light which is preceded by amber blinking lights.

Then, it is most distressing to hear that alleged criminals in situations like these have the right to refuse breathe tests. Such rights completely override their victims' right to the truth and to the attainment of justice.

Imagine yourself making dozens of frantic phone calls in an effort to get to see your deceased child as she has been moved awaiting an autopsy. No one appears to have the time of day to accommodate you. Finally, after much pleading, frustration and threats, arrangements were made so that we could see her. —Imagine yourself walking into a cold sterile room at the hospital morgue to see your baby lying on a cold steel gurny. Imagine touching her cold, lifeless face and saying your goodbyes, because you know that this will be the last time you will ever see her. Imagine being told that you can't get a copy of her autopsy report, because it may be used as evidence in a court proceeding. As a parent, you will have to wait for years before you can get to know the actual causes of your child's death, but the person responsible for her death has access to that information through his lawyer. Additionally, the drawn out lengths of time it takes for many of these cases to get to court prevents the healing process from even beginning. It is also extremely distressing to hear of the precedents set in many previous cases whereby after years of waiting they just come to a sudden halt through plea bargains. Such plea bargains prevent the court from hearing the actual details and even the horrors of some of these crimes and therefore routine minimum sentencing seems to result most of the time. Such results lead to feelings of betrayal and aggravation in the victims, like rubbing salt in the wound, and actually hindering any hope of healing. The crime that destroyed their loved one was treated like a misdemeanor and their precious deceased relative was made totally inconsequential.

—To say that my life has been totally consumed by this tragedy would not be an exaggeration. Imagine the panic and devastation you've felt when you had a genuine fear that some tragedy may have befallen one of your children. To those who are only imagining it, that feeling is quick and fleeting, because it's usually proven wrong. To us, for whom it is not imagination, that feeling inflates by 100%. It is a nightmare and a horror and remains forever. Every single day we wake up to this cruel reality that has no hope of any relief, a true nightmare, one that we can never wake up from. We can never feel that relief one feels upon awakening from a terrible nightmare realizing it was just a bad dream. It is not a dream, it is real, horrifically real!! Our dear daughter Crystal has been stolen from us permanently. I have visions of this horrific accident every day of my life. It is a terrible reality not to be able to remember your beautiful, warm, and loving daughter without also remembering the horribly violent and tragic incident that took her life so suddenly.—I feel anguish and grief for this sad loss of my daughter, deep sorrow for my grandchildren who as very young and impressionable adults have lost their mother under the most horrific circumstances possible. (2 of them arrived on the tragic scene before their mother was removed from her car). I feel grief for my grandson whose 20th birthday was the very next day after his mother's tragic death. I feel grief for my other daughter who has lost her only sister, a sister who was as close as a twin to her, and grief for her children and my other grand children who have lost the most warm, loving Aunt and friend anyone could have and with whom they too were very close. —

—We also feel extreme emotional anguish for additional losses and grievous mental suffering we have been forced to endure as a result of this crime that tragically took our daughter's life. — Our daughter's children and our grandchildren who wrote her obituary recognized their mother's outstandingly warm and loving qualities. They wrote and I quote, "If you met her she loved you. She could always look deep inside a person and find goodness in one and all. Those who are reading this more than likely received one of her special hugs. She had one for everyone." Everyone who knew Crystal recognized her exceptionally kind and loving nature. She was a warm and loving daughter. She and her family lived next door to us for over 10 years. She would often just walk across the way to visit and have a cup of tea. She was with us the entire evening on the night immediately prior to our leaving for the trip we were on when she was killed. All of Crystal's family was very important to her. She was the glue that held her family together. Even though our grandchildren were 20 years old, Crystal always made sure that they were involved with family gatherings with their grandparents and with other extended family members. This is 2130

something we no longer have! Every time I look across the way toward her house I cry because she is no longer there. I can still see her some times, walking across her garden toward me, but then reality hits home once more. In addition, our grandchildren have moved away, completely alienating themselves from us, as well as from their only maternal aunt and cousins, and essentially from all of their mother's biological relatives. We were even excluded from the burial of our daughter's ashes. — A parent was never meant to bury a child, but yet, being denied that most powerful grieving tool is very, very devastating. We have had no contact with our deceased daughter's children for over 2 years now. Instead of the warmth and love that were pervasive of every facet of our daughter's life, this crime has evoked anger, bitterness and hatred. Sadly, our daughter Crystal's beautiful legacy of love was destroyed along with her life.

This situation can well be compared to losing one of your limbs. Imagine such a loss! You could never simply get over it. Each and every day you would be reminded that you have lost this most important part of yourself, even if artificial limbs were employed. Often there is severe phantom pain that continues indefinitely. Then the domino effect of extraordinary circumstances along with the uncontrollable actions of others continue to occur. It is like the gangrene that spreads from one of your limbs to your other limbs. Now, Imagine having lost not just one of your limbs, but four of your limbs.

—That is our situation.— We have lost a daughter along with her three children. So in fact, we have lost not just one person, but 4 people as a result of this crime committed by a so called mature public servant who certainly should have known better. This tragic, criminal act has caused unsurmountable grief and anguish to a countless number of victims, all helpless to avoid the disastrous consequences that have snowballed as a result.

—All other activities in my life have had to be deliberately forced to try and distract a mind that has been completely deprived of joy. It is like having a dark cloud hanging over us permanently, never allowing the bright sunlight to shine through. I feel like I have been living only half a life because such a huge and important part of me has been torn away. A mother losing her child is truly like having half of one's heart ripped out. After the severe initial shock wears off, a sick and nauseating pain settles in your stomach and remains there forever as the reality of these catastrophic events hit home. Each and every day we feel the painful void left by her absence and the horrific memories of the way in which we have lost this warm, loving and beautiful daughter who had been a very substantial part of our lives for forty years. In addition, we have lost 3 grandchildren who had also been a part of our lives for over 20 years. This crime was the catalyst that has completely destroyed our family.

—A warm and loving family pulling together in an effort to support one another is the only thing that can bring any little comfort under such horrifically tragic circumstances. Only the love of our other daughter's family, other family members, along with the warmth and comfort provided by our large and loving spiritual family has enabled us to endure, or even to survive the devastating consequences that have resulted from this crime which permanently destroyed our life as we knew it previously. I still often feel like I cannot overcome this horrific and tragic reality. Only just legal consequences can trigger initiation of the healing process.