

Impact Statement

My sister, Joan Marie was special. Unfortunately, I didn't appreciate how special until she was murdered. We grew up very close together as we were only 14 months apart. Joan was the baby sister and she wanted to do whatever I did. I remember when we were very young that she wanted to hug and kiss me all the time. I used to run from that and now I miss it so much knowing that I have to remember the last hug we had in my kitchen four days before she was murdered.

Joan graduated at the top of her class and had the personality to go and do anything she wanted. What she wanted was to help people. Joan became very serious about her faith in God and started to practice what she learned. She became what we all should be – a giving, caring person who truly wanted to help the people around her.

Joan helped my mother when they decided to buy the "River's Edge" Apartment complex. I remember I had several misgivings about the situation. But Joan was so enthusiastic and told me it was a chance to help those people who were down on their luck or on their way back from prison. Joan had worked with Prison Ministry and believed that people can change. She worked in the soup kitchens and brought food to people. My father recently told me about the time she asked him to drive her up to San Francisco so she could hand sandwiches out to the homeless men on the street. Joan didn't wait for the need to present itself and she didn't wait until it was convenient to help out as so many of us do. Joan just did.

When my daughter was born, Joan was the best aunt there ever was. She traveled from Reno to the Sacramento area as much as she could to see her niece. However the constant upkeep and supervision that was required to maintain the apartment complex always lured Joan back faster than it should have.

Joan would complain about the toll the apartment and its seemingly endless list of problems was taking on her. I told Joan to just pick up and leave. Our mother would get a property manager and things would work out. But Joan couldn't do that. She knew that the money was tight for our mother and she truly cared about the residents. She felt she was making a difference for some. I remember how proud she was when one of the women asked Joan to take her to church! I also remember going through her garage after her death and finding a large box filled with men's sweatshirts. Joan bought the sweatshirts for the residents so they wouldn't be cold in the winter.

I wish I could say I never saw this coming. But in reality, Joan was one who would always look for good in another person. She was sweet and naïve – but that's no reason to die the way she did. SHE was the one who helped Jeffrey Sims when no one else would.

As I have two small children who don't understand, I have never been able to fully grieve. I now find myself awake at night crying with the thought of how I was unable to help my baby sister when she truly needed me. Joan called me just minutes before the brutal attack to tell me how much she missed her nieces. She left the message on my cell phone.

I cry also for my oldest daughter who did know Auntie Joanie and came to love her and all the gifts she would bring. Joan never had any money – she always gave it away and yet, she always came to the house with gifts for her nieces. The most treasured gift is an

old-fashioned desk that she and Ed painted and painted. Joan wanted to make sure my daughter Samantha had a place all her own now that she was starting school. How do you explain to a four year old that she will never see her aunt again because she was beaten to death? You don't!

Joan was killed when my second child was only 6 months old. She will have no memory of her doting aunt.

As we grew up, Joan and I became two very different people in many ways. I became a cop and put people in prison; Joan went to the prisons to help them as they got out. Joan and I disagreed on a lot of things but when one of us was in trouble or needed help, we always knew we could count on one another.

I have never been asked to write or speak words that may have such an impact on another person's life and I do not take the responsibility lightly. My family is not out for revenge. What is done is done. No ruling from the bench will change the fact that my sister is gone forever. We simply ask that this man who has been in and out of jail and prison all of his adult life and who has been given multiple opportunities to start a new life again, not be allowed to take someone else's mother, sister, or daughter. Not be allowed to hurt another, not be allowed to steal from another. I pray that the court does not allow the drug usage to be considered as an excuse for his actions. I have known lots of drug addicts in my profession; very few have ever committed murder. Jeffrey Sims has demonstrated that he cannot live outside of a jail cell. He should never be given the opportunity to try again.

Your honor, I am sorry that you and so many others have been drawn into our living nightmare. But that is the reality of what will happen again should Simms be allowed parole. By his own testimony, Jeffrey Simms has NEVER held a job or been a productive member of society. He told all of us in open court that when given the opportunity - he will lie and steal from anyone. Why should he look for a job when he can steal watches at the local mall? And now, you can't be sure he won't commit murder again.

This situation is exactly why "life without parole" was enacted. Jeffrey Simms has repeatedly shown that he is nothing short of a dangerous predator and should be locked up in a cell to keep the rest of society safe. He has been paroled, counseled and rehabilitated several times and has only now upped the ante now by graduating to murder. He committed the most heinous of crimes and beat my sister to death when there was absolutely no reason for him to do so. Joan didn't present a threat to him. There was no struggle. He wanted her money, but rather than simply stealing her purse, he chose to savagely beat her over and over and over again! And THIS is how he responded to a woman who chose to help him. He said he LIKED her. How can justice be served by allowing a man like this the possibility of ever walking out of prison again?

Please - don't let all the good that Joan did in her short life be outweighed by this man's "rights". Jeffrey Simms took Joan Varley's rights from her permanently and my family and friends have a hole in our hearts that will never be filled. Even Joan would acknowledge that there is true evil in this world. Jeffrey Simms is the very personification of evil and needs to be treated as such. He needs to be locked away where he can no longer hurt innocent people.

Thank You