

BRANDED FOR LIFE

Stories from a Registry



SECOND EDITION



FORWARD

The stories in *Branded For Life* are an important testament to the hardships and horror of how our sex offense regime. It not only destroys the lives of those impacted but the lives of their parents, partners, and children. This volume also includes many facts about these laws, including the most important one: decades of research and data show, conclusively, that they are ineffective at preventing sexual recidivism.

What is also brutally clear from the essays in this volume is a more subtle fact: these laws, as well as the pervasive misconceptions and beliefs about those convicted of sex offenses, are most effective at stigmatizing and imposing unimaginable cruelty and horror on those impacted.

Those reading this volume are, most likely, impacted by these laws and well-aware of their brutality and viciousness. This volume is notable for outlining and describing the personal experiences of those in the Arizona RSOL community. Those who read the stories in the volume can see they are not alone in the world, and that their experiences are not unique. It is well-documented that stigmatization and banishment is among the worst and most difficult realities of the human experience. This volume is a lifeline to those living as banished outsiders (or what some have described as “social death”), to help them recognize the truth that they are not alone.

This volume, however, is not simply valuable because it helps those impacted by sex offense laws to see that their suffering is not simply an individual and personal trauma. Arizona RSOL is among many state and national groups fighting to dismantle these laws, educating the public about their harms and ineffectiveness, and providing emotional and psychological support to their members.

One issue facing all those engaged in sex offense advocacy is mobilizing those impacted. Arizona RSOL is among many state and national groups fighting to dismantle these laws. However, the vast majority of those impacted are not involved in this fight, and for this movement to succeed, we must bring far more people into this fold. It is difficult to mobilize any marginalized and powerless group, and those living under the sex offense criminal-legal regime are burdened in a day-to-day fight for survival. Housing insecurity, unemployment, and poverty are day-to-day realities for a large percentage of those impacted. Even those with economic resources can be thrust into homelessness due to residency laws and face danger, limitations, and constant minefields in their everyday lives.

This moving volume must be viewed as one of many critical efforts to create a community for those who have been unjustly and needlessly banished from much of society. There is a long history of social movement organizing that centers on the lived experiences of those without voices or power. These voices build movements and are crucial for movement success. Yet this is a particular challenge for those impacted by sex offense laws, as they face the unique burden not only of shame, but extraordinary formalized stigmatization. They are viewed by society not as fallible human beings who have made a mistake or done something wrong, but as bad people. This volume is one way to communicate to society that those impacted are not bad people, but human beings who have made mistakes. Alleviating the extreme stigmatization faced by those on conviction registries is the first step towards increasing involvement in advocacy and building a large and effective social movement.

Branded For Life is thus an important and valuable tool to help those who believe they alone recognize they are not. Those impacted do not deserve the stigmatization assigned to them, and the answer to helplessness, shame, and stigma is to motivate join in collective action with others - such as Arizona RSOL - to fight together to challenge these cruel and useless policies.



Emily Horowitz, Ph.D.

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Introduction

In the shadows of stigma, a light of hope emerges. *Branded for Life*, now in its second edition, is more than a book—it's a clarion call for compassion and reason in a world quick to judge and slow to forgive.

Arizonans for Rational Sexual Offense Laws (AZRSOL) stands alone in our state, championing the cause of those labeled and left behind. We empower, we educate, we advocate—not just for individuals on the registry, but for a society that can be both safe and just.

Within these pages, you'll find some new stories along with some old favorites. Each account is a testament to human resilience, a challenge to our preconceptions, and a powerful argument for change. These are not faceless offenders, but fathers, daughters, neighbors—people seeking redemption in a system that often denies its possibility.

But this isn't just about stories. It's about facts—hard, researched truths that demand we rethink our approach to sexual offense policy. For decades, evidence has mounted: our current system tramples the constitutional rights of our citizens in the name of public safety, yet fails to deliver on its promise.

As you read, you may feel anger, sorrow, or discomfort. Embrace these emotions—they are the first steps toward understanding and action. See the humanity in each narrative. Recognize the urgent need for reform.

"*Branded for Life*" is more than a title—it's a reality for thousands. But together, we can write a

new chapter of justice, safety, and second chances.

Join us in this crucial conversation. Visit our website, follow our social media, and add your voice to the growing chorus demanding change.

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The path forward is complex, often contentious, but absolutely necessary.

This collection of stories was written by AZRSOL participants and is their account of what has led them to speak out in opposition of the sexual offense registry. AZRSOL has not verified the accuracy of any information in the stories and is not responsible for any misrepresentations or inaccuracies of fact or law. The facts listed below are accurate as of July 2024. The stories can be reprinted and distributed as long as this disclaimer remains fully attached.



A Mother's Anguish: The Unrelenting Fight for Justice

That fateful day when I left my home in New York to support my son Stephen in Arizona marked the beginning of an excruciating journey that continues to haunt me. I went alone, naively believing the case against him for child molestation charges would soon be resolved. After all, our Constitution promises the presumption of innocence until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

How misguided I was. In Arizona's handling of child molestation cases, that foundational principle seemed to vanish. Stephen was tasked with proving he had no sexual intent when he allegedly touched children inappropriately in public over their clothing. In hindsight, his legal representation was inadequate – a fact that pains me deeply.

We were shattered when Stephen received a 75-year prison sentence despite maintaining his innocence. An appeal followed, as we spent hundreds of thousands of dollars upholding constitutional principles, attempting to reduce wrongful convictions that stem from an effectively reversed burden of proof.

Committing to this long battle, my husband and I sold our dream home and relocated to Phoenix. More traumatic than leaving New York was witnessing firsthand how corrupted our criminal justice system has become over 19 grueling years. We've made innumerable sacrifices, losses that cut deep.

For a decade, every weekend brought the agonizing

drive to visit Stephen in prison, where we encountered families who seemed ordinary, provoking empathy. One tender moment stays etched in my mind – grandparents celebrating their anniversary in the visitation room, their grandchildren robbed of paternal contact upon the father's eventual release.

Appalled by such injustice, we founded Arizonans for Rational Sex Offense Laws (AZRSOL) to reform probation policies that too often backfire, shattering communities and hindering rehabilitation – undermining public safety contrary to their intent. Moreover, empirical

evidence suggests sex offense registries do not protect our communities.

In 2017, Stephen's conviction was overturned by the U.S. District Court, a victory soon deflated when the State appealed. Though the 9th Circuit upheld the decision, it stopped short of deeming the law unconstitutional, leaving the threat of Stephen returning to complete his life sentence.

Stephen's 2017 release after a decade's incarceration brought fleeting solace as he pursued

further education and engaged in work and community service. But on my birthday in 2021, he walked back into court to be re-imprisoned after the 9th Circuit reversed itself, restoring his conviction and monstrous sentence. The majority judge's separate concurrence, lamenting the "very thin" evidence and "concerning" possibility of a wrongful conviction, offered little comfort.

Petitions for prosecutorial review and clemency proved fruitless even though Judge Frederic Block who dissented on the 9th Circuit review wrote a 20-page brief arguing that Stephen should be granted clemency, leaving us adrift in uncertainty about Stephen's future. Will he die behind bars? Can any further legal recourse change this Kafkaesque outcome? This ordeal has utterly drained us – we are exhausted, disheartened, frightened.

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Juvenile on the Registry *Ryan*

When I was 17 I met a 14-year-old girl at a mutual friend's birthday party. We began talking and hanging out as friends. It wasn't long before I'd asked her to be my girlfriend. We were dating for about 4 months before I turned 18. I know that's not very long at all but within those 4 months I was convinced I was in love with this girl.

I'm now 21 years old and because of decisions I made at 17 and 18 years old I will be on the registry for the rest of my life with no way of ever being able to clear my name from it. I will be a felon for the rest of my life as well. The charge I was given was sexual conduct with a minor 14 years or younger which is a Class 2 DCAC felony and comes with the same minimum, maximum and presumptive sentence when punishable under ARS 13-705 as any person over 18 that attempted to murder their victim in the first degree.

Whereas if she had been 15 prior to me turning 18 under Section 13-405 I would have been charged

with a Class 6 felony. There was 7 months between me turning 18 and her turning 15 which basically means that had things happened 7 months after I had turned 18 I would have been charged with significantly less of an offense.

Even after I've successfully completed my probation, I can never really have a normal life again. I will forever have the stigma of Sex Offender attached to my name as reminder of my past.

Finding jobs or careers that do not involve fast food, working at a restaurant, doing construction, or working at a factory or warehouse is seemingly impossible. Even after I've successfully completed my probation, I can never really have a normal life again. I will forever have the stigma of Sex Offender attached to my name as reminder of my past.

The feeling I get in my stomach when I think about living the rest of my life this way is crippling. To think that anywhere I go, whether it's somewhere else within the state of Arizona or going to a different state entirely I will have to register and have the potential of having flyers sent out to my neighbors. All I pray for all day, every night, and every morning that I wake up is that one day I'll wake up with a fresh start.



40 Years and Counting *Anonymous*

My childhood was rough. I grew up with an older sister, four older brothers and a younger sister. The first incident of sexual abuse I can remember happened when I was just four years old by my seven-year-old brother (Gary). He did sexual things to me and had me do them back to him.

I finally worked up the courage to tell my parents when I was ten, but they didn't believe me, so the abuse continued. Thinking back on it now, I should have known better than to go to them, because when I was six years old I watched my father molest my 15-year-old sister on multiple occasions.

At the age of seven, my babysitter asked me to touch her, and she did things to me too. My second-oldest brother (Rick) encouraged me to watch his wife bathe and would laugh.

When I was eleven I went to Rick, who was twenty at the time, about the ongoing abuse. Instead of helping or protecting me, he said I had to keep quiet. Then he also started doing things to me. This continued until I was fifteen. I really thought this is what families did, but they just never told anyone. Kind of like picking your nose – everyone does it, but not in front of others. And you don't talk about it.

I was so messed up mentally and emotionally that when we had company, I would hide myself from them. I was always getting picked on and called ugly and stupid. I was put in special classes and got into fights. Unfortunately, even my teachers never tried to step in to see what might have been happening in my home life. I ran away from home starting at the age of twelve and up until sixteen. I never finished school. I ran with some other misfit boys and started stealing, breaking into homes and fighting. I was never taught how to have healthy friendships. I never had a girlfriend or even knew how to speak to girls.

In 1961, at the age of eighteen, I moved in with Gary and his family to help babysit my three nieces and nephew while they worked. It was then that I molested my niece, who was between five and eight years old. I did just as I was groomed. I touched and

kissed her. I never thought I was hurting her until I was arrested and charged with Penal Code 288.

My sentence was supposed to be ninety days for observation at Patton State Hospital. I was there almost three years before a public defender spoke up for me and helped me to get out. At the hospital I took classes and learned about people who were survivors of sexual abuse. I never meant to bring that pain to my niece. I also learned about passive aggressive behavior and how to interact with others and talk to women.

In 1984 I was released from the hospital and moved to Missouri to live with my parents to help them at the house. I was told to register in Missouri with the sheriff's office. The officer there said they didn't have a registry program, nor did they have any classes for me to attend.

My father died shortly after I was in Missouri. My brothers were mad because I was no longer silent about the abuse. They made it their mission to tell all my coworkers and extended family about my troubled past. Of course they never mentioned the parts they played that contributed to my mental illness.

I started drinking excessively to drown out the pain, anger and frustration. I was ready to put an end to my life and take the life of the brothers that tortured me mentally and sexually for years. Instead, in 1988 I checked myself into a psych facility and they diagnosed me with mental illness secondary to trauma suffered as a child.

In 1991 I moved to Arizona. They also had no registry as Megan's Law was not yet known. In 1996 Megan's Law was passed and I was told I had to register. I was a Level-One. I was on the Registry but only law enforcement knew about my crime.

In 2000 my wife and I moved to Alabama to help her parents as they were older and her father was sick and on dialysis. I worked part time and helped him get to the dialysis clinic.

Then in 2007 everything changed. An officer came to our door with a warrant and said I had to speak to a detective. I was told I had to register, and fliers would be sent out to all our neighbors. I was fearful

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about what would happen to my wife and stepson. I called the sheriff in Arizona. They said I would be a Level-One there. I would be on the Registry but there would be no fliers and I would not be on a public website. We sold our home, taking a loss on the sale as I had to leave immediately. In Arizona I was finally at peace and started to make some friends and go to church.

Everything changed in 2017. That was when Arizona changed the law. I was sent a letter that said I would now be placed on the public Registry website no matter how long ago my offense was or that I had not re-offended. The website doesn't show that these offenses happened over 40 years ago and that I have never committed any other sexual crime since 1981.

That's when things got a lot rougher. When people found out about me, my friends no longer wanted to associate with me. My neighbors would not speak to me. These were the same ones who we spoke

with every day for eight years. Now some neighbors drive slowly in front of the house but never speak. Even though we are in a 55 and older park, some people let their kids ride bikes past our house just to torment us.

I started drinking excessively to drown out the pain, anger and frustration. I was ready to put an end to my life and take the life of the brothers that tortured me mentally and sexually for years.

I didn't think it was fair for my wife to have the same address as me. I felt she would be in danger or have something happen to her or our home, so I moved to Payson. She would drive up every other weekend to visit and leave on Sunday evening. It was the worst time. The loneliness was sickening. This went on for over a year. We finally made the decision that I would move back home, and we would work this out.

We have recently found AZRSOL meetings and have been getting support through them. I hope to meet someone that might be able to help me get off the registry. I'm going to church. My pastors there have accepted me, and I hope by sharing my story I can help others that maybe in a similar situation.

Undeserved Shame *Anonymous*

I am the wife of a person who committed a sexual offense over 40 years ago. Before I met this person, I was just like many others who thought these people were monsters that stalked girls' bathrooms and playgrounds waiting to pounce on someone. I have now come to understand that many of them are grandparents, brothers, or uncles. Let's not forget that women also are not immune from this unfair, lifelong whole-family-encompassing sentence.

In my case, my husband was a sexual abuse survivor himself. This abuse started at the age of four by his older brother and continued up until 11 before he told his parents and an older adult sibling. As it turned out, his parents didn't believe him, and the adult brother told him to "be quiet about it" and that "it isn't abuse if you are not physically hurting anyone." As a little boy, messed up as it was, he believed that touching and kissing others was permissible, but not talked about. Later on, I would find out from both my husband and his sister that even the father who didn't believe my husband had been sexually abusing his own daughter for years. So, without help and guidance, the abuse continued. Even his brother's adult girlfriends and babysitters fondled him. Is it any wonder he was messed up?

My husband and I met in 1992. I still remember the day he shared his traumatic story. We sat side by side. He was drinking Jack Daniels with tears streaming down his cheeks, this six-foot-two, 250-pound man, poured out all the gut-wrenching details of his life. The color had drained from his face, and he was the color of cold dead ashes. With the last swig from the bottle giving him the liquid courage, he ended his story saying, "I am a sex offender, and I was in trouble for molesting my niece." He explained that although he knows he can't fix or take back the damage done to her, he truly never thought at the time he was causing her pain.

Now the ball was in my court. I, myself, am a survivor of sexual abuse. I personally know there is no registry or punishment that will make the survivor feel whole or vindicated. This comes through personal growth, mental health education

and learning to trust others.

In cases of incest, having her offender placed on the registry for life means the survivor has to deal with the guilt and shame (even though not warranted) of having her family's name drug through the mud. The fear that she and her family, along with the offender may be accosted or worse. Remember, this offender is often a brother, sister, aunt, uncle grandparent or parent.

Knowing my husband spent three years in a mental health hospital getting help to purge his own demons and learning healthy family dynamics, boundaries, forgiving himself and others. I decided to spend the rest of my life with this man.

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In 1996 he was told he had to register as a sex offender even though his crime happened in 1981 and his sentence was complete in 1983. At that time, there was no Megan's Law, and not many states had a registry where people had to sign up. My husband had to register for a crime committed 15 years prior and of which he served a 3-year sentence after which he was released. By requiring lifetime registration, this sentence is not just for the offender but for the whole family. The sexual assault survivor is now being victimized again by the state, only now the sentence is never ending.

My life was turned upside down the night he was told he would be placed on a national website database, and flyers would be sent to all the neighbors in our little town. Detectives did say they understood the concerns my husband had for my safety and property, but they couldn't promise to be able to protect me. My husband moved that night. We were informed that in Arizona, with his history and background he would be placed as a level-one offender and there would be no public notification, but he would be in the database. So, he left and the next day I had surgery. I was alone to recover both physically and emotionally. I still needed to sell the house. We suffered a great financial loss because of the fear that someone would destroy the property. While alone I did know that some people found out about his past. While recovering from surgery, packing boxes and fearing every night watching for cars or strange



noises, I thought I would go out of my mind with fear and grief and post-op pain as I didn't dare take pain medications given to me because it might alter my ability to get out should someone come to the house to do me harm.

I moved to Arizona to be with my husband in 2007. Everything was okay until 2017. Once again, after 36 years, and no recidivism, the Governor of Arizona passed a law stating that all people convicted of a sexual offense would be placed on the national website. Fear and dread once again had me in the clutches. I worry now not only about my safety but that of my family, including small grandchildren. What if people found out? What would friends and coworkers say? I became collateral damage of the judicial system. The department of justice didn't think about the repercussions this would have on me, my son, or my grandchildren. How do you explain to them that their grandfather who loved and cared for them all these years and never hurt or touched them inappropriately, was now on a registry website for life?

Most of our neighbors had no problems with us one they learned my husband's story or the fact that it happened over 35 years ago and there were no repeated offenses. The website also leaves out this information. There were a few people in our 55 year and older trailer park that would whisper and raise eyebrows when we went to public events along with finger pointing so eventually, we had to

quit attending.

In 2019 my husband had a heart attack called "The Widow Maker." It was a miracle he survived. I happened to be a nurse at the hospital he was in. I was terrified the staff would find out about my

husband's past because if he needed Acute Rehab Therapy, those facilities would run a background check for sexual offenders as a lot of them are close to schools and would not be able to accept him. Even though his offense happened over 40 years ago, his recovery depended on the acceptance of the facility, not his medical needs. Thankfully he was able to make a full recovery at home.

These are just a few examples of the experiences family members go through while living with someone who is placed on the registry website. My husband is a respectable, fair-minded man who would take a bullet for a neighbor. I've seen him sit for hours trying to talk someone into not killing themselves. He will place himself between a person and bully every time.

A close friend asked me once if I would make this same decision again. I replied unequivocally yes. I chose my husband with all his flaws because I believe our childhood experiences shape our outcomes. He never had a chance as a child. As a man, he learned what he should have been taught as a child. He overcame so much and I believe he deserves all the love and forgiveness afforded to any other human being.

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Shattered Families, Broken System *Vicki*

When people hear “sex offender” they think “sexual predator.” But that is not necessarily accurate. Thirty years ago, when sexual offense registries first came into existence, they contained a small number of violent predators who were presumed to be at high risk for reoffending.

Over the years, however, these laws have been expanded over and over again, state by state, to the point that we now have children as young as nine on the registry for behaviors that most would consider to be normal sexual experimentation.

Yet, as mind boggling as it seems, there is not one single study showing any benefit to public safety as a result of sexual offense registries. Not one.

Data shows that many of those living on sexual offense registries are people like my son, Dustin, who had consensual sex with a high school girl when he was in college. It was an act of indiscretion, not of predation. Yet he found himself facing 110 years in prison. He took a plea and served 5 years. Now, nine years after his release, he is on lifetime probation and the sexual offense registry.

The barriers to reentry have been overwhelming. Employment and housing discrimination make it difficult to meet even the most basic needs of those returning to society, and that was true for Dustin, too. He held as many as 10 jobs per year, and it took several years simply to gain permission to use a smart phone and access the Internet.

Most heartbreaking was the court’s decision to sever Dustin’s parental rights. In fact, most of those returning from prison are not permitted to be around children. Any children. Even their own. And so those children are left bereft.

Initially, because my granddaughter Lorelai was a child, the Department of Child Safety would not allow us to talk to her about her father’s crime. We couldn’t simply say that he had consensual sex with an underage girl. So, for the first years of his release, she believed her father had kidnapped,



raped and murdered someone. She thought her father was someone “really bad.”

Lorelai is not alone. Because of media hype and true-crime TV, many people falsely believe those on the registry are “really bad.” They have done something unspeakable. They cannot be “cured.”

They are doomed to reoffend. But studies in nearly every state show those who are convicted of sexual offenses are highly unlikely to reoffend. Arizona’s recidivism rate, for example, is less than 3%, compared to 60%-70% for other classes of crime.

Now that Lorelai is nearly 18, probation has allowed Dustin supervised reunification with his daughter. It took nine years, but we have all been thrilled by this positive step forward. Their relationship is developing more quickly than I imagined. Lorelai is extremely excited to finally have her father in her life, and I am elated to finally have my family together.

Still, I can’t help but wonder why. Why all this extra punishment? Why all this extra supervision? Why all this fear?

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We have 30 years of data showing that our current laws do nothing to keep us safe, and, in fact, in many cases, do great harm. The collateral consequences of these laws extend far beyond the individual on the registry, affecting families, communities, and society as a whole.

It's time for a paradigm shift in how we approach sexual offenses and those who commit them. We need evidence-based policies that prioritize prevention, rehabilitation, and successful reintegration into society. This means:

- *Investing in education and prevention programs to address the root causes of sexual offenses.*
- *Providing comprehensive support for both victims and offenders to break the cycle of harm.*
- *Challenging the pervasive myths and misconceptions about sexual offenses and recidivism rates.*
- *Advocating for policies that allow for redemption and second chances, recognizing that people can change and grow.*

The story of Dustin and Lorelai is just one among thousands. It's a testament to the resilience of the human spirit and the power of love and forgiveness. But it also serves as a stark reminder of the work that lies ahead.

As a society, we must ask ourselves: Are we truly safer when we marginalize and ostracize a group of people based on past mistakes? Or are we simply perpetuating a cycle of fear, isolation, and potential re-offense?

The path forward requires courage, compassion, and a commitment to evidence-based policies. It's time to reexamine our approach to sexual offense laws and create a system that truly serves justice, promotes rehabilitation, and enhances public safety for all. Only then can we hope to break the cycle of harm and build a society where second chances are not just possible but encouraged.

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CYCLE OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE: *Links between being a victim and becoming a perpetrator*

Published online by Cambridge University Press: 02 January 2018

Results

Among 747 males the risk of being a perpetrator was positively correlated with reported sexual abuse victim experiences. The overall rate of having been a victim was 35% for perpetrators and 11 % for non-perpetrators. Of the 96 females, 43% had been victims but only one was a perpetrator. A high percentage of male subjects abused in childhood by a female relative became perpetrators. Having been a victim was a strong predictor of becoming a perpetrator, as was an index of parental loss in childhood.

The True Way Out

Anonymous

We're all in a movie, my friends. My movie is my reality, and it's harsh. However, in the movies we watch on-screen, individuals band together and rise up and revolt and make changes so their lives are improved. Unfortunately, that won't be my movie at this time.

All of us who have been affected by the Registry and the Maricopa County Probation system, whether as a felon or as a family member or friend, have experienced extreme heartbreak, crushed hopes, and absolute loss. We have been through the enormous psychic pressure of being voiceless, powerless and isolated. We carry mountains of shame, humiliation and guilt. I am not here to tell you the countless stories of living on probation for nearly twenty-five years. That fact alone is the horror story.

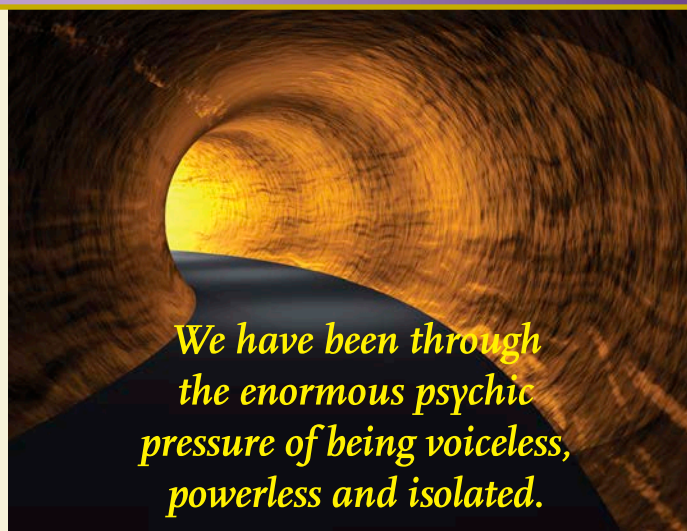
Probation in this county is not designed to show us empathy or help us heal. The officers are not trained for that. They are trained to protect their system and their jobs without mercy or forgiveness. Those who fight for offenders to help change laws are doing commendable work and are applauded by us all. But the reality of actually changing the laws in this county, to provide relief through a reward system that uses compassion, validation and encouragement, may not happen in our generation, or ever. Instead, the system is thick with ignorance and uses fear as a motivator.

We may or may not believe in God or the Universe, and that's okay, because either way it's our choice, and our choice is our freedom. We can pray and pray that God will deliver us from this heavy bondage, from this hell, but no one will save us. Our officers sure won't.

Years ago, feeling completely crushed, dead-ended and utterly exhausted with Probation's lies, lack of responsibility, and absence of accountability, I contemplated taking my life. Like many of us, I'm an extremely social person and love life and interacting with people, and I know I have so much to offer the world. But when Probation continuously closes doors on life as it naturally happens and evolves, a change happens inside like that of a withering flower or a beaten child.

I felt contracted, shriveled, withdrawn, with nowhere to turn and no one to turn to. I was dying inside. When I finally admitted to Probation I was having thoughts of suicide, they told me I was "victim posturing" and feeling sorry for myself, their classic, uncompassionate catch phrase used to shut all of us down and stop us from expression.

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But through this journey, an unexpected new path opened up for me with a teaching I've never heard before: the HU chant. It's supposed to be a higher vibration than the popular OM chant and raises a person's consciousness. It all made sense to me, and it felt like a cool ocean breeze was blowing through my soul and clearing out the thick, thick cobwebs and sorrow Probation put into my heart.

At first it felt weird, sitting in a chair doing this singing chant, but I was so desperate I did it that day. Then the next, then the next. Ten years later, I meditate for twenty minutes every morning and have noticed such life-changing results I had to write about it and share with anyone who feels stuck and numb and paralyzed in this system like a wriggling fly in the middle of the web.

Meditation has cleared my mind. It has reduced the overwhelming stress and deep anger I've felt towards probation. Meditation has helped me forgive myself and open my heart and feel more love and know that I am able to give and receive love. Through this daily practice I have also felt empowered, found my voice and confidence again, and have developed a laser-like focus. I am reminded of who I truly am, not what the system wants me to believe about myself.

Raising my consciousness has helped elevate me above the thick, lower consciousness of Probation. If all of us could raise our consciousness, one by one, we could collectively rise up and find the true way out. We have the freedom to make this choice and get our lives and sanity back and evolve into a new path.

I have taken responsibility for my past actions, and I take responsibility for every action I think, say and make every day. That's on me. But that's also on all of us, to be responsible.

That's what it means to be alive.

Where is Man's Humanity Towards Man?

Kally

forgiveness



Ninety years in prison plus lifetime probation was the sentence for possession only of computer images. Mandatory sentencing laws overruled a judge's reasoning that probation would have been sufficient. This was the result of exercising one's right to a trial rather than taking the offered plea bargains. This was the result of trusting a tech service to build and maintain a computer used in a business where discs were shared and often reformatted for future use as well as the machine being available and used by others. Why would one take the computer to a tech service if one knew there were images on it? And how would one know about there being deleted images on reformatted discs that came from various sources or were found in the office?

Being an incarcerated family member is a numbed stressfulness. There is the feeling of shame, embarrassment of a spouse's incarceration. There is the sense of injustice, unfairness toward the criminal justice system as one experiencing a trial with its publicity. There is coping with the frustration of an indifferent prison system as one faces constant changes in unit visitation and sees one's spouse deteriorate under DOC supervision. There is the loneliness of selling a family home of thirty some years during the first year of incarceration to be closer to a child's home and a spouse's prison. There is the emptiness of a relationship maintained through limited weekly visits, taped phone calls up to fifteen minutes, and letters – more of them sent to than received from prison. There is the self-imposed restriction as one spends several thousand dollars to maintain the needs of the incarcerated spouse as well as self on

an income that has had no cost of living increase in many years.

There is a sense of hopelessness as one prepares for two clemency board hearings only to have the two unanimous decisions for sentence reduction be denied by two governors. There is a sense of anger at the legislation of lumping together all degrees of sexual offenses whether they are actual, perceived or contrived. The anger continues as one

*There is the
feeling of shame,
embarrassment of a
spouse's incarceration.*

realizes that trials result in 99% for conviction and hung jury decisions are often retried, resulting in many taking a plea bargain leading to crowded prison conditions. There is anger at the extreme restrictions placed upon released SOs and families. It is going from one prison to another because of the public fear of a label; drunk drivers, drug dealers, and murderers face less public scrutiny upon release.

The state needs to reevaluate its harsh punitive criminal justice system; this reevaluation should be done with open mindedness and fair logic, not with self-righteous pontification and judgmental opinions. People should not be warehoused with a system making profit off others' miseries; actual criminal actions should be corrected through rehabilitation efforts not with demeaning imprisonment and indifferent releasing. Where is man's humanity towards man?

Tip of the Iceberg

Harry and Gayle



Our son Harry was following in the footsteps of a long line of family members who have contributed to society and community through service in the military and/or work as a civil servant. A former Arizona Wildland Hotshot Firefighter and EMT/Medic, he lost 19 of his comrades in the tragic incident involving the Granite Mountain Hotshots in 2013. After that loss he left the Hotshots and completed the Phoenix Fire Department's Training Academy. But before he could get hired-on with the Fire Department, he took a single misstep that has had a cost of such magnitude it cannot be quantified in dollars or words.

In Feb. 2017 Harry was arrested and released on bail for possession of child porn. The "crime" was just the tip of the iceberg. This brought to the surface a childhood incident of molestation, unknown to us or anyone else until the time of his arrest, when he revealed it to the arresting officers. He explained that, because of the incident he had suffered as a child, he was compiling IP addresses of child porn sites. He planned to submit them to the proper authorities in an effort to lead authorities upstream to the picture takers. He did not realize that visiting these sites in his research efforts would result in a charge of 'intent to commit a felonious activity'. His non-criminal intent was further reinforced by the fact that such sites were so easily available through Google online.

His explanation fell on deaf ears. The Maricopa

County Attorney's office prosecuted him to the maximum degree. (We have since learned it is their policy to prosecute everyone as aggressively as possible.) Thus began the most awful, heart-breaking journey of having to confront the fact that our son would spend years in prison, and the rest of his life on probation and on the Sex Offender Registry. That realization hit us all like a ton of bricks.

Ironic that even "murder" has degrees in the Statutes but not so with sex offender cases!

The justice system, in its attempt to protect society, has kept me isolated from the world I once knew.

Harry had no criminal record, no criminal intent, no child abuse, no molestation, no kidnapping or imprisonment, no indecent exposure, no public sexual indecency, no sexual abuse or assault, no violence, no voyeurism, no child sex trafficking, no taking a child for the purpose of prostitution, no picture taking of children, no luring of a minor for sexual exploitation.

His lawyer (whom we depleted our savings to pay for) advised him to take the plea deal offered – ten years to be served at 85%, with lifetime probation upon release. Going to trial would have led to even more severe and harsh consequences; he was looking at a 100-year prison term. Taking a plea meant no opportunity to present mitigating facts and circumstances, no particulars of his given case allowed in a trial, no judicial rulings on the facts and merit of the case. No Prison Diversion options, no short-term probation, no classes or

counseling, i.e., no opportunity to look below the surface where 80+% of the facts and mitigating circumstances lay, just as most of the iceberg lies beneath the surface of the ocean.

Given the stigma of such charges, almost all his friends, many since childhood, began distancing themselves, further isolating him.

His wife divorced him, so he was now engaged in a second legal battle, this one to gain visitation with his then two-year-old son. Since there was no prior criminal history, no hands on, etc. he was granted limited visitation rights. Limitations on visiting his son pained him in immeasurable ways. Since May 2018 the mother of his son no longer allows any of us to see young Harry.

Our son has since had another son, Ivan, with another woman ... a long-time friend and former girlfriend. They go with us about twice a month to visit Harry. But heartbreakingly, when he is released from prison and is on probation, he will no longer be allowed to have any contact with either of his children, who will be 9 and 12 years old.

Right now, there is outrage among U.S. citizens regarding separating immigrant children from their parents. That is indeed among the cruelest form of government-sanctioned child abuse. But that is only the tip of the iceberg. Millions of American children are being legally separated from their parents due to incarceration and the terms of sex offender probation. According to the National Resource Center on Children & Families of the Incarcerated at Rutgers University,* minor children being separated from their parents as a result of incarceration is a reality for over 10 million children, a disproportionately high percentage of whom are Black or Hispanic. (These figures do not account for the millions of children who are separated from their parents due to terms of sex offender probation, which does not allow parents to have any contact at all with their children until they turn 18 years old.)

“Parental incarceration is now recognized as an ‘adverse childhood experience’ (ACE); it is distinguished from other ACEs by the unique combination of trauma, shame, and stigma.”*

In the case of sex offenders it is argued that we are separating the children in an effort to keep them safe from parents who have harmed or might harm them. However, given the low rates of recidivism (3-5%) among sex offenders, this argument does not hold water. It makes sense (and there are numerous studies to back this up) that people who experience shame, isolation, traumatization, and shunning are more likely to commit crimes than are those who have a strong network of supportive, loving family and friends.

We question how tearing apart families and separating children from their parents, especially when there is little to no threat to society nor prior criminal history, serves anyone. A single mis-step should be a learning experience in life - not an experience that robs life and time, with disastrous effects on families not readily seen as they are below

the surface. Wouldn't it be better for everyone if instead of wasting our precious resources on criminalizing and incarcerating people, we invested in Prison Diversion practices that work to bring families and communities together in healthy ways? What kind of world might we have then?

We ask you to support any changes in the laws that will help keep our children safer and create a more just, humane, and fair system of justice for everyone.

* Children and Families of the Incarcerated Fact Sheet, National Resource Center on Children & Families of the Incarcerated, Rutgers University, Camden.

Retrieved 7/09/19 from:

<https://nrccfi.camden.rutgers.edu/files/nrccfi-fact-sheet-2014.pdf>

*I understand that
my choices have led
me here, and the
consequences of my
actions ripple far
beyond my own life.*

Third Class Citizen *Alan*

I wish I had known the truth. Being on the Registry has been nothing short of a nightmare. My attorney told me the judge would have discretion as to whether I would have to register or not. It was a lie, but I didn't find out until sentencing.

In the beginning all seemed fine. I got married, bought a house in a decent area, and we both had good jobs.

Then the harassment started. A death threat in my mailbox that I am glad my daughter didn't find. It said, "You touch my kids I will fucking kill you, you sick-in-the-head mother-fucker." A shotgun shell left on my doorstep and my car spray painted with "Want More?" I've had people quit working with me. I've lost three places to live as soon as someone sees me on the Registry and gets "scared" and complains to management. The story remains the same everywhere I have gone, that people who have committed sexually-based crimes are some kind of pariah. Canceled from the cancel culture, not even 3/5ths a person, a third-class citizen.

I spent three years on the streets, homeless, begging on a street corner. Through all of this, how many children were saved from a crime?

I am not saying the Registry needs to go away, but it needs serious reform or a complete rewrite. It was created to track "sexual predators" and has since been expanded to cover anyone that commits a sexual offense. There are three levels to this system. Level three is assigned to those most likely to recidivate, the ones the Registry was originally designed to track. I am a "level one," one of those not likely to commit another sex crime, ever. Statistically speaking, less than 3% of all people convicted of a sex crime will commit another. This is the lowest of all crime categories except murder.

We are human beings. We have families. We have jobs. We have relationships. Every single area of the life of a person on the Registry can be upended in a second. And for what reason? To give people a false sense of safety? It's used more for fear mongering than anything else. I experienced it when a group of twenty people came after me for visiting a friend in a high-end neighborhood.

"Is that the monster?"

"You don't belong here!"

"Call the police!"

I did my time. Two and a half years in prison, four months on parole. While on parole I was to go to sex counseling. The counselor told me in the first appointment I wasn't a "sex offender"

and asked what I wanted to talk about. After a few appointments I was told I had PTSD. A couple of years later I was able to start therapy to treat it. I have been in therapy and on medication ever since. I have done EMDR therapy,

which is helpful for healing trauma. Two years ago, I was diagnosed with bi-polar disorder. For this I did fourteen electroshock treatments. I voluntarily put myself through treatments that caused me to have two-minute seizures. All of this to show "society" I am not a bad person.

I had problems. I was distracted from what was right and what was wrong. It'll never happen again. Can I live now? Can I be a free member of society and not have to look over my shoulder anymore?

In my opinion, the law needs a rewrite. More thought needs to be put into it and the statistics can't be ignored. Neither can the challenges to the law. I think people on the Registry should have the chance to get off, with the judge having discretion as to whether they should be required

to register.

This isn't living. Not even a semblance of it. I am on disability and can't get a place to rent. People who carry the label "sex offender" can't qualify for federal funding like HUD and Section 8, so I have to rely on others. I will always have to rely on others, unless we get things changed. I have few acquaintances, even fewer friends, and forget about a girlfriend. Nobody wants to be with someone whose life is so difficult. I am left with nothing but tears, crying myself to sleep nearly every night.

*I spent three years
on the streets,
homeless, begging
on a street corner.*

*We are human beings.
We have families.
We have jobs. We
have relationships.*

Looking for Zebras *Anonymous*

In my years as a student before becoming a physician 6 years ago, my classmates and I had some uniquely high expectations, ready to shake up the world. I would examine a patient with a simple cough, but I would peer down their throat hoping to catch a rare tumor sticking out...just like in our textbook. I would examine someone with a little headache...but secretly hope to diagnose that exotic brain-eating parasite I saw on the news.

I would then realize myself how unusual this was, my profession existed only to ensure others' health. But I couldn't help but wonder, could I get an award! Make it on TV! Get a new disease named after me!

But, No. Our superiors luckily would warn us against looking for what was called "zebras", which referred to the unlikely rare cases impressive only in theory: in a textbook, a written test, or in a prime-time TV drama. We were warned: if you hear hoofbeats outside, stop dreaming of seeing a Zebra...it's probably just a Horse!

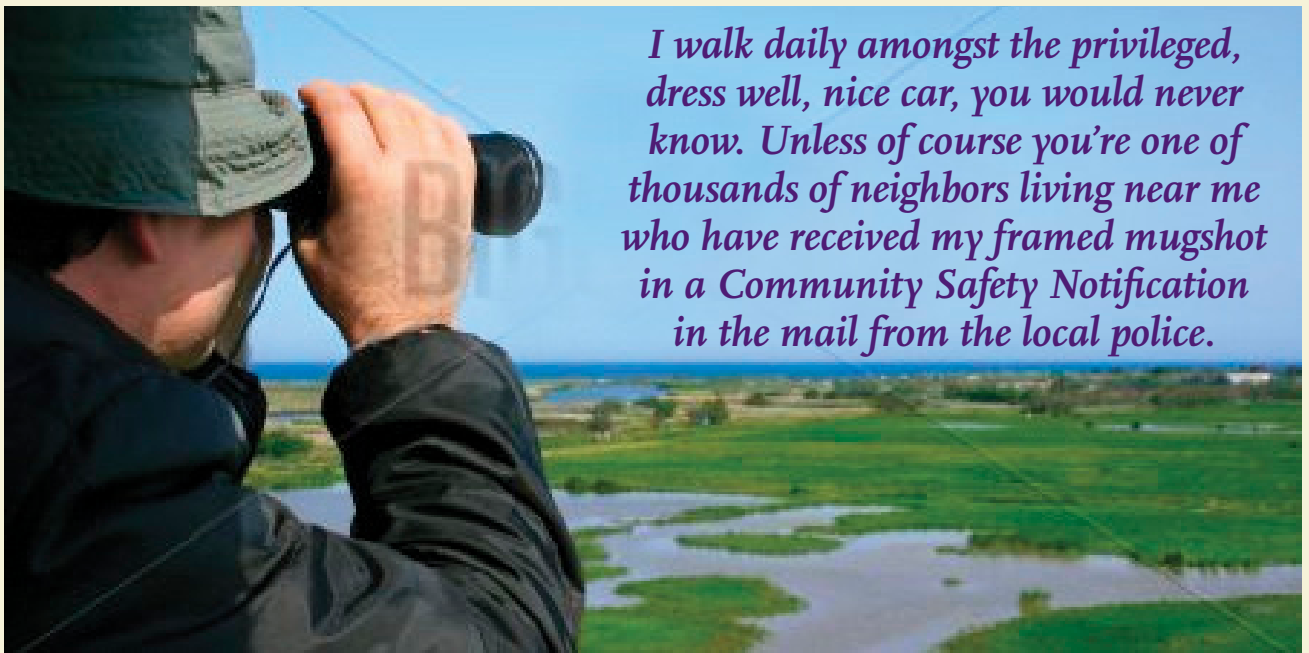
Now I realize we weren't the only ones afflicted with this urge to make a splash. In the justice system, whether a judge, a journalist, a legislator, or a prospective employer; everyone naturally imagines "Zebra". Commonly many jump on labels like "Criminal" or "Predator", which I will admit make a great headline.

All I hope for is consideration by all, for those who made a poor choice in the past, to get a second chance to be able move on. Contrary to popular belief, I am not asking for a pardon, a pass, or any benefits, and definitely not guaranteed forgiveness.

Do I blame the media? No. Do I blame current legislators? No. Do I blame law enforcement? No. I would be looking for that "Zebra" if I was them.

But unfortunately, I find myself today on the other side, sentenced several years ago to probation, already successfully completed...but tacked on "the Registry" for life because a prosecutor checked an extra box. I walk daily amongst the privileged, dress well, nice car, you would never know. Unless of course you're one of thousands of neighbors living near me who have received my framed mugshot in a Community Safety Notification in the mail from the local police.

Today I sit here writing this without the right job, without the ability to rent my own apartment, without a basis to ask the right girl to marry me. Never in my wildest dreams could I have imagined how much individuals are hurt, and how much their families, employers and all of society end up as collateral damage.



I walk daily amongst the privileged, dress well, nice car, you would never know. Unless of course you're one of thousands of neighbors living near me who have received my framed mugshot in a Community Safety Notification in the mail from the local police.

The Scarlet Letter Stands for Sex Offender

Robert and Kathy B

Two years ago our normal family life was turned upside down. My wife and I had successfully raised three children to adulthood. We were working on our youngest who was the academic star of the family. He was a couple of weeks away from graduating in the top tenth in his class with a full tuition scholarship to the University of Arizona.

Our son never had any problems with drugs or alcohol and was never a problem in school; the periodic calls from the principal's office were to tell us our son was getting an award or accolade for a science fair project. He reached the Eagle Scout accomplishment a couple of months earlier and we were extremely proud of his courtesy, honesty and integrity.

On my birthday a phone call came from the police department that our son had been arrested. My wife and I dropped everything and went down to the police office. It was explained that our son had a sexual encounter with an underage girl. We were told the girl met our son online and invited him over for a rendezvous at her house. She sent him videos and naked pictures of herself as enticements. Our naive son took the bait and drove to her house in the middle of the night. The teenagers kissed, hugged and got naked together when her father discovered the two. There was no sex and the encounter was consensual. After hearing the story from the police officer, we were somewhat surprised at the fuss, considering the two kids mutually consented, no sex occurred and that they both seemed to have a role in this encounter. Frankly, we first thought this was a matter that could have been resolved with two sets of parents talking to each other. We had two daughters and could relate to the other parent's position. We had no idea how much trouble our son was in. We were just about to be sucked into a vortex.

It took us a day to get our son released. We knew the charges were sexual misconduct with a minor and sexual abuse, both serious felonies. We still did not realize how serious. We attempted to get our son back to school so he could finish out the semester and graduate, since there were 4 weeks left in the semester. We worked with the principal and Pretrial services to try to keep him in school. We thought we could keep this matter private and under the radar. Then we received a call from our son-in-law telling us the local news had run a half true story on our son; the cat was out of the bag. Our family was devastated, at that point we knew our son would not be receiving his honors and getting to walk with his class.

It became apparent that we would need professional help. We

decided to interview the top attorney for these types of cases based on a recommendation from another family who had gone through a similar matter. In the interview we learned how much trouble our son was in and we were looking at potentially serious prison time of 25-30 years for the offenses charged. This was the beginning of our education. We were quoted the retainer would be \$75,000 and that was the minimum fee. The attorney was interested in what would be the defense? We said how about the truth, he did not have sex with her and she lied about her age and what about her role in the incident? Then the attorney told us about how they recently lost a major case with a young man at a bar. The girl had been ID'd at the door and had a bracelet band showing she was 21. The two got together and had sex and the young man thought she was 21, not 16. We were informed that not knowing the age of the person was no defense. The young man went to prison and is a lifetime sex offender. The attorney asked if the police had come to our house with a search warrant yet. We answered no; he prepared us for a probable raid, that we could expect them to come and pull and rifle through all of our belongings looking for evidence. We became very scared and worried about what could be found on our router, modem and personal computers. He explained that any naked pictures she sent our son could have 10-year sentences for each picture she sent if he saved them. Luckily there were no pictures and the police never came in the middle of the night.

95% of all sexual offenses are committed by someone who is not on the registry.

We settled on a attorney who seemed to really care about our case and our family. He took the time to educate us about the process. He explained about the grand jury process and it was likely the county attorney would pursue this route which sounded so extreme to us, a grand jury indictment, thus began our crash

education of the legal system. We assumed a reasonable plea deal would come quickly and our nightmare would end swiftly. This did not happen. The prosecutor would not offer a plea deal until our son had a thorough psychological exam and risk assessment. We agreed to get this completed, since we knew our son did not have a problem other than a lack of common sense. He was quickly growing up; he had no choice. We made an appointment for the risk assessment as quickly as we could and learned we were looking at 5 months to get the results. We began to panic because our son's wonderful college scholarship was in jeopardy. Through several meetings with the judge an agreement was struck that he could commute to Tucson every day and go to school while the slow wheels of the legal system churned. Our son drove 300 miles a day and



had to be back in Maricopa County by 10 pm every night. His schedule had to be compressed so he had no significant free time on campus. He had enough time to park, ride his bike, go to class and come straight home. We were hopeful he would meet some friends in school even though he was wearing a monitoring device on his ankle. Most of his friends scattered in the wind post high school graduation. Some were quick to judge based on hearsay, like his youth group who banned him from coming to meetings because of the charges presented. He lost his sole connection to the outside world when his pretrial representative talked to his work; he was quickly judged and put on permanent probation from working. We quickly witnessed our son's demeanor decline.

We struggled to keep positive and hopeful that everything would be OK. My wife and I constantly worried if our son would be alive when we got home; his grief was unfathomable. His world had been crushed in a moment of lapsed judgment. Kids experiment with sex; almost every high school kid in this state has broken the law. The only one trying to keep our son propped up was us. The system only saw him as a sexual deviant, not a stupid adolescent kid who made a giant mistake. It would have been enough of a lesson having dealt with the angry girl's father, spending a night in jail sleeping on his gym shoes, missing prom and graduation, and enduring public scrutiny. Staring at 31 years in jail seemed disproportionate to what happened. The system has a one-size-fits-all approach with no perspective of the big picture. This incident a generation before would have been considered a kid thing. We never considered what happened to be appropriate or something we would have condoned. Our concern was the reaction of the judicial system and society. We never considered having to

caution our kids to be cautious of other kids trying to pass off as being older.

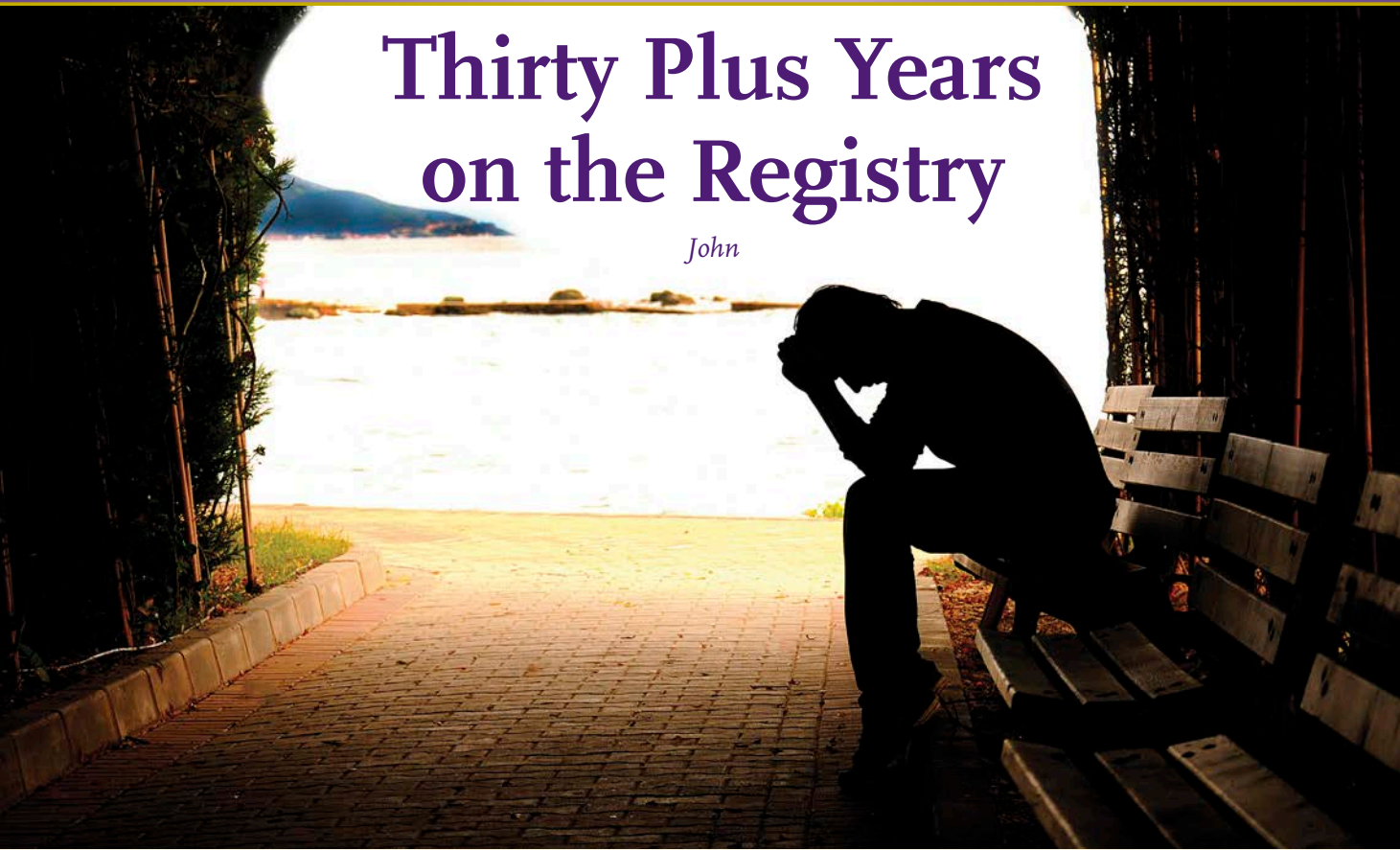
Finally, an offer of a plea came 6 months later. The main point of concern with our family at this point was the condition of sex offender registration. We told our lawyer this was the line in the sand for our family. If it was a condition, we would be forced to go to trial. A felony conviction would be bad enough, but sex offender status would destroy any chance of what was left of a normal life for our son. Thankfully the plea kept this condition off the table, although not permanently, just deferred. However his probation would have sex offender terms as a condition.

This last year on probation has been a difficult transition for our son. Getting a simple apartment is a bureaucratic nightmare, having to go to mandatory treatment while on probation is a challenge. The worst part is our son received 20 years of probation for an offense that occurred when he was only 18 years old. The most impactful issue daily for our family is the closeness and support of family values. Our son is very close to his siblings, but his older two siblings have children and he currently is not allowed to be around children. This effectively cuts off his relationship with his older siblings and destroys the relationship he has with his nieces and nephews. Holidays and family gatherings are now the most difficult times. Either our son is excluded, or our older children are. There really is no need for this extreme measure; it is clearly detrimental to his well-being and the well-being of an entire family. This one-size-fits-all approach is detrimental to a young man just entering adulthood from the one thing that can help him move forward and be a successful productive member of our society, Family.

95% of all sexual offenses are committed by someone who is not on the registry.

Thirty Plus Years on the Registry

John



My name is John, date of birth Nov. 1, 1967. My offense date is April 28, 1986. My date of conviction / sentencing date was May 11, 1987 on a non-dangerous non-repetitive Class 5 & Class 6 felony offense for sexual abuse and sexual conduct with a minor. (Please note: I was 18 years of age on the offense date and the victim was 16 years of age.) I served a total of 1 year and 3 months in the ADOC for both of the offenses and was released on parole in Aug. 1988.

Since Aug. 1988 I have been registering as a sex offender here in the State of Arizona.

Sex offender registration has had a very negative impact on my life and the life of my entire family. Being a registered sex offender has put my life and my family's life in great danger. I have been turned down for jobs with big name businesses due to being a registered sex offender. I have been turned down by rental agents at apartment complexes in Tempe & Mesa, Arizona due to being a registered S.O. I have had people follow me who received flyers in their mail box on me over the S.O. Registration/notification and tell me to move or they would shoot me, which has put my life and the life of my family in a great amount of danger, especially due to the fact that I have had to live at home with my mother for most of the 30 plus years that I have been a registered S.O.

Please note that being labeled as a registered sex offender are both very embarrassing and shameful to me and have caused

me to suffer with depression & humility on and off for the last 30 plus years of my life. Every year I have to go to my local M.V.D. office and pay a fee to renew/update my driver's license which is just one of many embarrassing situations for me because the people at M.V.D. know I am a registered S.O. when they pull up my information on the computer. In most cases when I have had to show my Arizona drivers license for any reason people ask why I have a one year drivers license.

I would like it to be noted that in Feb. 2000 I went through the State of Arizona sex offender evaluation process with a mental health care official from the State of Arizona and was cleared that **I DO NOT** meet the criteria as a sexually violent person; yet I'm still being made to register as a sex offender. Please also note that the 1986 offense is the only sex offense I've ever had until 2016 when I was charged with failure to update address information by the Pinal County Sheriff's Department, which is a victimless crime. This is just a short version of the things I've gone through and dealt with in the 30 plus years I've had to register as a sex offender here in the State of Arizona. I think after 30 years of not committing another sex offense **I SHOULD NOT HAVE TO REGISTER ANY MORE.**

***I was 18 years of age
on the offense date
and the victim was
16 years of age.***

Living in the Shadows:

The Hidden Cost of the Sex Offender Registry *Anonymous*

Imagine the worst mistake of your life haunting you forever, announced to every neighbor with ominous flyers. This isn't a nightmare—it's the harsh reality for those on the sexual offense registry and their loved ones. The registry doesn't just punish the offender; it ensnares entire families and communities in its web of fear and isolation.

I used to be outgoing, embracing life with open arms. Now, I live in the shadows, my world shrunk by a single, devastating event: my 18-year-old son committed a sexual offense. In an instant, society labeled him a monster, and by extension, cast a dark cloud over our entire family.

My son was once full of promise. A Criminal Justice major, ROTC participant, with the warmest smile and a heart of gold. He never gave us trouble growing up. Now, he's forever defined by his worst moment, his future dreams shattered.

Society paints those who have committed sexual offenses as irredeemable, the worst of the worst. Yet the data tells a different story: only 3-5% reoffend, a rate second only to murder. But facts seem powerless against the visceral fear the label "sex offender" evokes.

I live in constant fear—not of my son, but for him. Finding housing, employment, any semblance of a normal life is a Herculean task under the crushing weight of restrictions and public scorn.

The cruelty of the registry extends beyond the offender. I dare not share my story with coworkers, having heard whispers of people losing jobs when a loved one's status is discovered. Many registrants can't live with their families due to restrictions and are forced onto the streets where their instability makes them more at-risk to reoffend. Is this truly making our communities safer?

Every day, I grapple with the knowledge that my son's name, photo, and address will be plastered across the internet, making him a potential target for vigilantes. There's no fresh start, no chance at redemption that society affords to those who've

committed other types of crimes.

The toll is immense for families. I'm now on anti-depressants and blood pressure medication, crushed by despair and hopelessness. This isn't just my son's life sentence—it's ours. Millions of family members and friends bear this burden alongside their loved ones on the registry.

My greatest hope, my fervent prayer, is that the registry will be abolished in his lifetime. That we, and countless others like us, might one day live without fear, with the possibility of redemption and a future not eternally shackled to past mistakes.

It's time for society to confront an uncomfortable truth: the sexual offense registry, born of fear and a desire for safety, is causing more harm than good. We need a radical rethinking of how we prevent sexual offenses, support victims, and allow for genuine rehabilitation. Only then can we break free from these shadows and step into a more just and truly safer world.

This isn't just my son's life sentence—it's ours.



Trauma and Redemption *Maya Jones*

“Gramaya, the Earth makes the best water!” My grandson, Lukas, spoke these words as he drank from his water bottle on one of our frequent outings. I have many precious memories of our time together during his first eight years. We were very close; I took care of him about 30 hours a week from the age of three until six.

I was stunned when his mother sent an email saying I was no longer allowed to see him without supervision. I fought that through the courts and was granted limited visitation rights. However, his mother soon moved to Michigan, making it difficult for us to communicate or visit. Lukas is now 16. I have not seen or talked to him for eight years.

Losing contact with Lukas has been one of the most painful consequences of my son, Ryan’s, incarceration. He is serving a 16-year sentence and two lifetime probations for touching his daughter’s (from a different mother) vagina and breast twice. I am blamed for his actions by all three mothers of my grandchildren. I have not been allowed to interact with my granddaughter, who is now 21. And last month, my younger son, Mark’s, wife insisted on including a clause in their divorce agreement stating I will not be left alone with their children for longer than eight hours, and never overnight.

That these women hold disdain for me and the fact that one of my sons is in prison for child molestation could lead one to believe I am creepy and irresponsible.

I definitely made a lot of mistakes as a mother. I was married to a man who was sexually, emotionally and physically abusive. What possessed me to have children with him? A question I often reflect upon. As a result of the chaos of living in a severely abusive home, my sons were neglected and traumatized throughout their childhoods, even after our final separation, which took place when they were 5 and 11 years old. I take responsibility for that.

Recently I have been studying the effects of intergenerational trauma, which gets passed down



through generations, exacerbated over time. My sons are a product of this. Sexual, emotional and physical abuse has plagued our family as far back as I am able to trace.

Mark is working to heal his childhood wounds. However, Ryan is not being given an equal chance to deal with his demons. Instead, his trauma has been intensified. He is currently being warehoused in a private, for-profit prison. In 2015 Arizona spent approximately \$25,000 a year to

In 2015 Arizona spent approximately \$25,000 a year to incarcerate someone, and a mere \$3,600 to educate a child, many of whom live in unstable, abusive conditions.

incarcerate someone, and a mere \$3,600 to educate a child, many of whom live in unstable, abusive conditions. What kind of world could we build if we, as a society, committed to investing in our children and families, helping build healthy relationships and stopping the cycle of abuse? We would create a much healthier social climate than the one we have now, which grows out of a system that promotes and shields companies who profit from

the misery of people, fanning the fires of abusive behavior!

When someone causes harm to another, doesn’t it make sense to address their mental / emotional health issues rather than stigmatizing and dehumanizing them through long-term incarceration, lifetime probation and the Sex Offender Registry? Our family has been severely traumatized by this one incident, which if handled differ-

ently, could have been an opportunity to end our intergenerational trauma.

I am perturbed by our pointing fingers at individuals who do something hurtful instead of looking at the systemic dysfunction that underlies sexual abuse. How is it that our world leaders commit crimes on a much grander scale than anyone I have ever met who is being punished for life, yet they are allowed to exempt themselves from criminal prosecution? I am livid about this disparity and troubled by our unwillingness to address the foundational issues of sexual offending.

Throughout human history women have been objectified and sexualized. The billboard I passed every time I visited Ryan in jail demonstrates the extent to which we have normalized objectification of women: a picture of three beautiful young women, dressed in tight, revealing clothing, each holding a can of beer. The tagline: Sin ti no hay fiesta! (Without this there is no party!). It is no mystery to me that we have such a problem with sexual abuse and addiction!

My agonizing marriage and lack of ability to effectively parent catapulted me into a journey that grew me into the person I am today – a woman who is wiser due to the arduous struggle of climbing out of the depths of despair. I know people can change. Having emotional, financial and spiritual support facilitates making those changes. I have spent thousands of dollars on therapy, educational workshops, and spiritual teachers, along with countless hours working on myself. My current state of emotional well-being is a testament to the work I have done.

People who hurt other people are redeemable. I adamantly oppose all practices that castigate anyone who harms another (practices which interestingly do not apply to wealthy white men in power). Collateral consequences to those who commit sex offenses and their families exacerbate the very factors known to increase risk of recidivism. If we truly want to create a society in which children grow up feeling safe, nurtured, and cared for, we have to courageously address the sexual dysfunction of our society and treat sexual abuse

as the mental health, intergenerational trauma and systemic issue it is, rather than as a criminal offense.

We could start by retracting harmful, unjust criminal laws currently on the books and replacing them with restorative, inclusive healing practices such as Van Jones' Redemption Project and other revolutionary work being done in the criminal justice, mental health and family therapy fields. This will require a major shift in the perception of lawmakers, therapists and the public, and every one of us will have to find the courage to confront our own culpability in the perpetuation of sexual and childhood abuse.

One of my favorite (and last) memories of Lukas is of the storytelling concert he and I hosted to raise money for an enclosure for Hunter, a bobcat we met at an animal rescue facility. His insistence on

helping Hunter move from his cage to a beautiful enclosure was due, I believe, to the pain he was feeling over the recent loss of his dad, who was similarly locked in a small cage.

Last year Lukas experienced further loss of his relationship with his dad when his mother was removed from Ryan's visitation list by ADC for reasons unknown to us. She has to be on Ryan's visitation list in order for Lukas to talk to him, so they have not had a phone conversation for over a year.

My heart breaks when I imagine what my grandchildren are going through. They could benefit from the wisdom I have gained through

the personal work I have done over the last 45 years. That I do not have that opportunity distresses me greatly.

Thank you for the work you do to stop the traumatization of our young people. Please consider sponsoring a groundbreaking bill in this next legislative session – one that automatically and retroactively removes all people from the Sex Offender Registry who committed their offense when they were under the age of 26 and expunges their records. What a contribution you would make to our youth!

When someone causes harm to another, doesn't it make sense to address their mental/emotional health issues rather than stigmatizing and dehumanizing them through long-term incarceration, lifetime probation and the Sex Offender Registry?

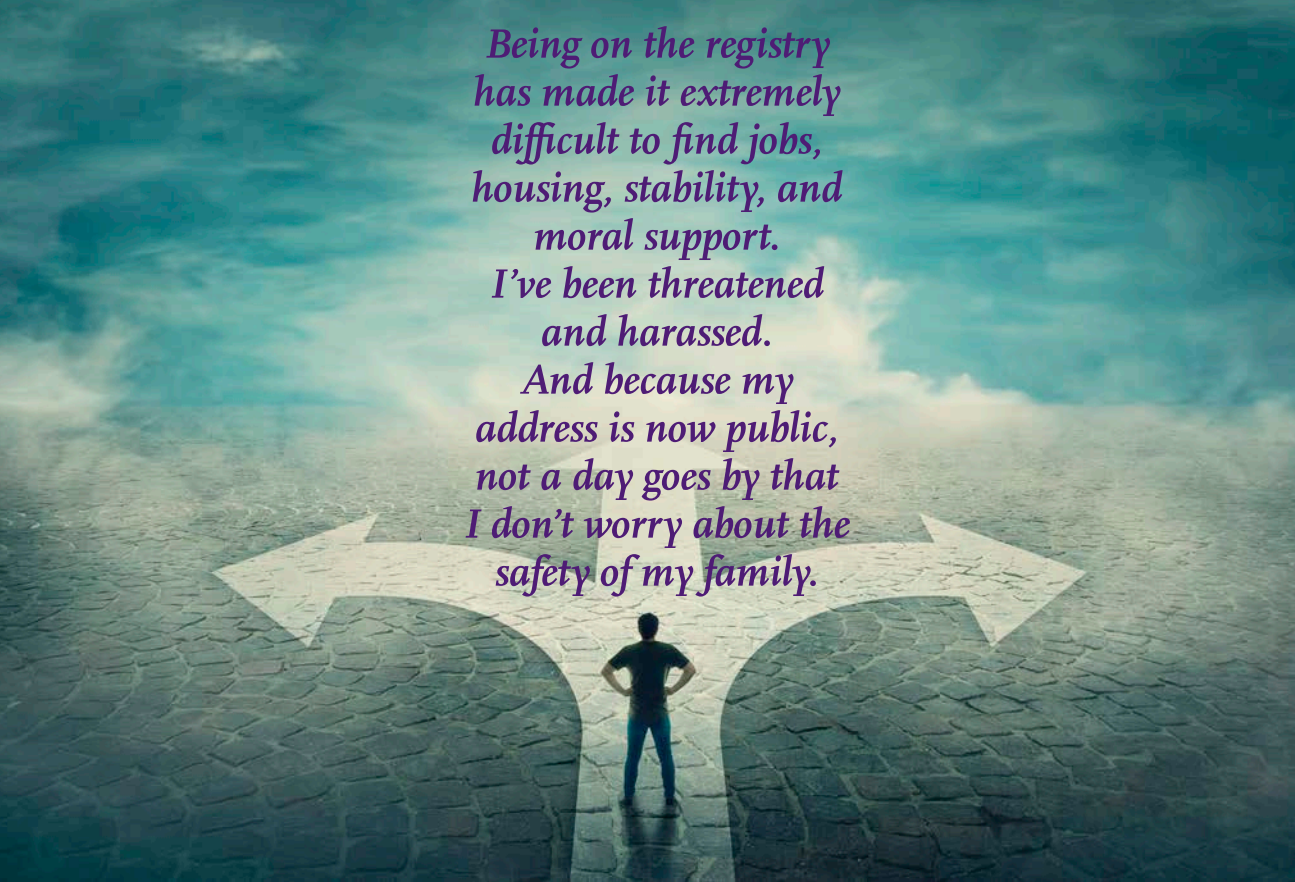
Choices

Paul Hanley

My name is Paul Hanley. I'm a 56-year-old survivor of sexual abuse that started in 1973, when I was ten years old, and went on for ten long years. I know from having done to me basically everything sexual a man can do to a boy that sexual abuse is a viscerally disgusting soul crime. And like many survivors, I blamed myself for what was done to me.

off all my clothes and attempted to rape an adult stranger in a motel pool, without any attempt to cover up what I was doing. I had the delusion that the woman was a famous country music singer who I believed was my girlfriend.

Fortunately for both of us, the woman kicked me in the groin before I could get myself in worse trouble and traumatize her further. The shock



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I've been threatened
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And because my
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I don't worry about the
safety of my family.*

I know firsthand that society makes it as hard as possible to speak openly about sexual abuse. When I wasn't being told by people I took the risk of confiding in that, "We don't talk about such things," I was being told, "Real men don't let themselves get sexually abused, so if it happened, you must have wanted it." The shaming wouldn't let up.

By 1993, the trauma of being sexually abused and my inability to resolve my shame had impacted me so deeply that I was out of touch with reality. I took off driving at random, ending up in Payson, Utah, which in my deluded state I mistook for Payson, Arizona, where I resided. There I took

"sobered" me up a little and I put my clothes back on. At the suggestion of the desk clerk, I waited in the lobby for the police. I promptly confessed to them, as coherently as my confused state allowed.

After I pleaded guilty to "Attempted Forcible Sexual Abuse, a 3rd-degree Felony," I was put on probation and interstate compacted back to Arizona. That's when the shaming really started. Even the "expert" therapists told me I could not be cured of my sexual deviancy. I registered with law enforcement and have lived on the registry ever since, with no legal way of ever getting off the registry.

Being on the registry has made it extremely difficult to find jobs, housing, stability, and moral support. I've been threatened and harassed. And because my address is now public, not a day goes by that I don't worry about the safety of my family.

I successfully completed each and every term of my probation, including therapy by the "experts" who were piling on me the very shame I had acted out on the poor woman I attacked. My probation was terminated in 1999. In 2004 I hired a Utah attorney to motion that my conviction be amended to a misdemeanor. The state joined in my motion and it was granted.

Yet I still have no way off the registry in Arizona.

Contrary to what the "experts" will tell you about me being incurable, even in the depths of my psychosis in 1993 I made a *choice* to attack that poor woman—and that means my choice not to commit more crimes is as good as a cure.

In the 25 years since I committed my crime, I haven't gotten so much as a speeding ticket. The Arizona Department of Corrections even let me go into one of our state prisons to talk to inmates about how to succeed with a sexually-based offense on your record.

My life's mission now is preventing and healing sexual abuse. To fight abuse, in 2017 I published my memoir *"Roller Coaster to Hell and Back: A True Story of Sexual Abuse and New Hope."* In the book, I describe my recovery from the sexual abuse I suffered as a child, and my rehabilitation after my crime.

My childhood dream was a career in writing. Now that I've worked through most of my shame, I work for myself as an author and an editor who helps people on all sides of sexual abuse write and publish their stories.

I'm obviously no hero, but I've done my share to give back. From 2011 to 2016, I volunteered at a literacy center helping adult immigrants learn

English and pass the US citizenship test. I told the literacy center about my crime right up front. They respected that.

I also helped my community by teaching free tai chi classes to senior citizens for five years.

Before I committed my offense, I somehow kept sane enough to serve twelve years in the Arizona Army National Guard. I earned several letters of commendation and received an honorable discharge. Learning in the Army to take responsibility for my actions has helped me succeed to a certain degree in spite of the registry. For example, I never used my childhood abuse as an excuse for my crime, even though my childhood set me up to fail.

Men who commit sex offenses are much more likely to have been sexually abused themselves than the general population. I hope my work will help these "invisible survivors," as I call us. I want to prevent abuse, not just heal it after the fact. Most survivors of abuse, however, would never dream of harming someone the way they were harmed. So it's important to me not to play the

victim. It's just that I do feel victimized by lifetime registry laws which mark me forever as a second-class citizen on the basis of one wrong choice.

I think it's worth asking yourself whether the predictable effects of living on the registry, which often include being homeless, jobless, resentful, unstable, and lacking social support, really make people who have committed sex offenses less likely to commit more crime.

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sexually-based offense
on your record.*

Kidnapped *David*

Dear Americans,

Your kids are being taken from you illegally and you don't know what's going on. It's going on behind closed doors.

Why do I say this? Well, my story goes back 18 years ... when I was kidnapped by the State of Arizona at the age of 16.

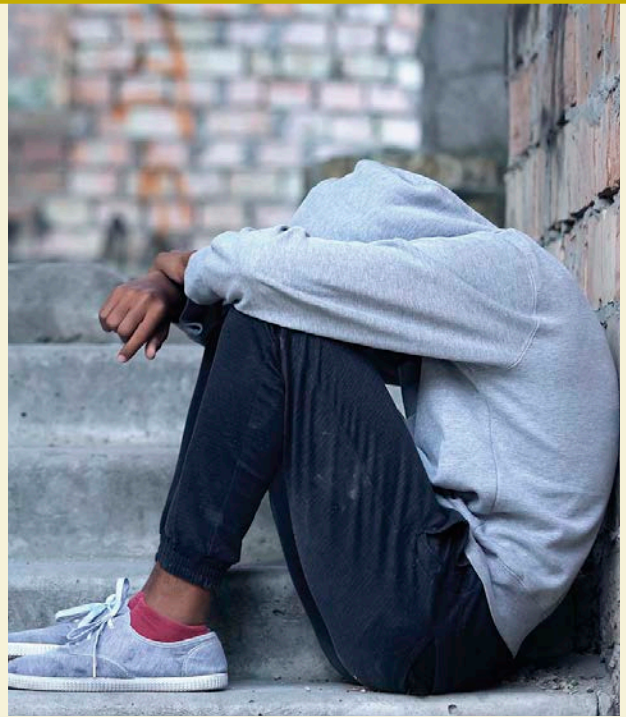
I was called out of class to go the "Office." When I arrived, I was handcuffed and stuffed into a cop car – without being told what I was being arrested for. I asked to call my mom but was told I didn't need her there. I was also not given a lawyer – didn't know I could ask for one.

I was so scared, I barely remember the details of that time – just that I was taken to the police station and interrogated, still without knowing what I was being charged with, although now I know it was for sexual interactions I had with two boys who were 3 years younger than me.

I was tried as an adult and handed down a sentence of 5 years in adult prison, followed by two terms of lifetime probation. Let me tell you, a young boy put in prison with adult men is easily taken advantage of. I will not relate here the bad experiences I had but will say that spending my teenage and young adult years in prison has made it extremely difficult for me to function since being released.

I don't have basic life skills, such as cooking or setting a routine for myself. I don't know how to weigh consequences for my actions. I don't know how to interact with people. I long to relive my lost youth and don't know what it means to be an adult. I have so many probation restrictions – I'm not allowed to have a smartphone or use the Internet. I can't go hiking, to the gym, or to movies and have not been given permission to attend support groups. I am not able to see my nieces, which limits connections with my family.

It feels like the world has closed in on me and I am spinning in a cycle of craziness. I am having extreme difficulty handling probation, especially the curfew restrictions. After my third violation, I was sent back to prison for 7 years, during which



Let me tell you, a young boy put in prison with adult men is easily taken advantage of.

time I was given an SMI (seriously mentally ill) designation. After my release, I was so not in my right state of mind, I wanted to commit suicide. I faked having a bomb in a CVS pharmacy, thinking the cops would come and kill me. Instead, I picked up another charge and am

looking at another prison sentence for that.

I feel overwhelmed and weighed down with guilt. My public defender is trying to guide me through probation, but no one is explaining to me how to get out of this cycle of craziness. I just long to get my life back together – is there anyone out there who can help me?

It feels like the world has closed in on me and I am spinning in a cycle of craziness.

Petition for a Lifeline

Patrice Brown - 9/22/15

Expecting nothing; receiving even less ...
I've been misled - I guess.

Alone again, though I find that rather strange -
thought true feelings were never supposed to change ...

I reminisce about things we underwent together.
Memories I'll always treasure.

What used to be unbreakable - thought this BOND would never break
Hand-in-Hand, into the depths of any ICY Lake

Sole survivors of the Spiritual Slaughter;
rising back to the Top like bubbles under water,

but one mistake -

The Enemy of LIFE - has managed to separate Me from Mine ...
As a result, we hear great cheer at the sound of my Flat-Line.

So much has been taken, my heart is now Numb
Devoid of happiness - the deeper I sink, the Colder I become.

Not getting what I'm needing;
my Soul is constantly bleeding.

Drip by drip one drop at a time ...
Truly, and cruelly ardent affection decline.

Having been deceived
by Lies Wholeheartedly believed

Deluded through the instrumentality of Counterfeit Love deposited
by disingenuous hypocrites with whom the KEY to my Heart was entrusted
I find myself callous; in ICE, my capacity for feeling encrusted ...

This destructive illusion
has given rise to the need for a Passion Transfusion;

however, this pervasion from One into another does not come cheap
and without Restoration - the Soul is destined to forever Sleep.

Is there anyone alive in this world who is willing to pay the enormous
amount of Loving Attention it takes
to restore the Life of a dying soul?
Is there anyone so Passionately resourceful?

Anyone so Divinely Enriched?

Patrice Brown aka the Brown MAN

Homecoming

I'm Nancy Phillips and I want to share my feelings about this whole legal process we've gone through in the eight months our son has been home and on lifetime probation.

While our son was incarcerated (8½ years) his absence in our daily lives was hard to endure. The financial burden (to our whole family) was immense. Somehow, with God's help and everyone else's we made it through that nightmare. We anticipated the homecoming. THE WONDERFUL HOMECOMING! Reuniting with everyday things and family all together sitting at the family table, enjoying a home-cooked meal and each other and finally being a family again. He told his kids and family, "We will get to do so much when I get home and we will make up for lost time."

... Oh but wait ...

Camping - fishing - lakes - parks - picnics - hiking
movies - bowling - ball games - malls.

... Oh NO ...

We can't.

And his seventeen and sixteen year old children can not attend family events. He can not see them. He can not talk to them. He can not send cards or letters. No communication at all, even though for over eight years he saw them all the time at visits and they talked almost daily so he could be sure to remain close and in their lives.

... But oh NO ...

Not till they are eighteen.

... The crushed heart starts again ...

He must move forward. He gets work immediately. He gets a great job, he loves his boss and his coworkers are great. Now he prays they will understand all his restrictions. Leaving early once a week for classes - coming in late once a month for PO visits - Not taking customers with children - Not being able to use the internet or have a smart phone to interact with customers. Oh and that's after they have to install Net Nanny on the computer he uses at work. These things cost him sales which means lost money.

... Oh but wait ...

Money:

Treatment	\$45 a wk./\$180-\$225 mo.
Probation Fee	\$65 a mo.
ABLE Test	\$200
MSI Test	\$225
Lie Detector	\$250

(BTW, he passed this test, proving what he said all along was the truth) Note: He will be required to take all these tests again, not sure how often or how many times.

Probation rules make it very hard for a person to even hold a job. It seems they like to make it harder for those who are succeeding and have acclimated to the outside world again.

WHY? How is that helping the person and his family?

... Oh and don't forget to REGISTER.

BTW, no charge for this!

Reconstructing Character Mark S.

CHILDREN are Ambassadors of Humanity. Children should receive the purest examples of kindness and unconditional love and remain free throughout all of childhood to experience that special innocence that being a child is supposed to be about. Children should never experience the many darknesses of human nature.

When a child has such darkness inserted into their lives with any type of abuse – especially sexual abuse, the child's soul is genuinely forever scarred.

The current healthier me who has worked for 30+ years to reconstruct my character is HORRIFIED, as if I am seeing an awful twin of myself [that I no longer identify with] in reflecting upon the past vile behaviors constituting crimes against children [that I absolutely committed]. I shattered the innocence of 35 child victims and the scarred souls of each of them haunts me daily. This caused me to make an unspoken promise to each victim that I would never again commit any such crime. I have gratefully kept that promise for 20+ years. Along the way, I have saved victims from others who were committing crimes against them.

I, from age 5 to 15, was victimized by 20 different people. I know well the scarring process from both sides. Therapists have encouraged me to have anger or resentment toward my abusers, I maintain that I won't waste a moment on any of the anger or thinking of them, I will focus on a healthier future for myself and keeping my promise to my own victims. As to my Lifetime Probation, I have never been motivated with the prospect of sanctions or being returned to jail if I relapse or violate probation. My motivation[s] have been healing from my own scars & my promise to each of my victims. I have been profoundly angered when in a therapy group setting, I hear other offenders state they will not violate probation or reoffend, only because they want to avoid a return to jail.

I used to strongly agree with authorities position in their "containment approach" that sex offenders can never change. I am a living example that is grossly false. My offense period was from when I was aged 15 to 23, eight years. I absolutely must

be vigilant & practice avoidance tactics, but I have made monumental progress and in 20+ years in the community have not on a single occasion felt any ideation nor arousal to any child & there have been zero instances of calls or complaint of my misconduct to any child.

As horrific as my own crimes are and the deep remorse I maintain, my greatest teacher of the prospect of hope and that people can absolutely change came from the vast human grace I have been

blessed with in my 20+ year journey. Many folks, from employers, family and friends I have made, considered my criminal past, but focused on who I could become today when given the chance. They taught me with their own healthy relationships that I witnessed, social ones and otherwise and in their law-abiding behaviors and coping in the best & darkest of times that life visited them with.

I encounter or pass by children in the community. I am so very grateful that I know in my soul I am no longer a significant threat to a single child. I used to be haunted the most when I heard children laugh. Knowing that my past behaviors to children buried their laughter for many years and replaced it with dread, confusion, feelings of betrayal by me, and relationship conflicts because of the scope of lack of trust in others or being triggered by the touch of others that reminds them of when I did so. Knowing that I no longer am willing to victimize others in escapism from my own issues & lack of coping skills is a great relief that I am no longer that darker twin.

I have learned great coping skills. I have overcome my haunting low self-esteem. With the aid of many I have replaced the darker experiences with healthier ones and the darkness fades more and more in the distant past. My utmost joy in life is aiding others in any manner I am capable of. My second joy is my healthy, committed, 100% mutual relationship with my partner of 6+ years, named Richard. I am 55, he is 65. Richard, through my exhaustive disclosures, is aware of my past. Thankfully he has the healthiest me, today, that understands that honest communication is key to a relationship where both folk's needs are realized.

*... I know well the
scarring process
from both sides.*



To any offenders who are NEW to the path of reconstructing your character. I ask you to focus upon human restitution to each of your past victims. Only allow genuine remorse to guide you, not any potential judicial sanctions. Know that no matter how awfully you are haunted by your former criminal behaviors, you are capable of overcoming much of the past cognitive distortions that kept you in that cycle and you are very capable of gifting each of your victims with a healthier you. The journey is very difficult,

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though profoundly worth it. An important tool to success in your journey is raw & honest communicating with therapists, probation folks and those who are in your life who you feel comfortable being honest with. They have to know the absolute real you to aid you in overcoming each piece and learning how to better react & cope as the journey moves forward.

An Old-Guy Story of Re-Entry *Barney Oldfield*

In 2003 I was arrested and charged with two counts of child molestation, Class 2 felonies. I was offered a plea deal that would have resulted in prison and lifetime probation. I did not want probation and the ACA refused to negotiate any other plea deal. I went to trial, was found (rightfully) guilty and sentenced to two 15-year terms (flat time) to run concurrently. I was 60 at the time and it was my first criminal conviction.

I have learned that sentences are often disproportional to the offense committed. People who commit murder often receive shorter sentences than those convicted of a sexually-based crime. A friend of mine got 200 years for pictures, a death-in-prison term. It is disheartening to see someone who sells drugs to a child that results in the death of that child get the same 15 years I got, as well as only having to serve 85% of his time, while I had to serve every second of my sentence. He also does not have to be on a public registry, labeled as a dangerous criminal for the rest of his life.

Once I got to prison, I realized it is designed to make inmates fail, reoffend and return. Human beings are being warehoused in these institutions, many of which are run by private, for-profit businesses. That experience is a story for another time.

Long-term incarceration so institutionalizes the inmate so that life after release is extremely difficult for most. Yet there is virtually no support to help someone re-enter. I was released on December 26, 2018 with 26 months of parole and have been fortunate to have a great Parole Officer. I also have the advantage being old and having monetary and other assets. I really feel sorry for the youngsters. For me, the effects of institutionalism were minimal because of my autism and the fact that I had spent many years in the military. Most are not so lucky and are affected more than me.

Housing: One of the biggest issues for anyone with a felony record, and even more difficult for people with an SO label. Many places that will accept felons will not accept anyone with an SO

conviction. Again, I was fortunate to have money, which most people just being released do not. I lived in a motel that was satisfactory and I felt safe there. The owner had a daughter. Families lived there and in the adjacent motel. At ~\$42/night (\$1260/month), not cheap, but the proprietor gave me a break for paying in advance and being a Vet. Never any problems. The owner says he likes SOs because they pay and keep to themselves. I bought a condo in March and moved out.

Employment: Although I am well-qualified for many jobs and pose no threat to society, I have had problems obtaining a job. I am fortunate to have retirements, but I know people who go back to prison because they cannot find work.

Transportation: The motel I lived in for the first 3 months had no stores close by, so I lived in a "food desert." I did a lot of walking at the beginning. I was lucky to have friends to help me with transportation and I learned the bus and trolley system quickly. Because I had money from retirement,

I was able to buy a car three weeks after my release. Most people do not have the money to do that.

Companionship: I avoid social events, fearing I might meet someone I like and having to tell them I am an SO. When I do participate in a social activity, I wear a

"Desert Storm Vet" hat. That helps guide the conversation in a direction that feels safe to me. I have been lonely with no female company, but I cope.

Church: No Catholic Church will accept me without Draconian conditions, but Praise and Worship Center in Chandler has welcomed me.

I ask legislators to work to change the Draconian laws we have in place that make it very difficult for a person to successfully re-enter society once they have served their prison sentence.

Once I got to prison, I realized it is designed to make inmates fail, reoffend and return.

I avoid social events, fearing I might meet someone I like and having to tell them I am an SO.

EDITOR'S UPDATE:

Barney returned to custody on a questionable technical violation and died of COVID in prison in 2020.

Redemption's Shadow Corey

From the moment I committed that heinous act at 18, my life has been a series of confinements and revelations. The weight of my crime has followed me for over two decades, shaping every aspect of my existence. I can never fully comprehend or undo the harm I inflicted on my victim - their pain and trauma are a burden I must bear for the rest of my days.

The justice system, in its attempt to protect society, has kept me isolated from the world I once knew. Ten years in prison morphed into an indefinite stay at the Arizona Community Protection and Treatment Center - a transition shrouded in uncertainty and fear. The lack of transparency in this process left both me and my family in the dark, grasping for information about my fate.

My journey has been one of profound change. The angry, hateful young man covered in offensive tattoos is slowly fading away, replaced by someone striving for redemption. But this transformation comes at a cost - I've lost my youth to institutions, never experiencing the freedom of my 20s and 30s. Now, as I enter my 40s, I'm still struggling to define myself beyond my past actions.

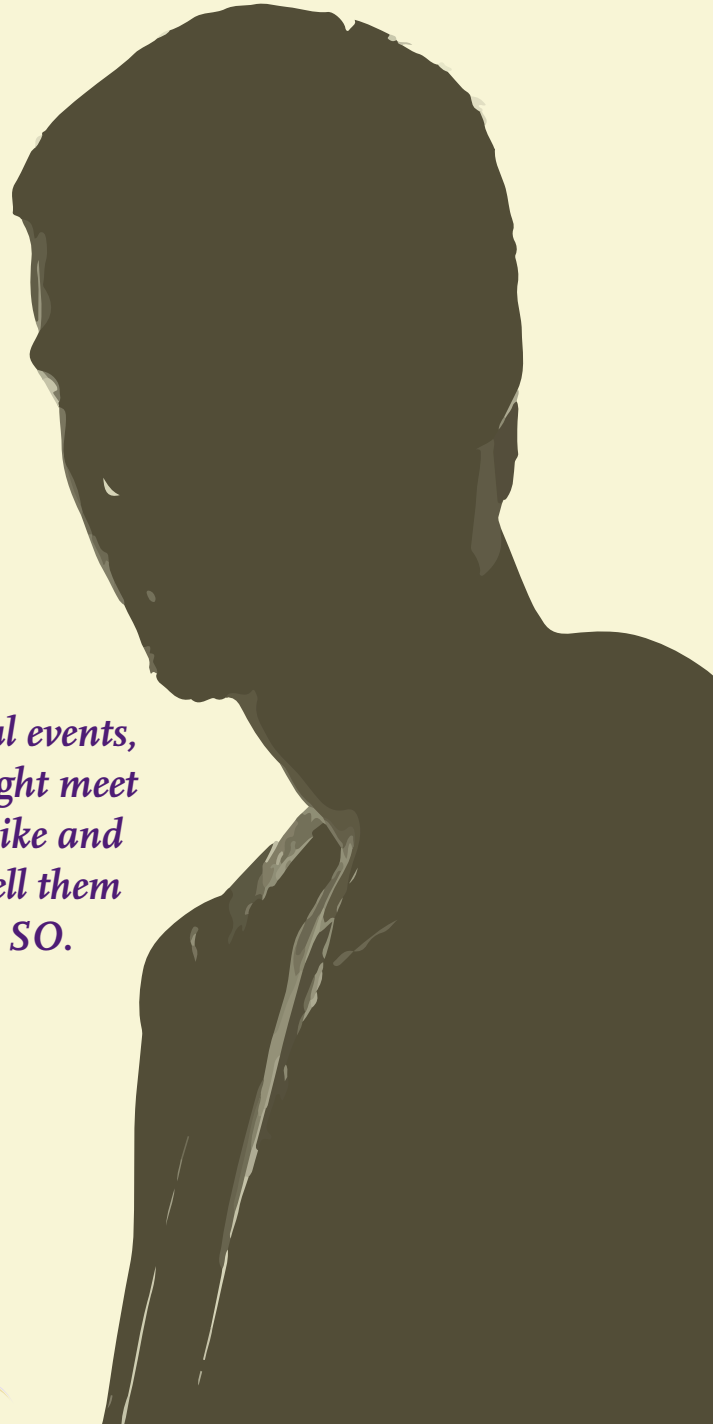
My family's unwavering support is both a blessing and a reminder of the pain I've caused. Their loyalty in the face of my mistakes is humbling and, at times, difficult to accept. They've stood by me through violence, hate, and unforgivable acts - a testament to a love I'm not sure I deserve.

I don't seek pity or absolution. I understand that my choices have led me here, and the consequences of my actions ripple far beyond my own life. As I continue to work on myself, I carry the weight of my victim's suffering and the knowledge that no amount of personal growth can erase the harm I've done.

The road ahead is long and uncertain. But with each step, I strive to become someone worthy of the second chance I've been given - someone who can contribute positively to society, even from within these walls. It's a debt I can never fully repay, but one I'm committed to working on for the rest of my life.

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inmates fail, reoffend and return.*

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In Memoriam

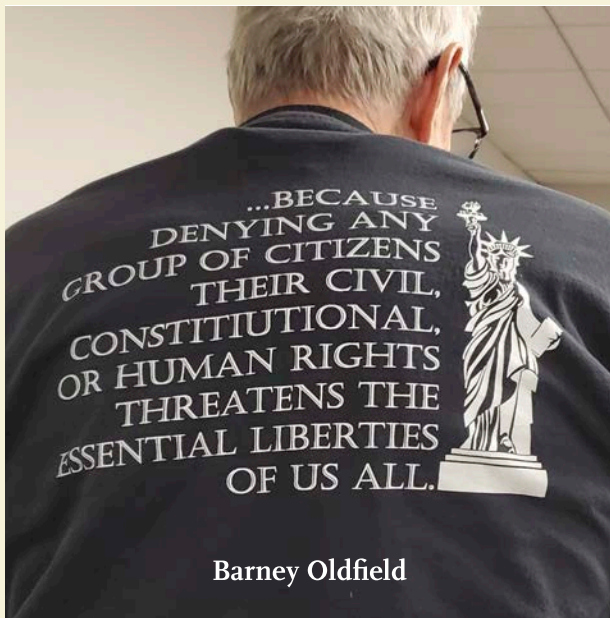
A Life Dedicated to Service and Second Chances

One of the stories you'll find within these pages: "An Old-Guy Story of Re-Entry," was written by 70-year-old Barney Oldfield, a beloved member of our community. We were so sad when our dear "Old Guy" returned to prison for a technical violation of his probation. He died in prison just a few short months later, one month before he was to be released.

Barney leaves behind a legacy of compassion, advocacy, and unwavering commitment to justice. After his release from prison, he worked tirelessly to create a more equitable society and to offer hope to those seeking redemption.

His Enduring Contributions:

- Provided vital testimony to the Arizona Legislature, helping to shape fair and effective policies
- Engaged in constructive dialogue with prison officials to improve conditions and opportunities for inmates
- Generously supported Arizonans for Rational Sex Offence Laws (AZRSOL), promoting evidence-based approaches and constitutional protections
- Offered personal assistance and guidance to countless individuals facing adversity



Each year we send holiday cards to over 500 men who are incarcerated. Barney spent a delightful afternoon at my home helping address cards. His love was put into every card he touched.

One favorite memory of Barney comes from our friend Maya:

Each year we send holiday cards to over 500 men who are incarcerated. Barney spent a delightful afternoon at my home helping address cards. His love was put into every card he touched.

Barney's belief in the inherent dignity of every person and his dedication to creating pathways for rehabilitation have touched many lives. His wisdom, courage, and generosity will continue to inspire us as we carry forward his vision of a more just and compassionate world.

As Bryan Stevenson said, "The true measure of our character is how we treat the poor, the disfavored, the accused, the incarcerated, and the condemned."

Barney embodied this principle in both word and deed. He will be deeply missed and forever remembered.

*Thanks, Barney,
for showing up
in our lives – you
made a difference!*

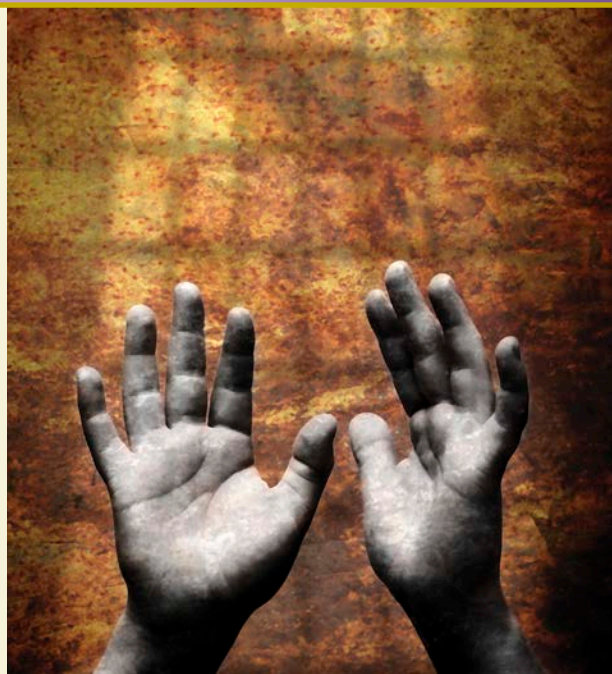
Robbed *Kenny*

My name is Kenny and I have been robbed. This state robbed me of my house, my business, my Harley, my truck and most importantly my family! I have owned two companies and also traveled around the world building the world's largest aquariums. Together my team and I broke six world records in the acrylic industry. I have never had any trouble in any other state or country I have ever been to....

When I came home from overseas I was happy not to have to travel anymore. My wife and kids were so happy. My father is very ill, I was helping him daily through his struggles. My mother was also happy I came home. Now they all regret that I ever came back to my own home town! My children are sad and cry for me to be with them. My wife struggles so hard to pay bills which she "cannot pay" and cries daily for me to come home. My father who used to save lives at Boswell Memorial hospital, but is now disabled also cries and tells me, "I wish you were here to help me." How is this possible? What happened to my rights? Now with a suicidal wife, a dying father and good children who are scarred for life, what can I do? The only reason I do not commit suicide myself is because I do not want to add to my family's misery!

I was arrested for sex crimes I did not commit. My wife (19 years) and my three children were homeless for 3.5 months. This state has made sure that I remain incarcerated until trial. I have no bond. How is this legal? ... This state has gone out of its way to split apart my family and my business! I was a taxpayer, a voter and an employer. I have no priors and no reason to run. Why can I not be out on pretrial services paying taxes and supporting my family? I am a loving family man that believes in God. This just proves to me [and] my family... that being honest, working hard at an honest living and voting means nothing.... They say why should I care, the "system" is perverted and there is no reason to vote or to contribute to a crooked unjust political scheme.

How is it that I am facing a "death in prison" sentence, not life, which is 124 years. This sentence is not humanly possible When I asked



the judge this she just looked at me and said "no it's not possible." ... I was offered a plea of 17-24 years and the state does not even have all of my "discovery" yet! How is this OK?

Even if I did every crime that is charged against me, in most other states I would have an "F-3" and the maximum sentence would be 5 to 7 years. I know someone that brutally murdered 2 people with a knife with uncountable stab wounds and

more than 5 priors including drug trafficking and violent robberies, and he got 17 years. On one of my court dates my family waited through another mans trial. [They] said this man violated a restraining order and premeditated attempt murder. He got 60 days county and

10 years probation.... Here in Lower Buckeye Jail I have seen many people with non violent sex crimes who have no priors, who can easily do probation, getting very high pleas.... How do I cope with this? What do I tell my children? What do I tell my wife? My parents?

Since I have been in this jail I have been unhealthy, depressed and borderline suicidal. ... We get fed once every 12 hours. It consists of bread, beans, rice, potatoes, & soy slop. All of this breaks down to sugar in our bodies. I have already had a friend in here die from lack of healthcare. I have never been so unhealthy in my life. I am reaching out with all of my heart to anyone that can help change this system. Please, help us!

*I am reaching out
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anyone that can help
change this system.
Please, help us!*



Lifetime in Prison on Paper

Sue Bowman

In 1984, my son John was arrested for sexual assault with a minor. He had consensual sex with a girl who told him she was 16; she was actually two weeks shy of 16. The Mesa Detective told us he did not have enough evidence to charge John. A year later, after he had turned 18, two deputies showed up at our home and arrested him. Seems the father of the girl had waited until John was an adult before pursuing the matter further. He was sentenced to 2.5 years in prison and two years probation. He served 15 months of his sentence. Three months after his release he was told he was required to register on the Sex Offender Registry.

When someone is sentenced to prison, probation, and a lifetime on the registry, the entire family goes with him. This Lifetime in Prison on Paper has been demeaning for John and for me. For instance, after he was put on the registry, many of my friends shied away from me. They never asked for the whole story; they just assumed the worst.

The list of things he can't do and places he can't go is long, all having to do with restrictions saying he cannot be anywhere children congregate: We can no longer have family gatherings at my home, we can't hold family picnics for a birthday, we can't go to the park. None of our family considers him to be dangerous. He spent time with his niece when she was a child; she has no concern about her daughter being around him, but that does not change the rules that have been arbitrarily put in place.

One of the many ways my life has been affected is demonstrated by our problems finding housing. For example: While John was in prison, I rented a one-bedroom apartment in Mesa. Three months before his release, I let the apartment manager know my son was coming home and we would need a two-bedroom apartment. The manager informed me that the rules state they cannot rent to "sex offenders." I had thirty days in which to find a new apartment and move. This was no easy task. Most apartment complexes and neighborhoods

with HOAs will not rent to "sex offenders". Finally I found someone who owned a duplex and was willing to rent to us.

Over the years we have been turned away from numerous rental properties. Finally, in 1999, I bought my own home in Phoenix, so I no longer need permission for John to live with me. After I bought my house, flyers were sent out letting the neighbors know a sex offender had moved into the neighborhood. Some neighbors would drive by and shout things like, "You're not welcome in our neighborhood!" Some will not speak to me. Although they haven't made direct threats to us, I always feel uncomfortable, knowing of their dislike of us and that they can cause us harm if they so choose.

When someone is sentenced to prison, probation, and a lifetime on the registry, the entire family goes with him.

Because of the prejudice against people on the registry, John has had trouble finding and keeping jobs, so he has been dependent on me for most of his adult life, including having to live with me. I am concerned about what will happen to him when I die, as I am his only source of support.

In 2016, he was charged with a technical probation and registration violation: failure to register as a sex offender in Pinal County. He was sent back to prison for 5.5 years (after being out for almost 30 years crime free.) So now, at age 74 I am back to visiting my son in prison, which is quite a hardship on me, both physically and financially.

We both feel victimized by the system that is in place. This is not justice. No juvenile should ever be put on the registry in the first place. John has never been a threat to society or to children; he has never been charged with another S/O crime. Yet he has been treated like a pariah his entire adult life, and by association, so have I. John's incarceration has cost Arizona taxpayers thousands of dollars, and for what? It has not made the public more safe. His case should be re-evaluated, as should others who have similar circumstances; after 33 years of being on it, surely he could safely be removed. It is time for these cruel, unjust, harmful laws to change.



In Memoriam *Greg Parr*

Greg, an artist who found purpose in adversity, passed away in 2024 while incarcerated for a sexual offense. Born on March 4, 1965, in Topeka, Kansas, Greg's life took an unexpected turn that led him to reevaluate his place in society and use his talents to support others facing similar challenges.

Despite the difficult circumstances of his later years, Greg's artistic abilities flourished. He became a valuable contributor to Arizonans for Rational Sex Offense Laws (AZRSOL), a non-profit organization dedicated to reforming sexual offense laws and supporting individuals affected by them. Greg's artwork made a significant impact, bringing comfort and connection to those who needed it most.

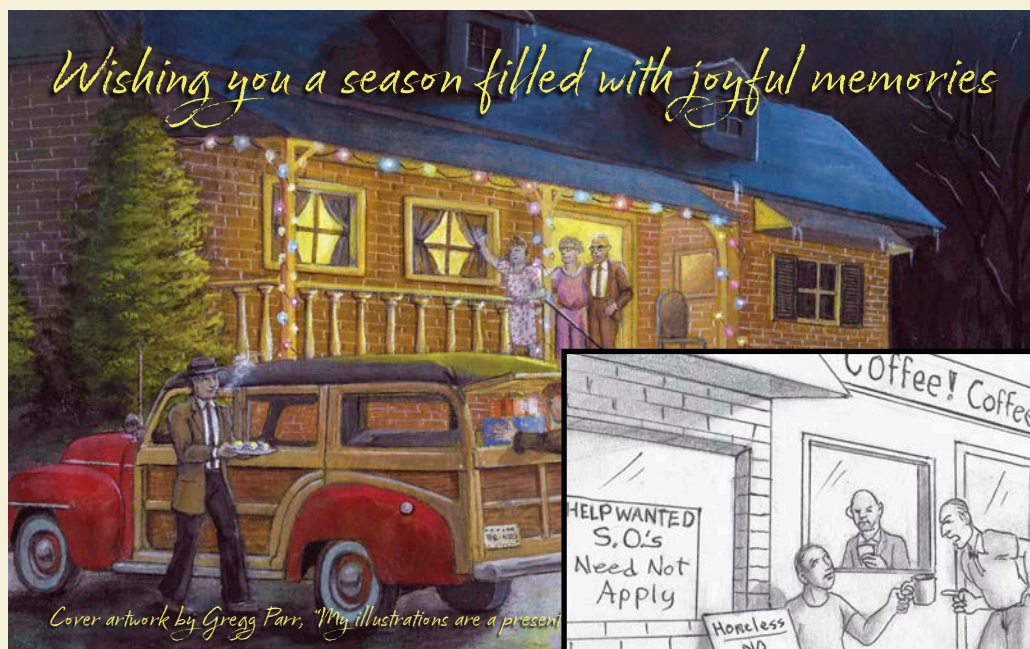
In his final year, Greg designed a touching holiday card that was sent to over 600 inmates in sexual offense units. This act of kindness provided a

moment of solace and human connection for many during a challenging time. Additionally, Greg's cartoon work helped raise awareness about the daily struggles faced by those on the registry, giving voice to experiences often overlooked by society.

*Greg's cartoon work
helped raise awareness
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While Greg's life took an unexpected path, his contributions to AZRSOL and his fellow inmates reveal a man who sought to make a positive impact, even in the face of personal hardship. His artwork became a powerful tool for communication, empathy, and reform.

As we remember Greg, we recognize the importance of understanding the full spectrum of human experiences. His story serves as a reminder of the power of art to transcend boundaries and the potential for individuals to contribute meaningfully to society, regardless of their past.





AZRSOL is the only Arizona non-profit providing support and advocacy for those living on the sexual offense registry, and we see the collateral consequences of Arizona's fear-based policies every day. That's why we strive to empower our members to live their best lives while working toward changing policies and creating safer communities.



For resources, reentry support, or other info contact:

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