

Sarah Houdek's Impact Statement

Spending time with my family is something that has always been very important to me! My family members are the type of people who are always there for each other; we have always been very close, like **"a group of friends"**. We always get together for birthdays, holidays, hunting, snowmobiling and a fishing trip every year since I was little.

When I received the early morning phone call on February 3rd, 2007 saying there was a family emergency ~ **"my life was forever changed in a way that is so unfair."** I was told to get out to my dad's house as soon as possible. Once all of the family was there; minus Tracy, Hilary, Alec and Zak. Brad Milbrath was put in the position to tell my family of the situation that took place at Tracy and Hilary's. At that time he did not know which one of the boys were there or not there (Alec or Zak). Once we figured that it was Zak that was not home that night, we had to go get him from his friend's house and break the news to him! **To have to tell a 10 year old that his father, brother and mother were all shot and that his father and only brother did not make it and his mother may not make it was unfair to all of us and especially him!**

I started to experience overwhelming feelings that I had never felt before! The pain was and still is unbearable. A total loss of feeling safe in my own home, the fear of being in the dark and alone, the sadness and the anger, the anxiety, loss of sleep and nightmares that will never end to this day! A constant knot in my stomach that is never ending. Being unable to stop crying for many days, breaking down on any given day. To this day I replay a vision that was instantly created in my own mind of what they went through that night! The feeling of my hands being tied behind my back, because I have not been able to do anything about all of this. So many questions that have been going through my head that will never be answered. Never being able to see my nephew grow up and become a man and get married and have a future family of his own. Feeling that I have no rights because of some coward that felt he had the **right** to decide the future of my family member's lives and end them and hurt so many others.

I feel such a loss of privacy and being put out there for the public to watch what we have been going through and them wanting to know how we are all feeling and what we all think of this. We are a simple family who never wanted to be watched by so many people. We understand there are a lot of people who care about us and want things to just be alright for us. No matter what anyone does for us, it will never change what that coward has done to all of us. ***The pain will remain forever!***

Watching Hilary struggle to stay alive, to see her ^{lose} loose her arm when she hadn't even come to yet and not knowing if she knew if she lost her husband and son. Watching her take two steps forward and three steps back for months on end before she became stable enough to live, brought great pain to me. Not knowing how she was going to be able to adjust to life without her other half and her first born son. I had to help plan my **own brother and nephew's funeral** and Hilary was not even conscious in the hospital yet when we were putting them into the ground! She never got to give them her final "good-by". She should have been the one to do those things, but that was taken from her also because of what he did! **Was that fair to her?**

I know in my heart that if he would have just asked for help ~ he would have received it!

I am pleading with you to give the coward what he deserves! In my eyes he deserves the maximum sentence for each charge consecutively not concurrent! That is the one and only thing that I can ask of you to do for me and my family! I fear, if the coward gets out too early, that my nephew Zak will be a young man trying to deal with the fact that the person who took his family away is free. I may not be around, but if I can help ease anything for Zak to try to live a comfortable life with as little fear possible, that is what I ask for. My family has to live with the loss of Tracy and Alec everyday for the rest of our lives, not by choice and I feel that he should live the rest of his life with the loss of being free, because he chose to do what he did and he should pay for it the rest of his life.

To be given this chance to have a say in how I feel and for it to have an impact on the outcome of how this coward will pay for what he did to my family and me is a

privilege that I am **not taking lightly!** It is the one and only way that I have felt my family can be heard on how we feel about him and what he did to us! Please know that this is coming from **our hearts** and it will help us repair all the pain and hurt that we have encountered because of him. It is important to our family, including Tracy and Alec, that you listen to what we have to say!