

An Open Letter to Rapist Brock Turner's Dad

Dear Mr. Turner,

I do understand why you wrote your comments—you were seeking to keep your son from going to jail. You love your son. That is good. But you see, his victim also has a father. And as a father of three amazing girls, if I were him and read your comments, I would want to ...

Not because you sought to keep your son from prison—from probably having the same thing done to him as he did to this young lady—but because in your plea for lenience, you did not even acknowledge the victim. You callously refer to his forcing himself on an unconscious woman as “20 minutes of action.”

What is amazing is that she doesn't even remember the *20 minutes of action* and yet she will be dealing with it the rest of her life. And based on this reasoning—“that is a steep price to pay for 20 minutes of action out of his 20-plus years of life”—I should be able to commit crimes for 51 minutes (for my 51 years) that damage the entire lives of others.

Can I shoot 51 people if I do it in 51 minutes? Can I rob a bank and keep the cash because I only robbed one bank in 51 years?

And what about alcohol? While alcohol abuse is a huge problem on college campuses, most people, the vast majority of people, do not commit sexual assault when they drink. And you have the audacity to suggest that he could travel (first class of course) and speak on college campuses about the dangers of alcohol—what danger? According to him and you, he committed no crime.

I think of Michael Vick, who has become an advocate for animal rights. But you see there are two big differences between your son and Vick. Vick did his time. And Vick expressed deep remorse for his sins. Your son has done neither. (A few months in county jail is nothing like prison.)

Again, I don't fault you for trying to keep your son out of prison—you're a dad—but you reveal yourself as a very poor one when you don't even acknowledge the victim. The pain and trauma caused by rape can last one's entire life. Feelings of guilt, blaming oneself, not being able to enter a healthy sexual relationship with her eventual spouse, constant fear that it will happen again, the shame of having police photograph her wounds and reliving the experience not only in nightmares but in waking hours.

Maybe you missed the victim's statement:

My clothes were confiscated, and I stood naked while the nurses held a ruler to various abrasions on my body and photographed them. The three of us worked to comb the pine needles out of my hair, six hands to fill one paper bag...

After a few hours of this, they let me shower. I stood there examining my body beneath the stream of water and decided, I don't want my body anymore. I was terrified of it, I didn't know what had been in it, if it had been contaminated, who had touched it. I wanted to take off my body like a jacket and leave it at the hospital with everything else. ...

After work, I would drive to a secluded place to scream. I didn't talk, I didn't eat, I didn't sleep, I didn't interact with anyone, and I became isolated from the ones I loved most. ...

Your damage was concrete; stripped of titles, degrees, enrollment. My damage was internal, unseen, I carry it with me. You took away my worth, my privacy, my energy, my time, my safety, my intimacy, my confidence, my own voice, until

today. ... I became closed off, angry, self-deprecating, tired, irritable, empty. The isolation at times was unbearable. You cannot give me back the life I had before that night either.

I can't sleep alone at night without having a light on, like a 5-year-old, because I have nightmares of being touched where I cannot wake up. I did this thing where I waited until the sun came up and I felt safe enough to sleep. For three months, I went to bed at 6 o'clock in the morning.

But your statement sounds like you actually blame the victim for ruining your son's life. No, your son ruined his own life when he decided to insert himself into an unconscious woman. Actually, in America, 20 minutes of action (read: rape) should get you 20 years of prison. This isn't ISIS. Sadly, we live in a day where people do not want to be accountable for their actions and parents enable and indulge their children. And it looks like your son won't have to give an account for his actions. At least not in this life.

God is a forgiving God, but only when we acknowledge our sins.
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