

Hello everybody, today we are here to talk about the murder of our only daughter Shannon. She was finishing her first year of graduate school when her life was suddenly taken from her. It was May 7th, 1998, Shannon had been up studying for her final exam the next day, when she had decided to get ready to take a bath. The assailant pried open her sliding screen door and attacked her. She started screaming for help but was strangled. Her neighbor called 911 and reported his neighbor screaming for help and choking noises. When the cops knocked on Shannon's apartment no one answered.

The next day Shannon didn't show up for lunch with her brother Shawn. Shawn then drove to her apartment and knocked on the door. When Shannon didn't answer Shawn went to her neighbor's door. The neighbor answered and told Shawn that he called 911 last night about it. They immediately ran upstairs and broke into Shannons' apartment, to then find her lying on her bed, naked. They called 911 again to report a dead body. The cops then came to the scene and called us. This was not a good thing to wake up to. A part of us died when we got the call. It hit us pretty quickly. We prayed a lot to be able to get through this tough time. We attended mass the next day. Let me tell you something that we say almost every day all of sudden became extremely hard to say, the Lord's prayer. I might have wanted the killer dead too but now I'm conflicted, I've never been through something this tragic before. I feel like I can't move like I'm in a come or something.

Sil and I started going to support meetings for families of murder victims, that was extremely hard, especially to see all the people we've gotten to be friends with hurt, they all have different feelings and different ways of expressing their grief. For us, we don't want him executed. If we wanted him dead it would take about 15-20 years for it to happen, we don't want this to last that long. It already took them 4 years for them to get a lead on the killer. He turned himself into the police, a 29-year-old male named Troy Graves, Philadelphia's Elusive Center City Rapist.

When we went to court he had a very strict district attorney to get through too. Lynn Abraham, a prosecutor who is known to be a pretty deadly district attorney in the city of Philadelphia, she wanted the death penalty right away, and we never wanted the death penalty. We had to fight for the life of our only daughter's killer. Yes, that is our decision, we could've just gone along with her but then we would have to live with the guilt of him being killed. That's just not right. Why should we struggle more? He's already never going to get out of jail, why should we add the extra pressure, the extra guilt on us, and his mother. We stuck to our principles, Lynn Abraham was extremely mad, she even went to the press about the situation. After she spoke out we got a lot of hate mail, complaining that we don't love our daughter, to me that just was terrible random people telling me that I don't love my only daughter. Disgusting, we went through a lot and I will always love my daughter no matter what.

She was a very loving human, she would do anything to help anyone. Taking the life of 29-year-old Troy Graves isn't going to do anything but hurt more people. We're here to raise awareness that no one should get the death penalty. I was able to reach out to Troy's mother and talk with her, she was so kind and generous, and she told me their story. After hearing what they went through, I can't imagine adding any extra pressure, extra guilt onto her, she has it terrible right now, and we can't think of ourselves at times like this. We need to stick together and do what's right for our society and our world. Shannon will be forever missed and thought of, but she would want us to move on and to make a change in the world since she couldn't. So please come with us on our journey to appeal the death penalty.