

Sean's Dad's Story as put by Elizabeth:

Friday, July 11, 2008

Sean's Daddy ~

Yesterday, the 10th of July, Sean's daddy and my son Michael, was sentenced to 9 months in jail and five years probation for being negligent to protect Sean.

My heart is saddened for Michael but also relieved that it is over. His sentencing is yet another step toward justice for our beloved Seanny.

Michael adored Sean. He adored all of his children. However Sean's death is a result of years of verbal, mental and physical abuse and manipulation toward his daddy by the monster who eventually murdered him. As is the case and reported by mostly women, Michael was a victim of domestic abuse which caused him to become beaten down and weak. So much so that he felt there was no way out and he felt at a loss in knowing how to protect his children. And he wasn't far from the truth. To date there are no resources as there are for women, for men who suffer abuse from their mates. Men are strong and able to handle all is the assumption and the expectation. But just as women who are caught in domestically violent situations, they are first and foremost human and can and do suffer from isolation, low self esteem and the feeling of worthlessness and helplessness from being weakened by their abusers. This is not an excuse, however it is a sad fact.

Michael has never denied that he did not do enough to protect his children. However he was not the abuser. He was the one who took Sean to the hospital, who never left his side and who has been devastated and continues to grieve on a level I can only imagine. His guilt is so that I am amazed (and grateful) that he has not taken his own life. He has admitted to his lack of action and his responsibility in his son's tragic death from the beginning and knew that he too must pay. His jail sentence is a mere drop in the bucket in comparison to the anguish and guilt he will hold onto for the rest of his life and the grief that will not end after losing all of his children. But unlike Sean's murderer, he has publicly and remorsefully admitted to the role he took leading to Sean's death tearfully stating many times throughout this past year, "I failed my children". He also voluntarily gave up his parental rights to his daughter's knowing that they deserve a better life. The monster continues to hold up their happiness with appeals that will prevent their adoption by the amazing, loving family with whom they have been blessed, for God knows how long.

Michael's attorney spoke a personal statement on Mike's behalf, but even the prosecuting attorney, Mrs. Tobin, (on a rare occasion) gave a personal statement as well. Saying that is rare for her to do so but that Michael was an exception. The judge also spoke of his disgust with the DHS for not doing their job in this case and that he would "shout it from the roof".

However, if there is any good news at all, it is that Lika the Lobbyist has stepped up and chosen Sean's story to launch a petition against male abuse and child abuse in Sean's name. She has begun the legislative process to institute change and to make all aware that men need programs and help in getting out of abusive relationships in order to protect their children from the abuse just as women do. She is currently writing the petition with Michael's help as well as my own. I will let everyone know more information as it becomes available.

I'll end now with the statement Michael read in court before Judge Foster handed down his sentence. I only wish you could actually hear this as he read it. It was very heartfelt and he choked and cried through it's entirety.

"Your Honor, Mrs. Tobin,

Everyone has regrets and choices in their life that they wish they could change or do over, do differently. I know I do! I just want to say, I love my children! I love them with all my heart! They were the most precious gift in my life and anyone who knows me knows how much I loved them. I made extremely bad decisions. I stayed in a very bad relationship in the hope that I could fix things, I could make everyone happy, or make everything OK as long as I never gave up trying. My judgment, my entire thinking process was clouded by years of verbal, mental, physical abuse and manipulation by a very ill woman. But never in my worst nightmares did I even think that all of this could ever happen. Like the saying, "Hind site is always 20/20". Now that I have had time to reflect and have been away from Crystal for some time. I realize now more than ever how beat down mentally I was. But I kept thinking to myself, I had a baby on the way, plus Angel and Sean and all I wanted was for us to be a family. And the harder I tried the worse Crystal would be. Of course I wish I had left her, but she made that almost impossible.

Whenever he threatened to leave with the children, she would literally physically beat herself up and dare him to leave threatening to call police and say, "Look what you did to me!" "Who do you think they are going to believe?" And he knew that he would be the one taken to jail.

Your honor I failed my son, my children. But I always loved them and I never hurt them. I tried my best with what I knew and what I thought at the time was possible. But always that wasn't enough. Losing my son, my daughter, my babies has crushed me! I can't imagine any kind of pain worse than that of losing your children. I would give my life in a heartbeat for the chance to change things, to leave Crystal and protect my son. That's my regret!"