

Judy's Law testimony  
Tess DeNiro  
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My name is Tess DeNiro, I am a Victim Witness Assistant with the Franklin County Prosecutor's office. I work with crime victim's every day, helping them through the court process, providing them support, and helping guide them to any resources they may need. Every victim of crime suffers, whether it be physically or psychologically, and they will always bear the scars of their traumatic experience. No matter the traumatic event, every crime victim struggles to regain their sense of normalcy. Some victims can seek medical care to help them heal from their injuries, others we can refer to counseling services for additional help. But for victims who suffer permanent disability or disfigurement, their battle to recover is so much more pronounced. Every day they wake up they must face themselves and face the world with the scars of their victimization immediately apparent. These victims are constantly and permanently reminded of the fear and of the pain they have had to endure. Their struggle to heal is not just internal, and drastically affects their daily lives as well as their quality of life.

From working as a Victim Witness Assistant, I have worked with a man who was shot multiple times by his wife, leaving him paralyzed. This man will be in a wheelchair for the rest of his life and can never go back to his normal life as a father to his two children. The defendant in this case pled guilty to felonious assault with a gun specification and was sentenced to 7 years. I have also worked with a rape victim who was shot in the stomach while fighting back against her attackers. The gunshot wound resulted in her having surgery and she will now need a colostomy bag for the rest of her life. This victim is still struggling with the psychological impact the trauma had on her, and now also has to deal with her lifelong medical condition. This case is currently still pending. Another case a father threw his 5 month old son against a wall. The child suffered traumatic brain injuries and has since regressed to the mental state of a 10 day old child. This child will never recover, and will need 24/7 medical care and assistance for the rest of his life. This case is still pending, and the father has been charged with felonious assault and endangering children. Then there is Judy, whose ex-boyfriend doused her in gasoline and set her on fire in August 2015. She has been in the hospital since the incident, with over 90% of her body burned. Even if Judy ever leaves the hospital she will never return to a normal life. Judy is permanently disfigured and will constantly have to fight and endure pain to do even the simplest of tasks. Judy will constantly be reminded of her worst moments on that day in August of 2015. Throughout the pendency of her case, I have personally witnessed the fear, sadness, and pain she has to go through on a daily basis. As we know, that defendant was sentenced to 11 years.

Through my work I have seen firsthand the physical and psychological affects these types of cases have on their victims, as they bring about a lifetime of pain, sadness, and trauma. These victims are dealt a life sentence and will never again regain their sense of normalcy.

Thank you for your time and attention on this important matter.