

Thank you for your time to listen to the victims that were created by the negligence of Ohio State University and the sexual deviancy of Dr. Richard Strauss. Please act on their behalf!

My name is Kent Kilgore and I was a walk-on swimmer for OSU in 1981 and a sexual abuse victim of Richard Strauss. I was 18 years old, the same age as OSU's incoming class of 2023.

A little bit about me. I was raised in a small city in Tennessee. My community was a tight-knit. It seemed everyone knew each other. My parents and grandparents raised me to be well behaved and mannerly. They expected me to show respect for Adults, Seniors', and all Authority figures.

I was a child that loved to please others and do the right thing. I was shy and reluctant to draw attention to myself. I was always playing with my friends in the neighborhood, eating dinner at their houses and sleeping over whenever I could. I aspired of becoming a gold medalist at the Olympics.

I competed (swimming/football/basketball/wrestling/track) on the same teams as my friends throughout high school. My friends and I enjoyed going to the mall and the movies after football games and swim meets. I remember the fun and antics in the locker rooms. Laughing and doing silly things friend and teammates do. I never worried about showering or changing in front of anyone. I was the kind of young adult that picked up my friends and drove them to early morning practice. Their parents trusted me to be safe and careful. I always helped my teammates when they were down. I would try to make friends anyone new - to make them feel more relaxed and accepted.

As I reached the end of high school, I decided that I wanted to become a teacher. My mother was and excellent teacher. I wanted to be the same. Attending OSU was an accomplishment for our family. My parents graduated from local colleges in Tennessee, but they wanted greater opportunities for their children.

As luck would have it, I was a good swimmer. I invested a lot of time in the sport. I made Junior National Cuts and was striving to qualify for Senior National and Olympic Trials. I remember, walking on to OSU's massive university and the swimming team. I had never seen so many pools in one place. Larkins Hall looked like a swimming mecca. I felt that OSU and its coaches could raise my swimming to the next level and its swimming program could help me make those swimming cuts and gain a quality education.

Through my 18-year-old lens, OSU was a powerful place. So many brilliant people in one place. To me, the size of the university, its professors, and the facilities reinforced the importance of those in charge. I thought, surely, those administrators in charge, at OSU, knew everything going on and had carefully vetted all practices they provided. I was in awe of the University and the people that ran it.

Also, my family felt moving to Ohio and attending THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY would help me achieve a college degree. I am a severe DYSLEXIC. My grades often suffered,

throughout my early education K-12, due to this learning challenge. The Ohio State University knew about Dyslexia and was a leader in the area. I was so excited to attend OSU and learn how to compensate for my challenges.

Just a few weeks after walking-on to the team, I had a mandatory physical that changed my life. The things that happened to me in that room, with Dr. Strauss and at the hands of OSU. should never happen to anyone!

The day after my abuse via OSU and Strauss, I waited. I hoped that someone had heard or seen something and that they would act. Practice after practice- I heard nothing- I felt only despair. Soon I became angry, depressed and quit school, swimming and forfeited my dreams. I walked away from my goals of an education; becoming a teacher and obtaining my Trial cuts in swimming. I just packed up my bag and walked away from swimming and a few weeks later I quit school. I just walked away from it all. I wanted to get as far away from Strauss and OSU as I could. I couldn't believe that this was the way OSU allowed its athletes to be treated by one of their most trusted doctors/professors...Strauss.

My encounter with Strauss and OSU's negligence to stop him, changed my career, life and view of the world. I left school and held various jobs that I quit for one reason or the other. I developed a complete lack of trust for authority figures. I carry that lack of trust today.

I have developed a deep anger that stems from being assaulted and violated by OSU and Strauss- a so called esteemed authority figure. My anger almost took my family and career due to my sudden outbursts of anger that affected my job and scare my wife and son.

I have extreme anxiety issues and countless, sleepless nights. I lay awake compartmentalizing my anger and try to bury the hurt behind very heavy, fortified doors. **I am not the same person after the negligence of OSU and the abuse of Richard Strauss.** I do not trust. My world is now harsh and skeptical. I feel all authority figures have angles and that you must keep an eye on them. I have anger that is instilled in me as a result of OSU failure to stop Strauss. I never had such a view of the world until OSU and Strauss.

I can still see that mans face and smell his breath.

Last-year my son was going through a very difficult time. As he was crying, I could not act to comfort him. I was not capable of giving him the affection he needed. I could not hug him or tell him I loved him and that it would be ok.

He screamed out: "you never hug me; you never tell me that you love me; you don't show me any affection...nothing!" I stood there paralyzed – unable to act. I had spent so many years suppressing my emotions, I could not act to help my own son when he needed it the most. As a direct result, I caused him real harm.

I have not allowed a doctor to do a physical on me until this year. **That is over 35 years.** I could not bring myself to allow anyone to touch me in that region again. I would not put myself in that

position again. I can not be in another examination room with a male doctor that pulls up chair and sits down in front of me. I can not bring myself to trust another doctor. I do not have faith doctors are who they say they are. I can't trust that they will professional, because I know that doctors are not always what they appear to be. I refuse to be compromised again.

I have intentionally ignored my health for many years. I have allowed conditions to go well beyond a reasonable time to treat them. These conditions caused me serious pain. I chose to endure the pain, rather than go to another doctor. I prayed my conditions would improve/disappear. I would not have another doctor near me -especially in that area where I was abused by Strauss. Subsequently, I left the conditions alone for decades.

As my health situation became much worse - I felt I was cursed. I did not understand why I was being forced to go to *another* doctor that would touch me and examine me- like Strauss did. I felt God was playing a cruel joke. I wondered what I had done to deserve this situation?

Hadn't I gone through enough already? I felt I was being forced into the same situation as I was years ago -with Strauss. I still held out and waited 26 years to get the courage to see a doctor.

The only person that convinced me to finally see a doctor was my wife. She told me that there were other people to live for; other people that wanted me around. She told me that we were creating new memories and would over write the old. She opened my mind and I realized that I would not allow Strauss or my University to kill me!

I ***finally*** married my best friend at the age of 52. She has stood by my side and has not waived. I feel my wife save me. She goes to every doctors' appointment with me and even stays in the exam rooms. She holds my hand and never left my side through my first surgery to relieve that long lasting condition which caused me great pain for decades.

Last year, I read the Coie/ Perkin Report. The Predator -Strauss -was finally exposed. The Abuser, the destroyer of young innocence that roamed Larkins Hall for decades. I felt vindication. However, I never needed a report to verify what I already knew!

Curiously my feelings of vindication turned to confusion and anger when I read how many victims followed me. I was stunned. So many athletes across multi-sports were abused by HIM. I am still angry at OSU for allowing this predator to walk freely in their halls for so many years. How can such a Prestigious University not have oversight to catch such flagrant abuse of *their* students and *their* athletes? This reality was overwhelming.

I also noticed looking back at my time at OSU, there existed a disproportionate unequal power of authority: Not only the patient/doctor relationship was unequal with Strauss but the unapproachable Coaches/athletes relationship and OSU itself- the administration. They ALL knew WE were being sexually molested and nonchalantly looked away as if we did not matter. We DO matter!

I felt there would be consequences If I rocked the boat. As a freshman on the team I felt I had very little standing or position. My job was to follow along, keep my mouth shut, and learn the ropes. I felt after 3 previous conversations with Coach Sloan, who was curt and loud, that he was someone I could not approach.

I felt intimidated and if I made waves and be asked to leave the team. I felt as a freshmen swimmer, that if I created problems, I stood to lose my position on the team- my education -my pride and of course there was the embarrassment and stigma that goes along with being a sexual abuse victim- especially a male sexual abuse victim.

Remember I was raised to respect authority and I believed the OSU administration was there to watch and protect. I left OSU a much-changed person.

Daily I regret my lack of action and try to cope with my lack of trust of authority. I offer my deepest apologizes to all the athletes that came after me.

Each day I contemplate: “What if?” “What if I had just picked up that little man and smashed him into the wall. What if, I had thrown him out of the room and exposed him for what he was and what he did.”

Then Strauss would have been exposed and the abuse might have ended with me.

I did not fully gain an understanding of the extent of damage caused by my lack of action against Strauss and OSU until I read the total number of sexual abuse victims in the Coie/Perkin report. **If I had just done something, anything, Strauss’s reign of terror would have been over and so many would not have suffered. I am sorry for letting all you down!**

I would gladly take all your pain. I live with the stress created by my “lack of action.” My grief and anxiety for not acting is the cross I will bare for the rest of my life.

I do not want anyone else to suffer the guilt I endure due to my lack of action! OSU clearly knew they had a sexual predator on campus, and they failed to protect the innocent. OSU knows now (they always knew) many have suffered as a result of their lack of action. We need people to act- get involved- do something.

Please do not make my mistake and sit idle and wait. Please do not make the same mistake as OSU and ignore the facts.

Please support Bill 249 and message that sexual abuse will no longer be tolerated or condoned.

Take action, do something, do anything, because your action will cause others to act.

Thank You;

Kent Kilgore

