

My name is Leanna Rocheleau and on August 17, 2021 I was sexually assaulted by a massage therapist Daniel Sharfal at the grand resort hotel and spa in Warren, Ohio.

I think it's important that you understand exactly what that meant.

It was more than just him exposing my body breasts - it was him showing me he could. It was more than him touching the most intimate and vulnerable parts of my body. It was a power move. It was strategic.

The actual assault happened within the first 15 minutes of the massage.
Which was calculated.

He planned on that so that the remaining 45 minutes and He could take Whatever voice I had left.

I've decided to take the opportunity to give myself a gift today one I hoped would always come but never did.

I took the initiative to draft a letter to myself as if the system and everyone involved had written it to me.

Just a warning there's lots of "I'm sorry's" because the system has a lot to apologize for.

Dear Mrs. Rocheleau,

You were right.

I believe you.

Your experience, feelings and impact this has had on your life is all validated.

I'm so sorry this happened to you.

I'm sorry you had to fight so hard for someone to hear you.

I'm sorry the managers at the spa blamed you for not getting up and leaving.
I'm sorry they didn't offer to call the police.

I'm sorry about the shame and guilt you had to overcome. The intense self-anger and internal battle constantly questioning about why didn't you just get up, why couldn't you scream out for help. That must have been life altering.

I'm sorry we didn't understand what the freeze response was.

I'm sorry you've had to spend hundreds of hours and thousands of dollars in therapy figuring that out.

I'm sorry you have to wear armor now when you were once soft and gentle to strangers.

I'm sorry the prosecutor didn't think your truth was enough to pursue criminal charges against him.

I'm sorry it took another victim for the medical board to take action.

I'm sorry it took them 3 years to investigate. That must have been maddening.

I am sorry the medical board called it a classic "he said she said case" and only placed him on probation.

That must have been devastating.

I'm sorry you had to expose your truth to the world so you could validate your instincts that there were more of you.

I'm sorry to the 13 other women that came forward.

I'm sorry we didn't believe you and could have prevented this tragedy.

I'm sorry that the second investigation is taking just as long.

I'm sorry we all know he is a predator and we cannot suspend his license to prevent anyone else harm.

I'm sorry that we didn't have a system in place already that would allow law enforcement and the medical board to share information.

I'm sorry for how many times you had to cry in the closet or the bathroom so your kids wouldn't worry

I'm sorry you vomited and lost out all faith in the system when his probation was completed.

I am sorry about this traumatic experience almost costing you your marriage.
I am sorry about the many times you were unable to be present with your babies because something triggered you and you needed to retreat to a safe space.

I am sorry that we aided in your trauma.

I am sorry that we failed you so many times

But mostly I'm sorry that you will never hear someone say these things to you.

We will do better, We won't make this mistake again.

It is with sincerest and deepest regrets,

The system

I know for some of you here today you know and can feel exactly what I know and have felt and that was the motivator for you becoming a representative for the house to try and make the world a better place through legislation. I urge you to fast track this.

To the ones who don't know what it's like to have your world dismantled. Be grateful. I yearn for my ignorance before this.

I hope some day to learn from you and help aide in further legislation. I've found purpose for my trauma and its to help make it better for the next person who stands in my shoes.

Thank you for your time today.