

My name is Miranda LeBoeuf and I am 35 years old. I'm a lifetime resident of Washington County Ohio. I was born and raised in a very small village town. I would like to thank the members of the committee for giving me the opportunity to speak here today in effort to support Erin's law. I am a rape Survivor. My father was a serial rapist who was arrested in December of 2019. He was originally indicted for 20 counts of rape with 7 victims. Later, they added an additional two counts of rape to the indictment with two more victims. This brought the total to 22 counts of rape with 9 victims. Now please consider these are just the victims that were willing to participate in the investigation and that are on file. I believe his true number of victims to be closer to 50 simply from the people that have reached out to me and being able to look back at my childhood through adult eyes. The counts on file range from the year 1991 through 2012.

As a child, I always thought he was a superhero and my best friend. It is my belief that he started to groom me at birth. He appeared to be an extremely nurturing father to the outside world.

I would like to take you on a walk through my childhood. Please close your eyes and imagine what I am about to say.

I was in kindergarten and we had a wood carving shop in the basement of our house. He would make lots of things but his favorite was wood staff. These were long walking sticks basically. He would always ask me to rub the staff with it enclosed in my hand "to be sure it was smooth enough and not give anyone any splinters" while he was rubbing my back and legs. His favorite staff had a cobra head and was carved out of hickory wood. In the process of making it, I vividly remember him beating on numerous things with it to "test its durability." Then he would say things like "This will work just fine if anyone ever comes between our "special love". I was 6 years old and all I knew was he said he loved me.

I was in 1st grade and he was charged with Gross Sexual Imposition for inappropriately touching me and another little girl. They would end up putting me on the stand and asking me questions about "sex" and "abuse". I remember denying all of those accusations simply because I was taught that what we had was "special" and "love". He had told me numerous times that no one would understand because we were closer than the average father and daughter. That others would try to separate our entire family if they knew what we were doing. It would result in my siblings and I going to foster care and being separated to never see each other again. I was 8 years old and all I knew was I didn't want to live all alone without my family.

I was in 2nd grade and the case was coming to an end. I was laying on a leather couch in the downstairs of the court house, waiting to hear the jury's verdict. It was a mistrial due to a hung jury. He said the other little girl's story changed so many times that no one could figure out whether or not to believe her. I remember him congratulating me on "keeping our family together" and being brave enough to keep the "secret bond" we had. He ended up taking a plea deal for contributing to the delinquency of a minor to avoid a 2nd jury trial and was only sentenced to 60 days in jail. I was 9 years old and all I knew was I got to return home with my family and we would all still be together.

I was in 3rd grade and he had just tied up all the loose ends from the trial. I remember him telling me that I had become his “best friend”. This meant we would now be closer than we had ever been. We could explore a new level of “love” and “bonding”. This was him teaching me to “please my future man”. I was 10 years old and all I knew was I now had a best friend.

I was in 5th grade and started to have interest in a boy who lived right below us. I remember telling my father that I thought he was cute and wanted to share my “special” skill set with him. He urged me not to because I was not good enough yet to be “ready”. He was sure that I would do such a bad job and the boy would never like it or talk to me again. I was 11 years old and all I knew was I liked a boy.

I was in 6th grade and went to my 1st sleep over at my friend’s house. I remember watching her interact with her father very closely trying to determine what their relationship was like behind closed doors. I remember trying on different dresses with her. Her mom helped us get in and out of them. That was enough for me to walk away thinking I was closer to my father than she was with hers. I was 12 years old and all I knew was my father was the one who would always help me in and out of my dresses.

I was in 7th grade and We moved back to town. This is where I would finish out my schooling. I had a “cool” father. He would allow me and all of my friends to do whatever we wanted inside the home. This would include smoking cigarettes and marijuana. He also allowed us to drink alcohol and take pills from his “magic pill bottle”. He had an extensive porn collection that we had access to whenever we wanted. I was 13 and all I knew was I liked to get high and drunk.

I was in 8th grade. My father never let me out of the house to hang out with any of my friends without his supervision. There was another boy that I liked that lived on the opposite side of town. I decided, since I walked to school everyday, that I would start to leave earlier and walk to this boy’s house so that I could prove I liked him. One morning, I was walking with him to school and my father drove by us. He never stopped or said a word. I remember being so distracted at school all day knowing I was going to be in trouble. When I got home that evening there was a note on the table that said “You have just returned to being 15 years old.” I remember it like it was yesterday, I was devastated. I knew that he was going to be so mean to me going forward and wasn't going to allow me to do anything that I enjoyed with my friends. I was 15 years old and all I knew was I was in trouble.

Shortly after having numerous parties at my house, I would grow to realize I was no longer the only person he had this “special bond” with. I figured out that my father was basically using me as bait for other teenage girls. He would get us intoxicated so it would be easier to take advantage of us all. Then, he would also use us being wasted as a means to keep us all quiet. No teenager wants to admit to their own parents that they got drunk at a friend’s house.....Let alone admit that they had been raped. He did a great job of convincing all of us that we were the only one and no one would ever believe us if we tried to tell. My father was an upstanding citizen who seemed to be very well liked by a lot of powerful and dangerous people in our town.

He was great at keeping face in public and appearing to be a great role model to all of us children. Most people in town felt their children were safer at my house compared to most. With time, I would switch my friend circle to mostly guys simply because I thought they were safe at his hands. I would become one of the “boys”. As soon as I was legally allowed, on my 18th birthday, I moved out of my father’s house.

I personally struggled with many things that are typical for survivors of rape. I developed migraines at a very young age compared to most. I appeared to be the “near perfect” child which often left me feeling very overwhelmed when I was unable to keep up the facade. I was a very promiscuous young adult with terribly unhealthy sexual practices.. This resulted in having numerous sexually transmitted infections that luckily were all treatable. I just wanted someone to actually “love” me for once. I struggled with working memory and self-control. I ended up very depressed with anxiety through the roof. I had a great deal of difficulty trying to build social relationships. When I would make a social connection, I would immediately withdraw. I am still, to this day, hypervigilant no matter where I am. Even with my father locked away for the next 25 years, I rarely feel safe anywhere including in my own home. I struggled with substance abuse most of my adult life. By the grace of God, I am finally sober. My PTSD controls my life based on what day it is.

It wasn’t until I got sober and started self-reflecting that I even began to realize all of these things were connected to my sexual abuse. My soon to be ex-husband was the very first person I ever actually told out loud with words. My entire life was falling apart and I needed him to understand what was actually going on at the root of all of my issues.

I strongly believe that had I been taught personal body safety as a young child, my life would have been completely different. If I would have had the words and knowledge to actually know what was happening to me then maybe I could have also prevented other victims. I have a ton of regret and guilt associated with my childhood that I now understand doesn't even belong to me. It belongs to my father instead. Even as an educated grown adult, I still have days where all of these negatives are a risk to my mental health. Statistically, I should be dead. I have to be sure to stay extra self aware in order to thrive at life in general. It is my goal to speak for those who have not found their voice yet. Most, simply put, only know what they are being told by their abuser. With Erin’s Law, we have the opportunity to change that narrative. We can let them know what is actually happening to them is not their fault and that we will keep them safe. They need to know that they are not alone and this is a much bigger problem in the world than anyone is willing to discuss. We can teach them the difference between a safe secret and a dangerous one. We can teach them the difference between a loving touch and a sexual touch.

I have two children of my own. They are 11 and 15. I want them to grow up knowing that only they have total control over their own bodies and to love themselves regardless of anyone else’s narrative. I would much rather they lose their “innocence” through education as opposed to the world taking it through personal experience. I want my children to be educated in all avenues of life so they are capable as teens and young adults to make safe and proper decisions.

I hope that hearing my story today allows you to realize no other children deserve to have this as their life. Kids deserve to be happy and loved properly. Thank you for your time and consideration today. I appreciate all of you. God bless You and Yours. From Me and Mine. Thank you again!