

Twenty years, eight months, and one day ago, on December 30, 1999 you made a choice. You chose to go with two other men and change the course of so many lives, including your own. You are one of three men responsible for taking two innocent girls lives. You could have done something to stop it. You could have called and reported that you were a part of something awful, but you did not. Instead, you continued to be a part of the unthinkable things our girls endured before you were a part of ending their lives. You had a choice.

They were young and beautiful, but you know that. They were innocent, but you and your other buddies took that from them. They did nothing to you. *They did not owe you or anyone else anything.* Their lives were only just about to begin. You took that. They didn't have a choice.

Our lives changed. The pain you have brought to us is indescribable. It's unfair. Because of your choices, we don't sleep. We don't have a single day that we aren't searching. We don't walk into a crowd, first without looking for her, and then wondering if every person in the crowd could cause us more harm. We don't allow our other children to go to sleepovers, have play dates, or trust anyone to be near them. We have nightmares. We mourn every single day and will continue to do so until the day we can bring the girls home, and then we will mourn in another way. We don't have a choice.

You took a daughter away from a mother and father, a sister from a brother. You took a niece and a cousin. She had an enormous extended family who loved her. Lauria wasn't just a friend at a sleepover. She was ours! Lauria was our blood. She should have graduated high school. She should have gotten married and had a family. Your choices took that from her and your choices took that from us. She was not yours for the taking, but you did it anyway. When you took her though, you messed with the wrong girl. You see, though you stole her from us and all of her future from us, you will never steal our memories of her. They aren't tainted by the awful things you did to her. You aren't allowed to take the joy she brought us. You aren't allowed to take the good dreams we have of her. The same goes for Ashley. You cannot take the memories of her. You cannot take the joy she brought her family. And will fight for them to the death. We will never go away. We will be in your every thought. You will always know that if you ever do get out of prison, we will still be here. We won't go away. How do you sleep at night? I hope that your every night is

sleepless and that you spend the rest of your days thinking about what you did.

Choices. We are all faced with them every day. You made your choice then, and you've made it now because the girls are still missing. So because of that, the court will make the choice of how you will live out your remaining days. And we, the family of Lauria Bible, are faced with the choice of forgiveness. That's a tough place to be because forgiving you could mean betraying her. Would she forgive you? The answer is yes. She would have forgiven you if she had had the chance. She was a child of God. She was washed in His blood and was the daughter a King. So are we. And so, we will forgive you. That does not mean that we are okay. We will never be okay. That does not mean that we can ever forget the things you've done. But we choose not to be filled with hatred and bitterness. We will not be stuck in this moment. We forgive you so that we may free ourselves to move on. You have no power over us. We give you grace so that we may feel peace.

The Bible says, in Romans 13 verse 19 Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. The Scriptures say, " I will take revenge; I will pay them back, " says the Lord.

We will trust in the Lord.

Month after month when we have entered this court room, you have looked at us. You have made certain to make eye contact with each one of us before moving on to the next. You have wrung your hands. We see you. Now, take your final look at us. Lock eyes with each of us as you have so many times before. This time, make sure you see Lauria's face in each one of us. You do not win today. Justice wins and she lives on in each member of this family. Ring your hands in those shackles and know that those hands, your hands, that took her and Ashley away from us, will forever have the blood of two teenage girls and two adults on them. Remember that every time you rub your face with your hands. Every time you look in the mirror, know that your eyes were some of the last to see the girls alive and see the evil in your own eyes, as we do. This is the end of a chapter for us as you finally go to prison, but this is not the end of the girls story. We will prevail. We will find them, no matter what. They will forever be remembered as two beautiful angel's. You will always be remembered as a kidnapper, a murderer, and an evil man who didn't, for

twenty years, eight months, and one day make the choice to be a decent human being. May God have mercy on you.

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