

November 28, 2009. It was the Saturday after Thanksgiving. That was the night Kraig Kahler shot and killed my sister, Karen, my two nieces, Emily and Lauren, and shot and mortally wounded my Grandma, Dorothy, who died of her injuries on December 1. It happened at my Grandma's house in Burlingame. That was the day my life changed forever.

I'd like to tell you a little bit about these women, starting with Grandma, Dorothy Wight.

She loved her family and was proud of her grandchildren and great grandchildren. She was generous, kind, smart, and loved to read. I love to remember the stories she shared about growing up in Burlingame and playing the sousaphone in the high school band. There are so many great memories of the times spent at her house. Every afternoon, at 3 o'clock she would take a Sousie Mocha International Coffee break. Even now, when I really miss her, I like to take a few minutes at 3 o'clock and have coffee with Grandma. She was the glue that held our family together and it was at her house where our families would gather for holidays and celebrations. Kraig took that away from us.

Karen was my big sister. She was smart, talented, creative and so much fun. She loved her family and offered encouragement and support in all their various activities. Karen was my resource to call when I couldn't figure out what to make for dinner. She'd ask what I had in the cupboard and then come up with something delicious. We would spend lots of time on the phone since we lived so far apart. My husband, Tim, would ask what on

earth we talked about for so long and my response was almost always, “Nothing!” When we did get together in person it was always fun and full of adventure. Even if it was just a trip to the grocery store. She was my sister, my best friend, and I miss her.

Emily was just 18 when she was killed. She had just started her first semester at the St Louis College of Pharmacy. Even though the family moved from Texas to Missouri her senior year of high school, she continued to excel academically and made friends easily. Her life was cut short that day and I miss her sparkle.

Lauren, 16, was my goddaughter. She was an awesome kid, super creative, and a little quirky. She loved jell-o and sushi for dinner and converse shoes. She was smart, a great friend, and always up for adventure. I miss her so much.

This nightmare started on November 28, 2009.

Since then, there has been a trial, a conviction, an appeal to the KS Supreme Court, an appeal to the US Supreme Court, and a 1507 motion. It is now 2024. Kraig Kahler’s sentence has been affirmed but it has yet to be carried out. There is no finality. He killed 4 people. There is no question that he did it and he needs to suffer the consequences of his conviction.

Kraig was able to pay for his own defense by using his own funds, but by the end of the trial he ran out of money. Now, he is considered indigent and the State of Kansas taxpayers are paying his appeals. I resent that.

Living through the initial trial was awful; listening to expert testimony, autopsy reports, and the Life Alert recording from that night. Now, there is a non-evidentiary hearing scheduled to take place in the next few months to argue the 14 points of the 1507 motion. It has been scheduled once, and has already been continued twice. This extended appeal process is emotional, stressful, and painful. Every time there is a new appeal, it tears open old wounds, making it feel fresh and raw. It has also been brought to my attention that Kraig has the right to attend this hearing and will most likely be there. So he gets to take a field trip. From Death Row. On taxpayer money. Again, I resent that.

Many family members who were directly affected by Kraig's selfish actions that awful night have passed away since this nightmare began. I resent that they were not able to see his sentence carried out.

All these years later, there is still no end in sight for finality - for justice - for Grandma, Karen, Emily and Lauren.

Please thoroughly and gravely consider this house bill 2782 on behalf of all the victims and their families.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to share my thoughts.



