

Hi, my name is Sandra Carmichael and I am a survivor of homicide and parent. My heart felt prayers to our Newtown families and all those who too have been affected by gun violence.

On October 23, 1993, the unimaginable tragedy struck my family. My 21 year old brother, Anthony was murdered by someone he knew, lived in the same community and according to witnesses was under the influence of a controlled substance, PCP. According to street paroled police officers, they saw what looked like were two people running, but it was my brother being chased down by his murderer. Five shots were fired @ 2:20 am. My brother was shot with 3 of the 5 bullets; twice in the back and once in the chest with a .38 caliber revolver. He collapsed on the front steps of my mother's home after knocking on the door.

When I received that call, I was in a state of shock. The drive from Bridgeport to Stamford seemed like the longest drive ever. At the time, cell phones were not as popular as they are today, so, we couldn't get any information until we arrived at Stamford Hospital. My brother expired at 2:50 am.

I have little memory of planning and attending my brother's home going service due to the trauma. When I finally grieved my brother's death, it was 6 years later when my neighbor's husband died from a motorcycle accident.

My brother's murderer is a repeat offender. On March 1988 to July 1989, he was charged with 2nd degree assault and on January 1991 to March 1993, he served time for drug possession convictions. The murder of my brother was only 7 months prior to his last release date.

On December 15, 1994; 13.5 months after my brother's death, the murderer was arrested in Carthage, NC hiding in his aunt's closet. He was sentenced to 20 years on August 29, 1996 after being found guilty on 1st degree manslaughter by reason of emotional disturbance. Thirteen years later, he was released to the Supervision Board of Parole on January 12, 2007. We wasn't aware of his eligibility for parole due to a glitch in the system, but, was given a heads-up after receiving a telephone call from the Stamford Police Department. However, he was returned back to the Department of Corrections in Bridgeport on January 22, 2007 for technical violations, but, was later granted parole on or after May 18, 2009 and his final release on December 21, 2009. He was no longer considered an inmate. He was 5 years short of his 20 years sentence and had the green light to be integrated back into society. I was devastated and felt like my brother was murdered all over again.

Last June 17th was a really hard time for me when it should have been joy, happiness and celebrations. My husband and I celebrated 23 years of marriage, it was Father's Day and what would have been my brother's 40th birthday.

My immediate family seldom talk about my brother. A few years ago, my mother shared with me how difficult it is to have to bury your own child. Honestly, I can't even imagine it.

Please remember urban violence and murders while you make these decisions. Newtown is in every town in Connecticut. I hope and pray that for those who are responsible for making decisions about gun safety and violence that it is the right choice being made so that our murdered victims/family members can continue to rest in peace.

Thank you.