

A letter to a killer

As I can't believe anyone who truly knew our daughter, Jenn, could have murdered her, I have to assume you were just a casual acquaintance of hers – someone she would say “Hi” to, perhaps talk to at a party or, unfortunately, someone she felt she knew well enough to take a ride from.

Since you didn't know Jenn well, and as her killer I feel you should, let me introduce her to you.

As Jennifer grew into a wonderful young woman known as Jenn, did you know that she:

- ∴ was afraid of spiders;
- ∴ cried over sad movies and books;
- ∴ was never a morning person;
- ∴ could never get or give enough hugs;
- ∴ named her truck Percy after an invisible friend she had as a child;
- ∴ loved grilled cheese sandwiches, ice water and milk;
- ∴ survived a very serious accident a year and half before you murdered her;
- ∴ collected unicorns and stuffed animals;
- ∴ got her tongue stuck on a frozen metal flagpole;
- ∴ loved to write and play volleyball;
- ∴ earned her Canada Cord;
- ∴ had a sweet tooth like her father;
- ∴ played the flute and guitar;
- ∴ was living with her aunt and uncle while attending Okanagan College. She was on her way home to babysit their kids while preparing for two exams and an oral presentation the morning you murdered her;
- ∴ had just become a Trekkie;
- ∴ didn't like to be called Jenny;
- ∴ loved loud music and loved to dance;
- ∴ was open and outgoing and always able to see the best in people;
- ∴ wanted to visit the Bahamas after her grad this June;
- ∴ was a bridesmaid at a wedding we attended the weekend before you killed her;
- ∴ loved to curl up with a book and her favorite comforter or get together with friends and watch videos or play cards;
- ∴ never said goodbye. She didn't like the word;
- ∴ would have been 20 on Easter Sunday;
- ∴ would spend hours discussing spiritual beliefs with her dad;
- ∴ had a cat named Color Crayon;
- ∴ liked to wear gold rings on one hand and silver on the other;
- ∴ found her high school grad dress in a wedding shop. Appropriate, wouldn't you say, since you've effectively removed any chance of her ever becoming a bride now;
- ∴ was trying to stop smoking;
- ∴ lived in rural communities and small towns most of her life;
- ∴ was a creative speller;
- ∴ made great crepes;
- ∴ was in a line-dancing competition with three other friends. The group called themselves the Chaka Mika Kickers;

∴ would always knock on our bedroom door when she came in late to let us know that she was home and to say good night and tell us she loved us.

Sometimes my anger at what you've done surfaces with such force that I feel it can actually touch you – destroy you.

Sometimes I think about how twisted or tormented you must be - how badly you need help before this happens again.

As I face my first Mother's Day in 20 years without my daughter, I want you to know how extremely proud I am to have been Jenn's mother and how fortunate I am to have had the time I did with her; that despite being left with the emptiest feeling I've ever felt in my life, I'm able to find some comfort in the wonderful memories - memories your vicious act will never destroy.

I also want you to know that I still say good night every evening to my daughter and tell her I love her. Now, however, thanks to you, I add – usually with tears running down my face –
“I miss you.”

Another letter to a killer

Jenn's Dad, Terry, asked me to write you another letter...

Jenn was 19 when you ended her life on October 16, 1993. Years ago when Jenn was quite young I wrote something that I feel a need to share with you today -

Jennifer opened one sleepy blue eye. The first thing she saw was her best friend Nicey who was just opening his one enormous eye - he had lost his other eye under very mysterious circumstances. Jennifer smiled a good morning to her furry, blue friend and lazily opened her other eye. Nicey acknowledged the greeting with a grunt. He loved his Jennifer very much but he wasn't one to get mushy about it.

Jennifer stretched her arms and wiggled her toes. Today was going to be a big day. Her bunny nuzzled her cheek and she gave him a big hug-squeeze. She pulled her bluebird's tail and listened to him chirp.

Jennifer sat up; rubbed the sleepy dust from her eyes and opened her mouth wide in a yawn. Bunny tickled her toes and she giggled. What a funny bunny she had. She shoed bunny to the end of her crib where Nicey was regarding them with his one eye. Bunny hopped onto Nicey's lap and gave his big belly a bunny-whisker rub. Jennifer laughed out loud. She laughed even harder when Nicey tumbled Bunny off his lap onto the blanket. Poor Nicey hated to be pestered - especially by Bunny.

Smuts came out of the closet where he slept and arched his back. He stretched his legs and glanced at Jennifer in her crib. Jennifer bounced up and called to him. Smuts ignored her call; lifted his long black tail and walked over to his food dish. The dish was empty. Jennifer asked him if he wanted some food but Smuts continued to ignore her. He sniffed the air and then walked slowly out of the room. Jennifer scolded him for being so rude - what an exasperating cat!

Jennifer decided she had to go to the toilet. She was a big girl now and didn't wear diapers. She couldn't get out of the crib herself so she called out for Mommy. Three times she called before her tiny ears heard the bed in the next room squeak. Some people sure were hard to wake up! Mommy opened Jennifer's curtain - it hung in the doorway instead of a door - and called out a "Hi, Pumpkin" to Jennifer. Jennifer gave Mommy a kiss and hug-squeeze and informed her it was time to get up. Mommy ruffled Jenn's curly blonde hair; set her on the soft rug and gave her her slippers. Jennifer patted the faces on her slippers and pulled them on. It was nice to have slippers with faces.

Jennifer scampered to the bathroom. As she sat on the toilet, she spied Smuts again and slid quickly off the toilet to chase him. Smuts ran straight to Mommy - what a chicken!

Mommy took off Jennifer's princess nightdress and put her blue sweater and pants on her. Jennifer asked for her bobbin' robin so Mommy pinned it onto her sweater. Jennifer started talking about toast hoping that Mommy would forget about those tangles. No luck. Mommy picked up Jennifer's small pink brush and started brushing away the tangles. Jennifer kept trying to turn her head away from the brush and had to say "Tangles all gone, Mommy" three times before Mommy agreed with her.

Jennifer ran into the bedroom to say good morning to Daddy who was a real lazy bum - he was still in bed. Jennifer climbed up onto the bed and gave Daddy's sleepy head a big kiss. Daddy was going to help her build a snowman when it snowed.

Jennifer smelled toast. She rolled off the bed and ran to tell Mommy she wanted butter but no cheese on the toast.

Do you have a daughter? Does she have stuffed animals? A pet? Tangled hair? Does she hug you? Kiss you? Does she like toast and butter? Do you love her? Hold her? Want to protect her?

Did you know that ~

- ∴ Jenn would have been 27 now and that I was 27 when she was born? How old are you now?*
- ∴ Source Graphics in Kelowna provided us with over 500 Crime Stoppers posters that family, friends and relatives have put up across Canada? Posters asking for information that would lead to you. How do you feel when you see one?*
- ∴ some of Jenn's friends are now married and have children? A couple of the children have been named after her. Do you know of any children named after you?*
- ∴ shortly after Jenn's death, I became a member of the Victim's Advisory Committee to the National Parole Board? As a member I've visited provincial and federal correctional facilities and shadowed parole hearings? Do prison and parole hearings ever cross your mind?*
- ∴ in 1994, we attended a grad at Okanagan University College as Jenn's class refused to graduate without her? Jenn was there. Have you felt her presence at times?*
- ∴ the mother, daughter and grandmother portrait I always wanted was done from pictures of each of us at age 19 after her death? Did you ever have your picture taken with Jenn?*
- ∴ there are 4 bursaries awarded in Jenn's memory at 3 secondary schools and OUC? Friends, relatives, teachers and a Kelowna RCMP Staff Sergeant have presented these bursaries over the years? Have you ever applied for a bursary?*

- ∴ Jenn loved Christmas – especially decorating the tree? We have not had a tree since she died. We decorate with an angel collection (150 angels now) started 8 years ago? *Do you believe in angels?*
- ∴ Jenn's case was investigated by the Unsolved Homicide Unit we helped get up and running? *Did they question you? A friend? A relative?*
- ∴ a First Nations' elder, who I met while attending an elder assisted parole hearing, arranged a sweat for us? It allowed us to let go of the destructive bitterness that was holding us back – tearing us apart. We're more at peace now. *Are you?*
- ∴ our next Christmas tree, an angel tree, will be after you are caught or give yourself up? *Will it be this Christmas?*
- ∴ Jenn's brother, Wendell, applied for his status when he moved to Victoria and it arrived on what would have been Jenn's 21st birthday? *Do you know that we still celebrate her birthdays?*
- ∴ Jenn's father and I were on a Gordon Elliot show about parents who become an integral part of the cases of their murdered children – a role you cast us in the day you took her life? *Does the murderer role you cast yourself into that day haunt you?*
- ∴ a beautiful picture, done by a classmate of Jenn's, hangs in memory of her at OUC? *Have you seen it?*
- ∴ we're more at peace today than we were 8 years ago but with that peace has come an even greater conviction that you will be caught – will have to deal with Jenn's murder – that it isn't going to go away? *Did you think it would?*
- ∴ Jenn was murdered on her godmother's birthday – a special day now changed forever? *Do you know your life changed forever that day too?*
- ∴ our First Nations' elder has become a friend, a mentor, a confidant? *Do you have anyone you can confide in?*
- ∴ Terry and I talk about the case wherever we go – that we were told by the Attorney General and the Deputy Commissioner of the RCMP that the way to solve case was to keep it alive – keep people talking about it? The media have been incredibly involved in keeping Jenn's case breathing. *Have you seen or heard some of the numerous articles/interviews on TV, internet, newspaper or radio?*
- ∴ October 16/2001 marks the 8th anniversary of the day you took Jenn's life – a day we'll never forget? *Can you?*
- ∴ since that day, we always release a birthday balloon on April 3 (Jenn's birthday) and throw carnations (her favorite flower) in the ocean or a river or lake (she loved water)? *How do you celebrate your birthday?*
- ∴ on what would have been Jenn's 25th birthday, a family of 3 eagles circled the balloon and a river otter played among the carnations floating on the water? Otter is known to be a very powerful female spirit – we could feel Jenn with us. *Do you ever feel her with you?*
- ∴ Jenn's case was entered into ViClas a month after her death? *Did you know that you're an ongoing part of the ViClas database?*
- ∴ Jenn's Dad rejects the term victim some apply to us? He says we're survivors – that Jenn was the victim! *Have you ever been a victim?*
- ∴ we frequently light candles in Jenn's memory? *Do you know that candles have been lit for you too?*
- ∴ Jenn loved my 360⁰ perfume and started wearing it when she went to live with my brother and his family while attending OUC? That my 6-year old nephew said, while hugging me just after her death, "Aunty Jean, you smell like Jenn!" *Did you notice her perfume that night?*

- ∴ a First Nations' carver, who knew nothing about Jenn, brought me an otter he'd carved the day before what would have been her 27th birthday? *Do you get messages from Jenn?*
- ∴ a very credible psychic told us that Jenn has forgiven you? *Have you forgiven yourself? Can you?*

Jenn's Dad and I have always believed that everything happens for a reason and that good comes out of everything that happens. Your fatal act that day 8 years ago shook that belief to its very foundations – hell, it turned our whole world upside down. I ranted and raved and questioned every value and belief I ever held – I rejected beauty, goodness, even life itself.

When I returned to those values and beliefs, it was with greater strength and conviction. Good has come out of what you did to our daughter – great good, unbelievable good. *Does that surprise you?*

Did you think when you killed Jenn that day that you also killed her spirit? Her essence? Her love? Her soul? You didn't and you never can.

Her dad and I still say goodnight to Jenn every night and tell her we love her. We know that she's still with us – as she's still with you. This isn't going to go away – deal with it!