

Testimony of
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THE LACY FERGUSON STORY

Lacy Marie Ferguson is my precious daughter. She came into this life with a Chromosome disorder called Turner's syndrome, a sex chromosome abnormality in women that can stunt the growth of their internal and external reproductive organs and bones. The doctors in the Los Angeles area where Lacy and her two brothers were born told me she would not survive infancy. She spent the first two and a half years in Children's Hospital in Los Angeles. As Lacy grew she defied all the doctor's prognosis for her life. I separated from my husband, took my three small children and set out for a safer place to raise them, seeking a slower-paced life and hoping to escape what I perceived as an escalating gang scene in Los Angeles, settling in Modesto, CA, where I married again to a wonderful man named, Jack, who became my children's step-dad. He loves my children as his own.

Lacy thrived in Modesto. As a grammar school student at Burbank Elementary she joined The Girl Scouts, was in The Navy League and The Sea Cadets. She loved school. As she grew she was still plagued with Turner's Syndrome and I was reminded by doctors that she would not make it past puberty. Lacy pushed on and on unaware of the severity of her medical problems. You see as a mother, I couldn't tell her that she could die because I didn't want to believe it either. One day when Lacy was a teenager she went to the library and discovered on her own, what Turner's Syndrome was all about and she stayed mad at me for a long time for keeping her medical condition from her. I felt upset and scared at the thought that she now knew, how serious this was and that in reality she could die. As a parent, I just wanted to protect her from the ugly truth and I lived in denial of what could happen to her. It was hard for me to look into her face and tell her the truth.

As a teenager she was very typical, playing her loud music and dancing in her messy room. She had a lot of friends who loved to congregate at our house. She graduated from Modesto High she moved to Sacramento to be with her boyfriend. They discussed marriage, but at no time did the prospect of children enter the picture. Because of her medical problems, Lacy believed she could not have a baby. So, it came as a shock in 1999 when she discovered she was pregnant. For our family, it was a miracle. Lacy's boyfriend, however, did not want to be a father, so Lacy left him and moved back to Modesto to be with her family. To this day, the father of the baby has had no contact with the baby.

On August 25, 2000, Haleigh Morgan Ferguson was born. When the doctor's tested Lacy and the baby there was no trace of Turner's Syndrome and for once in Lacy's life she had her whole life ahead of her. We were so happy. The year 2000 was a truly good year. She took right to motherhood, taking good care of Haleigh. She loved her very much, saying that having her was the best thing she'd ever done in her life. She called her, "her little mini me". We had our lives all

planned as a family. We would help take care of Haleigh so she could go back to trade school to learn welding. She figured she could make good money doing this. Everything was normal.

I want you to know that it has been three years, ten months and five days and a few hours since someone took her from us. The time that has gone by has been the longest and loneliest time in my life. We are in a pain that is so deep and never ending. All of this happened the night of August 24, 2003. That night there was a loud knock on our front door, it was one of Lacy's friends who told us that Lacy had been shot. We could not believe this when we heard it. Lacy's dad drove to the store to see if it was true and it was. He was met by officers who held him back so the paramedics could work on her to try to save her life. People told us what had happened; it was a warm summer night, Lacy and her boyfriend had gone to the Quick-Stop Market on the corner of Paradise and Carpenter Road in Modesto to get a pack of cigarettes. When they came out of the store they stood there for a moment talking when a car pulled up beside them and parked. Another car pulled into the parking lot, and then left, went down the street, then returned, Opened fire on the first car.

Lacy, who was in front of the first car, was shot in the head. Her boyfriend was shot in the arm and a gang member from the first car, who was the target of the shooting was shot twice in the lower part of his body in the buttocks. My daughter fought very hard for her life. She was taken to Doctor's Hospital. She had died at the scene and was resuscitated. In the hospital trauma room she had died again and was brought back to life a second time. She was taken from the trauma unit and moved to ICU ward where doctors hooked her up to machines to help her breath. They told us she was brain-dead and would not make it through the night. They told us it would be better to turn off the machines and let her go, but we had hope. We stayed by her side, held her hands and told her we loved her. I prayed to God and begged him for her life, for her to get better and come home with us. But it was not to be. They couldn't do surgery, it would kill her. There was nothing they could do. She had been shot in the back of her head and the bullet, a large caliber, hollow-point, did complete damage. It exited her forehead with part of her forehead and most of her brains. We had to let her go.

That single moment, when someone pulled that trigger, it changed her life and ours forever. Lacy will not get any older. She was only 25 years old. In the trauma room I said 25 was not enough. One of them asked 25 what? I said years, 25 years was not enough. She will not raise her only child, Haleigh, who had her mother killed on her third birthday. Haleigh has asked me why the bad people took mommy away? But I just can't answer that one because we don't know why either. We know when, where, and how, but we don't know who or why they did this. Lacy was not a gang member, or wearing the wrong color of clothes, she was not standing with anybody who was, just an innocent bystander. Haleigh will never hold her mother's hand, or have her wipe away her tears, or be there for the happy times or sad times in her life. For this I am very sad because Lacy and I were very close. We had become more than a mother and a daughter. We had become good friends. I want you to know Lacy was a good person, loving, funny, and always willing to help someone if they needed her. She was there for them. She was always smiling and ready to go. She will never get married, or kiss any boo-boos away. There are so many things that will never happen. We have pictures and memories and we hold all the love in our hearts for her and we hope to see her again. We tell Haleigh that mommy is in heaven that she is watching over her and when the wind blows, that's her mama blowing her kisses. At the age of three, that

seemed to comfort her. Now that she is six years old, she knows mama's not coming home and she's beginning to ask bigger questions. She wants to know when someone will be caught and punished for what they did to her mama.

Haleigh had to change schools because when her mother's case aired on America's Most Wanted TV program, the gang member's children at her school teased her about her mother's death. They teased and picked on her to the point that lead her to lash out physically and we had removed from that violent environment. We changed to a new school and she is doing so much better not having the harassment and anxiety that was put upon her. She is a beautiful and bright child and she deserves so much better. She is a tender-hearted child inspite of the heartache she has endured. I want to tell you about something she did the first summer her mother was gone. We were in the front yard, weeding the flower garden, when Haleigh came upon a particular weed and picked it. It was a "puffball", a simple dandelion. As children do, she made a wish and blew on it. The seeds went airborne everywhere. She came up to me and asked me if I knew what She wished for. I thought that it would be a baby doll or bicycle or something that every Little girl would want. She told me that she wished mama could come home from Heaven. I couldn't tell her that her wish wouldn't come true because when she said it, I wished it too. I want to tell you what family's holidays are like now. We celebrate part Of the day as close to normal as possible, then we go to the cemetery and visit Lacy. I Know when Haleigh goes with us, this is as physically close to her mother as she will Ever be again and this hurts. She talks to her mama, tells her what's going on in her life, And tells her that she loves and misses her a lot. Then she hugs the headstone and kisses Her mama's picture and the angel on top of it and tells her goodbye. As you can see, our Holidays, have certainly changed.

Lacy's passing has been hard on her family and friends. We are still functioning, but our Lives are very different now. I am now Haleigh's mom, Jack is now Haleigh's dad, and This is our family. And as a family, we are seeking justice for Lacy's death. Before Lacy died, I held her hand and made her two promises. First one, I would take care of Haleigh, as best I could, hopefully, as good as she would. Second promise that I would Find justice for her death. It is still unsolved. The Carole Sund/Carrington Foundation Came forward and put a \$5,000 reward on this case for us. We have held candlelight Vigils, passed out fliers, billboards, pizza boxes, carwashes, charity functions, donations bus benches, and have even talked to a psychic.

I wrote a letter to the editor in the newspaper, entitled, "Letter to the Killer". I wanted Not so much for the killer to know what I would want to see happen to them, but I Did want them to know what we have to live with. (To my daughter's killers. I have Some things I have to say. In the early morning of August 24,2003, you shot my Baby girl in the head. She did not die right away. She fought very hard to live but she Passed away. I stood there holding her hand; I could not stop what was happening To her. You took her life on her baby's birthday. She will not get to hold her or kiss her Or wipe away her tears. She will not be able to do any of these things because of you. Twenty or thirty people saw what you did to her, maybe just maybe, someone will do the Right thing, help our family find some peace. We need this to be able to go on living. I Promised her two things, I would take care of her daughter, and second, I would find out Who did this to her and bring you to justice. I will do all I can to keep this promise. The Hardest thing I ever had to do in my life was to tell my daughter goodbye. And yet there Are more hard times. Watching my granddaughter cry for her mother, something I can't Give her. Watching her hug

and kiss her mother's gravestone when we visit her, and Having her ask why you did this to her mommy. All of these things I can't answer, only You can. You took the life of a beautiful, happy, and fun-loving little girl. I want you to Know, that we love her very much, that we are all in so much pain, I had to write this Letter to you. If anybody can help us, please do).

We have done TV programs like The Victims Voice, Nancy Grace, and Catherine Crier America's Most Wanted, numerous news shows, a Governor Schwarzenegger Reward of \$25,000 per suspect, for the arrest and conviction of the guilty parties, we have had numerous help from great legislators and after almost four years later, it is still unsolved.

Looking at me now, you wouldn't think I know anything about gangs, but I have learned So much since my daughter's death. I am telling you I am only one voice who speaks for Many families who are living in the same nightmare that we are. Gang violence affects Millions and millions of families all across America. If it's not affecting them in the way It's affecting our family by loosing a loved one; it is affecting them by having their young People recruited, harassed, intimidated, threatened, beat up, basically destroying a life. Once a gang has a young person join them, the young person doesn't know it, but they Just joined for life. That life usually ends before the age of 21 and is a life of self-destruction and pain to their own families as well as victim's families. It's hard for me to Read the newspaper and see another family has lost a loved one to gang violence. This Touches my heart and hurts us again just to see another family have to live what we're Living through. I don't know what it takes to eliminate gangs, but I do know that they

Are spreading and becoming larger and I don't believe that your family and mine are Safe. Something needs to be done. You can start today by considering this bill. Thank You.