

Protect Our Minors

The reason why this Bill 624 is so important to me is because as a minor my twin brother was wrongfully accused of raping a young white female. My brother was 13 years old he was in Middle School during the time of this encounter. We lived in Harford County Maryland in a low income complex with a single Mother of seven children. My brother and I were the last of my Mother's children. My twin brother and I were very close and we still are this very day.

I will never forget the year 1988 as long as I live. This very day I stop trusting in the statement "justice for all". I was at home and I heard a knock at the door. My Mother was in the kitchen cooking. I ran to tell her that there were police officers at the front door. I remember my Mom drying her hands and walking slowly to the front door. She opened the door slowly with a big warm smile she said " how can I help you officers"? The officers replied " can we come in and speak with you about a personal matter"? My Mother opened the door and allowed them to come in and she had asked the police officers to follow her into the kitchen.

The officers sat down and took out a book and a pen. My Mother asked them " what was the problem and why were they here"? One of the officers asked were is your son youngest son? My Mother replied he is at football practice. The officer said" we need to speak with him." My Mother looked at me and then at the two officers and said "why"? The second officer began to speak. He said" my twin brother had been at a house uninvited and they wanted to ask him some questions ". They knew the whole time that my twin brother was being accused of rape but did not disclose that information to my Mother.

My Mother said they could return after 6pm that evening after dinner. The two officers left my Mother's home. When my twin brother came home my Mother asked him about being in someone's home uninvited. He could not recall that moment. He kept telling my Mother that it wasn't true and he had know idea what they were talking about. At 6:30pm I heard that same knock at the door that I heard earlier that afternoon. The two officers were back.

They came in and my Mother walked them to the kitchen again. My twin brother was sitting at the table with a worried look on his face. The officers asked him his name he told them. They asked him what grade he was in. My twin brother answered. They asked him what school he went too and what sports he liked to play. My twin brother answered all of the questions in a very polite way. My Mother asked the officers to please explain to my twin brother why they were there! The officers asked my brother was he at a home a few weeks ago with a few other classmates after school. My brother said yes he had been. He also stated that he was invited by a few girls from school. So him and one of his male friends went to the girls house.

The officers asked my Mother if he could come down to the police department so they could get a statement from him since he had done nothing wrong. My Mother said " yes he could go as long as he was home for bedtime he had school in the morning". The officers and my twin brother got up from the table and walked out the door. My twin brother was talking to the officers about football and how good he was. The officers were very interested in my twin brother's conversation. I watched out the window as my twin brother got into the back of a unmarked police car until it was out of sight.

All that evening I couldn't do anything but think about my twin brother and what it would be like at the police department. It, grew late and my Mother said" it was time for bed". I couldn't sleep without my twin brother. It was the first time we had ever been apart for a night. I fell off too

sleep and the next morning he still had not returned. After getting ready for school I heard a knock at the door it was the two officers and my twin brother. My twin brother didn't look the same. He had a cold look in his eyes. His body looked tired well he looked tired.

The two officers walked in the kitchen with my Mother. They began to tell my Mother that my twin brother was accused of raping a white female the day he went to the house uninvited. They also told her that my twin brother had wrote a statement. The officers explained that my Mother had to return him to the police department were he would be charged, fingerprinted and released until his trial. My Mother kept asking what did all of this mean. The officers told my Mother to get a lawyer they couldn't help her anymore and they walked out.

A few months later my twin brother went on trial for rape. The courtroom was full of people the whole 5 days of trial. My twin brother had a public defender who was new to the job. She told my Mother that she believed my twin brother was innocent. My twin brother had been integrated for more the 10 hours. He was forced into writing a statement. My twin brother had a learning disability and couldn't spell half the words that were written in the statement. My twin brother's lawyer kept asking for a mistrial. But the answer was no every time it was asked to the judge.

My twin brother was 14 years old at this time and had know idea what was going on. He was so small in that big chair. I could hardly see the top of head. As the fifth day of trial came almost every witness had testified there were two witness left. The young lady that my twin brother was accused of raping her Grandmother was up next. As my twin brother's lawyer questioned her the older gray haired women began to cry. The asked her if she needed a few minutes. She said no she would be ok.

My twin brother's lawyer was very stern with her questioning. She asked the young ladies Grandmother did she see my twin brother upstairs with her Granddaughter? She took a few minutes and softly replied no. My twin brother's lawyer asked her did my twin brother rape her Granddaughter and she said " for the love of God no " she didn't believe he had done anything to her Granddaughter. She also stated she thought it was all made up because the neighbors saw a black boy come out of there home and her Granddaughter's parents were not home. The Grandmother went on to say she was home in the back bedroom. She said that my twin brother never knew she was there.

This was the break we all had been waiting for the last few days. The next day the young white female my twin brother was accused of raping took the stand. My twins brother's lawyer questioned her very aggressively. The young girl began to cry. Again, the a Judge asked her if she needed a break. She replied no and wiped her tears. My twin brother's lawyer asked her did my twin brother rap her. She sat quite for a while. She looked at her a GrandMother then my brother and she said no.

The court room went silent. I watched the tears come down my Mother's face. I had never seen my Mother cry. My twin brother looked back at me and said" I told you I didn't do it" I felt so invisible in that court room. The Judge leaned back in his chair and sat quite. He told the young girl she could step down. He asked my twin brother to stand the Judge began by saying " he was glad that the truth came out because if it had not he would have sentenced my twin brother to 25 years to life".

This was truly a unjust act that occurred to my twin brother and my whole family. This Bill 624 is so important to my family. It may not correct the wrong doing within my twin brother's situation. But it can help the next young boy faced with a situation like this one. Our children's lives

depend on it. My twin brother was given a second chance at life. But so many other young males won't get that chance. That's why this Bill 624 matters.