VICTIM SUPPORT NETWORK

VICTIMS FOR VICTIMS





For too long, the victims of crime have been the forgotten persons of our criminal justice system.

— Ronald Reagan —

MY WHY

MARKIE LUTHER

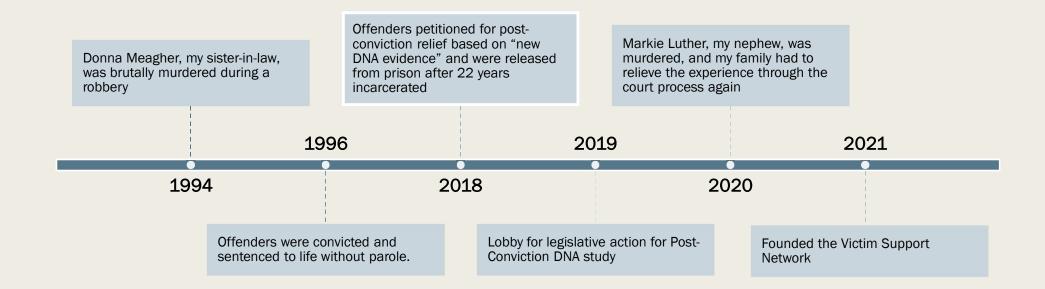
DONNA MEAGHER





EMPTY PLACE AT THE TABLE





Timeline

Helena judge overturns murder, kidnapping, convictions in 1994 Donna Meagher murder

Seaborn Larson Great Falls Tribune Published 1:11 p.m. MT Apr. 13, 2018 | Updated 2:42 p.m. MT Apr. 13, 2018

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A Montana judge on Friday overturned the murder convictions for two men serving life sentences for the kidnapping and murder of Donna Meagher in 1994.

Judge Kathy Seeley on Friday vacated the convictions and ordered new trials for Freddie Joe Lawrence, 56, and Paul Jenkins, 64, who were convicted of Meagher's killing after new DNA evidence pointed to David Wayne Nelson as the possible culprit.

In her order, Seeley wrote that the new evidence was "generally inconsistent with the State's theory of the cases, as presented at trial." She said the evidence "far exceeds" the standard required to prove the probability of a different outcome at trial had it been presented.

The new evidence was presented before Seeley on March 9.

"We are very pleased with the Court's Order overturning the convictions against Fred Lawrence and Paul Jenkins," Larry Mansch, legal director for the Montana Innocence Project, said



State news GRAPHIC



Meagher was alone and closing the saloon the night she was killed.

Simac points out that Jenkins wife bought clothing from the Helena Dillards with quarters he says were taken from the Jackson Creek Saloon. He also claims Jenkins and Lawrence painted their cars after the murder in an attempt to conceal themselves from law enforcement.

"The evidence is there," says Janelle, who was 11 years old during the two murder trials held in Helena.

"I mean, I don't know how, just because a little bit of DNA and a law that was put in place lets them walk the streets."







November 2020 Law and Justice Interim Committee Rachel Weiss

STUDY SUMMARY: HJ 43 STUDY OF POSTCONVICTION RELIEF (2019-2020)

BACKGROUND

House Joint Resolution 43 (HJ 43), sponsored by Rep. Gordon Pierson during the 2019 legislative session, requested that an interim committee study alternative methods to conduct postconviction relief hearings and analyze whether types of evidence are equally considered when determining postconviction relief. The 2019-2020 Legislative Council assigned HJ 43 to the Law and Justice Interim Committee (LJIC) along with three other interim studies.

STUDY PROCCESS

When selecting priorities for its interim work, the LJIC members assigned a lower priority to the HJ 43 study. The committee directed its legal staff to provide a summary of the current postconviction processes used in Montana.

The LJIC's study plan also requested that a panel of stakeholders speak to the committee. On November 18, 2019, four speakers discussed their experiences with Montana's postconviction process and their perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of it. The panelists were:

• Francis Meagher, family member of a crime victim;

 Tammy Plubell, Assistant Attorney General, Appellate Services Division, Montana Department of Justice;

Chad Wright, Appellate Services Division Administrator, Office of the State
Public Defender; and

Judge Luke Berger, 5th Judicial District and member of the Sentence Review Division.

November 2020 HJ 43 Study Summary (2019-2020)

STUDY OUTCOMES

The committee did not request further information or presentations after receiving the staff paper and hearing from the panelists. It also did not request legislation related to the study.

Victim Support Network Overview

- Development of network
 - Meetings with other victims to establish code of conduct, confidentiality and registration form
- Outreach to County Attorney offices across the state
- Met with the Governor's office
 - Received letter of support
- Continued community education through MBCC and DOC
- Upcoming legislative session
 - Voice of victims together to provide public comment and raise awareness of victim's rights and issues



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR STATE OF MONTANA

Greg Gianforte Governor



Kristen Juras Lt. Governor

March 21, 2022

Montana Department of Corrections Victim Services Program 5 South Last Chance Gulch Street Helena, MT 59620

Dear Montana Victim Services Team,

I am writing to recognize and commend you, the Victim Services staff, as well as your community partners and volunteers. Victim supports are an integral part of the corrections and criminal justice system as we work together to promote public safety, reduce crime, and ensure victims of criminal activity have the resources and support they need to heal.

The mission of Victim Services is to inform, involve, educate, and empower crime victims while enhancing community safety through positive collaboration. I encourage local law enforcement and judiciaries to work with you and make their resources available to victims in our local communities.

Victim Services has a wide range of resources to support mental and emotional recovery. Sometimes, all a victim needs is a person to talk to who understands the trauma they have experienced. Victim Services works with community partners such as the Victim Support Network and Jane Doe No More to facilitate these peer-to-peer conversations.

As I host public safety roundtables across the state, I will ensure victims are at the forefront of conversations about building safer, stronger communities. If my office can ever be of assistance to you and your colleagues at Victims Services, your community partners, or victims of crime, please don't hesitate to reach out. Thank you for the critical work you do.

Sincerely

What do victims experience?

"Learning about the exoneration felt like the earth opened up and I got swallowed into a black hole." (Crime Survivor)

- Navigating the criminal justice system might bring back negative feelings and trauma from the original crime. It might also have an impact on your family and other loved ones.
 - Anxiety
 - Increased stress
 - Sense of isolation
 - Fear
 - Confusion
 - Grief
 - Hopelessness
 - Disbelief
 - Loss of faith in the justice system
 - Anger
 - Self-Blame
 - Revictimization
 - Retraumatization



OUR VISION

There are no expectations, requirements, or time limits.

The Montana Department of Corrections (DOC) maintains the data to ensure confidentiality. privacy and availability of information. No one gains from your involvement in this program, but you.

This program is yours to use in the way you see fit. It's not a 9-5 professional group, it's real people; victim's, family members, people in need of support, guidance and understanding.

This is not a program for anyone to attempt to "fix" anyone else. It simply is an opportunity to connect with other individuals who have a shared experience.

Don't be afraid to speak with someone that has experienced a different crime. Often, you will find shared experiences, emotions and thoughts

IMPORTANT

WHAT NEXT CONFIDENTIALITY

1) Submit your information to the network regarding the crime, the offender or which is then added to the database and circumstances. It is your discretion to share distributed to all members. You will also what you are comfortable with within the receive a copy of the network and its

· Code of Conduct

wish.

· Release of Information

· Confidentiality Disclosure

2.) Welcome! A member will reach out to

and simply welcome you to the network.

3.) Safety is top priority. If you choose to meet another member in person, please

utilize a public setting or call DOC Victim Services to have a Victim Liaison

accompany you or arrange a meeting place if possible.

4.) Not a fit? No hard feelings! If you meet

and you decide that it wasn't the right fit,

you do not need to offer an explanation or apologize to anyone. You can simply reach out to someone else!

or speak with a member of the network.

you to answer any questions you may have

You can reach out to a member first if you

network. Information made available through the network is confidential and is not available to the public.

DOC does not release any information

COMMUNICATION

You can update your communication preferences at any time or terminate your involvement.

There is no participation requirement. You can participate as little or as frequent as you would like.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST If you are aware of a conflict of interest within the group, please notify DOC Victim Services immediately.

REFERRAL The network is currently word of mouth referral only. Please do not advertise this program to maintain the integrity of the network.

All members must complete required forms before allowed access to network database.

What is the Network?

The Victim Support Network is comprised of crime victims, survivors and those touched by crime throughout the state of Montana who have registered to share their information.

The network is a peer support system for members to share and connect through lived experiences.

This network is what you make it! The main purpose is to connect individuals who have a shared experience, whether that is through the criminal justice system, corrections, community services, etc.

You can join anytime regardless of when your experience occurred.



CONTACT US

Francis Meagher, Founding Member Email: francismeagher@yahoo.com Phone: (406) 560-3619

VICTIM **SUPPORT NETWORK**

Victims for Victims: A peer support network for crime victims and survivors.

BROCHURE

What is the network?

- It's not a 9-5 professional group, it's real people; victim's, family members, people in need of support, guidance and understanding.
- This is not a program for anyone to attempt to "fix" anyone else.
- Opportunity to connect with other individuals who have a shared experience through the criminal justice system, corrections, community services, etc.
- Crime victims, survivors, family, loved ones and those impacted by crime

PEER RUN

- "…offer emotional support, share knowledge, teach skills, provide practical assistance, and connect people with resources, opportunities, communities of support, and other people"
- Peer support system for members to share and connect
- Join anytime regardless of when your victimization occurred
- No one or agency gains from your involvement in this program, but you.

You're not a victim for sharing your story. you are a survivor setting the world on fire with your truth. And you never know who needs your light, your warmth and raging courage.

- Alex Elle

CONFIDENTIALITY



DOC <u>does not</u> release any information regarding the crime, the offender or circumstances.

• It is your discretion to share what information you are comfortable with within the network.



Information made available through the network is confidential and is not available to the public 3

Members must sign <u>Release</u> of Information and <u>Confidentiality Disclosure</u> prior to participating

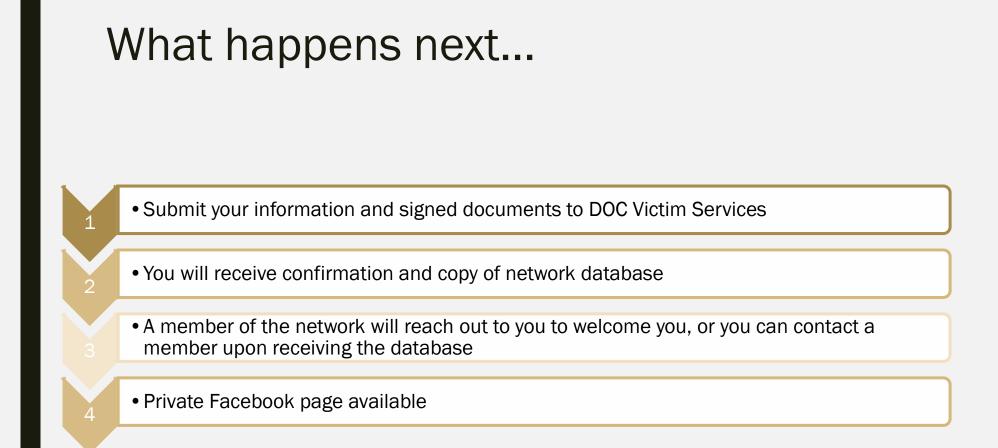
Required Forms

Code of Conduct

Release of Information

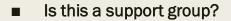
Confidentiality Disclosure

Please send these completed forms to DOC Victim Services



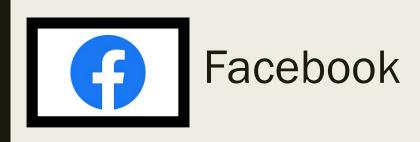
CONSIDERATIONS

- You can update your communication preferences at any time or terminate your involvement by contact DOC Victim Services.
- The network is currently word of mouth referral only.
 - Please do not advertise this program to maintain the integrity of the network.
 - Use your judgement when referring the program to others
- If you are aware of a conflict of interest within the group, please notify DOC Victim Services immediately.



- No, there is not mandatory support group meeting. However, if you and others decide to form one, you can!
- Do I have to participate right away or a minimum amount?
 - No, there is no participation requirement. You can participate as little or as frequent as you would like.
- Is my information kept confidential?
 - Yes, your information is only shared to members of the network who have signed the required forms.
- Can a minor/juvenile participate?
 - No, not at this time.

FAQ's



- *This is not the Victim Support Network Database.* This is a private group for those who are interested in relevant topics, information and referrals to the database. You must complete the required documents to be added to the Victim Support Network Database.
- The Victim Support Network is comprised of crime victims, survivors and those touched by crime throughout the state of Montana who have registered to share their information. The network is a peer support system for members to share and connect through lived experiences.



Victim Support Network- MT

How to Get Involved

- Stay informed on legislative bills and sessions
- Educate yourself about Montana Statute and Laws
- Speak with your local representative
- Exercise your voice during the legislative session
- Victim Support Network

Contact us

<u>Founding Member</u> Francis Meagher <u>francismeagher@yahoo.com</u> (406) 560-3619

DOC Victim Services <u>CORVictimLiaison@mt.gov</u> (406) 444-0447

The dead cannot cry out for justice. It is a duty of the living to do so for them. Lois McMaster Bujold // Quoteistan.com

"TO THOSE WHO ABUSE: THE SIN IS YOURS, THE GRIME IS YOURS, AND THE SHAME IS YOURS.

TO THOSE WHO PROTECT THE PERPERTRATORS: BLAMING THE VICTIMS ONLY MASKS THE EVIL WITHIN, MAKING YOU AS GUILTY AS THOSE WHO ABUSE.

Stand up for the innocent or go down with the rest."

& FLORA JESSOF, CHURCH OF LIES

Justice will not be served until those who are unaffected are as outraged as those who are.

Benjamin Franklin

Too much mercy ... often resulted in further crimes which were fatal to innocent victims who need not have been victims if justice had been put first and mercy second.

AGATHA CHRISTIE – QUOTESTATS COM

I swore never to be silent whenever and wherever human beings endure suffering and humiliation. We must take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented.

Elie Wiesel