

Jesse O'Donnell



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Royal Commission into Family Violence
PO Box 535
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Uploaded at www.rcfv.com.au

Dear Sir / Madam

Submission in response to Royal Commission into Family Violence

Submission author: Jesse O'Donnell

Submission topic: Campaign for the introduction of "Rekiah's Law"

1. My name is Jesse O'Donnell and I am the brother of Rekiah O'Donnell who was shot and killed by her boyfriend, Nelson Lai on 11 October 2013.
2. Nelson Lai was charged with the murder of my sister, however on 13 May 2015 the jury delivered a verdict of 'not guilty' to the charge of murder, and Nelson Lai was only convicted of manslaughter, which I submit is not an adequate charge in the circumstances of my sister's death.

Background

3. On the 11th October 2013, I received the most gut wrenching phone call from my father. He had called to tell me that my 22 year old sister, Rekiah, had been murdered - shot in the head by the person who claimed to love her, Nelson Lai.
4. Nelson had mentally and physically abused my sister for months on end, beating her, holding knives to her throat, kicking her in stomach, accusing her of cheating - which, when she denied, he threatened to kill her until she admitted to being unfaithful.
5. Rekiah was forced to lie to Nelson that she had feelings for other men, just to get a break from the abuse, as it seemed to satisfy his ice-fuelled frenzy. Nelson threatened

to kill her on so many occasions, it became the norm. When Rekihah wanted to leave the relationship, Nelson would threaten to kill her family and her friends.

6. It was obvious Nelson wanted Rekihah dead. The death threats he had sent her over Facebook and text message included, "I'll kill you, rat," "Your phone bill will be the death of you," "My mission will be complete when you're gone, slut. One day you'll feel the force of my hand, you fucking dog slut," and "You're a dead dog walking, I'll make you famous."
7. My sister was a beautiful, headstrong woman. When she wanted something, she would stop at nothing to achieve it. She had a fierce determination and love for her family and friends, and always looked for the best in people. She saw something in Nelson - something that no one else could - and begged him to seek help to overcome his violent and controlling behaviour. She read many psychology books about family violence to try to understand what was happening to her in her relationship, and gave him pamphlets on family violence.
8. Yet, this murderer, Nelson Lai, did not care, and did not respond to my sister's pleas for help. At approximately 9am on October 11th, Nelson finally followed through on all his death threats. He shot my sister in the head and killed her.

Rekihah's Law

9. Nelson's defence in court for the months of abuse and Rekihah's murder, included excuses such as, "I didn't know the gun was loaded," and "I was scattered, from coming down off ice." These excuses convinced the jury to clear Nelson Lai of murder, much to the shock of my family and in fact, Australia.
10. I want to know why the government allows such pathetic excuses in court? Nelson Lai consciously chose to consume an illegal substance, fully knowing the effect ice had on his behaviour, therefore should be held fully accountable for all actions he made afterward.
11. I want to know why the jury is not allowed to hear details of the accused's past? Nelson Lai had previously spent time in prison, and had abused a previous partner in front of their children. He was well known by police due to his criminal record and drug abuse - yet this had no bearing on his verdict.
12. I want to know why the precise aim of the gun not taken into account? Rekihah was shot directly into the temple. Ballistics experts gave evidence that this proved intent to kill, yet Nelson Lai was convicted only of manslaughter.

13. And finally, I want to know why our government does not care that these murderers are getting such short jail sentences? In a few years, they will be wandering the streets, ready to commit these crimes again, and again, and again.
14. Two Australian women a week have been killed in domestic violence cases this year. The statistics have become a national epidemic. I do not want my sister to become another statistic. I do not want her death to have been in vain. I want Rekihah to be the turning point of the domestic violence disaster and so do thousands of Australians.
15. We created a Facebook page (www.facebook.com/rekihahslaw) to promote 'Rekihah's Law' and within 24 hours it had over 4000 likes. We also created a petition (www.change.org/rekihahslaw) which already has more than 5000 signatures in just over a week. Both have drawn the attention of media personalities and continue to grow in numbers each day.

My submission for 'Rekihah's Law'

16. My submission is for 'Rekihah's Law'. Any person, who shoots a gun and kills another human, unless in self-defence, is instantly convicted of murder. No excuses, no cop outs.

Please contact me if you have any queries or wish for any more information.

Yours Sincerely

Jesse O'Donnell