

Good morning. My name is Dawn Romig and I am here today representing my daughter, Danni Reese-Romig. She isn't here today. 11 days after her 12th birthday, a 17 year old "juvenile", Brian Bahr, cruelly and violently took her innocence, and then her life. She was very loving, caring, and vibrant girl, with amazing potential, just starting to blossom into a lovely young girl. She was discovering pretty clothes, and the value of brushing her hair. She had a passion for animals and dreamed that one day she would be a veterinarian. She also loved being a big sister. She had a younger sister, Destiny and a new baby brother, Darryl Jr. Danni loved teaching him how to walk all around the house. The day we buried Danni he walked all the way across the living room by himself for the first time.

Danni and her father, Darryl, had a very close relationship. When Danni uncharacteristically did not come home on time that dreadful evening, I knew something was wrong. After forming our own search team, Darryl led the way through the bitter cold and snow. Being a father in distress and full of fear while searching for his child that night, adrenaline took over his mind and body, and it was like he had no asthma. Darryl's health has gotten much worse over the past 5 years. His asthma has him totally disabled, that's why he isn't here today. I can't help but feel that the impact of the loss of his daughter has contributed to his decline.

I try to be the strong one for all of us. I am Danni's voice for her rights and the rights of all past and future victims. The world seems to have lost its sense of accountability. Danni had a right to expect to live her life and follow her dreams.

She was robbed of that right by Brian Bahr, who needs to understand that everything you do in life impacts your life; the good and the bad. And this was bad. I believe if a juvenile is old enough to think he or she can take someone's life in such a well thought out and violent manner, then they must clearly understand the possible consequences and should suffer the appropriate punishment. He chose to make that decision and in doing so, chose to accept the consequences of that same decision. Danni had no say in being beaten, raped, then murdered, she had no choice; she was at the mercy of her offender. His age is merely a number. It was an adult act he planned and executed. Why should these juveniles NOT get "life in prison"? Age cannot excuse what they have done. Letting him go free—on parole or not— would send a message to him that it was okay because he was only 17. It would also give messages to other juveniles and those that can get juveniles to do their dirty work for them. What he did to my daughter is not okay—at any age. The heinous things he did should never be considered as pardonable; otherwise her death becomes even more senseless.

Our case became a death penalty case when the rape kit came back positive. The District Attorney asked us if we wanted to pursue the death penalty or accept his plea for only life in prison. We did not seek to end Brian's life, even though he ended our daughter's life. He needs to live every day with what he has done. I also did not want my family and my children to go through appeals for the next 20 years. It would not be fair to any of us. So now, the possibility of the laws changing to let out people who took the lives of others just mere months or years

before being legal adults is difficult. But I do seek justice; justice for a life cut short; justice for a life full of promise and hope, ended violently and mercilessly at the hands of a "juvenile" by technicality, who carried out a cognitive adult act that ended the life of my daughter.

February 26th 2003 was the worst day of our lives. It began when a boy Danni knew came to the door asking her if she wanted to go to the playground. Brian Bahr thoughtfully manipulated this much younger boy into going to get Danni because he knew she would gladly accompany that boy to the playground, setting his evil plan in motion. She wasn't home when she was supposed to be. At 7:00 that evening, I called the police to report her missing. Shortly after that, we formed our own search team. We talked to all her friends and everyone we talked to said they saw her with Brian Bahr- the teenager we knew who had lived right around the corner from us. My husband went to his home and Brian answered the door. Daryl asked if he saw Danni and that she hadn't come home for dinner. Brian lied, saying he hadn't seen her since she was walking home from the bus stop after school. A bold faced calculated lie right into the face of the father of the girl he had just willfully and brutally murdered. This was not the act of a flustered young juvenile; it was the adult act of a cold blooded killer.

Our child was missing. Every parent's worst nightmare was playing out in the reality of our lives right then and there. After hours of pacing and worrying, we finally got the horrific answers for most of our terrifying questions. They needed a picture of Danni to get a positive ID. They told us they found a young

blond haired girl that met Danni's description. Our worst fears were now facts.

Danni was dead.

In the coming days I had to step up and take control, because my husband could not physically do it. I made funeral arrangements for the first time in my life. Not for a parent, but for my Danni, my oldest child. Every choice I made for the funeral and the burial was what Danni would have wanted, what she liked and who she was. I needed to get her clothes to wear and I thought of her brand new dress she was going to wear for a special school trip. She could not wear that dress ever, even to her own funeral because she was so badly beaten that the bruises on her arms and her neck were so great and getting darker by the hour. Instead, I had to get her a shirt that had long sleeves and a high neck to cover the marks that told the story of her last few hours alive.

Those following weeks, months and year were full of counseling, meetings with Jim Martin and painful court dates. We learned that Brian had made a list, it was called, "23 things to do to a girl in the woods." Mr. Martin allowed us to read this list. Beat her. Check. Rape her. Check. Kill her. Check. Everything on that list was carried out. That makes it premeditated and cold hearted. This sinister plan certainly was not on the level of a "juvenile." There are more and there are going to be more Brian Bahr's out there. Is this the kind of juvenile you want to put back in our neighborhoods? He was 17 years old at the time, which legally makes him a juvenile. There is no difference mentally between a 17 year old and an 18 year old adult committing these kind of crimes. He plotted and planned exactly what he was going to do to a CHILD and he did it. This is not the kind of

person we should allow to get out of prison, walking the streets among your children and mine. He and those like him must pay the full price for heinous crimes. It is the only reasonable justice for taking my 12 year old daughter's life. Our lives are forever changed, so should Brian Bahr's life be forever changed. We will mourn our loss forever....he should mourn his loss forever. His loss of freedom to follow his dreams—whether they have good intent or evil intent,

My husband and I have learned some very important things about life from the past five and a half years. Life has taught us to be better parents, a better spouse to each other and better human beings. We have learned that life can be snatched away very quickly. The time we spend with our son and daughter is so much more precious now, we want to cherish every moment we can for no one knows what the future holds. My own personal motto is, "Never think or say, that's not going to happen to Me."; whether it's good or bad. Who would have thought that our quiet little family would be forever associated with the highest profiled murder case in Allentown? It's a legacy we never would have chosen. But just as Brian Bahr gave Danni no choice, he gave us no choice either. You must never allow the chance that any other victims can be at the mercy of these "juveniles' choices by setting them free because of the age that they were when they committed these crimes. I beseech YOU to make the right choice. We must be strong and clear in our message to these offenders....there IS accountability, no matter what age you are. Danni Reese Romig paid the ultimate price to have it, and we must demand it.