

Victim Impact Statement of Gracie Perryman

First, I'd like to thank the court for allowing me to speak here today.

On August 13, 2021, Samuel Rich changed my life forever in the worst way imaginable. Without any warning or reason, he shot me in the face and left me to die. I was life flighted to the hospital. When I woke up, I was told that my boyfriend, the love of my life, Will Warner, had been murdered in cold blood and left in the street of Nashville.

Before that day, I was happy, and healthy. Will and I were planning a future together. We had big plans and bright dreams. We dreamt of a house on the hill, even a family one day. We were taking our first steps to making our dreams a reality.

After that day, our dreams were crushed. Nothing is the same and it never will be. I'm no longer healthy, and happiness seems just out of reach. I've been left with permanent physical injuries that will continue to affect the way I speak and swallow. Due to my carotid artery being severed, I am at high risk of stroke and developing blood clots in my brain. I have already undergone multiple surgeries and will continue to have surgeries just to live a functional life again. Recovering from these surgeries is very hard physically, emotionally, and financially.

But none of the physical pain I've endured compares to the emotional toll this monster has caused me. There are no words to describe the pain it feels to lose Will or the damage it has caused in my life. I've been left with an emptiness I cannot fill. To see such a loving, hopeful person cruelly ripped from this world should hurt anyone. To know he laid there alone and in fear during his final moments shatters me. Every hope and dream I had for the future went with him that day.

No amount of love, therapy, or sheer will can take away the pain Sam has left me with. I can't go a day without PTSD. I have flashbacks. I don't sleep at night. I don't trust people anymore. I can no longer eat out with my family due to my panic attacks. I'll never be that silly, fun, loving girl I once was.

Even if I do find a way to overcome what happened on August 13th, I'll have to look over my shoulder for the rest of my life. What an unfair way to live at just 21 years old.

Despite it all and as hard as life is right now, I refuse to let Sam Rich win. Only by the Grace of God I am here today. He did not succeed. I will use that same Grace and hold on to hope. I will rebuild myself and move forward. I may stumble and cry along the way,

but I refuse to let August 13th, nor Sam Rich define me. I'm so much more than that. I'm here for a reason. Here to bring justice to Will and I. I won't let this destroy me. This will only make me stronger. Stronger than I ever was before. I'll make a life that Will and I will both be proud of. A life worth living. I will find happiness one day.

I hope you all see the damage Sam Rich has caused in so many lives. I beg you to keep him where he belongs. He's no man. But a coward and an animal who belongs behind bars. He shouldn't be given the chance to destroy anyone else's life.

Thank you for your time today.