

To: The Honorable Judge Gene Zmuda

From: Maggie Kirschman, sister of Eileen Adams

Re: Robert Bowman G-4801-CR-200803583-000

When a person reads about a child's disappearance in the newspaper, or hears an Amber Alert on the radio, or sees on TV that a missing child has been found dead, there is always shock and disbelief. They can't believe that *anyone* could or would ever hurt a child. They wonder how they themselves would react if it were their child, or the child of someone they knew. They talk about it at length with their friends and co-workers. The media tells and retells the story until the public is thoroughly appalled, and demand that the killer be found and punished to the fullest extent of the law. But then the next big story comes along, and they forget - they forget about the child, and the child's family. Unfortunately, for my siblings and myself, there is no forgetting - the short life and brutal death of Eileen Adams has never been just a "story" to us. Eileen was our sister. We can never forget.

I remember reading Eileen's obituary in the newspaper -in fact, I read every newspaper article, and listened to every TV news segment about her that I could. I guess I was hoping that I could figure out where she was, and bring her back home so that everyone would stop crying and things could go back to normal. Even though I was only 8 years old, the words, "she is survived by" really hit me. Eileen, my sister, one of the "big kids", had been the victim of an unimaginable, horrific crime; she had been abducted, tortured, sexually molested (words I needed to look up in the dictionary) ~~raped~~ and brutally, no - savagely murdered; and we, as her family we left to survive that - whatever that meant.

Back in 1967 we were a family with a mom and dad, and 8 kids - a good Catholic family you could say. Eileen was the little sister to Maryann, Al and Marty, and the big sister to David, Steve, myself and Ruth. However, from the day she went missing, we went from being a 'family' to 9 separate individuals - each trying in their own way to cope, to understand, to actually believe that this had really happened. And since in those days there were no grief counselors, support groups or books written on how to deal when a child goes missing, that is how we stayed - 9 separate individuals, each trying to find their way out of the nightmare.

During the time Eileen was missing, it was as though "real life" had somehow stopped, and this surreal kind of life took over. Everything seemed different - food didn't taste the same, nobody acted like themselves anymore- their voices sounded different, you couldn't expect a coherent answer to a question you posed, we needed to "be quiet" and "not upset your mother ", monsters started living in the bedroom Eileen, Ruth and I had shared, and the only game that we played was the "waiting game", waiting for Eileen to come home. And, as you probably know, it was the holiday season - Peace on Earth, Good will towards man and all that, but there was no peace in our house. We all waited for the "Christmas miracle" to happen - for Eileen to walk in the front door. Her presents stayed under the tree, waiting for her to come home.... a

constant kick in the stomach every time you walked into the living room. Maryann left her porch light on every night, all night - just in case. Dad and Al and Marty would go out each night looking for her, driving the route she would have taken again and again, trying to find a clue, someone who may have saw something..... trying to find Eileen. Mom made the rest of us go back to school after a while, she said it was to "try and get things back to normal". But I knew better. I knew it was so she could pretend that Eileen was at school too, like she should be. By having all of us home, it only reminded her, and us, that we were not complete - Eileen wasn't there.

I remember the night the police came to tell us that Eileen's body had been found. I had been taking my bath, and when I came out, Grandma, Marty, David, Steve and Ruth were in the kitchen- obviously upset, and crying. And the door to the family room was closed. That door was never closed. I asked what was going on. Steve lifted his head up off the table and cried, "Eileen's dead". I didn't - couldn't - believe him. As I reached for the doorknob, Marty put his hand on mine and said, "Don't go down there. Eileen is really dead", and he turned away to cry. I don't know why I did, because I have never been a brave person, but I did open the door - and what I saw has been seared into my soul. I saw a police officer standing in front of my parents who were seated on the couch. The officer looked very uncomfortable, as though he would rather have been any other place in the whole world than in our family room. My mom was crying- face all red and blotchy, but silent - no sounds. I could tell she was trying to be the "strong one" for my Dad, but I could see it was taking every ounce of courage and strength she had not to explode. She had her hand on dad's leg - somehow I knew she wanted him to hold her, but he didn't- he couldn't. My dad was crying harder than I had ever seen anyone cry. I mean I had seen him cry in the days of Eileen's disappearance, and that had unnerved me, but it was nothing like this. This was so raw. This was so deep. This was so consuming that everyone and everything was forgotten. He didn't feel mom's hand, he didn't hear the door when I opened it, he knew nothing but his daughter was dead - and now, so did I. I knew Eileen was dead. And I also knew that "Mom's and Dad's" couldn't always protect their children.

Mom and Dad were both so consumed with their own grief that they became strangers to the rest of us. And now, not only did we lose our sister, we lost the only parents we knew as well. Mom and Dad each reacted differently to Eileen's death. Mom prayed. She prayed ALL- THE - TIME; in fact, that was pretty much ALL that she did. It seemed that she had forgotten that she had other children who needed her. It seemed that the only time she remembered us was when she would demand that we line up on our knees, with backs straight, and with absolutely no slouching, along the length of the couch to pray the rosary with her, again and again. Mom prayed for Eileen's soul, for strength, for understanding, and for forgiveness. She prayed that the "Crown-of-Thorns" Eileen had worn would not be in vain. But mostly, I think, Mom prayed for Dad. She prayed that one day he could accept Eileen's death. You see, my Dad was angry- very angry- rage filled his heart and consumed every moment every of his life. He turned to alcohol to forget, but found that no matter how much he drank he could always hear Eileen crying, "Daddy, please, help me"! He began carrying a gun with him wherever he went - something we younger kids knew about, but were not allowed to speak of. When he flew into one of his frequent rages, he would scream as to what he would do to the "bastard" who took

his daughter from him - starting with breaking both of his kneecaps, and going on from there. He would mourn the loss of the grandsons she would have given him. He wanted nothing to do with a "GOD" who was so cruel as to allow what had happened to his daughter - and to him. Now, imagine two little girls, Ruth and I, who don't even begin to understand what has happened to their sister, no less why their father is acting this way, hiding under their bed, shaking, crying and wishing Dad would just stop screaming and breaking all the dishes and chairs; hoping he won't hurt Mom - or us, if he found us hiding from him again. Imagine the two little boys, David and Steve, now moved into what was once considered the "girls room", struggling to know who to hate the most - the sick animal who killed their sister, or the father who could not accept the fact that they had a loss as well. Imagine being one of the "big kids" - knowing what was going on at home, but not knowing how to fix anything - *not* for the younger kids, and certainly, not for themselves.

We kids learned quickly that we were not allowed to talk about what had happened to Eileen, we were not allowed to mourn her, in fact we were not allowed to even speak her name, because in doing so, we would be risking eliciting one of Dad's rages, or making Mom cry and retreat to her room and her prayers. To Mom and Dad, Eileen's death was *their loss*, not ours, and so, we had to remain silent. We were also cautioned not to talk about Eileen with anyone outside of the family, at anytime, for any reason. Grandma said people would look at us differently; they wouldn't know what to say to us, and wouldn't want to be our friend; that it was too great of a burden to put on someone else. And besides, we might just be confiding in the "killer"! And so, we continued to remain silent, and let it eat at our very cores. The holiday season was forever destroyed for us, Christmas being nothing more than yet another terrible reminder of what had happened to Eileen and fracturing of our family. Because we did not know who had killed Eileen until 1981, we thought that it could be anyone - a stranger, someone we knew - all were suspect. We were always looking over our shoulders, always waiting for the "monster" to strike again. To have one more of our family snatched away. To have the nightmare start over from the beginning. I know Mom and Dad felt that too, because we younger kids - especially Ruth and I - were not allowed to go anywhere but school. We needed to be where Mom could see us at all times. No play dates or birthday parties. No sleepovers with the cousins... we were not even allowed to go to Maryann's house - after all, that was where Eileen was going, and look what happened to her! Every day we looked at each other and wondered who would be next, praying it wouldn't be me, but then feeling guilty about that. It turned into an "every-man-for-himself" kind of life - survival of the fittest. Maryann *had* to direct her attentions to her own babies; Al and Marty were almost always out of the house - not together, of course - each had his own agenda, but they were *OUT*; David turned rebellious and defiant; Steve got into fights and began to have a temper like dad's, flying into rages with the slightest provocation; Ruth found a few subtle ways to get the attention she so desperately needed and craved, but certainly not nearly enough; and I, I felt like the invisible child, just trying to stay out of everyone's way, trying not to upset Mom or Dad. Being the next girl in line, I was acutely aware that my very existence was a terrible reminder to them of the daughter they had lost, so I tried to do everything I could NOT to be like Eileen, not to be that constant reminder. I grew my hair long, because hers was short. I wouldn't wear any of the clothes that had been a hand-me-down from Eileen. I became quiet because she was so full of

life. I was forever trying to bargain with God - "Bring Eileen back – clearly, that's who they want, take me instead"! As I grew up, I felt Mom and Dad resented the fact that I did age - had birthdays, turning 15, 16.... something Eileen never did.

As we all grew, this separateness in the family became more and more apparent. People on the outside could not understand why this kid was mad at Mom and Dad, or why that kid moved so far away; especially after what happened to Eileen. They thought that her death should have brought us closer together. But the reality of the situation was that each one of us was hurting, and that hurt was so consuming that it was impossible to see outside our individual selves. We could not see past ourselves to acknowledge that the other members of the family were hurting as well. And so resentments came, and with them, more fracturing of the family.

As we each grew up and began to make our own lives, we kept those resentments within us. When we married, it was difficult to explain to our spouses exactly what had happened to Eileen and the family, and our feelings about it. We were not used to talking about it - we didn't know how! As often as we tried, the feelings, emotions and despair were indescribable, creating a distance with them, the very ones who wanted to help us the most. To love someone deeply was a risk. We needed to hold them at arm's length, to protect ourselves from the hurt if we ever lost them. When we started having children, our feelings of vulnerability really kicked in. We looked at our sons and especially our daughters and saw in them a look that was Eileen's or a mannerism of hers. We were afraid for them, and afraid of losing them, as we had lost Eileen. We knew what loss felt like and vowed to do whatever was humanly possible to protect ourselves from experiencing it again. We wanted to hold our children tight to our sides their whole lives, to always have them within our view, to protect them from any sort of hurt or evil. We each had to wrestle with our demons - to constantly tell ourselves that surely, lightening won't strike the same family twice - that it was necessary for a child's well being to allow them a life separate from us. That by holding them close to us, we were hurting them, as we had been hurt. It took every bit of willpower, faith and determination we had to allow the sleepovers and birthday parties, to let them walk 3 houses down the street to a friend's house "all by themselves", to ride their bikes around the block, to learn to drive, to go off to college, to start families of their own. We allowed our children to grow, to have lives, to make decisions for themselves based not on fear of the "monster", as we had, but on what was best for them - and it nearly killed each one of us. Truth be told, it literally did kill two of us. Steve passed in August 2002, and David in February 2009. The rest of us all firmly believe down to the deepest depth of our souls that both of our brothers would be here today if not for decisions they made in their lives based on Eileen's death. Based on what the "monster", Robert Bowman, did to our sister. Robert Bowman killed the people David and Steve had been, just as surely as he killed Eileen.

When we first heard the name, Robert Bowman in 1982, I think shock was our first emotion. We had each buried what had happened deep inside us, but now it was like someone came along and reopened an old wound -ripping it's scab off. All of the old pain and heartache came back a thousand fold. And because we were all that much older, understood that much more,



had children we could look at and imagine it happening to, it hurt that much more. And it devastated us to know that even though we now knew who had abducted and killed Eileen, there was nothing we could do about it. It was as though it did not matter what had happened to our sister - or to us. Robert Bowman had found a way to get away with murder - and it made us all sick. We had to find a way to push all of our feelings way down deep again, including this terrible insult, just as a way to survive. Through the years, the case would be looked into again and again. And each time it was, that old scab was ripped off. I never knew how much hurt a human heart could withstand - I think I better idea of that now. Every new bit of information was like a knife in the chest. When Bowman was finally arrested on October 2, 2008 (my son's birthday, incidentally), it was an indescribable feeling of relief and joy. Finally, the "monster" who had killed my sister, my family, the very person I, myself had been, was going to receive his punishment - justice at last!

By now, things had changed with our parents. All of Mom's prayers must have worked, because Dad not only turned back to God, he became a Deacon in the Catholic Church. They had both seemed to have found a way to make peace with what had happened to Eileen, or rather they wanted everyone to think they had. Mom passed away in March of 2002, and as Maryann and I were cleaning out her things, we came across a box, tucked away in the bottom of a dresser drawer. In the box, wrapped in tissue paper, were the pink pajama's Eileen had worn to bed the night before she went missing. I remembered back to when Mom had come into our bedroom all those years ago, and took the pajama's. She said she was going to wash them so they would be fresh when Eileen came home. Mom had kept them all these years. She had never washed them. Is that what is meant by "surviving" - what mother survives that? And now that Maryann and I were both mothers, and mothers of daughters, we could each feel the depth of Mom's pain just by holding the pajama's. It was an overwhelming, all-encompassing pain that I hoped never to feel again. Robert Bowman was responsible for that pain. And Dad, well.... you know the story. As a result of a chance meeting with an off-duty police officer, he was basically responsible for having Eileen's case reopened. When a parent loses a child the way Mom and Dad lost Eileen, there is no "peace". It eats you alive. By the way, Dad died 3 weeks after Bowman was captured. We think Dad understood that Bowman was caught, we hoped that he did. The only thing we could be happy about was that neither Mom nor Dad were alive when Eileen's body was exhumed. To know that she was buried naked, in a body bag, with the pajama's and robe Mom had picked out, lying on top of her would have killed them both. To have had them know the full extent of Eileen's torture would have been too much for any parent to endure. It is almost too much for us, her siblings. And we pray with all our hearts that we will be able to reinter her soon. To finally - and for eternity this time, let her rest in peace.

Throughout the course of these past ~~44~~ years, our family has been forced to live and relive the most painful period of our lives. The newspapers and other media have been attracted to the story from the beginning, and have actually said that the story reads like a Hollywood movie. We, as a family, have always tried to maintain a low profile. To us, this has always been a very private sorrow, and we would like to go on the record to say that it will always be private to us. We do want to thank The Court, all of the Detectives, Investigators, Prosecutors and Jurors who gave up numerous hours of their own lives to see justice prevail. However, we feel it necessary

to say that we will not be entertaining any offers of interviews, books or movies about our sisters death, and we hope everyone can understand and appreciate our position. Eileen's short life, as well as our lives have been sensationalized enough.

Eileen had been missing 43 days before her body was found, and now <sup>43 plus</sup> 44 years later Robert Bowman stands before you, Your Honor, waiting to hear what his sentence will be. He has had over 40 years after murdering our sister to live his life as he wished. He has had his day in court - in fact he has had it twice. Eileen was just a little girl with her whole life before her. She was a beautiful person, and not one of us doubt that she would have grown up to be an amazing woman. And we all miss her. Robert Bowman is the reason why Eileen is not with us today. As any parent teaches their child, we all have choices in this life, and we have to live with the consequences of those choices. Robert Bowman chose to abduct our sister, Eileen. Robert Bowman chose to molest and rape her. Robert Bowman chose to kill Eileen, and throw her body away like she was nothing more than trash. My family sincerely pleads with this court to punish Robert Bowman to the fullest extent possible for his choices. We hope that the next time we hear the name 'Robert Bowman' will be after he has died in prison - a pathetic, toothless old man who is all alone, without even his pet rats for company.