

Statement of Roxanne

I first met Nikolas Cruz when I lived next door to Nikolas, his brother Zackary and their mother, Lynda, in Parkland, Florida. My son, Rock, who was approximately 12 years old at the time, used to play with Nikolas who was approximately 9, and Zackary, who was 8. Lynda, Zackary and Nikolas' mother, and I would talk every day. Sometimes they would come to my house and sometimes I would go to their house. Lynda and I became friends quickly; she was like my mom.

I sometimes watched the boys if she needed to go out and sometimes I would take the boys out to bowling, boating, or go to the movies, the arcade or the water park.

In October, 2016, I stayed at Lynda's house for 3 weeks with my children. While I was there I saw guns on the floor in the closet of Nikolas' room. The guns that I observed were not hunting guns. They looked like army guns. I saw at least 5 of them. The guns looked like assault weapons. They were very large. I also saw a large box of bullets. I saw Nikolas playing with and cleaning the guns. I asked my older son to check the weapons to make sure there were no bullets in the guns and to put the bullets in the safe. I asked Lynda for permission to do this and she allowed my older son to do so. Lynda was afraid to do it herself because she was afraid of Nikolas. I explained to Nikolas that I was concerned about my young child and that I could not have him be around loaded guns or any weapons where bullets could be placed in guns, because my son was only 5 years old and I needed to be sure that he was safe. I also made sure that Nikolas was never alone with my young son and that either I or my older adult son was there to make sure that we were all safe.

I was also concerned about the guns because I knew that Lynda had told me that Nikolas had put a gun to her head in the past.

In October, 2016, Lynda was a single parent and she asked me if I was willing to take care of her sons if anything ever happened to her. I assured her if something happened to her that I would be there for her boys.

In October 31st, 2017, Lynda drove herself to the hospital. She had contracted pneumonia and the flu. The next day, the nurse called me and asked me to come and get Lynda's boys because Lynda did not have much longer to live. I immediately rushed to the hospital and spoke to Lynda and told her I would keep my word and take care of her sons. The boys were there and able to say their goodbyes to their mother. We were all crying. Within five minutes, Lynda passed away.

I took the boys to their home where they gathered their personal items and their dogs and I took them to my home. I remember there were guns in Lynda's house. I told Nikolas that he was not allowed to bring his guns into my house, with the exception of BB guns, which were to be locked up in my adult son's room and Nikolas could not have them if my young son, Tyler, was in the house. All of the other guns were taken to a friend's house, where I was assured by the friend's parents that they would be locked up.

Nikolas lived with us for a little less than a month, and at first he was on his best behavior, but then we had to make a number of 911 calls. The first 911 call occurred because my mother had found a receipt in Nikolas' room for a gun and bullets that he had purchased from Dick's Sporting Goods. We did not find any gun at that time because he was still in the waiting period to receive the gun, but we were very concerned. Rock called 911. When the police came we told them about the purchase of the gun and that we were very concerned. I asked them if we could stop him from getting the gun that he purchased. They said they couldn't stop him from buying or having possession of a gun. I told them that Nicholas was 19 years old but I felt that mentally and emotionally he was similar to a 12 year old.

For the second 911 call, my mom, who was also living in my home, saw Nikolas digging in the backyard and she didn't know why. She and I went to look at the hole because I was concerned that Nikolas might have obtained the gun and buried it there. I did not find a gun there, but I did find a hole in the backyard and a large empty gun box, which was the same size as the hole. The box had dirt on the bottom, which appeared to indicate that Nikolas might have been digging a hole to hold a gun box, and he might put a gun in that box. I was concerned. For that reason, we called 911 and we explained to the officer that Nikolas had

purchased a gun and that we were afraid of his intentions. The police said that anyone was allowed to bury a gun and that Nikolas was allowed to do that. I was surprised because I thought that guns had to be locked away.

For the third 911 call, Nikolas had been punching holes in the wall at my house. My son Rock intervened and told him that he must not disrespect me and not destroy our home. Nikolas punched Rock and Rock defended himself. I called 911. By the time the police came Nikolas had left the house. I told the officers that I was concerned that Nikolas would come back with a gun.

I told the police about prior incidents that I knew of in which Nikolas had put a gun to his mother's head and to his brother's head. I also told them about other warning signs. I was very concerned that the gun, which he had purchased, might be brought into my house or that he might get the gun and use it to harm himself or others. Law enforcement said that nothing could be done.

When Nikolas returned to the house, I told him that it was either the gun or us and that he had to choose. He could not have both. He chose the gun. I told him that I cannot have guns or violence in my house and he would need to find another place to stay, but that he could call me and I would still help him and be there for him, but I couldn't have him living in my house and putting my family in danger. I could not live in fear in my own home. I even offered to help find him a place to live. Nikolas went to a friend's house to live with him. I warned the friend's parents about Nikolas.

After Nikolas lived with that friend and his parents for a very short period of time, he moved to the home of James Snead. I remained in touch with Nikolas and James. The day before the shooting, Nikolas texted. He was worried about the dogs.

My heart goes out to the 17 victims of the shooting who were killed, to the 17 who were injured, and to all their families and to everyone who was placed in fear that terrible day at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School.

I did everything I could to warn law enforcement about what could happen. I wanted to protect, not only my own children, but also anyone else who might be at risk of being harmed. I also wanted to protect Nikolas from himself.

Unfortunately, although I did everything I could, I was not able to stop this tragedy from taking place.

While Nikolas was living with us, I had begged him to go to the doctor and get reevaluated because his mother had passed away and he was very depressed. I felt that he should get back on his medication that he had been refusing to take, but he declined to do that. He said that it didn't help him and I could not force him to do it because he was an adult. I also suggested to him that it could help him if he talked to a therapist. He refused.

I am so glad that the young people in Parkland and across the country are marching this weekend in support of changes in gun laws to help protect children at school so they can be safe. I am a parent and I support them and I'm very proud of them.

I don't know how Nikolas obtained all of the guns that he had, but given the fact that I have reason to believe he was mentally ill, he should never have been able to purchase or have those guns in his possession. I hope that elected officials will listen to the voices of those who will march on Saturday. I agree that it is urgent that our elected officials take action on the issue of guns to prevent future tragedies like the one at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School.

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