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Statement of Katie Kuhlman

I grew up Christian. Every major decision that I have made in my life has been made prayerfully and I have always felt the decisions were right by God. That includes praying about joining the Christian Mingle dating website.

I chose that site because I thought that Christian Mingle would help me find someone who shared my same values and deep belief in God, Jesus, and The Holy Spirit. I wanted to live those values with someone who believed in them as much as I did.

I told the jury the following account of what happened to me.

Within a day of having an account with Christian Mingle, Sean Banks and I connected and began chatting. He called himself Rylan and I later learned from police that was not his real name. We exchanged phone numbers and texted and talked on the phone. We talked about life, values, theology, God and Scripture. He said he was a Christian and almost everything we talked about revolved around God.

About a month later we decided to meet. We originally planned to meet for coffee in La mesa at a coffee shop but about 15 minutes before our coffee date, Sean called me to tell me that everything was closed because of Thanksgiving was the next day. He told me that he was already in La Mesa and asked if I had any suggestions. I told him we could watch a movie at my house because he was already close. I told him I had no alcohol at my house.

When Sean got to my house he brought a movie and Rum with Coke and Dr. Pepper. I felt comfortable having invited him over because we had been talking and texting almost every day for a month. He got to my house around 8:30 and very quickly fixed us drinks. I felt he was very aggressive about wanting me to drink my drink. He kept asking me why I wasn't drinking and if I didn't like it and kept telling me to drink more.

Finally I took a sip and then told him firmly that I didn't want to drink. He said, "Ok, fine" put his arm around me and we started watching the movie. During one of the fight scenes, Sean put his hand tightly around my neck and told me it was crazy to him that with just one twist you could snap someone's neck and kill them. I became alarmed and told him that I needed to go to the restroom.

When I was in the bathroom, I remember thinking that maybe he put something in my drink... Maybe he was going to hurt me... A lot of things were going through my head and I started to feel overwhelmed and uncomfortable in a way I never had before. I kept telling myself I was crazy and overreacting and that everything was fine. When I went back out to the living room, I kept telling myself again and again that everything was fine and to act normal.

We kept watching the movie on the couch and eventually he asked me for a kiss, so I kissed him. I was expecting a light, quick kiss, but the kiss became very aggressive and I pulled away and said we should slow down. He kept trying to kiss me for a few minutes but after I kept saying we needed to stop and let's slow down, he eventually pulled away and stopped.

About 10 minutes later, out of nowhere, he quickly moved back to me on the couch, tried to kiss me, and forcefully put his hand down my pants in between my legs. I kept trying to pull his hand out and telling him to stop but he refused. He told me he wanted me to orgasm and that I needed to loosen up and everything was fine. I told him that I couldn't and it wasn't going to work and that we needed to stop.

He told me we'd be more comfortable in my bedroom and I told him I didn't want to go in my room. He grabbed my arm and forcefully pulled me. At that moment I realized something bad was going to happen and I started to fear for my life.

He had me pinned on the bed and was holding me down with his upper body. He had my hands pinned above my head. He completely climbed on top of me and I was crying telling him that I didn't want to have sex. He didn't listen and he began having sex with me. I started crying harder and at the top of my lungs screamed "Please!" begging him to stop. He got angry, screamed "Fine!" and got off of me, grabbed all his things and left. 10 minutes later he texted me pretending like he got lost that night driving, never came over, and that we had never met. Immediately I saw how calculated his crime was and I called the police.

That occurred on November 21, 2012 and that night completely changed my life. My life didn't change because I became a victim of rape, but because I finally realized that bad things can happen even to me and that scary people aren't just in the movies. Crime became a reality for me that night.

I have spent the last 2 years picking up broken pieces in my life. The first several months were the hardest. I became very depressed. I hid from my family and friends and I was too ashamed and embarrassed to get out of bed. I spent that Thanksgiving and Christmas and New Year alone in my apartment. I nearly lost my job from missing so much work. I learned that surviving rape can make you feel dead inside. I spent a lot of time in therapy and as much as it has helped me and brought me out of that depression, I still struggle with understanding why Sean Banks would calculate this crime against me and try to use power, manipulation, fear, and intimidation to try to get away with it.

I believe that sex is a choice and that I should decide if and when and with whom I wish to be intimate. Sean Banks took that choice away from me. Coming to terms with losing that control over my body has been very hard for me. It's been even harder to realize that the trust I had in humanity to respect that right was taken away by someone without any remorse.

These last 2 years I have learned so much and discovered strength I never knew I had. I have found healing but I know there are scars that will always be there. Not one day goes by that I don't think about that night. Sometimes it's triggered by perfume or cologne or a TV show or the way someone resembles Sean Banks. No matter what though, that night is still always in the back of my head. I have been trying to put this behind me and I was hoping that after the trial I could start a new chapter of my life apart from this.

I want Sean and his family to know that I pray for him every day. I pray that he realizes what he did was wrong. I pray that he understands how terrible this has been for me, and I pray that he realizes that he is not smarter than the law and he can't hurt people and just get away with it with no punishment.

I am going to have to deal with this battle for the rest of my life. The pain and scars and memories will never go away. For that reason I am asking that Sean Banks receive the maximum sentence. I know that in the sentencing report I told the Probation Officer that although I wanted Sean to be punished, I did not know if I could live with myself knowing that I requested he be sentenced to life in prison. I may have thought that at the time that we spoke, but I have since changed my

mind and do not feel that way anymore. I do not want Sean to ever have the opportunity to physically, sexually, or emotionally hurt another female, so again, I am asking, Your Honor, that Sean Banks serve the maximum sentence.

My ultimate goal in coming forward and going public is to encourage other women who have gone through similar situations to not be afraid to do the same. Rape can happen to anybody, anywhere, anytime and it's never okay.

November 7, 2014