

Statement Presented in court by Peter Gold
Monday, October 31, 2016

The series of events that occurred that night still leave me in disbelief. I question the reality of those moments daily. How was everything timed so perfectly? What if scenarios play on repeat in my head? What if you had driven around the block one or two more times to scope out the scene before deciding to make your move on that girl? I would have driven right past, no crime occurring yet. What if I had carried cash on me that night? Would you have taken my money and run? Would you still have pulled your gun and at point blank range tell me, "I am going to kill you?" What if your car license plate wasn't in the sight of that security camera; would you be here? What if your gun didn't jam; would I be here?

I woke up two days later in the hospital surrounded by my family and a group of best friends. This moment will forever be the happiest moment in my life. I was alive. You hadn't killed me. And with my family by my side, I knew I would bounce back stronger than ever. Strong enough to stand face to face with you again.

Standing here really hurts. It tears me apart emotionally to know what you did that night and the following day. I want you to know and understand the effect your individual actions had not just on me, but on those around me. My family was a train wreck. I will never forget the pain and trauma you caused them. Can you even imagine how you made them feel? That pain you caused is a burden I carry with me forever, and you should too. Secondly, my heart shatters for the couple you sexually assaulted the following day. Their wounds will never heal quite like mine and I feel unbelievably terrible. You committed the ultimate selfish act. I hope your justice brings them peace.

After much critical thought, I feel deeply that no human is born with the hate and rage that you proved possible that night. Violent actions like this are happening daily in our country and have become a systemic problem which is certainly a major issue in our city. I have lived in New Orleans for eight years ignoring our city's violent reality which you abruptly showed me. I believe we are failing the youngest generation, those who come home from middle and high school with a lack of necessary familial and community support. The lack of guidance at this all-important developmental stage makes the bad path in life an easy path to choose. Being surrounded by a culture that teaches power through violence is how an altercation becomes shoot to kill.

I hope that 50 years from now when you are released from jail, you will use your remaining years to affect young people's lives in a positive way. You have heard here today how your individual actions have created so much pain and trauma, merely adding to the cultural of violence in our city. I will dedicate the rest of my life to work with and support those who want to change our culture, who don't want to see what happened on November 20, 2015 happen again. There is no reason for this terror. We can be better and working as a one community we will be stronger.