

Thank you for having me today, I am Pam Martin Harris. My Mom is Roberta Martin who was brutally murdered, and her body was set on fire, which is clearly disturbing a corpse, this happened last July in Enosburg, VT. I'd like to share a little about my Mom, at 82 years young, as we called her, she was truly young at heart. She walked daily, did yoga, stretched on her inversion table, she gardened, ate healthy, she had a radiance about her. She truly defined that 82 is the new 62!! Mom had a sweetness about her, she was timid, old fashioned, she kept to herself, she was well liked by her friends and neighbors. She had a servant's heart, when family or friends were sick or needed help, she was there. She truly had a heart of gold. My parents were married for 60 yrs when my Dad passed 6yrs ago, Mom became a widow, on her own for the very 1st time in her life. This is when she began spending her summers at her home in Enosburg and spent the winter months with my husband & I in the south, getting out of the cold VT winters. She wasn't ready to give up her independence and chose to stay in her home. She did NOT like being alone, especially at night. In fact, she'd leave every light on until it was bedtime, we ended our evenings with a phone call to say our GOOD NIGHTS. We spoke several times a day, every single day. In fact, last Summer we talked about our plans this winter, planning our Christmas vacation to Destin, spending time with my grandchildren that lived nearby, baking as we always did during the holidays. I'm telling you this because our plans were shattered and taken when she was murdered. That dreadful day to learn that a body was found and could possibly be my Mom was horrific. Detective Baker called me that day and asked what size shoe my Mom wore, did I know any particular details about her feet. At the time, I had no idea why such specific questions were being asked. My Mom was petite, wore a size 6 shoe, she did have surgery on each of her big toes, where she had screws placed. I was puzzled and my mind was racing WHY am I being asked this. Because of these few facts, we were told by the VSP that the remains found, were most likely my Mom's but that they needed to be confirmed by the medical examiner. Only to find out that the body found was identified 24 hours later that it was my Mom. My family and I didn't learn all the details that day, we got them in pieces... like a tiny broken puzzle that made no sense. We were told that a foot was found, that had been severed, chewed off by an animal, dismembering it. Detective Nadeau found a human foot and then searched further, only to find a body 3 feet away, that had been burnt beyond recognition but appeared to be human not a decayed animal. Imagine being told this about a loved one, especially your Mom, it was horrifying. We still didn't know who did this or why. I felt helpless, I felt completely broken, the horror she must have felt was haunting. When the VSP arrested the suspect, forensics had determined she was raped, they had proof of his DNA. My precious sweet Mom had been brutally attacked, murdered, raped and carried out of her home, thrown into the woods, set on fire. Let that sink in. A clear example of a "disturbance of a corpse". My family and I were robbed of saying our final goodbyes to our Mom. IMAGINE, if you will, losing a loved one from such a heinous crime, only to learn your loved one's body was burnt, it's cruel, it's inhumane and so brutal. The closure you never get is unnerving. It's a void, and ache that's constant, an unrelenting battle with reality that you feel, the endless replay in your mind of what could have been, if only he would have left her body alone. But the cruel visions that replay in your head haunts you, daily. I never got the opportunity to say my final goodbye to my precious Mom. My Mom was in the privacy of her home, sound asleep, in her safe place. This demonic monster broke in, harmed her, murdered her, raped her, but that wasn't enough. Instead of fleeing and leaving her... he carried her lifeless body out of her home, less than a mile away, he could have just left her in the woods but that wasn't enough, he then ignited her and burnt her beyond recognition, in hopes to destroy any evidence, I assume.... Just let that resonate!!!!!!!

Visualize that!! It's very VERY disturbing, as any of you could ever imagine.

This is where me & my family were brought to, where her body was found, 5 days later. There was a huge old oak tree that had fallen over and its roots were pulled out of the ground, creating a ditch like, I crawled into the area and lay there, as I lied there I could smell the burnt wood and leaves that remained. My Mom's remains lay there for the 5 days while we were searching for her, hoping to find her alive. My sweet Mom was not only murdered but her lifeless body was cruelly abused.... Not only removing her body but burnt her. It's **cold-blooded, ruthless, unsympathetic, barbaric, vicious, atrocious, callous, evil, harsh, hateful, inhuman, inhumane, relentless, sadistic, spiteful, vicious and wicked....** Are just a few descriptions that come to mind. It's hard to express and put into words how e this makes me feel, it's hard to choose the appropriate words to emphasize the brutality.

I speak on behalf of my sisters, my Mom's sisters, her sisters in law, nieces, nephews, grandchildren, great grandchildren, neighbors, friends and even people that didn't even know her. We've all been in this nightmare together; it's caused so much pain for many people. I have gone to counseling and have learned several others have, as well. This has tested my faith and questioning GOD why, WHY would GOD allow this to happen, in my faith, I have concluded this was the act of the devil. When my Mom's Mother passed away she kissed her Mother on the cheek, saying her final good byes. I was 10 yrs old when my Grammy passed and it's something I cherished. It's something I have done as well, when my Dad passed, I kissed him on the cheek, and other close family members..... It's something I never really given any thought to, until now. I never got to kiss my sweet Mama, I never got to say my final goodbye.

Almost 4 months later, after she was found, we finally heard from the medical examiner, the cause of death was blunt trauma to the head, homicidal. That is what's written on my sweet Mama's death certificate forever. The date of death on my Mom's death certificate says, Jul 2024. There is no day of death because it can't be proven, this is permanent , it's what will be on record for generations to see. Not only did he rape and murder my precious Mom, he burnt her.... This could be why we don't have a day of death, which is my theory. Also, I have learned this charge holds a penalty of up to 10 years and a \$10K fine..... up to 10 years meaning it could be well under 10 years, this may be another conversation to have because I believe it should be much more than up to 10 years.

Last September after a status conference, we met with Diane Wheeler, Deputy States Attorney in charge of my Mom's case, we were asking many questions, 1 was, why is only aggravated murder being charged against the accused and not each individual charge, which would be breaking and entering, unlawful trespassing, assault, rape, murder, transferring a corpse and abusing a corpse. She explained each charge and what penalty they hold. Diane explained that it's a misdemeanor, a mere slap on the wrist for abusing a corpse and we were outraged. She suggested we reach out to VT legislators. So, this is when I reached out to Sen Randy Brock, Amy Farr VSP victims advocate, she put me in touch with Jenn Poehlmann, Executive Director for the VT Center for Crime Victim Services, my friend Patty Whitney reached out to Tom Burditt, who now I've learned has been working on this bill. The reason we are even addressing this today is because of my Mom's murder, I would like for you to consider calling H.41 "Roberta's Law". My Moms legacy will live on by naming it "ROBERTA's LAW", hoping other families will not have to endure it as a misdemeanor, but enforcing this as a felony. The sad reality is she was taken from us, she was healthy and had a lot more living

to do, God didn't take her, this monster did. But murdering her was not enough, he burnt her, no human deserves this, especially ones' Mom. To sum up, in my sweet Mom's case, we may never know the order of assault the perpetrator did, blunt trauma to the head, which the medical examiner concluded is the cause of death, he raped her.... the DNA proves it, which would clearly be disturbing a corpse, he removed her dead body from her home and set her on fire, again disturbing a corpse. IF there is something that could arise during her trial, perhaps on a technicality and the aggravated murder charge is thrown out, Diane would impose each individual charge. It could be said that he reportedly should be charged twice, disturbing a corpse, by raping her and burning her after she was killed, is something to consider. In today's society, with the combination of mental health and drug addiction have become an epidemic and being such a problem, these crimes are just unthinkable, we must put such important laws into place and the penalty be a felony.

I am so grateful to Tom Burditt, his team and to all of you for considering this today. Thank you for hearing me and GOD bless you all.