

This is a letter in support of Sex Week. I don't know if you will publish it. For obvious reasons it must be anonymous.

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I wish we had Sex Week when I was a student ten years ago, although some of us were so headstrong that perhaps we would have paid no attention. But here is my story as a warning to others not to follow my unfortunate course.

In the fall semester, my date to a frat party was a sophomore, although I was a senior. Alcohol flowed and I encouraged my under-age date to consume a lot until she was willing to do almost anything. In my room, I + we had unprotected sex although I don't know if she was smart enough to know what we were doing. A couple of months later, she revealed to me and to her parents that she was pregnant. Her parents were indignant that their "good" daughter, whom they naïvely assumed was a virgin, had been raped. Her family lived a well-known lawyer; I had no excuse since I had provided the alcohol and had encouraged her to drink too much. I was convicted and sentenced to a minimum of six years in prison, with possibility of parole. Thus my university career ended within a few days of what would be near my graduation. The pregnancy ended in an abortion "to protect the innocence" of the girl (whom I have forgiven, but I don't know if she has ever forgiven me).

You can imagine how this has affected my relationship to my parents, my two brothers, my sister, and everyone I thought were friends. My dreams were gone; those dreams had evaporated.

But this was only the beginning of my nightmare. There is no pleasure for a 21 year old felon to be incarcerated with thugs who aren't homosexual but establish their dominance by "initiating" (i.e., sexually subduing them) newcomers into submission. After several appeals to the administration, I was moved to a different unit where the inmates were not violent.

I had never been a violent person and became a model inmate, then a trustee. At the end of six years, my first application for parole was denied. After more than seven years, I finally received parole, but my parole would continue for ten years. As a result, I must report to my parole officer every week (I can now do this occasionally by telephone). For the first two years of parole, I was forbidden to leave Knox County without permission. No more holidays with family at Hilton Head or elsewhere. Even now, I must report to my parole officer when I leave Knox County to go to Gatlinburg or Nashville, or anywhere.

For the rest of my life, unless laws change, I am a parolee because I must register as a "sex offender." Where do I live? I live at home with my family because no landlord will rent an apartment to a registered sex offender - they fear liability if I "cannot control myself." If I had enough money to try to buy a house, neighbors would immediately be notified that their new neighbor is a registered sex offender. I am forever an outcast, a leper. It is impossible to get a date; I dare not do anything stupid such as visit a prostitute; therefore I must resort to "solo" techniques to relieve "tension."

Convicted felons in Tennessee are denied the right to vote, but on release from prison they may request the Board of Probation and Parole the restoration of voting rights **WITH THE EXCEPTION** of violent offenders such as those convicted of murder, rape, and treason. Unless the law changes, I will never again be permitted to vote.

I am older and wiser at age 31. Nothing can restore what I lost in years, in getting a decent job, in exercising normal "rights" which everyone takes for granted. My recommendation "Be Smart, Don't Be Stupid." The cost-benefit ratio is horrible. It plagues you for the rest of your life.