

It is impossible to put into words the impact of Sydney's decision to sell my sister laced drugs within my own life. For starters, it directly caused the death of my sister Shannon Leigh Mulligan. Yes, my sister ultimately made the decision to use the substance that night, but one cannot ignore the direct role that Sydney had in this. My sister was actively trying to get clean, but it's extremely hard to do that when your so called friend is dangling the very stuff you are addicted to in front of you, practically harassing you the entire time you are in treatment. Substance use disorder is a stigmatized disease, which Sydney profited off of. Sydney was no friend of Shannon like she likes to claim she was. A true friend would encourage and support their friend during their journey towards sobriety, not use their illness for profit by selling them deadly substances and tempting them any chance they can get. Who knows where we would be now if Sydney decided to be an actual friend to Shannon and encourage her sobriety instead of selling her the same poison that killed her? Maybe she would still be with us today almost 3 years clean.

Sydney did not support Shannon's sobriety because in her eyes Shannon was nothing but another one of her customers. I don't want to see her today. She is the person who tempted my sister the whole time she was in treatment then when she was out, sold my sister the poison that killed her. Standing up here today is extremely hard for my family and I to do, but we need to be heard. We need to be Shannon's voice because hers has been completely stripped away. Sydney deserves to be behind bars so she cannot harm another person and cause the same pain that she has caused my family. I ask myself, as a mother herself, how could she not be a friend to Shannon, put greed aside, and encourage her sobriety for her daughter? How can she sell her poison and harass her with it the entire time she is in treatment? What if her children had gotten

into that poison? All it takes is for them to touch it one day and the same thing that happened to my sister would happen to them. Sydney could not wait for her “customer” to get out of treatment so she could make more money. It is selfish and greedy. What Sydney has done is not only legally wrong, it is morally wrong.

Shannon was more than just a “customer”. She was an amazing human being. She was a mother who struggled with substance use disorder. Her substance use disorder and struggles do not define her. She had a good soul. She had so many dreams that can never be fulfilled. She was a good person with a good heart. She was too trusting of the wrong people who just ended up abusing her, like Sydney did.

Because of Sydney’s decision to profit off of my sister’s illness as well as my sister giving into the bait, my children will never get to know their Aunt. When Shannon and I were younger, we always spoke about the things we would do with our children when we had them. We would take them to the zoo together, take them for ice cream, to the museum, bring them to see each other often, and so on. We wanted our children to be close with each other as well as with us. This fantasy will never become a reality because it has been ripped away from me by selfish acts. I thank God that we at least have Aria, Shannon’s daughter, still in our lives today. But we also have to listen to her tell us how she wishes her Mommy was here, how she doesn’t understand what happened, how sad she is that her Mommy isn’t with her, how much she misses her and so on. It breaks my heart every single time I hear those words. After my sister’s passing, I fell into a deep depression. I drank all the time, I self harmed, and I did not want to be alive anymore. I pushed away family and moved away from home because the memories of Shannon were just too much to bear. I practically destroyed myself for almost an entire year. Eventually,

my husband and finding out I was pregnant with our son helped to pull me out of the depression, but the emptiness that this has caused me will always be there. It will never go away.

Throughout my entire pregnancy and ever since I gave birth, I have always felt a hole. There was something missing. In my relationship with my husband there is always something missing. Finding out I am pregnant again, there is something missing. With every joy in my life, it is never complete because Shannon is physically missing from it all. I have to remind myself that she is with me through everything in spirit, but that is not enough. She deserves to be here through it all. She did not deserve what happened to her. She needed support and got nothing but discouragement from her "so called friends" and abuser. I think about all of the things that Shannon wanted to do but will never get because of selfishness. We would have been each other's maids of honor. She will never be able to get married, she wasn't able to see me get married or meet my husband, she will never meet my children, she will never get to know her child, she will never have the opportunity to have more children, she will never be able to finish college and pursue her dreams, and so on. The list of never-s is endless. The colossal impact that this has had on my life and the people around me will never change. It will be there forever. Going forward, I have a new calling. I will finish up my college in June of next year to become a substance abuse counselor. My aim is to help the same type of misunderstood people that people like Sydney profit off of. I want to honor my sister by helping others who are in similar circumstances she was. I want to be a vessel of support and a motivator to encourage sobriety, something Shannon needed.

Thank you to everyone for listening to my statement. Three to five years will NEVER be enough time to justify the lifetime of pain Sydney's actions have caused us all and the life that it

cost. I pray during her time behind bars, she can learn to take accountability for her actions and work towards doing some good.