

Rodney is the eldest of the four Lincoln children. He was 16 years old when his father was arrested. Today he is the father of two adult sons and a teenage daughter and the proud grandfather of four.

An open letter to the feelings of a wrongfully convicted mans son.

I was asked to explain how I felt when my Father was arrested and wrongfully convicted for a crime that he did not commit, how do you put in to words what a teenage boy goes through when such a devastating event takes place in their life?

Many of the thoughts that follow in this letter are feelings that I have never shared with anyone, not that I did not have people that cared in my life but more out of shame that I felt this way. I hope that by sharing these thoughts that I may be able to help someone else understand that they are not alone, or different from others for feeling this way. It happens and people eventually have to know how others are affected.

I was doing all that I could at the time to come to grips with society, the same as any young man growing up and starting to make his own way in life, find friends make a good name for himself, and find his own way. My father had a way of allowing me the opportunity to make my own decisions and let me learn but with a hidden sense of guiding me without me realizing that he was helping me. That was suddenly taken away..... HOW could they say these things about him and accuse him of such a heinous crime????

Those are the questions I asked myself..... Then I started asking " why did this happen?" then it started....., people would start being quiet when I came around, and start whispering things when I was what they thought far enough away to not hear. Then anger set in and doubt, always wondering who my true friends were, then I began to fear that people were judging me on the way society had labeled my Father. I was always fearful of filling out job applications or introducing myself to new people because of the media attention to my Fathers case, some say that was an unfounded fear. To me it was real, I hate to admit it but it was real and for just reason, My Father's name is Rodney Lincoln, my name is Rodney Lincoln. Can you now see why that fear was justifiable?

Then it started to creep inShame..... yes I was shameful of what my father's name and what my name had become to society. Who could I blame for this? I did not know, I knew that it was not my Dad's fault, I couldn't blame the victims, I could not blame my family, I blamed myself for this fear and this shame.. I should blame the investigators and the prosecuting attorney, the Judge, and the Jury. I knew that if I done that I would be a bitter and untrusting person, or even worse, possibly live up to what society thought of Rodney Lincoln...

I ran from my fears, traveled to places that did not get the propaganda from the St. Louis media. I tried to make the name Rodney Lincoln a respectable name in society, don't get me wrong I have always respected my father and the way that he has handled the situation, I just wanted the name to be respected in society. Maybe that was wrong but that was what I believed.

There are many times since, I have grown up that they have had something on the news or in the papers about my father's case, that I have had to explain to people that Yes the name is the same as mine, the man they asked about is not me, but he is My father and he is innocent, and I am proud to be his son.....

This letter may not mean much to many, but to those that make quick judgement's of people before they know all the facts, or they begin to accuse someone of something, make sure that you have examined everything thoroughly and not take the word of others to make your decision, it does affect many life's.

Society has not changed much, in the way that they make snap judgments and decisions without all the facts, I will tell you quick story of something that recently happened to my family as a result of media attention..... ***My wife was babysitting a little girl and she just adored this little girl, this little girl's parents thought the world of my wife. There was a newspaper article on my Father's case that came out and we were thinking that the end was finally near. My wife sat down and wrote a letter to this couple explaining everything and letting them know that there was a possibility that Dad was coming home soon and would be living with us. They suddenly stopped bring the little girl over and stopped talking to my wife, and when she inquired why, they stated that they did not want their daughter***

around my Father..... that hurt my wife like you would never believe, she cried for days. And wondered how anyone could judge before they even knew someone. She felt what I had felt for so many years and I ached for her, ached that she had to witness such shallowness.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter, I hope that it helps someone somewhere someday.

Rodney Lincoln.