

Greetings,

My name is Mishawn Penkava and I am in my senior year of high school. Fairly recently, 18 hours before I started writing this, I decided to call my dad for the last time. Many times in the past year, I have made phone calls to my dad about my life at my mom's house. At first I held my feelings in, but no one can hold everything in for long. I did not like the life I had at my mom's house. My dad knew it, my aunt knew it, and my friends knew parts of what I couldn't hold in.

I left seven years of my life behind. I left all my friends, family, and connections. Albany grew to be my home town, I could be walking along any random road and see my fifth grade teacher, my doctor, or even someone from the other high school that I once met at a football game. I enjoy being happy. The one thing that caused me to be unhappy was enough to destroy all those connections of friendliness and love I had.

What started my feelings toward not being happy at home was something simple, the house has never been clean. I would clean the dishes and three times within two weeks there were dead moths and flies in the dishes covered in food. Ever since we first bought chickens, we had a bowl for scraps of food we did not eat to feed to the chickens. The bowl would not be covered and for days on end there would be fruit flies everywhere in the kitchen. In our pantry one time, I went to make Mac n' Cheese and I poured the box out into the water to find three moths in it.

My mother has ten dogs who are always in a kennel in an area that poop never is picked up. If those dogs are lucky they run out in the field for an hour but that is the only attention they receive from their owners. Those dogs sitting at my mother's house are sad and lonely, I hear it every time someone walks by them and doesn't pay attention. The puppies for selling, all live together in a walk-in kennel inside the house. The puppies are always covered in poop, the house always smells like them. I could barely breathe in the house. The poop is always sitting on the ground, hardly ever clean. My mother has been diagnosed with a mental health issue. She doesn't behave like others do. She doesn't comprehend simple things, which causes frustration.

As I mentioned before, my aunt knew how I felt and my friends knew the parts of what I could not hold in. Today, when I text messaged one of my friends telling her I was moving, she called me in tears. Later I called two of my friends who were together at the time to tell them, they also cried. My friends did not know much of my problems at home, but my aunt did. When I called my aunt she did not cry, she was proud I had finally done something because she knew this wasn't a way I should be living.

Everything I know is gone now, all the social events, my friends, my brothers, and even I am.

Sincerely,

Mishawn Penkava

To whom this may concern,

My name is David Penkava. Mishawn Penkava is my daughter and decided recently to live with me instead of her mother. Unfortunately, I'm certain the circumstances that led Mishawn to make this decision are not unique only to her as many teenagers have less than ideal home lives.

I got divorced in 2006 and my ex-wife took Mishawn and her brother (my son) when she moved to the Albany area in 2008. In 2011 my son moved back here to live with me as he didn't get along with my ex-wife's new husband and I provided a "home" not just a place to live and food to eat.

Without going into great detail the backstory on my ex-wife is that she has several medical and mental issues and has been diagnosed as having a mental illness. She has been taking many different medications over the years to include prescription pain medications at extremely high dosage. Additionally, every time I have entered her home it was a mess and she has now converted a portion of her home into a dog "birthing" kennel giving the entire house a rancid smell and creating a breeding ground for bacteria/disease.

Over the years Mishawn and I have talked at length about the living conditions and her mother's erratic behavior/mood swings. Recently the conversations have led her to tears because she didn't understand why her mother does the things she does. I've always encouraged Mishawn to live with me because I would provide a home and family environment that would be much better than what her mother provides. Although Mishawn knew the home life would be better she didn't want to give up the friendships she had made over the years she had been going to school in Albany.

That all changed about 2:00am on September 28th when Mishawn called me in tears saying she couldn't handle the conditions she was living in with her mother. Mishawn told me she wanted to live with me and finish her last year of high school at Crater High School despite all of her friends being at West Albany High School.

If you have any questions regarding this letter or would like any additional information feel free to call 541-621-7121.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Penkava". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "D" at the beginning.



Crater School of Business, Innovation, and Science

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September 29, 2015

To Whom It May Concern,

I'm writing this letter on behalf of Mishawn Penkava, a brave young lady who enrolled in Crater School of Business, Innovation and Science just last week.

It is critical for the wellbeing of Ms. Penkava and her education that she begin to acclimate to the high school culture in Central Point, Oregon, and therefore begin to participate in athletics and other school events.

Mishawn is committed to graduating from high school and to creating a better life for herself than what has been provided to her in the past by her mentally unstable mother.

I am supporting a hardship request for Mishawn Penkava as her ability to participate in athletics will help her transition socially and academically into the high school environment of Crater High.

Please feel free to call me with questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Tiffany Slaughter, Principal
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