

**Claire Hart**  
**Victim Statement**  
**8/29/23**

**Introduction:** The arson attack that occurred last November not only destroyed me and my five year old daughter's home and treasured memories but also inflicted emotional and physical trauma we'll likely be dealing with for the rest of our lives. This statement gives an overview of the challenges we've faced, the toll they've taken on our well-being, and the price we'll be paying for years to come due to this person's actions.

**The Fire:** On Thanksgiving 2022, I woke up around 3:15 AM to a light but strange, persistent sound. I saw smoke outside my bedroom window and went to the front door to investigate - that's when I saw the fire. My home was in flames. I called 911 for help and was able to determine that the fire was far enough to the side of the front door that we could escape through it. I wrapped my sleeping daughter in a blanket and ran out of the house and up the block to escape the fire and smoke. With my arms occupied with my daughter, I called for our dog to follow, but she must not have wanted to go out into the smoke. Hoping to run back to rescue our dog, I knocked on a neighbor's door to ask them to watch my daughter, but there was no answer. All I could do was stand on the sidewalk up the street with my daughter in my arms and watch the fire grow bigger with every passing minute while we waited for the firetruck to arrive. A police officer was the first on the scene, he rescued our little dog from the house and let us sit in the back of his car. We watched the fire department work for what seemed like hours to put the fire out.

**Displacement and Disarray:** The immediate aftermath of the fire was a disorienting blur. The little life that has taken every ounce of strength in me to create for my daughter, was destroyed in a matter of hours, leaving us displaced and without any sense of security or belonging. Our home, our little haven, our treasured belongings, and irreplaceable memories were senselessly destroyed. When we went back into the house to try to salvage important documents, my sweet, innocent daughter cried when she saw what was left of her home and belongings. We've both continued to struggle with the incredible loss we experienced. Treasures like my daughter's beautiful locks of hair from her very first haircut, my late grandpa's scriptures, the teaset from my wedding that was to be passed down to my daughter — priceless, irreplaceable possessions just gone. The instability of our living arrangements since the fire has also been distressing for both of us. We've had to move from place to place trying to save as much money as possible while still maintaining a decent level of security.

**Financial Strain and Uprooted Lives:** The financial strain has been overwhelming. We've had to pay out of pocket for living arrangements as we've bounced from one place to another, while still having to pay the mortgage of our desolated home. The financial loss we've experienced is something we'll feel the repercussions of for years to come. The anxiety and uncertainty I've felt as a single mother providing for my daughter has only intensified with the ever-growing mountain of costs I'm having to single-handedly pay for. I've had to halt any financial planning indefinitely and don't know when or if I'll be able to recover.

**Loss of Time and Emotional Toll:** Rebuilding our home has proven to be an exhausting process, demanding an unprecedented amount of my time and energy. Coordinating with insurance agents, negotiating with contractors, and overseeing the details of reconstruction has monopolized my time, leaving me with essentially no time for recovery. This coupled with the demands of my full-time job and being a full-time mom has absolutely devastated my emotional well-being. I have been pouring from an empty cup since November trying to perform at work, take care of my precious daughter, and rebuild our lives. The emotional toll of managing this process while grappling with the trauma of the arson has left me utterly exhausted with an often overwhelming sense of hopelessness. This attack has affected me in essentially every circumstance and relationship in my life. It's affected how I perform at work, my professional and personal relationships, and my confidence just venturing out into the world on a daily basis. My sleep quality has been completely ruined. I wake up several times every night and have trouble falling asleep, my mind just racing. I'm not sure how to really express just how difficult this experience has been. But every single day has been a battle. Every day I just have to continue to put one foot in front of the other hoping to eventually see a light at the end of the tunnel.