

Mo's story

In 2015 I approached my offender supervisor about RJ. I'd been in prison many years by then. I had a lot of guilt I wanted to explore and it took me a lot of time to be honest about what I'd done

The victim's family never got the chance to know what I'd done. I was anxious to start with and thinking about myself. After months thinking about it and after speaking to another guy in prison who'd done RJ I had to pluck up courage and put my own fears aside

I asked my OS and after a few months RJ came to see me. The interview was intense and took 2 and a half hours. I had the opportunity to tell the truth to the victims and to accept responsibility

I was deemed suitable. I was asked to write a letter of apology to the victim's family. It took me a long time to write it but it was only 1 page. Paula, from RJ, said she'd try and speak to the victim's family via the VLU and if she felt it was ok, would give them the letter.

Then Paula came back to see me. I knew she had news so my heart was pounding before the visit. I kept thinking of the worst-case scenario which was that they didn't want to know me and I'd be unable to tell them the truth of what happened. Paula said that the family were finding it very difficult and all these years later visit the grave every week and are still grieving. Then I thought that I wake up every morning and don't think about him or his family.

The family said it was difficult to see me but had some questions they wanted me to answer. They said they didn't want to put pressure on me, but hearing that made it hard. They are really decent people. They've been speaking to me, but through Paula. Their top question was why? This was the question I feared the most. It took me 4 months and 4 A4 pads to write the next letter. My mind went totally blank when I was trying to write. I felt the family were watching me. I didn't want to sound as if I had an excuse for my behaviour. All they knew was from court and it was lies. Therefore, telling the truth was important. I would wake up thinking about the letter. I got lots of support from Paula

I was apprehensive about telling them where I'll go and live on release. I was concerned for my family on release but decided to tell them where I'll be going

Then I heard from Paula that the family had the letter but hadn't read it. I was relieved they were going to read it as they wanted to know what happened and I hope it helped them. It was a slow process. Paula updated me and told me that some members of the family had read it and others were keeping it for when they were ready to read it.

The process is now closed. I'm happy to answer any further questions at any time. This is for them and they have a right to know

I wish I could have had the courage earlier. I was cowardly. I caused the family more anguish and pain because it took me so long. I could do something right, by telling the truth. There's

a lot of guys who find it hard to be honest about what they've done. The truth is ugly, disgusting and hard to take in. It was a way of me dealing with what I've done by keeping the truth to myself. I hope my letter helped them