



## THE INNOCENCE MISSION

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### **The Innocence Mission Reacts to the Chelsea King Tragedy**

Orange County, CA – The founder of The Innocence Mission, a non-profit organization dedicated to the prevention of child sexual abuse, has decided to speak publicly about the tragic death of Chelsea King, the San Diego teenager whose life was taken by a registered sexual predator.

“It breaks my heart to read the daily accounts of how this innocent young woman, so full of promise, had her life cut brutally short by a perpetrator who had a history of sexual abusing young women,” said Elaina J. Kroll, founder and CEO of The Innocence Mission. “Although much of the media attention surrounding the case has focused on the judicial and criminal aspects of Chelsea’s murderer and his release from prison, there is an underlying issue that we at The Innocence Mission want to have as part of the dialogue.”

“Even as we voice our sadness on the loss of Chelsea, we need to also remain focused on the underlying crime that drove her killer. While his complete criminal history remains under scrutiny, news reports indicate that this man was a repeat abuser of young women. One of his possible victims was only 14 years. This is nearly the same age I was when I was sexually abused. In the midst of the anger directed at Chelsea’s brutal killer, I hope that we can also remember his other victims, and the need for our society to better protect them. That is why I founded The Innocence Mission.”

Kroll founded The Innocence Mission after undergoing a lengthy legal battle with the Catholic Diocese of Orange County. Her perpetrator was a choir director at her church. “We need to view these unfolding events as examples of the broader problem of shame and silence that surrounds child sexual abuse. It is a problem that touches every aspect of our society. When we look at Chelsea King’s killer, we must remind ourselves of this.”

The Innocence Mission has planned a number of public forums in the coming weeks to address various aspects of the problem of child sexual abuse. Details on these events will be forthcoming.

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