

## STATEMENT FROM INMATE'S FAMILY

Between 9:30 and 10 a.m. on Monday, 7/31/17, calls were made to the Luzerne County Prison to see if any progress had been made to have Samantha Fisher be able to visit her mother, Tricia Cooper, who had also been incarcerated at the county prison and had attempted suicide on July 25.

Our calls were initially met with recorded messages, so we thought we might be better served by going to the prison and speaking with a shift supervisor in person. We drove to the jail, arriving about 11 a.m. We approached the front desk manned by a worker. I introduced ourselves, explained that we had driven here from Florida because our daughter had attempted to commit suicide in this institution and conveyed that we had spoken to a lieutenant about the prison possibly trying to have Samantha receive a one-hour furlough in order to be able to visit her mother, who was dying in Wilkes-Barre General.

My request to speak with the shift commander was met with, "He is busy. He has meetings to attend, and you need to go and get a lawyer."

I tried to explain that we had already spoken to staff supervisors and that they claimed to be working on the furlough idea.

At this point, the front desk person stated that the only person that can approve a furlough is a judge and that we need to get a lawyer.

I explained again that Samantha's mother, who was dying at General Hospital, was the most recent inmate that had attempted suicide almost a week earlier while housed at the prison. He again stated that we could not see a supervisor and that we needed to get a lawyer.

In a last ditch effort to attain our goal, I stooped to explain to him that I was a retired state police officer in hopes of getting a measure of professional courtesy in hope of Samantha getting to say goodbye to her mother.

The desk person was steadfast in his refusal to permit us to speak with an officer.

At this point, I admit I lost it and threw my fist in the air, turned and began to

walk out.

My wife, Samantha's grandmother, continued to plead with him to see a shift supervisor. I now realized this was a lost cause and asked my wife to follow me out of the building.

As I was leaving, the desk person pointed to the door and directed me to get out of the building.

My wife continued her plea for a few more minutes before realizing there was no point in trying to convince this person of the importance of our attempted meeting.

We were again directed by the desk person to leave the building. After leaving the building, we went back to the place we were staying to prepare to spend what little time was left with Tricia.

Just before getting back to Wilkes-Barre General, my wife received a cell phone call from the attending physician that Tricia was dead.

Over the years, have Tricia Cooper and her daughter, Samantha Fisher, been involved in illegal activity? Yes, they have. Have they been called to answer for their indiscretions? Yes, they have. Are they BAD people? I will leave that up to you to decide.

Did they deserve to be kept apart at the time of Tricia's death? Could a short visit, arranged by staff at the prison, be the determining factor in Samantha being able to decide to never go down this path again, to seek out and spend her life on the straight and narrow, to become a model citizen? Maybe.

Would it have been worth a shot? I think so. What do you think?

I can't help but be concerned of the fact that the attempted suicide rate at the county prison has increased significantly this year.

As a retired law enforcement officer and corrections officer of many years, I was appalled at the degree of insensitivity by all but a few staff members at the prison that we attempted to reach out to.

I am left with more than a little concern for how the other eight families of prison inmates who attempted to commit suicide this year were treated during and after their ordeal.

**Allen and Carol Moss**