

VICTIMIZED AGAIN?

Many unaware when those who hurt them apply for pardons

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The woman who fatally stabbed East Hartford resident Jean Hill's daughter stood inside a courtroom recently asking for a pardon.

But Hill wasn't there. No one had told her LaResse Harvey, who was convicted of manslaughter and served prison time for stabbing Tammy Hill in 1993, was seeking a full pardon, which would have erased her criminal record.

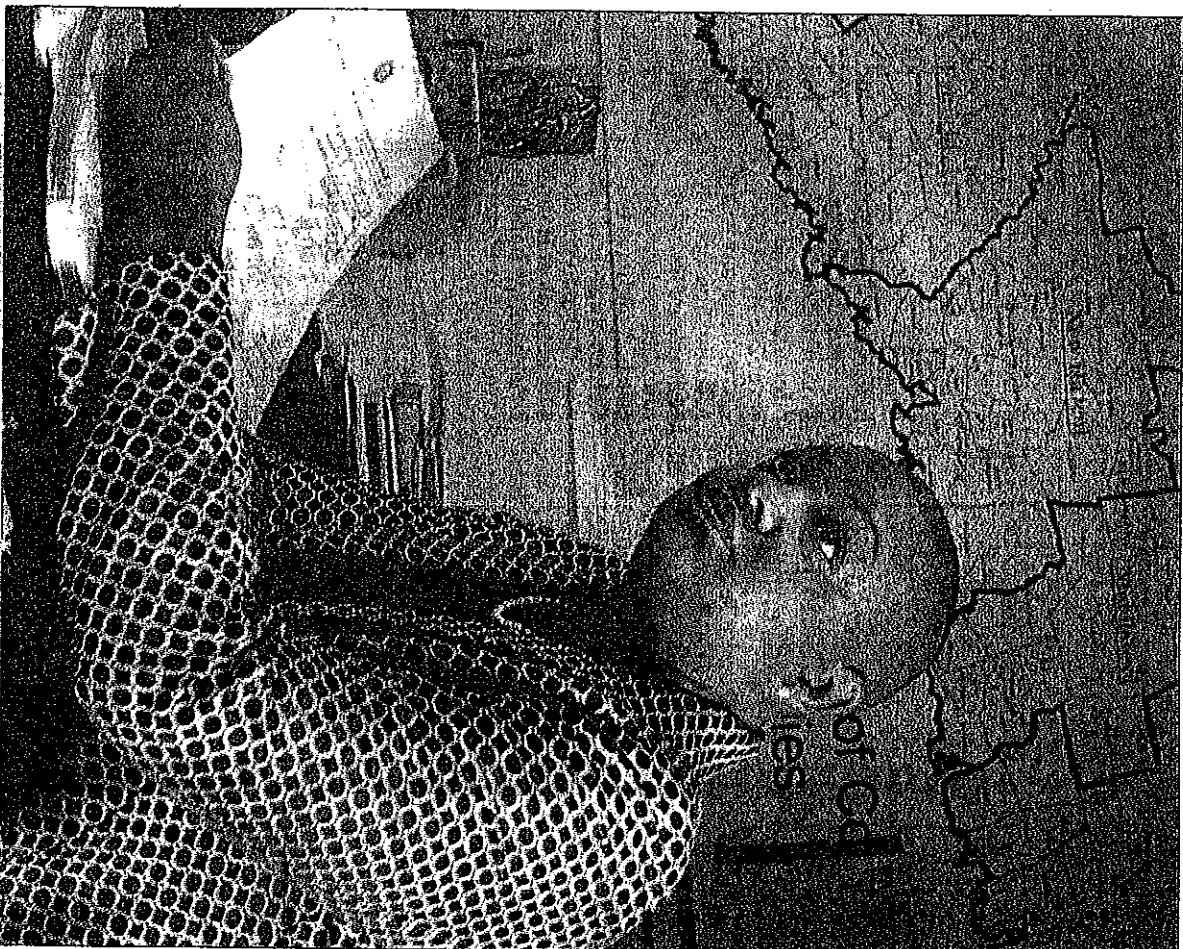
Instead, Jean Hill learned about Harvey's application from the New Haven Register two weeks after the June 27 Board of Pardons public hearing,

when the board heard testimony, then made its decision in closed session. This was the

Jean Hill

to get a pardon and manslaughter is dead.

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LaResse Harvey looks over documents related to her pardon request for a manslaughter conviction stemming from a 1993 stabbing. The victim's mother didn't know Harvey was seeking a pardon.

Michelle Stangor/Registrar

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second time Harvey sought a pardon. Hill wasn't notified either time. Register staff was able to locate Hill's current address within minutes through an Internet search.

"Nobody ever contacted me about this (pardon application.) Why didn't anyone contact me?" Hill asked. She said that if she had known, she would have gone to the hearing to speak against Harvey's application.

"If I had a chance, I would have said that she is in court trying to get a pardon and my daughter is dead," Hill said. "I don't feel it is fair that she is enjoying life and living the life my daughter should have. Anybody that killed somebody shouldn't get a pardon. I think that conviction should show up on their record."

see who obtained pardons, and staff there said they get only occasional requests to see the minutes. (The lists are also included with this story online at nregister.com.)

DeFeo said efforts are made to contact victims of surviving family members before hearings.

"Human error is something we deal with," DeFeo said. "There are times when we don't get in touch with victims."

The state Office of Victim Services has two advocates assigned to the Board of Pardons and Paroles.

These advocates attempt through various means to locate victims and survivors, according to DeFeo and Cimino.

When searching for victims or their relatives, they will check places like the

do so. "Victims need to take certain steps to be included," she said. "Most people think it will happen automatically. We try to make sure they know how to get notified."

"If it is a case that pre-dates registration, then there has to be generalized searches for the victims. We have to make sure they are reaching out to find people."

Cruz said she plans to talk to the Board of Pardons about the Hill case, and to notify families, particularly in older cases.

"If there was no victim participation, that concerns me," Cruz said.

The Office of Victim Services currently has 2,197 names listed in its notification registry, which was launched around 1996,

Tammy Hill had just applied to the University of Hartford and wanted to be a lawyer when she was killed, according to her mother.

"She was a very smart and nice girl," Hill said. Tammy Hill was stabbed in New Britain during an argument over a man, according to her mother.

"They were arguing, and (Tammy) was getting ready to leave, and Lakese went into the house, got a knife, called Tammy's name, and Tammy turned around, and that is when she stabbed her in the chest," Hill said.

Hill raised her granddaughter, Tammy's daughter, Shakia Deleston, now 24. Deleston has no memory of her mother.

While no one at the pardon hearing represented Hill's family, several peo-

pany has gone before the state legislature, and Harvey said she hopes to pursue marriage and family counseling.

see how I've changed and lived my life since then. I was an unguided child. Not having the proper direction sent me down the path, one I feel fortunate to have gotten out of. I am not the person I was then, and I am truly grateful to the board for seeing something good in me."

In another case, even though the victim of one violent crime has since passed away, victim advocates were able to reach her relatives for their input on what should happen to one of her convicted attackers, who recently sought a pardon.

When Scott Labossiere sought a pardon before the board in May, a prosecutor spoke against it, and a victim advocate spoke on behalf of his victim's family. After hearing from them, the board unanimously denied Labossiere's request.

Labossiere served prison time in connection with the

"It has been 24 years. I was a teenager and have paid my debt to society. I'd like to be

remain unaware when convicts who caused them harm seek to get their criminal records erased.

Linda Cimino, director of the Office of Victim Services with the state judicial branch, said they are able to locate a victim in about 15 percent to 20 percent of pardon cases.

Hill said a victim advocate told her Harvey got a provisional pardon. Board minutes, confirm this, though Harvey on Friday still hadn't received any notification.

A provisional pardon does not expunge an individual's conviction, but comes with a "certificate of employability" from the board, and makes it illegal for an employer to deny employment based on one's criminal record. An individual who gets a provisional pardon can try again for a full pardon.

The board also can grant conditional pardons, which results in an erasure of the criminal record, with conditions, or it can deny an application outright.

"There isn't anything I can do about it," Hill said of the outcome. "I would have been even more upset if she had gotten a full pardon."

Harvey, of Plainville, said Friday she wanted a full pardon so she can move forward with her life, and she plans to again seek a full pardon.

As for Hill's family members not being notified, Harvey said, "they should have been."

"That is their right to be there, and I would have been upset, too," Harvey said. "I wish her family had been contacted, so



Scott Labossiere

paints a mural at the Manson Youth Institution in 1991.

Register File photo

Office of Victims Services' victim registry, which has a Post-Conviction Notification Program, Defeo said. It includes a service to give victims information about pardon hearings.

There are also checks done with the Department of Correction's victim registry, and some general Internet searches, according to Defeo.

"If they still can't locate the victim, the case goes forward," Defeo said. "If they can reach the person, the victim has a right to testify at the hearing." Defeo said outreach was

according to Cimino.

"If a crime occurred before then, the ability to get people to retroactively join the registration program is difficult," Cimino said. "I'm very sorry Miss Hill is upset. Clearly, we wish we could contact everybody."

If no one is registered to learn about a particular individual seeking a pardon, the advocates will look to see if a victim's name is in the file and try to locate the person via Internet searches, too, according to Cimino.

Brian Garnett, spokesman

ple came to the hearing to support Harvey's request.

Harvey, founder and director of Civic Trust Publishing Co., told the pardons board she had been acting in self-defense when she caused the fatal wound.

"I made a poor decision 19 years ago," she said. "I was protecting myself and had no intention of killing Tammy Hill." Harvey said Hill came to her home and an argument ensued. Harvey alleged that Hill hit her on the back of the head. Harvey told the board she ran into

lived in North Haven at the time.

DeChiaro's attorney, Tara Knight of New Haven, said her client got a full pardon.

The Boston Post Road Subway shop where the robbery took place is no longer there. Kevin Kane, a spokesman at Subway's Milford headquarters, said it didn't appear that anyone had contacted Subway about the DeChiaro pardon case. Knight, who had represented DeChiaro at the time of the original offenses 17 years ago,

Senior Assistant State's Attorney Paul Narducci objected to any pardon for Labossiere, citing the "heinous nature of the crime, in which the victim was beaten with a flashlight, tied up and placed in a closet."

A victim advocate read a statement from Parks' children at the hearing, in which they asked that the pardon request be denied.

According to her children, she was found unconscious and bleeding heavily in a closet and was at death's door because of

"It has been 24 years. I was a teenager and have paid my debt to society. I'd like to be freed from the past," Labossiere told the board. "I have tremendous guilt issues about this crime. I was 19 years old."

According to Labossiere, a friend suggested the robbery and he went along with it. "We were smoking marijuana and drinking. I'm not blaming that but it had an effect," Labossiere said. "We broke in through the back window. We were surprised the person was home. I am so sorry."

Labossiere and an accomplice took the woman's car, purse and money. Labossiere, an artist, said art was his saving grace in jail. "I have learned from my mistakes," he said. "I have to give back to the world that I took from. I made a terrible decision. I am so ashamed of myself, and I'm very sorry for what I did."

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Today — I'm a social worker, and an advocate for social justice and change. I am a grandmother now. I want (Tanny's) mother to understand I am very sorry. She is the person who needs to know how sorry I am. She is the person I would like to know for, gave me, but I don't know if she could."

Pardons board hearings are open to the public, but votes are handled in closed session. The names of people seeking pardons aren't publicized beforehand.

The whole thing about pardons is to expunge the record, it defeats the purpose to create a record," said John DeFeo, executive director of the Board of Pardons and Poles.

After a vote, a victim or survivor can learn the outcome and advocates will reach out to them to let them know what happened.

It isn't easy to learn the public to learn the outcome. The board submits lists, which include the names of pardon applicants and whatever action it took after its meetings to the Connecticut State Library in Hartford. The lists for hearings for January through May 2012 were submitted to the library July 5. The public would have to go to the library to review the lists to

So what can a victim do to ensure they won't ever be in Jean Hill's situation? DeFeo said victims or relatives of deceased victims should make sure they are on these registries, and that all their contact information is up to date.

That will make it easier for us to find them — we are diligent and serious about it," DeFeo said. It can be challenging to find victims or their families in pardon cases because it can be many years after a conviction before an individual seeks one, DeFeo said. Officials have an easier time tracking down victims in parole cases because less time has passed according to DeFeo.

With a pardon case could have tried to convince 2009-30 years ago and the victim now has the first time it is coming up and the victim has been involved since the was in the courts, DeFeo said. State Victim Advocate Michelle Cruz said victims of survivors sometimes fill up as making excuses, Hill and she has the same name and had the mail forwarded after a move.

Hill was overcome with tears as she thought about her daughter, who would have been 42 years old

Harvey asserted that Hill changed and Harvey said, "I closed my eyes and swam." The board members asked her questions such as what she has learned and if she's sorry she helped others.

Every one deserves a second chance," Harvey said. Many Marquay, Harvey's friend, said "I think what is going on regarding an offender, they have had contact with Carnet's said. It is dependent upon the victim or survivor to register. Hopefully, at some point during the court process, people are made aware of this service."

Hill, meanwhile, hopes she will be named in Harvey's case before the pardon's board again. After being contacted by the New Haven Register, Hill questioned the pardons board, and she said officials claimed they couldn't find her, which she thought was making her name and she has the same name and had the mail forwarded after a move.

some crimes are just too egregious to erase," the family said in a late night read at the hearing. Actions have consequences. We believe a criminal record is his personal cross to bear.

According to the family, the victim suffered broken bones, a crushed skull and had permanent brain damage and migraines, but she didn't remember the attack. The victim's family's name, DeChamone said, had no way near the person in no way near the person. The child was then named by DeChamone said, "My biggest fear was being able to provide for my family." The board asked how he is different now, and he said he is different now. He has different goals and two got conditional pardons. Three applicants were denied, including Labors.

"She is a remarkable person, both personally and professionally. She is always willing to give of herself," Marquay said. Jacqui Parker of Windsor and Harvey supported her and was there for her as she battled breast cancer. "I know there is not a day that goes by that she doesn't think about the young woman," Parker said. Harvey also tried to get a pardon in 2006, but was denied due to the severity of the crime. The board indicated she could offer any sincere apology and remorse. No one should have to go through that. It had to be fair and nonpartisan lobbying.com have been 42 years old.

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Victims of sex offenses can find out if expungement is available by contacting the Department of Corrections at 860-385-0300. For more information, visit www.ct.gov/corrections or call 860-385-0300. For more information, visit www.ct.gov/corrections or call 860-385-0300.