

ages of 10 and 13, middle adolescence between the ages 14 and 17, and late adolescence between the ages 18 and 21. Dr. Steinberg also testified that late adolescents “still show problems with impulse control and self-regulation and heightened sensation-seeking which would make them in those respects more similar to somewhat younger people than to older people.” For example, he testified that impulse control is still developing during the late adolescent years from age 10 to the early- or mid-20s.

In part, because Shea was only 19 and 21 at the time of these offenses, his brain was not fully matured and his decisions lacked the benefit of adult mental processes. Additionally, parenting has a huge impact on the way the brain is wired. “The aspects of brain development most closely tied to human behavior can be affected for better or worse by the care we give our children.” Although the brain is resilient, early exposure to violence, stress and other environmental pressures increase risk of impulsive actions. The American Academy of Pediatrics has identified factors that show abusive childhood experiences trigger violent behavior. These factors are as follows: witnessing domestic violence or substance abuse within the family, being poorly or inappropriately supervised, and being a victim of physical abuse.

As a result of Shea's trauma as a child, his ability to properly evaluate situations and make good choices was severely impaired. Through neglect and abuse, Shea was taught to protect himself by using any means necessary. Shea's actions were the wrong choice. The result was tragic and cannot ever be made completely whole. However, under these circumstances Shea's youth and the parental teachings must carry significant weight in determining what sentence is ultimately appropriate for these crimes. Shea should not be made to serve an excessive sentence.

**2. The sentence given based on his charges was excessive and leaves him no hope of a productive life upon his release from prison. Furthermore, Shea's excessive sentence on the 4 counts of Use of a Firearm in the Commission of a Felony was through wrongful interpretation of the law.**

The excessive severity of Shea's sentence raises serious questions on why was he given 4 life sentences and 18 years for a robbery that did not leave anyone physically injured? We do not argue what Mr. Dease did was deplorable and irresponsible, but is it necessary to take from him the majority of his life, giving him no chance at redemption upon his release from prison. In *Weems v. United States*, the United States Supreme Court stated that within the ban on cruel and unusual punishment is the precept that the punishment for a crime should be graduated and proportioned to the offense. *Weems v. United States*, 217 U.S. 347, 367 (1910).