



When You Run Over a Crowd of Schoolkids, You Aren't Thinking About Parole

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On January 25, 2026, the Ventura County Star newspaper ran the following headline: "Thousand Oaks murder raises questions about CA's youth offender laws." At issue was the case of Austin Eis, who ran his car into a crowd of high school students three years ago. He was drunk, but it wasn't an accident: He'd stated his intent to kill as many people as possible and either get a life sentence or commit "suicide by cop". Multiple students were injured, and one, Wesley Welling, a 15-year-old freshman, was killed. Before the attack, Austin had kept a journal over 3 years describing his desire to commit mass murder, from when he was 20 years old. I don't know if his history of homicidal ideation goes back any further, but I doubt it just appeared, suddenly and fully fledged, after two uneventful decades.

Wesley's death is an unmitigated tragedy. There are no equivocations to it — that young man should not be dead, and certainly not like this. The grief of his family and friends is surely beyond measure. What has me writing this today, and why the years-old story is again front page news, is that his mother, Kelly Welling, is evidently pushing for new legislation: "Wesley's Law", of course. Her proposal would carve up California laws that currently allow almost anyone convicted of almost any crime committed under age 26 to be eligible for a parole hearing to determine whether they still pose a threat to public safety after 10 to 25 years (depending on the original sentence). This includes people sentenced to life for murder, as Austin Eis was. He was 24 years old at the time.

When Kelly Welling learned that her son's killer would have a chance at release after 25 years, she was upset. I sympathize with her grief, and I understand her anger. But that anger is badly misdirected. To what should be absolutely no one's surprise, it turns out that it's the rabid jackals of the District Attorney's office who are egging her on now, drafting legislation in her dead son's name as they salivate over the prospect of rolling back at least part of the law that gives some glimmer of hope to people like Austin Eis after those sick pigs fight so hard to take every ounce of hope away from them. They, the prosecutors

and related turds, are voraciously eager to use the Welling family as a tool to further their twisted worldview and strengthen the foundation that pays their bills and bolsters their delusional self-conception as the white-cloaked Protectors of the Realm. The fact is, I feel for Kelly, terribly so, but her quest to ensure even more inescapable torment for those who've caused pain like hers is an effort that only compounds evils, and worst of all, does so in the service of the absolute nastiest elements of our society — pigs and prosecutors whose sole objective is to fill their pockets and inflate their egos by packing jail cells as full as possible.

No one can fault Kelly Welling for wanting to "Do Something". The urge for vengeance is human nature. Still, we all know that nothing can bring Wesley back or undo the atrocity of that day, and that's where another of our uniquely human natural capacities comes into play: the ability to recognize and overcome our basest instincts for the collective good.

The one big, glaring fact that these sleazy prosecutors want to make sure Kelly Welling and other victims never pay too much attention to is this — dismantling the laws that aim to give some glimmer of hope to people like this driver and his family (all real, human people who are surely enduring their share of life-shattering grief as well) cannot possibly do ANYTHING to prevent future tragedies like this one. Let's not forget, Austin Eis was not just homicidal, he was suicidal. Nihilistic. He didn't just not care about the consequences to himself; he welcomed them. ● So, aside from the obvious fact that such utter self-destructiveness fairly SCREAMS of mental disturbance and painful hopelessness borne of god-only-knows what personal tragedies of his own (all of which should make us seriously question what justice really looks like in a case like this), no one can sincerely argue that some new reduction of an already slim chance at a hypothetical parole a few decades down the road could create even the slightest hesitation in an intoxicated person whose determination to kill and die emanates from a profoundly tortured soul buried deep under a mountain of rage and despair. It's not really a debatable point, is it — this guy literally preferred a pig's bullet to any version of the life he was living before his rampage, so tell me how tweaking the details of some obscure parole law might've affected his decision making in that moment? The idea is absurd, the

exact sort of nonsense that only a cop or cop-proxy could buy.

Ultimately, we can't know what demons drove Austin Eis to such depths that awful day, what experiences made him aim his car at a group of innocents, but I firmly believe that we've all known the oppressive darkness of hopelessness, and most of us have at least thought about doing unthinkable things ^{at} some low point in our lives. The laws that Ms Welling now aims to change (with the salivating encouragement of venal, predatory prosecutors, of course) are laws that may have even protected her son Wesley himself someday, if somewhere in that tumultuous decade between 15 and 25 his own life experiences had led him, god forbid, into the horrors that often spring from the deepest despondency. Make no mistake, Wesley is the victim here, innocent and tragic, but we shouldn't forget that he was also human, just like his mother, like his killer, like me, like you... and all humans benefit from a shared societal commitment to compassion and mercy when we fall, as any of us may fall, at any time, for a whole universe of reasons, just like Austin Eis did.

* (I used to always add a few favorite quotes when I had space)
(at the end of a post. Maybe that's a good habit to get back to.)

1. "In a time of deceit, telling the truth is a revolutionary act" — George Orwell
(I'm going to try to tell a lot more truth going forward. Bottom line... why not?)

2. "That you are here, the powerful play goes on, and you may contribute a verse."
— Walt Whitman

(I'm still here, and yes, I do think I'd like to contribute a verse or two. Because the play is powerful, and I'd rather not squander my ~~part~~ part in it.)

* Hey! Do you have any favorite quotes you wanna share? Please do! 😊