

Letter From the Editor

# Hope in the Midst of a Broken World

Prior to 2003, I spent some years doing litigation in NY. I never was that idealistic about the legal system, but during that time, I became quite disillusioned with the law. I worked on a case where a guy, through his corporation, took money from some poor church folk and vanished with their money. He had sold some trips to them and disappeared. It all seemed so wrong. But there was nothing that the people could do to get their money back. There was nothing I could do to help them either.

After my move to California in 2003, I wasn't sure if I wanted to continue in the legal field, but sometime after the move, I decided even if I don't want to be in legal practice, it would be good to get the bar exam over with. Though, it wasn't until 2009 that I got to see justice being served via the legal system. It was during the first few months of my volunteering at CAST that I sat through and supported a trafficked client in a landmark civil case prosecuted under the California Trafficking Victims Protection Act. Seeing the outcome and the collaboration of those who worked tirelessly on this case restored some hope in the legal system in me.

Since then, there have been times when I was at legal clinics that I see how the poor and marginalized have been taken advantage of. I remember an African American client who because he had a same name as someone who committed a crime, a criminal record came up under his name even though he was nowhere near the scene. He tried to convince the sheriff knowing that they have the wrong person on the record, but to no avail. I don't remember what the outcome for him was, and I hope we were able to help him straighten it out. From that encounter, I felt that some people are easier to take advantage of and don't know many who would stand up for them.

There are many who are being taken advantage of, in fact millions or more around the world. They range from foster kids and

runaway kids who are vulnerable to being trafficked in our own cities, Christians towns being bombed and wiped out in the Middle East, Yazidi women (and any non-Islamic woman) made sex slaves by ISIS, ... the list goes on and on, despite the fact that I wish it doesn't.

Who will you stand up for?

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There are some brave people standing up against injustices, some are not in the limelight, but I am thankful that they have the courage to stand up for the oppressed, the homeless, and the fatherless. Who will you stand up for?

Sincerely,

Juliana Zhu, Esq.

Senior Editor of Culture & Policy

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