

In loving memory of her sister



Written by Bob Weir

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Bob Weir and Lucia Bone. Photo by Netsky Rodriquez

What do you know about the people who are sent to your home by companies that hire them to do repairs, paint jobs, cabinetry, plumbing, etc.?

When you need work done you call a legitimate company, usually one with a good reputation for service, without any fear that they may have dangerous people working for them. You trust the reputation of the company without knowing anything about the reputation of its employees.

On August 27, 2001, an Orlando, Florida woman named Cathy Sue Weaver was raped and beaten to death in her suburban home by a recidivist criminal. After his brutal act the savage murderer set her home on fire in an attempt to destroy evidence.

before her murder, Ms. Weaver had signed a contract with a well-known Florida department store to have the air ducts in her home cleaned. She had every reason to expect that doing business with the store would not be life-threatening. What she didn't know was that both of the men sent to do the job had criminal records.

Detectives' investigation discovered that six months

One of the men had been convicted of sex offenses twice and was still on parole after doing time for the last one. Evidently, while he was working at Ms. Weaver's home, he was plotting to come back at another time. About six months after the work was completed, the ex-con, named Jeffrey Hefling, returned to Ms. Weaver's home to rape and murder her. What probably occurred, although we may never know for sure, is that the murderer used his service credentials as a ruse to regain admittance to the home. He was apprehended after DNA evidence connected him to the murder. He is currently serving multiple life sentences in prison.

In case you think this was an isolated case, you couldn't be more wrong. Every year, people are being assaulted and murdered in their own homes by workers sent by companies that don't do criminal background checks on their employees. Without those inquiries the average homeowner is vulnerable to some violent predators that look for opportunities which will provide them easy access to their victims. Sue Weaver's sister, Lucia Bone, having suffered through such a tragic loss, decided that something had to be done to prevent this tragedy from happening to other unsuspecting consumers.

In 2004, Double Oak resident Lucia Bone founded the Sue Weaver C.A.U.S.E., Consumer Awareness of Unsafe Service Employment (www.sueweavercause.org), in Sue's memory to promote education and awareness to the dangers inherent in those house calls by people who, due to their prior criminal records, may represent a serious threat to unwary consumers. C.A.U.S.E.'s national awareness campaign educates consumers, employers and legislators on the necessity of proper annual criminal background checks on workers entering our homes or working with vulnerable members of the population.

Starting as a roundtable meeting with family and friends, C.A.U.S.E. became a 501c3 organization with nine board members. Ms. Bone travels the country to alert consumers of the potential threat and to demand that employers screen their employees. Her first speaking engagement was in front of the National Association of Professional Background Screeners.

Texas State Rep. Burt Solomons had some legislation put through after the Elizabeth Smart abduction and Lucia believes C.A.U.S.E. may be attached to that as well. However, in her opinion, it is not strong enough. She says complete background checks are not difficult, and she has proposed legislation that would make it mandatory.

Nevertheless, she feels that the possible expense, (one day's pay for an employee), may be an issue that some businesses don't want to pay for. That's odd, inasmuch as they will be held liable for any crimes committed by their employees. Multi-million dollars lawsuits are being won by consumers who have been victimized in this manner. Therefore, responsible, conscientious employers would be saving themselves a lot of grief (and possibly preventing serious assaults) by being proactive in this regard when hiring people.

Recently, Ms. Bone received a call from the Today Show producers, requesting that she come to New York for an interview. She had contacted them a few years ago about C.A.U.S.E., but, she says, "Apparently the timing wasn't right" to capture their attention. Then, a few weeks ago, an 8 year-old New Jersey girl was abused by a cable service provider, and the story made them remember her appeal. The Today Show paid her airfare, hotel accommodations and other expenses. Lucia said the televised exposure provided some very positive attention to her organization.

In addition, for the past four years, she has hosted a spectacular annual event, "Dancing for the C.A.U.S.E.." All funds raised are used to support the efforts of the group, whose motto is: "We protect you and your family, one serviceman at a time."

Bob Weir is a long-time Flower Mound resident and former local newspaper editor. In addition, Bob has 7 published books that include "Murder in Black and White," "City to Die For," "Powers that Be," "Ruthie's Kids," "Deadly to Love," "Short Stories of Life and Death" and "Out of Sight," all of which can be found on Amazon.com and other major online bookstores.

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