

In the weeks and months—even years—that followed, Shannon regularly paid me visits in my dreams. In many, I would replay our last chance encounter, which took place just a couple of weeks before Shannon disappeared.

A complete fluke, I had spotted Shannon among a sea of Spring Breakers in Daytona Beach, a rare place for either of us to visit. I walked in her direction until she came into clear focus. Yes, it was Shannon. For a few fleeting minutes, we laughed and reminisced. We caught up on where our college lives were taking us. We made plans to see each other a few weeks later when she would be back in Miami visiting her family. Then we hugged and went our separate ways.

It was the last time I saw Shannon. I didn't know it at the time, but it was my chance to say goodbye. She would be gone before the month came to a close.

FIGHTING THE MONSTER

As the years went by without word of what became of Shannon, my dreams began to reflect the anger I bottled deep inside.

In one recurring dream, it's late in the evening in some unnamed town in the middle of America. I walk into a restaurant for a bite. The room is dark and bustling with customers. I take a seat in a booth and see Shannon sitting across from her captor. Her hands are not tied, but she's not moving, not trying to escape. She's scared or drugged or both, I reason. I approach their table, see a spark of hope in Shannon's eyes and quickly find others who help me hold down the man who had stolen Shannon from her family. We pummel him. Shannon returns home.

My anger also manifested itself in other ways.

I made decisions determined not to cede power to the monster. I fought the fear that evil could lurk behind any corner.

I jumped at the chance to intern at The Boston Globe rather than spend the summer at a local paper. I walked to and from my apartment many late evenings holding a stun gun wrapped in a newspaper. Years later, as a reporter for The Miami Herald, I'd live and work in Sao Paulo, Brazil, for several months, riding the subway and making my way in another language in an unknown city five times the size of New York City.

I moved across the country to Northern California, where I worked and lived for seven years. A visit to Yosemite, on assignment in Mexico or vacationing in Vancouver, I'd imagine crossing paths with Shannon and putting an end to the tragic mystery.

ANGER TURNS INTO FEAR

Then I became a mother and the anger gave way to fear.

My firstborn was just shy of two years old when Colvin "Butch" Hinton III, a man with a history of harming young girls, confessed to kidnapping and murdering Shannon. Hinton, an umpire at the softball field where Shannon kept score, said he had set out to commit murder on March 26, 1994. He had targeted another woman but changed his plans when he spotted Shannon.

Hinton said he held Shannon at knifepoint, tied her up in his home, repeatedly raped her—in between catching a movie at a local theater in an effort to create an alibi—and ultimately strangled her in the early morning hours of March 27.

The unspeakable details resurfaced my dormant pain.

As my son's independence blossomed—and with that his ability to walk away from me at a department store or at a park—I found myself fighting a constant unease. I wanted—needed—to know where he was at every moment.

Most parents take their children to the park to relax, sit back and let their kids play. That will never be me.

I'll never forget spending one afternoon at a local water park with several of my son's friends. The other mothers positioned their chairs in the shallow water to chat and sunbathe. They didn't fuss, completely confident that their kids were safe. I stood the entire time, sloshing through the knee-high water to make sure my son emerged from the labyrinth of slides.

Dealing with my vigilant watch is a reality my children have learned to accept: My 9-year-old son understands why last summer I had him skip a field trip to the water park. My 4-year-old daughter recites to me how I shouldn't speak to strangers. I live in constant battle with myself, wrestling with a deep-seated desire to fuel my children's independence while also fighting a fear that harm may come their way.

Both of my children know, to varying degrees, Shannon's story. They know the world can be cruel, but they also exude a spirit of boundless optimism. They see themselves as the superheroes who can change the world.

I hope they do.

TIMELINE: THE SHANNON MELENDI MURDER

March 26, 1994: Shannon Melendi, a South Florida native and 19-year-old Emory University sophomore, vanishes on a Saturday afternoon from her part-time job as a scorekeeper at a softball field in suburban Atlanta.

March 27, 1994: Shannon's parents, Luis and Yvonne Melendi, get word that Shannon has been missing for more than 24 hours. They make arrangements to fly to Atlanta. In the ensuing weeks, volunteers and friends plaster streets with "MISSING" posters bearing Shannon's photo. Print and TV media in South Florida and Atlanta follow the story closely.

April 6, 1994: A caller to an Emory University hot line claims he is holding Shannon captive. As proof, the caller leaves a ring belonging to Shannon, enclosed in a bag, inside the pay phone where the call was made.

April 12, 1994: Police search the home of Colvin "Butch" Hinton III, an umpire at the softball field the day Shannon was last seen. Hinton has a criminal record of sexual assaults.

September 1994: A fire damages Hinton's home.

October 20, 1994: The Melendi family and friends of Shannon attend a vigil and press conference at Emory University on what would have been Shannon's 20th birthday. Luis and Yvonne Melendi keep Shannon's story alive in the local and national media for years to come.

March 26, 1995: Southwest 48th Street in Miami-Dade County is renamed Shannon Melendi Drive. The street runs in front of Southwest Miami Senior High School, where Shannon was class president and a prominent student.

June 1995: A federal grand jury indicts Hinton for arson, suggesting Hinton set fire to his home to collect insurance money.

January 1996: Hinton is convicted of arson and sent to federal prison.

December 2003: Hinton is released from federal prison.

August 2004: Authorities arrest Hinton, using a grand jury indictment that accuses Hinton of murdering Shannon Melendi.

September 2005: A jury convicts Hinton of murder. He is sentenced to life in prison.

June 2006: The Georgia Supreme Court upholds Hinton's conviction.

July 17, 2006: Hinton confesses to kidnapping, raping and murdering Shannon, after his appeal was denied.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 15, 2014

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, this is a National Small Business Week and I rise to recognize the contributions of small businesses in my congressional district and across the country.

With more than half of Americans either owning or working for a small business, it is clear these companies are a vital part of our nation's fabric.

Every day, small firms and their employees across every sector and industry are working to grow and become stronger.

When they do, we all benefit from their innovations, their job-creating power, and their ability to make the U.S. more competitive globally.

That why I support the Democratic agenda to help small businesses and entrepreneurs startup, grow, and create jobs.

"This includes supporting tax credits to help small businesses hire new employees; immigration reform, which will provide a solution for those businesses facing a maze of problems when hiring immigrant workers; and expanding financing options for entrepreneurs, especially in low- and moderate-income communities.

We must also oppose cuts to job training programs that help meet American businesses' workforce needs. Lastly, we must include working on a long-term extension of the Highway Trust Fund, which is critical for small construction firms across the nation.

Mr. Speaker, small businesses and entrepreneurs impact our lives every day and it is fitting that we recognize their contributions to the economy and our country during National Small Business Week.

Whether it is opening a new storefront, training workers, or sponsoring activities in our cities and towns, we have many reasons to thank small businesses.

This week we do so, and recognize these entrepreneurs not only for the contributions that they have already made, but also for their future work to strengthen our local communities.

In recognition of all that small businesses do for our communities, from providing conveniently located goods and services to sponsoring local events and organizations, I urge all Americans to take this opportunity to patronize the diverse businesses in their communities to demonstrate to them our continued appreciation and support.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 18TH ANNUAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING WEEK IN ALAMEDA COUNTY

HON. ERIC SWALWELL

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 15, 2014

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 18th Annual Affordable Housing Week in Alameda County. Organized by East Bay Housing Organizations, a group of community leaders and affordable housing advocates, this period lasts

from May 9 to May 18 and includes over 23 events are being held in ten cities across the East Bay, including in my district, to call attention to the need for affordable housing.

The health and economic stability of our communities depend on the availability of quality and affordable homes. Many non-profit and community organizations are continuing to address this need by providing homes and shelter for those in need. I believe strongly in the importance of these organizations, which provide affordable housing to our most vulnerable populations, including seniors, veterans, low-income families, the homeless, and those with disabilities. We must ensure that these organizations have resources and support in order to meet these critical needs.

Last November, I was proud to join with Habitat for Humanity to restore a house in Livermore for a local veteran buying a home for the first time. Habitat for Humanity East Bay/Silicon Valley prioritizes providing affordable housing opportunities for our veterans.

I also want to recognize Eden Housing as an inspiring example of affordable housing. Their new development, Emerald Vista in Dublin, has won a Charles L. Edson Tax Credit Excellence Award, given by the Affordable Housing Tax Credit Coalition. This award recognizes outstanding Low-Income Housing Tax Credit developments and honors the best in affordable rental housing.

Housing for those in need is a community-wide effort, and I am proud to represent a district with so many leaders working to assist individuals in need of supportive and affordable housing. These efforts bring us closer to creating kind of sustainable communities that are essential to the diversity and prosperity of California.

INTRODUCTION OF A BILL TO FACILITATE INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT AT AND POTENTIAL USES OF POINT SPENCER IN THE BERING STRAIT REGION OF ALASKA

HON. DON YOUNG

OF ALASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 15, 2014

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation to facilitate infrastructure development at, and potential uses of, Point Spencer in the Bering Strait Region of Arctic Alaska by and for both the public and private sectors through fostering a public/private partnership among the Federal Government/the U.S. Coast Guard, the State of Alaska, the Bering Straits Native Corporation (BSNC) and industry.

I will be joined in co-sponsoring this bill by my friend, the Chairman of the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Subcommittee of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, the Honorable Duncan Hunter.

What the Bill Provides: This legislation seeks to address the legitimate interests of the Federal and State Governments as well as the private sector in providing a means for future uses of Point Spencer by Federal, state, and private sector stakeholders for a variety of tasks and missions, including search and rescue, shipping safety, economic development, oil spill prevention and response, port of ref-

uge, arctic research, maritime law enforcement and related and other uses.

For the Coast Guard: The bill provides a footprint at Point Spencer that the Coast Guard has indicated that it needs to retain to support possible future uses of a portion of Point Spencer, a total of approximately 140 acres. That includes a major footprint on the water and the land on which buildings that the Coast Guard boarded up in 2010 are located, as well as rights to use at no cost the current and any future airstrips for Federal purposes. The bill provides that the Secretary of the agency in which the Coast Guard is operating could, instead of retaining the lands reserved for the Coast Guard, have those lands conveyed to BSNC and then leased at no cost to the Coast Guard by BSNC. Also, a federal Navigational Servitude is reserved for the Coast Guard to exercise upon tidelands and submerged lands.

For the State of Alaska: The bill provides for the conveyance of approximately 180 acres to the State, including the airstrip and a shoreline footprint on the water as well as a right-of-way should it decide to build a road in the future from the airstrip to the mainland across Coast Guard and/or BSNC land. The State would also have a choice of having the lands identified in the bill to be conveyed to the state, conveyed to BSNC instead and then leased back to the state at no cost to the state. The tidelands and submerged lands around Point Spencer would be recognized as having continued ownership by the State of Alaska as they were presumptively conveyed to the State under the Statehood Act.

For Bering Straits Native Corporation: The bill provides for BSNC to receive the remainder of the lands not set aside for the Coast Guard or the State and thereby to be able to serve in facilitating the future uses of Point Spencer. If the Coast Guard and the state prefer to have access to the lands through a lease arrangement rather than having them retained or conveyed as applicable, BSNC would receive the lands identified for Coast Guard or State use and then lease those lands back at no cost to the Coast Guard or the State. BSNC would have access to the airstrip but could be charged usual and customary landing fees to help defray maintenance and administrative costs associated with the operations of the airstrip. Provision is made in the bill to help ensure protections for archaeological and ancestral items of antiquity through the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, the National Historic Preservation Act, and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act.

Background: By way of background, Point Spencer is a small 2,600 plus-acre spit of land located in the Bering Strait region and was used for thousands of years by the Inupiat Eskimos and their ancestors and was the site of an ancient Inupiat village. Long before the coming of Europeans and Americans to this region, Point Spencer served as a major trading hub for the intercontinental movement of items among the indigenous groups of what is today, Alaska, and eastern Eurasia. With the "discovery" of whales north of Bering Strait in the 1840's by non-Natives, Point Spencer and adjacent Port Clarence, served as a safe harbor for the vessels of the American Whaling industry. In 1850–1852, vessels searching for the lost Franklin expedition over-wintered in Port Clarence. From 1865–1867 the area saw

activity related to the Western Union Telegraph project, an uncompleted plan to link North America with Russia across Bering Strait. Point Spencer-Port Clarence continued to serve as a major harbor for the Revenue Cutter Service (forerunner of the USCG) during the 19th and into the 20th centuries. Throughout this period of initial contact, the residents of Bering Strait provided food, safe harbor, and guiding services to the visiting EuroAmerican ventures.

Because of the use of this spit of land by indigenous Peoples, the ancestors of those who now comprise the BSNC, for thousands of years before contact by non-Natives, the land is of great importance archaeologically and culturally to Alaska Natives living in the region.

After passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) in 1971, the purpose of which was to help settle aboriginal land claims of Alaska Natives and also help clear the way so that the Trans-Alaska pipeline right-of-way could be secured and the pipeline constructed in the 1970s, BSNC filed a selection to Point Spencer in 1976 as a 14(h)(8) selection under ANCSA. Key among the reasons for this selection by BSNC was the recognition of the historically strategic place of Point Spencer within Bering Strait history, and to help ensure that the artifacts and archaeological resources from their ancestors would be better protected and the land would be available for future purposes.

However, because Point Spencer had been withdrawn in 1962 from appropriation under the mining and mineral leasing and other relevant laws of the U.S. so as to permit the construction of a Coast Guard LORAN (Port Clarence long-range radar site) station in 1966 at Point Spencer, the lands were unavailable for BSNC to select or to use unless and until the U.S. no longer needed the lands for the LORAN site. Two years after BSNC filed its selection at Point Spencer, the State of Alaska in 1978 filed a selection application under the Statehood Act on most of the land there and then top-filed on the entire parcel in 1993.

In 2010, the LORAN site at Point Spencer (named the Port Clarence LORAN station) was closed, hardened and abandoned by the Coast Guard and LORAN was thereafter no longer utilized for navigation purposes. At that time, BSNC began to explore the potential for fulfilling its aspirations for selecting Point Spencer that began 34 (thirty-four) years earlier.

BSNC contracted in 2010 to have a geomorphic study of Point Spencer undertaken to determine the long-term stability of the landform. BSNC also conducted an economic study of the lands and began an analysis of the hazardous materials contamination that the Coast Guard generated during its years of operating the LORAN facility and cataloguing any necessary clean-up that would be required to make some of the abandoned site useable. Working with the shipping and response industry, BSNC has also begun developing a phased infrastructure development plan for the Point Spencer lands. Such infrastructure could play a key role in fulfilling the purposes outlined above as well as in enabling the U.S. to pursue and protect national security, transportation, and potential economic interests in the region as the sea lanes open up and natural resource development is considered in the Arctic.

Potential for Job Creation: The bill seeks to provide for public sector interests and at the