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SCROOGLED



That's Angela L. on the bottom. She was often on the bottom in high school fifty years ago when she realized she could get cash for it from downtown businessmen. She needed the money at age 16 to rent a small apartment. She left her parent's house because her mother beat her up every time her father sexually molested her. Prostitution seemed her only way out.

Tough choices, but necessary for someone who would eventually become a strong woman. Angela got out of the trade at age 20, miraculously escaping disease, addiction and a host of other job related dangers. She moved to a new town, led a quiet life and attended church where she met and married the minister's son. The young man was at home after graduating from college and he fell head over heels in love with her. They enjoyed a warm and successful marriage. Their three children are proud of a Mom who today has her own award winning jewelry arts business and is involved in community volunteer work.

Angela's story of redemption began a half century ago when she changed her life, a process she said felt like jumping out of an airplane. A new beginning for Angela in today's world might not be possible. There's a good chance she would never have the opportunity to start all over. Prospective employers might request her Facebook password so a Human Resources clerk could snoop around for photos of Angela in her underwear. Mr. Raster at the appliance store might secretly tape their activities and upload the video to an Internet porn site. Angela might get out of her parent's house at sixteen, but her prospects of getting a job in her home town or any city would

be remote. Getting a job on the moon might be easier. While she became more desperate each week, a Google of her name could show more arrests as Angela tried to escape from her trap. A girl has to live while she deals with one rejection after another. We might say she'd be Scroogled.

A human tradition is to begin again. To move to a new town and make a fresh start, to leave a job one was not suited for and go to work for another company. There was a time when a person could start over. Stories abound of famous people who would not have been successful if they had not been able to go elsewhere to set up their tent. Today that's less possible. The Internet and Google aren't the only agencies that can prevent this from happening, but they are major forces that inhibit one's ability to start over.

You can't escape. No matter where you go, everything about you ... your troubled marriage, your rash decisions at a young age, the anti-business paper you wrote for a high school civics class, a copy of your genome along with a listing of your propensities toward getting certain diseases or even developing a gambling addiction. The note your elementary school nurse, a born-again Baptist, wrote saying that unless disciplined you might become a sociopath. She wrote that about all the boys. It's all on line for anyone to view. Your past never truly becomes the past. It is always with you, dogging you, ready to testify against you, to damn you.

There's no question one should learn from his mistakes. And yes, society needs information to protect itself from criminal intent. But as you move on in life you should not have to bring along all your mistakes and the opinions of people who never liked you anyway. Energy spent on new beginnings should not be siphoned off to continually fight the bad actions of your past.

If you're like Angela, you deserve a chance for a new beginning. You won't be getting it from the Internet.

David Griffin

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