Smarthinking's E-structor Response Form

(Your marked-up essay is below this form.)

HOW THIS WORKS: Your e-structor has written overview comments about your essay in the form below. Your e-structor has also embedded comments [in bold and in brackets] throughout your essay. Thank you for choosing Smarthinking's OWL; best wishes with revising your paper!

*Strengths of the essay:

Hi, <student>! My name is Louise L., and I will be your e-structor for today. I'd like to begin by commending you on your use of the comma in this sentence:

As authorities would later find out, 96-year-old Miss Mary endured being neglected, financially exploited, and in servitude to these two family members for five years.

You were able to use the comma to separate the introductory element in this sentence. This not only follows one of the rules in comma usage but also makes your sentence flow well. Good work!

Content Development:

You might want to add more specific details to your narration. This will help add insight to your essay. You mentioned that Miss Mary's case took longer than a regular case. How long exactly did Miss Mary's case last? How might you compare the amount of time a regular case would take to the time that Miss Mary's case lasted? Answering these questions would surely clarify this section in your essay.

*<student> has requested that you respond to the Organization:

I suggest that you discuss each key event that happened to Miss Mary separately. This will help readers better see that these events occurred at different times. Currently, your first paragraph has several scenes. How might you be able to discuss the scenes in this paragraph separately?

This link from the Smarthinking Writer's Handbook will provide further guidance on this area: Developing Powerful Paragraphs

*<student> has requested that you respond to the Grammar & Mechanics:

Remember to set off non-essential elements of a sentence with commas. This will help signal to your readers that this phrase or word interrupts your sentence but does not change its meaning. You wrote:

Susan disappeared and Miss Mary made a scrapbook of her ordeal, perhaps as a way of validating her experience, and proving to herself that it really did happen.

Where do you think is the non-essential element in your sentence here? Let me show you can example of how I might set off non-essential elements in a sentence:

My sister, who is twenty-one, always reminds me to be careful.

She, unfortunately, did not want to watch that movie.

Based on my example, where do you think a comma best fits in your sentence?

To learn more, click on Comma Usage from the Smarthinking Writer's Handbook.

Summary of Next Steps:

Thanks for letting me comment on your essay about the case of Miss Mary, <student>. I've listed some steps you can follow while revising:

1. Add specific details to your narration.
He Wouldn’t Turn Me Loose: The Sexual Assault Case of 96-Year-Old Miss Mary

[←It might be best to create an introduction. This will help readers get the premise of the story. How might you be able to give an overview of the case? →]

Miss Mary moved into the Jacksonville, Florida home of her grandson, Billy, and his wife Susan, to get out of going to a nursing home. After living on her own, Mary lived in a nursing home and hated her experience there, so she felt lucky to have the opportunity to live with Billy and Susan and keep her things with her. That was her greatest fear, being put away and forgotten in a nursing home. She shared part of her Social Security check for the household expenses as well as cooked and cleaned for Billy and his wife. Billy often blew his money on drugs and alcohol and took more of Mary’s money to pay the mortgage. As authorities would later find out, 96-year-old Miss Mary endured being neglected, financially exploited, and in servitude to these two family members for five years. [←You might want to organize your essay in chronological order. This will help readers follow the chain of events that happened to Miss Mary better. How might you recount the events that happened?] As if that was not enough, about 6:00 p.m. one night when Susan was out, Billy began to physically abuse his grandmother by dragging her around the house and out the back door across rough ground into
a shed. Her grandson threatened to kill her before daylight, saying that no one who know who 
did it; then, repeatedly raped her until around 2:00 a.m. This fragile woman was covered from 
head to toe with bruises and bleeding cuts, when she finally got to the phone and called 911. 
Her voice was frightened and frantic as she pleaded for an officer to be sent over. She 
explained, “There is a maniac in the house!” I can only imagine how terrified she must have 
been to be at the mercy of this monster, her own grandson. [↩️ You seem to be writing a 
formal paper. Please make sure to use the third person point-of-view at all times.] The police 
came and arrested Billy and got Miss Mary to the hospital. Mary did end up going to a nursing 
home after all, under the name Jane Doe for safety reasons, but the Sexual Assault Agency 
provided her with understanding advocates that helped her get through the court process. She 
also had an understanding prosecutor who worked very hard to get Billy convicted. 
Unbelievably, Mary’s entire family testified against her, trying to make her appear to have 
made up this terrible crime in her imagination. The trial went on for a longer than usual time 
and the prosecutor spoke of being worried that the jury would not believe Miss Mary as she 
was the only witness. The defense also used tactics like standing far away to talk to her and 
talking low, knowing that she did not hear or see well, trying to confuse her and make her look 
incompetent. 

Thankfully, Billy was convicted and is still in prison. Susan disappeared and Miss Mary 
made a scrapbook of her ordeal, perhaps as a way of validating her experience, and proving to 
herself that it really did happen.
Mary wanted to die with dignity so she took out a burial policy to cover her funeral costs. Up to this time Mary had given Susan money to go pay on her policy, which she pocketed and, during the trial, Susan cashed out her fund altogether. Even the paperwork with her last wishes was not found. This poor woman was emotionally, physically, mentally and financially victimized, her entire family turned against her and she would experience physical pain for the rest of her life in a nursing home. [This sentence observes subject-predicate agreement because your subject, “woman” and your predicate, “was” are both singular. This gives your paper coherence. Nice work!] Other cultures respect and even revere the elders in their society, while it seems like they are a target in this one.

The elderly often experience worsened functional and financial status and progressive dependency, poor health, feelings of helplessness and loneliness and increased psychological distress already with the aging process. When you add abuse to this, research suggests that older people who have been abused tend to die earlier than those who have not been abused, even in the absence of chronic conditions or life-threatening disease.