

Leticia Lopez
1920 Marian Ave
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T. Davis
Corporal
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To Whom It May Concern:

My marriage of 13 years ended abruptly on May 22nd, 2003. Johnny was a deeply caring and loving father and husband. He was my rock, anything we had to get through, we could handle – as long as we were together. Our lives changed drastically the day the police came and told my 17 year old son that his father, my husband, was dead.

Johnny's loss was felt deeply by all five of our children. Although my oldest son, Richard, was five when Johnny and I married, Johnny was always Richards' father. How I found the strength and the words to explain the unexplainable, the inconceivable, to our other children, Melaena, Miette, Johnny Jr., and Tommy, who were all in school, I have no idea.

Although a large part of me was stunned, and incapable of really processing that Johnny was gone; my body jumped into action, calling relatives and trying to make arrangements. It wasn't until later, that I broke down, all I could think, was, "How did this happen?", and right after that followed, "Who could have done this and then just left him there?" Johnny was the main provider for our family, yet he was never absent in the sense that many Fathers can be.

Johnny was the one who potty trained the kids, he was there when they were sick, he was involved in every detail of their daily life. It is impossible to convey the completely shattered life we have led since that day. Richard was forced to grow up fast, since I had to become the provider, he took on a lot of the responsibilities of taking care of his younger siblings; Melaena had to help cover the role I had been playing at the house, by being emotionally strong for her siblings. While I worked long hours trying to keep us together and fed, all of us suffered, the kids began to hide food because they were worried we might not have enough food later.

Although we had money concerns, the biggest hole we had was from the void left by the lack of his laughter, the sight of his smile, his intense joy of being with his kids.

At the funeral, Tommy was extremely confused. He kept asking, "Why are they putting Daddy in that hole?" and "When is Daddy going to wake up?"

Not a day goes by that any of us don't think of Johnny and wish he were still here. It's the little things that still get us, the Donuts for Dads morning at school, the prom pictures, the quiet moments that we will never share with him again. Johnny had a way of making the kids' birthdays' the most special and important days of their year. We haven't been able to even celebrate birthdays since his death - it only reminds us of how much we have lost.

I look at my boys and I am heartbroken that they don't have their father to play soccer and baseball with; my girls will never have him walk them down the aisle and give them away. Someone stole him from us – and to add insult to injury, they got away with it. Our loss never lessens, in fact, as the years pass, it seems to grow even more intense. Why should his killer be able to be free because the 'statute of limitations' has passed. What kind of message is being

sent to his killer? That if you can stall until two years have passed, you are a free man. This person is walking around, enjoying their life, living their life, having the moments that we cannot have because of their actions. You can never replace the loss we have incurred and continue to struggle with every single day; but it is not right for the person who took him away from us to have what we cannot.

Our country is based on the premise of justice – please find the justice in this case – for Johnny, if not for us.

Sincerely,

Leticia Lopez