

I am writing this letter on behalf of my brother, Joshua Keith Zimmerman. Joshua was murdered in Anchorage while in Alaska DOC custody in the early hours of January 12th, 2024.

I remember this morning so vividly. I woke up like any other day. I received a text from my mom shortly after waking up that I needed to call her and my dad as soon as possible. Hearing a parent hardly able to breathe over the loss of their child is something you will remember forever. Those first couple of weeks after Joshua's death were filled with empty words and carelessness almost as if Anchorage DOC did not care and to them it was just another inmate. But we still had hope.

Over the course of the last 9 months we have had zero answers. What we do know, or at least, what we were told by the Alaska State troopers per the Alaska State Medical Examiner is Joshua was suffocated with a soft object in his cell. He was found in his bed the following morning. Alaska DOC said foul play was "not suspected" and his cause of death was "unknown". But how could that be if he was murdered in your jail as told to us by AST? These are conflicting stories. Joshua had recently undergone a procedure amputating his foot that had been giving him trouble for years. So not only was he murdered under Anchorage Correctional Complex cameras, he was somewhat defenseless considering he was learning his new normal of using one foot to get around until he got his prosthetic. It seems a bit odd that with a building with so much security and cameras that no one can give us a straight answer. Besides the obvious fact that these correctional officers failed miserably at their job of simply keeping the inmates alive, it begs the question of who are these people protecting? We were told by the Alaska State Troopers to not speak of this heinous crime. Not speak of my brother being murdered in state custody? Who does that benefit? I understand the logistics of keeping cases private while they are being investigated but to not give us anything for months while simultaneously telling us to not speak about it? I feel strongly that this case is being swept under the rug in hopes our family will forget and move on. Just as they have done to many others.

There are cases upon cases of Alaska DOC negligence available for public consumption online.

When the Anchorage Daily newspaper wrote an article on my brother they made sure to list his charges before saying he had "passed away" in Anchorage DOC. They made sure to dehumanize my brother the best they could so the public wouldn't raise an eyebrow as to what is actually happening inside the Alaska prison system. Just as they have done to so many others.

I'm not blind to the fact that there are terrible people sitting in jails. But there are good people in them too. And frankly, the type of person you are does not give someone the right to take your life. Joshua was an avid fisherman and loved his family. I could give so many examples of Joshua helping someone in need. He had dreams of becoming a father and loved watching any

sport. His heart was huge. Joshua was only 13 months older than me. He was there for me the day I took my first breath and saw me through 32 years of life. My only wish is I was there for Joshua when someone in the Anchorage correctional complex took Joshua's last breath.

Just the fact that someone is walking the streets who murdered my brother should seriously concern you. They could be your neighbor. They could be your tenant or your landlord. They could be the person pumping gas next to you or the person in the booth next to you at a restaurant celebrating their children's birthday. And they are free, with no remorse and no consequences for taking Joshua's life.

Joshua isn't the only person who has died in Alaska's jail system under unusual circumstances. Most of these cases go cold because they tell the families the same thing they have been telling us.

Joshua was in jail for two misdemeanor charges. After a couple of years Joshua found himself making bad choices and decided enough was enough. He turned himself in to Alaska DOC December 12, 2023 in hopes to use the facility as a source of rehabilitation. Isn't that the intended use of jails? If not to rehabilitate humans then what are they for? We need compassion and treatment. Mental health and addictions have no place in jails.

I have personally witnessed in my lifetime a police department solve a murder with no real leads in my home town in a span of just a few months. So please tell me why this case is over a year old with no real answers when the entire crime was in a heavily "secured" building with cameras? What is the Anchorage DOC protecting and why?

The pain the Alaska DOC has placed on my family is indescribable. While we sit with an emptiness so big as they just continue their everyday lives.

I am writing this letter on behalf of my brother and so many others who were wrongfully killed at these correctional facilities across the state of Alaska. In hopes to not only bring awareness to what is going on behind closed doors but to seek justice as well. There is a serious problem happening here and this will continue until something is done. There are pages of proof against Anchorage DOC and the lies they tell families regarding the deaths of their loved ones. Please tell me why you are funding facilities that essentially give people a safe space to murder humans? Please just imagine someone you love dying in their facility and they treat your loved one less than human.

Alaska DOC also listed my brother as an Alaskan Native. My brother and I are both 1/16 Alaskan Native. And while yes, we are proud of where we come from. I do not think his heritage being listed was anything more than a manipulation tactic. When our biological mother died she was listed as "white" and she was twice as much Aleut as my brother and I. How does that make sense? There is right and there is wrong.

Joshua Keith Zimmerman was a son, a brother, an uncle and a friend. Joshua was alive. He was right here breathing the same air as you and me. It's so hard to explain to someone what the loss of a sibling does to you. He was my first best friend. He had his whole life ahead of him and now we will never get to see it. He was so much more than a statistic and he was so much more than the person Alaska DOC is trying to reduce him down to. Life wasn't fair to him and now, even in death, it continues to be unfair. Joshua was the man who loved to read and write. He was the teenager who got straight A's without trying. He was the little boy who walked around with a lightsaber and walked his little sister down the church steps. Joshua was an amazing person and all who knew him could tell you about his infectious smile and laugh. He was so loved. I will miss him for the rest of my life. For the rest of my life my father won't have a son. For the rest of my life I won't have a brother and my daughters won't have an uncle. He will be photos in an album and a brief 5 second clip I have of him singing his favorite song. He will never again be home for the holidays or call me just to chat. That is real pain.

I hope that one day we will find out exactly what happened to my brother in the early hours of January 12th, 2024 in Anchorage DOC custody.