

# **Braes letter**

**I was asked to write something about the loss of my son, Braeden, and how his death from a fentanyl poisoning has affected me and my family but I can tell you, it's hard to put into words.**

There's nothing that can fill the hole that has been left behind for me, my family, and many friends. His absence is deeply felt, every day.

He was only 20 years old when he died. Six foot six and a smile as bright as the sun that would light up any room when he entered. He was looking forward to traveling and exploring the world as soon as Covid restrictions were lifted but that never happened for him.

I went to his apartment on a Monday morning to wake him for work and found him slumped over, expired in his chair. I didn't know what to do but try to lift him out of it and perform CPR, even though I knew it was too late.

His skin was purple and there was a slight bit of blood coming from his nose. He had hemorrhaged from being in that position too long.

It was hard to move him because he was so much taller than me, but I managed and as I laid him down, I heard the last little bit of breath that was trapped in his lungs escape and that was it, I started screaming.

My only son was gone. Just like that.

I was there for his first breath, and I was there for his last. Most of me died that day, right along with Brae and I don't know that I'll ever recover.

To see him lying there in the funeral home days later was surreal, it shouldn't have been happening, but it was and it did.

Sometimes, I have to remind myself that he was real, he was here and that I didn't imagine the best part of my life. He was a bright spot in all of our lives, and it was snuffed out by someone who didn't care about him or anyone else they were poisoning, all for the sake of money.

Meanwhile, we are all left behind, wondering what we could have done or said that would have made a difference in Braedens life and guided the trajectory of it down a different path, but he was in an experimental phase, trying to figure himself out and was robbed of the opportunity to correct himself because of the desperation and greed of a drug dealer.

The lengths that drug makers or dealers will go to get people hooked and using are endless and the lack of care and respect for life is obvious.

It is time for them to be put on notice and make it known that we will not stand for their dealings in death any longer. There needs to be serious consequences for this complete disregard of life, and they need to know how their actions affect the communities they live in. They destroy more than just the person who uses the drugs they provide; it devastates entire families.

I ask God every day, why He took my boy from me and the world.

I may never have the answer, but I feel like we can make a difference and use his story and others, as an example to change laws and bring some justice for those who have been lost needlessly but not pointlessly.

Braedens memory lives on.

Thank you for your time.

Forever grieving,

Athena Fulton

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