

VICTIM TO READ

J. Rogers

My faith in God and humanity has been seriously and perhaps irreparably shaken. On June 16, 2016 I received the most devastating call a mother can get. One of my children was dead. What I've since learned and seen on video about the circumstances surrounding Corey's death has left me with a diagnosis of PTSD, for which I am presently in treatment. My life previous to this moment is but a distant memory. I am forever changed.

In that moment, my heart broke into a million pieces and will never be whole again.

Did this call come from the police?? No..it came from my younger son, Collin, who found out by contacting the police due to rumours that it might have been Corey who passed away alone, in a cell, with a covering over his head. Imagine how difficult that call must have been for him to make.

Two hours!! That's how long my son lay on the floor of a cell, alone, deceased, with a covering over his head. At least two hours! Two hours!! How can that happen when the policy of the Halifax Police Department is to do 15 minute rousability checks on every prisoner, never mind one with a spit hood on, when, according to directions from the manufacturer of said hood, should be under CONSTANT SUPERVISION??

Cheryl Gardner, you told the EMT that "male arrived at approximately 22:40 and was agitated and uncooperative." You've seen the video; did Corey seem agitated to you?? He couldn't even stand up. She also stated that, and I'm quoting the EHS report, "Pt. Was non-violent, but has a history of violence with police in past interactions. Spit hood was applied for this reason." So was this a punishment for past behaviour and if so, is this proper procedure?? You also stated that "prisoner responded with grunts and snores when spoken to." She also noted chest rise. Can someone please explain to me how someone who is deceased can respond when spoken to??

Dan Fraser, you walked past Corey's cell without breaking stride when he chose to do checks, which wasn't always the case. In fact, in one of the videos you were heard to be playing your harmonica when you logged 2 checks that you didn't even do.

You both stated in your testimonies that no one followed the 3 R checks which came as a directive sent down by the province after the Victoria Paul Inquiry in 2012. Does that make what you did, or rather failed to do, all right?? One of the reasons you sighted for not doing checks properly was

paperwork. It seems to me that the well being and the very life of your prisoners was/is more important than paperwork. I worked as an LPN in Psychiatry and even after a 12 hour night shift, my patients were important enough that if I didn't have a chance to do the paperwork that was part of my job, I stayed behind to do it. My patients didn't go without the care they needed. Maybe the name of your "Prisoner Care Facility" should be changed to the "We Don't Care Facility", because there certainly was no care given to Corey that night.

Because you both decided not to do your jobs that night my son is dead. Corey was put in Cell #5, a cell with no bench or toilet for his protection. We now see how that worked out. He would have been better off in the drunk tank, where at least one of the other prisoners could have taken the hood off when they noticed that he had vomited into it. No matter how drunk a person is, I don't believe they would not leave someone who had passed out with a bag over their head.....common sense.

Try to imagine living the rest of your life without one of your children. If you can imagine that then you have a small idea of what I go through every single day without Corey. I have been given a life sentence.

If you could take just one day, hour, or even minute of my grief, I would gladly exchange it for whatever your sentence will be. I wake up every morning to the reality that I will be grieving for the rest of my life.

Yes, Corey was an alcoholic, but that is an illness, not a crime. To the system, Corey was nothing more than a drunk and a nuisance, but to those of us who knew and loved him, he was so much more. He was a son, a brother, a father and a partner. Corey was very intelligent and spent much of his time reading. He also enjoyed playing chess and was very good at it. Corey was most often a loving, caring individual who would give the shirt off his back to those in need. Corey had a wonderful sense of humour and he also loved to sing along with any music that was playing. He was a very integral part of our lives.

Corey's youngest daughter was not even 48 hours old when her father was taken from her. Hailie will never know her father, except in pictures and through the memories of those who loved him.

Since Corey's death, I have been in constant physical pain, due to the fact that the stress has caused an exacerbation of the symptoms of my occipital neuralgia. Trying to deal with the death of my son has been increasingly

difficult, due to the fact that I have a constant 24/7 headache. It has caused painful stress and tension throughout my entire body. I am in constant physical, as well as emotional pain.

My heart wants this all to be a nightmare that I can awake from, but my head knows that will never happen. This is all too real.

The last time I saw Corey, I dropped him off at the corner of Connaught Ave. and Chebucto Rd. He gave me a kiss, a hug and a "love you" as usual and left to pick up a cradle from a friend for his newborn daughter. He was so happy and proud. I still have trouble driving past that intersection and make all efforts possible to avoid it.

Due to his untimely death and my limited income I initially wasn't able to afford a proper gravestone for Corey. This has added undue stress, as well. Originally his grave was marked only with a granite stone that I searched hours for at a beach and added an engraved plaque; a labour of love. His ashes are buried between my parents, his grandparents, in Port Mouton, as I could not afford a plot. This distance makes it difficult to visit his grave as often as I'd like.

My greatest fear in all of this is that, unless something changes within the system, some other parent will have to go through this painful, never-ending journey that I have had to go through every day since and will for the rest of my life. Things need to change so that police are obligated to follow their own policies and are better trained to assess intoxicated prisoners. What does it say about our servers and protectors of our society if they are unable, or unwilling, to protect our most vulnerable?

Corey should never have been placed in a cell to begin with. His level of intoxication was such that he should have been in hospital, not a jail cell. I'm not saying that Corey was an innocent bystander, but we need to remember that he was an alcoholic. Alcoholism is an illness, not a crime, and should certainly not be punishable by death.

I was told that I could draw a picture, or write a poem, or letter. I have chosen to write a letter to my dear son, Corey James Leslie Rogers.

My Dear Corey,

I loved you the minute you were born. Then I saw your face and I fell in

love some more. You were only a minute old, but I knew I would die for you and to this day I still would. When I chose to have you I made a conscious decision to let my heart walk outside my body. It's unnatural and so very unfair when your heart dies before you do. There is a cord that connects us, even now. It's not a cord anyone can see, nor is it like the cord that connected us before you were born; it bonds us together heart to heart. No one can break this cord. My heart cries out for you, but you're not there. What a tragic privilege to have had you and lost you.

I miss your laughter. I miss your smile. I miss the sound of your voice. I miss our talks. I miss you every moment of every day and will do so until I take my last breath.

In life you had your struggles, but, while you were alive there was always the hope that things would work out for you. Now my only hope is that you rest in peace.

You need to know how much you were and are loved and missed every day by so many.

Rest in peace now, my son, in the knowledge that you will live forever in my heart.

Hugs, Kisses,
Love & Sunshine,
Mom

Because of Corey's untimely death due to the negligence of Cheryl Gardner and Dan Fraser, I didn't even get to say good-bye and tell him just how very much I love him. I ask the court to impose the strictest penalty possible, because living every day without my son is a life sentence with no possibility of parole.

Thank you for listening.

I would like to present my statement in court.

I would like to present my statement in this statement is true.

To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this statement is true.

20 20 at Hollister

day of February

Dated this 3rd

[Signature]

Signature of declarant

If you completed this statement on behalf of the victim, please indicate the reasons why you

nature of your relationship with the victim:

at 20

day of _____

ated this _____

