

Before my world changed, I was an innocent 14 year old. I had just started my life; I was a freshmen at Jesuit High School. I had a lovely, goofy, and caring family. I guess, to others, we were normal; the stereotypical, happy family. But, on January 14th, all of that changed.

My oldest brother, Taylor, and I, understood each other on another level. We were silly, smiley, and adventurous together, and we both loved hard. He was my best friend and we were happy. And then suddenly, he slipped from my grip, and fell. Taylor fell back into his addiction, and this time it killed him. When he took the drugs the night he died, he expected a high to help with the withdrawals. He had put his chai tea latte in the microwave and just lied down to close his eyes for a second. He had his cat on his chest when he took his final breath, and departed from the world.

I was no longer the innocent 14 year old, my family wasn't perfect, and nothing would ever be the same again. I no longer had my brother with me holding my hand. Taylor never saw me get ready for a date. He won't see me graduate high school, and he won't watch me get married, or kiss the heads of my children, and ask them if they want to play. These things will never happen because of people who will be back on the street soon, or already are back, selling drugs and profiting off of addicts and their deaths.

My brother was not the scum of the earth. Taylor was sweet, and kind, and so many other things that a lot of people in this room will never get to know; and, he was an addict. I'm 16 now, and as you know, I don't have one of my brothers, I don't have my main cheerleader, and my fashionista. I beg of you, please don't let anymore best friends and good-hearted people get taken away like this.

Let's stop this before more loved ones get ripped away from their loving families, and before more brothers from their little sisters.

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