

Tuesday, October 29, 2019

Sophia(DagmarHead),

I love you and I miss you.

You have a father that loves you and wants to be in your life.

I have no idea what your mother tells you about me. But you're old enough, I think, to know that every story has two sides. Your mother is convinced that I'm a bad person and I want to hurt my children. I know she's unhappy that I'm bringing her back to court, and she's shared those feelings with Morey. But going back to court is the only way I can see my daughters. I think the lawyers and judges enjoy the fighting because they all make money. They don't care if my soul is crushed and my life is thrown into the trash. They don't care that you have no father.

I think it's ridiculous. I've only ever wanted good things for you. Someday, I hope to see you, and be able to explain everything. I can't explain it all in a letter.

Right now, all I want is for you to know that I think about you, and I want you in my life.

It seems that we may need to wait until you're 18, and then you can get your own passport.

I'm including some photos. I hope you look at them, and keep them, and remember me.

You and I were talking regularly in the spring. What happened? Suddenly, you didn't call anymore. Your mother has all kinds of reasons – that the tablet power cable was lost, or the laptop's password was forgotten, or Skype wasn't working. There was always some reason, but they're just excuses.

You asked me once about my website. The address is just "black.blue". You asked me if it's "dot-com", but it's not. The entire address is just **black.blue**

If you open a web browser, either on your phone or a tablet, you can go directly to **black.blue/contact** to see all my contact information. There's a phone number you can call, an e-mail address, a Skype ID, and a PO Box address. Last year, I sent you postcards and stamps. You can write me a postcard and send it to the PO Box. I would love to hear from you. If I had your phone number, I'd call you.

Morey won't talk to me anymore. I don't know why. She has problems, and I solve problems. But I'm way over here, and I can't do anything but give my love. Maybe I've lost Morey. I don't want to lose you.

I wonder what you're doing for Halloween. I wonder if you're too old for Halloween now. I wish I knew these things. I wish I knew what foods you hate, what music you love, what dreams you have.

When you're older, I hope you have the courage and the gumption to get to know me again. I love you until the last beat of my heart.

Dad

Some photos are included. Here are the numbered descriptions:

1. When I was 21, I had a job on the Big Island of Hawaii, working at a luau at a very fancy hotel. This is a picture of my manager and me. Instead of pants, I had to wear a lavalava when I was at work, like a girl's skirt. It's pronounced just "lava – lava".
2. This is a picture I took of myself in my dorm room in New York when I was 19.
3. When I was in the Army. Your grandmother Julie took this photo.
4. This is your mother and me, back in happier times. This was taken before we were married.
5. Last year, I had the chance to visit China for a few days. I took this photo of myself in Tiananmen Square, which is a place with some interesting history. Look it up. Behind me is the gateway to the Forbidden City, with its famous photo of Mao – the great Chinese leader.
6. This is me last year at sunset on Christmas Eve. I spent Christmas alone without my family. It hurts that I cannot see you and your sister on Christmas mornings anymore.
7. You know about the Pyramids in Egypt, right? I was there a few years ago working with the Egyptian Army. They had some fun toys to play with... I mean military toys.
8. I always liked the name "Bintang". I just like the way it sounds. Bin. Tang.
9. Here I am at a party late at night in some faraway place. I am eager to show you parts of the world that you do not yet know. There is so much life beyond Lynchburg.
10. This is your grandmother Julie and me. She misses you very much. She lives in Georgia, and she always asks if you can visit her. She has her own cell phone and e-mail. It's easy to contact her.
11. In another letter, I said I was sad because you had no idea I was working in a war when you were a newborn baby. I worked hard there, and it was difficult work. It sucks because all that work seems forgotten now. You had no idea I was there. Sometimes the enemy would make homemade bombs and bury them next to the road. Then, when American Marines drove by, they would blow-up the bombs and kill the Marines. One of my jobs was to find the bombs before they exploded. The Marines gave me this patch after I found my second bomb.
12. You and me at Disneyland in Florida.
13. I was working on this spy plane for an Arab country. Someone from that Arab military called us "cowboys", so we all got cowboy hats for this photo. I'm in the white shirt. I had block three faces in this photo; they're "secret" men; I can't talk about them.
14. This is your dad, half-way up Mount Kilimanjaro in Africa. It's the tallest mountain in Africa. It takes about four days to reach the top. I climbed to the top in 2009. I would love to climb again someday; I would love for you to join me. It's a dream I have.
15. This is your dad, flying over north Africa in a small plane, in the backseat.
16. I took your sister hiking years ago in Arizona. Here we are on a trail called The Dreamy Draw. I always liked that name: Dreamy Draw. Did you know I went to college in Arizona?
17. My good friend Dennis took this photo of me in 2013. He says I'm "wistful in some harbor bar". I've known Dennis more than half of my life. We've had some crazy adventures, and I would love to tell you about them someday. He's funny and twisted and smart – and one of those people who makes life interesting. I'm sure you know some of your mother's friends. You should know some of my friends, too.

18. This is your dad at Auschwitz in Poland. It's a truly horrible place. But so horrible, it was preserved into a kind of museum to keep reminding everyone just how horrible things can be in this world. Right where I'm standing, millions of people got off trains that stopped here, only to be killed shortly afterwards. I don't believe in ghosts, but this place was 100% haunted.
19. This is one of my favorite photos of you. We were sleeping at a Lynchburg hotel, and you had just woken up.
20. Your mother took this photo of me shortly after we met. This was long before we were married and had children.
21. Do you remember me saying goodbye to you at the Lynchburg Airport? I was headed to Afghanistan that day. You liked being swung by your feet.
22. I was driving in the desert this summer, and really liked the rocks in the background.
23. More driving in the desert; camels just walking down the road.
24. You and me in Lynchburg.
25. I was working in Egypt at a military base and found this mural. I thought it was pretty funny. This is more than amazing. It's premium amazing. Hey, this reminds me, YOU still owe me a painting, remember? You once offered to paint a picture for me, and I sent you paints, brushes and a canvas. You said you'd do it at Kimberly's house. But that was more than a year ago. I still want my original SoBe painting! But please nothing so absurd as this Egyptian mural.