

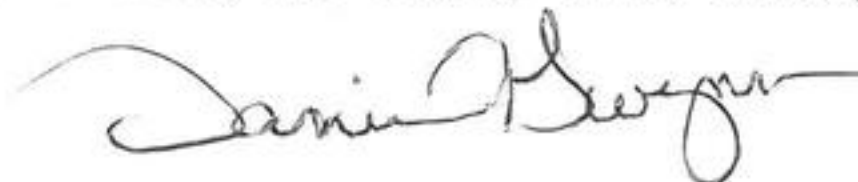
I've been surviving my incarceration one day at a time, but I'm still missing my family terribly. I'm the oldest of a brother & sister I grew up with, along with three cousins, and I have a brother & sister on my father's side who no longer acknowledges me. And there's so much more of my family out there that I've also lost touch with. My mother use to carry me around with her when she visited--I was very young. But drugs, her death & prison has caused a great strain that continues to grow between us.

As the oldest, while I was living amongst my immediate siblings (save my father's two), I felt a great sense of responsibility for them, and appointed myself as an example for them to follow. But I got lost along the way.

Although my siblings are their own persons responsible for their own actions, today I'm feeling their weights of responsibilities because I couldn't & can't be there for them during their times of hardships. I can only sit idly by in here and watch my family suffer through these hardships that I know we could survive better as a family. When we feel scared and alone, those hardships seem much more difficult to get through.

Communication has been very difficult for us due to my incarceration. Something funny happens and my first thought is to pick up a phone and call one of them, but that's not so easy these days. I have to sign up for phone time the night before, and I'd have to have prepaid phone time. Mail is scarce, and my letters go unanswered; I've received maybe 5 visits in my 18 years of incarceration, the distance proves to be a hardship; and phone calls cost money. I've missed the passing of dear loved ones, the birth of some new additions, and the young ones I once held so tightly grow into their own.

This isn't a pity party, where I'm sitting around crying, "Woe is me." This is about the strength of my family waning while I sit here on death row so far away. I'm supposed to be there looking out for them, cohering the family unit, strengthen-



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ing & helping guide us so the sacrifices our mothers & grandparents made were not in vain.

I'm not so egotistical to think that they can't make it without me, because I know they could & have. It's just that I know the distance that's grown between us since my absence has weakened us. This prison system has played a very large role in widening the rift, by discouraging our families from being supportive. We're thrust far across the other side of the State so far from home; phone call rates are crushingly high; and visits are a financial hardship, time consuming & discouraging due to the prison administration's discord, disdain & disrespectful tactics. It's all designed to keep them away.

I do miss my family, and I miss what we could've had. We may not have much closeness right now, but we've still got enough to build upon, and I refuse to take any of them for granted.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Daniel Gwynn". The signature is written in dark ink and is centered on the page.