

[REDACTED]
O'Fallon, Illinois 62269
17 November 1997

Dick,

I'm sorry I haven't been very good about writing lately, but I've been preoccupied with quite a few things -including a traumatic incident. I just haven't felt like doing much of anything over the past five months.

Five months ago -on June 17- my son was killed in a work accident in Greenville, Mississippi. He was 24 years old and it was his first job after college. He graduated from U.S.M. in May of last year with a degree in Communications and Broadcasting. He got a job with a TV station in Greenville, Mississippi as a Production Manager. While he was setting up an antenna from a van, the antenna touched an overhead power line and he was electrocuted. I did not even know he had that job until I learned that he'd been killed on it. In the divorced relationship between my ex-wife and me, communication has been scant. That's a terrible way to learn something, but it happened! My cousin (who lives in Mississippi) called me up and told me about it, my ex called later. I had not seen my son in nine years; I'm sure you understand what goes on in divorced relationships. However, I was looking forward to seeing him again.

It just wasn't right and **I mean not at all!!** What happened to him was a life shamefully wasted! (OSHA cited the TV station for lack of proper training.) It should have happened to me when I was his age, not him! When I was 24 years old, I was a crewchief in Vietnam. I had put myself out to get that duty and to be there. I had gone out of my way to get it! *I asked for it!!* Had I been killed then, it would have been far more expectable. After all, it was a war then and we had to expect things like that. But not what happened on this day four months ago!! There was no reason for that! And I mean none whatsoever!!

mailed
11/28/97

I'm sorry it has taken this long for me to write this letter, but I just haven't felt like doing very much lately. So much in life has lost it's meaning. I guess I'm still trying to pull myself together again. We saw buddies of ours die in Vietnam, and in war that is to be expected. In your own country and in time of peace, it is not to be expected. I guess -at least in a way- that makes it harder. I don't know, but I wonder.

As Ever,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Frank Austin". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name "Frank Austin".