

Exhibit A

Letter from Jie Li

Nick was my college roommate, honorary brother, and best friend whom I could rely on and open up to whatever I came across. We used to look into the future full of hope, optimism, and love. I thought we would be the best man at each other's wedding, and I thought we would be best friends throughout the rest of our lives. However, my world was forever changed on Oct 31, 2017. Since then, I have been dealing with enormous amounts of pain and confusion while witnessing how Nick's loss has impacted all people around him.

So, today, I'd like to take this chance to share a short letter, condensed from the original one I have been writing from time to time since late 2017, addressing my very dear Nick.

—

Dear Nick,

Well, where to start? As it has already been insanely painful to just write down your name here. Not even saying that we have more than 2000 days of stories to share.

I still carry such vivid memories about the first 15 days after receiving the news.

But as you always said, "let's catch up!" So, let's catch up.

Nov 1, 2017:

In the very early morning, I missed a few calls. I called back. My mind blanked out after hearing the news, and I kept asking if that was a Halloween joke. Do people fool each other around Halloween time just like we did on April's Fool? A moment later, someone else called. I told him to stop repeating the "joke" while breaking into tears. And then, more calls and messages and more people asked, "are you alone?", "Are you by yourself?", "are you OK?"

I was alone. I was by myself. I was not OK.
And then I had no idea what the rest of the day was like.

Nov 2, 2017:

I went to the bike path hoping to find where you were at the last second but fearing seeing anything about you.

I cried as I saw a spot surrounded by candles and flowers.
I cried again as we saw another spot with candles and flowers.

I kept walking along the bike path. I tried to find you, but I did not.

Nov 3, 2017:

I went to see your mom, and many other people were at your apartment. Your relatives, your family friends, your friends, and our friends.

I saw your mom, but "I'm sorry" was the only sentence I could say. For that night, I was silenced, and I silenced myself.

I spent most of the night in your room, trying to capture your last presence. Your computers, books, keyboards, headphones, clothes, and of course the "well-known" brand-new mattress.

Nov 4, 2017:

I woke up around 3 am and told myself "f**k, this is not a dream!" I went crazy searching every article covering the attack, the driver, and everything there. I wanted to know more to figure out what the heck happened.

Nov 5, 2017:

I and a few other folks decided to revisit the spot. We brought some beers, nuts, and other snacks, just like when we lived together back in our sophomore year in college. We were mad, so mad. It wasn't making sense, and nothing made sense back then.

Nov 6, 2017:

I received an update about the details of the funeral during work. I could not hold it anymore, and I broke down on-site. "It's true. It is happening."

Nov 7, 2017:

I felt myself being torn apart. I felt my heart was being shattered; on the other hand, I was dying to see you again at the funeral.

Nov 8, 2017:

I'm going to see you again, but it will soon become I will never see you again.

Nov 9, 2017:

At the funeral, I thought I was going to say something, but I did not. To a lot of folks, we were the best bros. Someone once said that we had the best college friendship, which everyone dreamed of. However, my brain was simply blank

throughout the whole thing. I did not know what to say, and I chose not to speak out to pretend it was all just a dream.

Nov 10, 2017:

I went to your home and saw your mom again. All I wanted was to hug her, and I needed that hug. I still did not know what to say to her. The silence was the best language we could communicate with at the moment.

Nov 11, 2017:

11/11/ is widely recognized as the Single's Day in some Asian countries. I could not help recalling when I explained this web-born holiday to you. And yes, it was back to the early time in college when we were still single.

Nov 12, 2017:

An education in Physics surely taught me a lot about the black hole, but I never felt what a black hole is like. Now I know because I felt sucked into an endless hole every second, in which no light of hope or math equation could articulate the pain and loneliness.

Nov 13, 2017:

I started collecting and organizing all messages, photos, videos, or other media types, about you, about us. Oh, you were such a goofy, silly boy. Of course, you are.

Nov 14, 2017:

Walking dead. I feel like I'm the walking dead.

Nov 15, 2017:

Again, all my motivations towards life, work, society, everything were gone. For the whole day, I did not want to do anything. What's the meaning for all without being able to share them with you?

2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022

Was that my hallucination? Because I saw you on the subway, at the Japanese restaurant we used to hang out at, and in many other places, from time to time.

You were giggling, just like the silly way you always did.

I did not lose you on October 31st of 2017 because I never accepted the fact. To me, it has always been just like that we are going to hang out in the next few weeks. My

understanding of the world was killed the moment when I was informed of the incident. My belief in humanity and the beauty of this world were shattered, as I realized that the world is full of stupidity and insanity. I am lost.

Well, investing all my knowledge in Physics, I hope there is a parallel universe, in which we are best bros still. We might end up living in the same apartment in NYC. We might start our tech startup...et cetera.

There is not a day when I was not reminded of you by something. Your smile, forever stayed in 2017. However, you and I both know that part of me, the early 20s me, will forever remain there with you... because you made my early 20s enriched, fun, and adventurous, full of love and genuineness.

The wait for the trial has been part of my life and one of the few things I looked forward to in the past five years. I felt like I had a purpose in this broken world. With the trial being closed and the sentencing today, I guess it is time to say goodbye. All of my love and memories, till next time.

So, the moment comes. The moment when I have to finish up this supposed letter, to confirm the reality that you are forever gone, in this physical world, of this dimension.

Goodbye, my dear friend. Goodbye, my past five years of pain, disbelief, confusion, struggle, and despair.

At the end of your funeral, I asked for a few minutes to be with you alone. You were inside the coffin – cold, sealed, and separated. I was desperate because my last hope of seeing you again was not realized.

I raised up my hands and did a few knocks on top of the coffin:

“Knock knock, I f**king love you, bro!”

Jie
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