



I wonder if my daughter dreams of me

Micha'el, 55 years old, 30 years on death row in Florida

I'm Michael and I've been on death row 30 years. (Since May 1987). Thirty years in isolation in an 8' x 10' cage. Can you imagine? Try spending just a couple of hours, alone, in your average size bathroom. Drag a mat in there and spend the night. Don't forget something to eat. Food is brought to you. You cannot leave. If you have the fortitude or adaptability to last a week then you get to go outside twice for 3 hours each time, weather permitting. On second thought, don't try it. I wouldn't want anyone to subject themselves to such horror.

Don't feel sorry for me. The situation is what it is. I've been on peaks and I've been in valleys. I endeavor to stay in the middle Sometimes I'm knocked down into that valley (of tears?) in the brutal of ways. Too often I've been let down appeal after appeal, screaming seemingly into an abyss where no one can hear... or no one cares to hear. I the same? I suppose the latter is worse. I believe I've kept my sanity throughout. I phrase it this way because it's been said that an insane person doesn't know they're insane. No one has told me I'm insane. If they did, I wouldn't believe them. ☺

I was a young man when I got here, just 24 years old. I hadn't begun to really live. I've read that the latest studies show the male brain isn't fully developed until between the age of 24 and 26, especially impulse control. The law doesn't take this into account. Not now, surely not in the mid 1980".

I remember my last night being free. I was with a woman I loved. A woman no longer in my life. I remember it like it was yesterday. We were together... which resulted in a daughter. A daughter I've not met nor even know her name. I dream of her. She doesn't have a face... it being blurred, unknown, unknowable. I wonder if she dreams of me... only knowing me as "unknown". That is my name on her birth certificate. Two unknowns to each other.

Friendship. Kindness. Understanding. Compassion. Trustworthiness. Who among us doesn't desire all of the above? Love. Love. I've read once that love is like paper. Once it's crumbled, it can't be perfect again. A crumbled trust is a betrayal. Betrayal can be flattering. It just crushes you. If you let it it can cause you to hate. I know. I don't wish it to anyone, ever. It being blurred, unknown, unknowable.

I remember the last night I was free like it was yesterday. A daughter was born to me almost seven months later on August 28, 1986. A daughter I have never met or even known the name of. I have taken to calling her Cylia. I dream of her. She doesn't have a face. I wonder if she dreams of me, only knowing me as "unknown" which I've learned was deceptively placed on her birth certificate. Two unknowns to each other. She is my heart, my life. This is a tender subject for me. Hard to think on too much. It's painful to think that at some point in her life she may have concluded that she has a daddy that didn't care about her and what this has done to her. My little girl. There is so much I want to say to Cylia but most of all to engulf her in my arms... to touch her soul with mine, a place where no words are needed, where just knowing and understanding exit. At this place, she will instantly know that I was told I was not her daddy. I had my suspicion. She would also know that grandma and grandpa wanted very much adopt her

but they too were told that I was not the daddy. I only found out two years after Cylia's birth that she is indeed my little girl. She has been adopted at birth by a couple who had been married for 15 years. I have prayed many times that this couple has taken good care of Cylia, that she has felt safe and has come to feel that she has the best mommy and daddy in the entire world.

Cylia will also know that I've done all I could from my position to find her, that she does have a daddy that loves her with all his life spark. That I wished her a happy birthday every year on August 28 the last 28 years (she was not quite 2 when her mother conferred to me that I am indeed the father.) She will know other matters as well, too sensitive to be discussed here.

I've listed myself with two agencies, one national and one state (Florida) where Cylia can find me if she were ever to look. Florida adoption records are sealed forever so that route is a non-starter. Hospitals in Florida are forbidden by law to divulge any information they may have. The only way I can find her is for her to find me...thus the agencies I am listed with or through social media. The latter will require help from someone with the skills and preferably large social media footprint. The message is, I put a lot of time, effort and thought into helping Cylia to find me...if she so desires.

The possibility exists that she doesn't want to, or even that she found me and decided not to make contact. I understand this too. In this place where their souls touch, Cylia will know that I love her, that daddy always has, does and always will love her. I love you.

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Micha'el can be contacted through [contactdeathrow](http://contactdeathrow.org)