

Statement of Doug Griffin
September 14, 2015

The story of Courtney Ada Griffin

Courtney was born July 25th and was born the same way she left this earth, way too early. She spent her first 11 days in the NICU center of Mass General Hospital fighting to develop lungs strong enough to breathe on their own. We lived on Canobie Lake in Salem, NH until Courtney finished 2nd grade. She spent her early years playing in the water and spending time with the family. She was a quiet kid and never talked much but you could tell she was intelligent because she was always listening and you could see that in her eyes. We moved to Newton, NH as she started 3rd grade and as the new kid and being a bit chubby she was not comfortable in her new surroundings and really began to dislike school. We felt bad for her because she spent many mornings not wanting to go. She eventually made a couple friends when she got to middle school and a few of them were still her friends after high school.

We sent Courtney to Europe with the People to People program when she was 12 and she was able to see and do some amazing things. She climbed the Eiffel Tower, taught an English class in a German classroom, walked on Normandy Beach, walked through Anne Frank's apartment in Amsterdam, toured the Louvre museum and saw the Mona Lisa. She even bought a cuckoo clock for us in the Black Forest of Germany. She came home a changed person. She was talkative and much more mature. We really felt that was the turning point for her as she changed from a shy quiet kid into one that easily held conversations with adults.

As she entered high school she had some friends that used to come over the house and visit and play in the yard. As time went by her friend set began to change and some of her usual friends sort of dropped off and new friends that didn't come to the house were the norm. We believe this is when she first started with the pills. We knew she was smoking pot and would come home high sometimes but at least she was coming home. Prescriptions began disappearing from our medicine cabinet. When she got her first jobs they were working fast food and of course the new kid works the worst hours so she was working till after midnight on weekends. She didn't have a car so mom or dad would sit in the parking lot waiting for her to be released. When she finally got her car we were relieved that we didn't have to drop her off and pick her up daily.

Unfortunately she started not coming home right after work and was spending time with the folks that came in after midnight to buy food. This, as you can imagine, was an unsavory lot. Her school work was not what she was capable of doing and she seemed not to care much about it anyway. Upon graduation she was accepted at the University of Hawaii and was all set to take off for the islands. We told her that there was no way that was going to happen until she worked at the family business for a while and took a couple night classes to show us that she was ready. Because of her habits we were afraid to cut the girl a check and set her on an airplane off to Hawaii. If you ever asked Courtney what she wanted to be when she grew up she always gave the same answer "Hawaiian". We used to think that was a riot!

She began working for Seacoast Digital Computers right out of school and was a rock star! We have over a million parts in our inventory and she was managing it all without a problem. She handled the shipping and receiving and did everything we asked and more. I had one daughter upstairs on my office running my computer company and another downstairs running the flower shop. I was living the dream!

After about 6 months Courtney had saved a few thousand dollars and wanted a car so we let her lease a brand new Honda Civic. Isn't that every kid's dream? On the way home from the dealership while being followed by her mom she stopped to gas up the new wheels and who should she run into but the kid that kept stopping by Wendy's late night. From there things went all downhill. Chris was his name and he wasn't a bad kid. Chris was kind of tall and dorky and always kidding around. He loved every sport and was always talking baseball. They started seeing each other and things started disappearing around the house. Money at first then problems with the credit cards we had given her for "emergency" use started to go out of control. After taking the cards back they were stolen right out of our wallets and thousand in charges were run up. Things became difficult at home and we began arguing with Courtney constantly about the things she was doing and the stealing and constant lying. We couldn't believe anything she said and she would disappear suddenly. Courtney became a frequent visitor at local hospitals from car wrecks and overdoses. She would leave work for lunch and not return till the next morning. We never knew where she was or who she was with.

One day she left the house at lunchtime and was going to get together for dinner with the family. She drove to Lawrence bought some heroin, overdosed in Haverhill, was found by the police and ambulated to the hospital, given Narcan and was home in time for dinner. The next day the ambulance bill showed up at the house and she said "It wasn't me". She ended up at Hampstead Hospital for 9 days trying to regain control of herself. While there she obtained the addresses of every drug dealer in a 100 mile range and upon her release she went off the deep end. She began going missing for days at a time and we had to hide anything valuable from her.

Courtney's addiction was taking over her life and she did not want to be that person. She signed up for the US Marine Corp and began a process of physical conditioning that would enable her to pass the entrance requirements. After a few months she was finally able to complete the number of crunches necessary for entry and she was sworn in. After approximately one month of boot camp and a lot of hard work Courtney was discharged because marijuana was found in the urine sample she gave the day she took the oath. That completely destroyed her. She had been so proud to be a Marine and to be free of the people and problems she left behind at home. Negative feelings began to overwhelm her and trouble began again. When Chris became homeless in the Spring of 2014 Courtney asked if he could move in with us. We were terrified but figured we could more easily keep tabs on them if they lived here.

At first it was awesome we laughed a lot, watched sports together and had fires in the back yard at night. Things settled into a nice routine and we thought all was well. Then the needles started showing up everywhere, even in the clothes dryer. Sometime in mid Summer of 2014 Courtney and Chris began stealing commodities from my company. This included copper wire, gold circuit boards, and aluminum. I deal in large quantities of these items so at first I was a bit confused and thought things had just been

moved around or maybe had been sold as scrap. When I found they were loading the car up every time my back was turned and then heading off to the scrap yard to sell my inventory things got nasty. My wife had a \$7,000 necklace disappear and one of her favorite Ruby rings. I had to call the police one night because things became violent and I demanded they leave.

We began working with the Newton Police Department because one of the officers was able to befriend Courtney and was very well aware of the kids' activities. Courtney had even agreed to wear a wire and do a buy for the Newton Police Dept. We were advised to kick Courtney out of the house, cancel her insurance and then once homeless she could receive treatment in Mass. We did just that and Courtney and Chris moved into Chris' grandparent's house in Plaistow, NH. The constant battle with our insurance company gave us no satisfaction. We were actually told by Anthem that Courtney's problem was not a matter of life or death so no coverage would be offered!

Chris was arrested and jailed shortly thereafter and Courtney was alone at someone else's home. A bed became available for her at a local facility and Courtney was due to enter treatment on Sept 30th. Courtney totaled her car on the evening of Sept 28th and wanted to be taken to the grandparent's home rather than come home with us. She called her dealer who delivered the drugs to her at the grandparent's home. He remains unprosecuted today.

She passed away of an overdose of fentanyl. The NH State Medical Examiner told me the dose was approximately 80 times the strength she was expecting to receive. There was no note, she was alone and found by the grandfather on the afternoon of the 29th. When she was found the police were notified and somehow information was passed to Chris while in jail and I received a call from him indicating that my daughter had passed away. The most horrific call I could ever expect to receive came from an inmate and not the local authorities. Courtney left this world the same way she came into it, way too early.