

# The day everything went wrong essay



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Taken for granted, by me, are so many things. We don't plan for the unexpected things that occur from day to day. Then, in the blink of an eye, something horrendous happens and your life is never the same again. I was confronted with this when I received the shocking news, my breath was taken away and a sob was caught deep within my very soul. The unwanted yet undeniable words, telling me my cousin Johnny was dead. I so often seem to be immobilized by that moment. " He played life to the fullest, and without regret, he bet it all and braved the fall". For me, that is the day everything went wrong.

Ray and Jerilynn, My parents and my daughter, Alexa live in Costa Mesa, California. My Mothers sister Aunt Carole and Uncle Lenny, Karen, Joe and Johnny my cousins live about a block away. I, myself had been living in Newport Beach, California, about 5 miles away. Regardless I saw them all, most every day.

I can still feel the humidity on my skin and in my hair on that very dark day. It was August 26th, 2009, my Cousin Johnny's 43rd birthday. I was at my parent's house kickin' around some ideas for the upcoming Memorial Day weekend party that we always had. A big celebration always but it was my cousin Johnny's birthday as well. So much happiness and so many hopes and dreams! Freeze-frame - We were interrupted by a phone call from my Aunt Carole. My Mother was so happy, but then she always is. She had picked up the phone, dead silence so intense, you could feel it. I have always been able to feel before anything real came to be. I knew almost immediately, before my picture perfect beautiful Mother turned the color of

Cadaver white, something was very wrong! My Mom started to cry and yelled " No, oh my God, no", choked by tears, " Is he ok? What happened? She asked? Thinking my uncle Lenny... or...something happened. She was saying " No, oh my God, no". Over and over and over again. Finally I managed the words " What is going on? Mom what is it"? It was then she choked out the terrible news, my cousin Johnny had a terrible accident . An accident at the river in Arizona. He had gone there with some friends to celebrate his 43 birthday. Diving off the cliff that he has dived off, so many times before.

Copper Canyon, it was called. 200 feet down and missed by a foot. To his death. Just 12 inches away, 12 inches from the water. Unbelievable! I was paralyzed with by emotions. Everyone sitting there with a blank look on their faces. My first thought was that there had been a mistake that it was all a misunderstanding. Johnny was still alive and in the hospital hurt. To my complete horror I was so very wrong.

My Mother and Father rushed to be by my Aunt Carole's side in her time of need. My Mother, She hugged me and said " I Love you". In a total panic, my parents left. I was alone at this time. So very alone all by myself to deal with all these emotions that I had. I am standing in the Middle of the family room now the words, the images, the HORROR! Blinded by rage and all that is not right! The hole in my heart, without my Johnny, my cousin, my protector and the big brother that I never had! GOD he really is gone. The moment was so science fiction -B movie BAD! Crying uncontrollably, realizing I will never get to see or talk to my cousin again. A laugh that I will never hear again I was so empty and without feeling. It was as if I had been trapped in a void? All the memories, heartfelt. Johnny was truly a free spirit.

It is so strange to think just a few hours ago we were planning Johnny's birthday party and in a split second everything changed and now we are planning to bury him on his birthday. My mom and Carole had to call Liz, Johnny's fiancée and got more of the traumatic details about the jump that took Johnny's life. Liz was just told she was pregnant with Johnny's baby. This baby would never get to meet his or her daddy, nor would this baby ever know what kind of a person he was.

Johnny Kissel - my cousin

A stallion- wild spirit held at bay. Head tossed back -an air of defiance. Galloping on moonbeams and bedding in dreams A stance of power-fearful of no other! A friend to everyone- That was Johnny . That was my cousin... Flared nostrils -teeth of pearl could he be real? An enigma not to be compared Excellence at his best. He played life to the fullest and without regret! Restless and introspective he took on waves all over the world with strategic assault- he beat every challenge that he had been dealt! Until Wet, heat, time slap, thinking to himself " if you don't play, you can't win" Confusion tore down his defenses- But come on psychic awareness along with fairness He had done the jump 3 times before now, how could he miss! Bring it- intensely bold " Kissel". He could not be bought and certainly not sold. So he braved the fall, and slayed the beast! The finality was tragic. The story Epic! Johnny Kissel will always be remembered as uncontrollable- intriguing and eternal magic. Don't take your life or the lives of the people you love for granted. At any given moment everything can change. I can only go forward with my life now and make the best of every day have a purpose

and with reason. This is what I strive for, I am sorry that I had to lose my cousin Johnny to realize this.