

Lampard Inquiry Commemorative and Impact Statement

My dearest Son, Christopher Samson Nota,

It is with a heavy heart and profound sorrow that I write these words to commemorate your life, a life tragically cut short. Captured images of you falling to your death my Son are images I can never erase from my mind, [personal/sensitive] The systemic failures that plague our National Health Service's support for dual diagnosed autistic individuals robbed you of your future, and the pain of your absence is a wound that will never fully heal. You were a beacon of light, a unique and beautiful soul who deserved so much more than the hand you were dealt.

From the moment you entered this world, you brought with you a radiant energy and an unwavering spirit. Your autism was an integral part of who you were, shaping your perceptions, your passions, and your interactions with the world around you. It was never a burden, never a deficit, but simply a different way of being, a different way of seeing the world.

Your mother Julia Hopper spoke at length about your growing pains, I adopt each and every word she mentioned.

As a child, you were fascinated by numbers, by patterns, by the intricate workings of the world around you. You had a thirst for knowledge, a desire to understand how things worked. You loved learning about history, about science, about the universe. And you had this amazing memory, able to recall facts and figures with incredible accuracy. You were also a talented in your own way at recognizing sequences, interpreting them, expressing yourself through symmetry or arranging toys in a particular manner. You possessed a keen eye for detail, noticing the nuances that others often missed. You had an unwavering focus on your interests, pursuing them with passion and dedication. Whether it was learning about historical events, mastering a new video game, or immersing yourself in the world of music. Oh, how you loved music! As you grew older, you would listen to your favorite Songs for hours on end, lost in the rhythm and the melody. Music was your escape, your solace, your way of connecting with something bigger than yourself. It was a language you understood, a language that spoke to your soul. The world was a tapestry of sights and sounds to you, a symphony of sensations that you absorbed with an intensity that was both beautiful and awe-inspiring. And you had a genuine love for the people in your life, expressing it in your own unique and beautiful way.

The world, my dear Son, was not always kind to you. The challenges you faced were immense, and the resources available to support you were woefully inadequate. I remember the countless hours your mum and I spent searching for therapists, for schools, for programs that could cater to your unique needs. I remember the frustration, the anger, and the despair that washed over us as we navigated a labyrinth of bureaucracy and indifference at trying to obtain support for an Education Support Plan that took your special and individual needs into account. Because your mum stayed at home to focus on looking after you and your 2 brothers, she felt like she was constantly fighting, constantly advocating, just to get you the basic support you deserved during the early years of your education. I recall the countless phone calls, the endless paperwork, the constant struggle to advocate for your needs. I remember the feeling of isolation, of being lost in a system that seemed designed to exclude rather than include. I remember the nights we lay awake, worrying about your future, praying for a world that would embrace you for who you were, not judge you for what you were not. I longed for a world that would see your potential, your strengths, your unique gifts. I longed for a world that would celebrate your autism, not see it as something to be feared or pitied.

The system failed you, time and time again, leaving us to navigate a complex and often hostile landscape. The lack of understanding, the absence of tailored support, and the persistent stigma surrounding autism created barriers that you should never have had to encounter.

But through it all, you persevered, your spirit shining brightly despite the darkness that surrounded you. You taught us the true meaning of resilience, of finding joy in the face of adversity. You remained patient, understanding, and loving; you never complained, and you never gave up hope. You found joy in the simplest things, the things that many take for granted. You reveled in the sensory experiences of life, finding wonder in the everyday. You had this incredible ability to connect with people on a deep level, even when communication was challenging. Your smile could light up a room, your laughter was contagious, and your hugs were the warmest embrace. We called it the Nota bear hug. You had a way of seeing the good in everyone, and you taught me the true meaning of unconditional love.

Lampard Inquiry Commemorative and Impact Statement

Do you remember that trip we took to New York City? Your step-mum, Christine, you, and I explored the city together, hand in hand, navigating the crowds and the noise with a shared understanding. We were a team, facing the world together, and in those moments, we felt an incredible sense of connection with you. The way your face lit up watching the street performers in Times Square... The vibrant colors and the cacophony of sounds stimulated your senses in a way that only you could appreciate. You were mesmerized by the towering skyscrapers, feeling the energy of the city pulse around you. The hustle and bustle, the sheer vibrancy of it all, captivated your imagination. You asked insightful questions, your curiosity driving you to learn and explore. As we toured the City, we could see the wonder on your face; your inquisitive mind asking questions about different cultures and lifestyles, taking in our feedback and thoughts and synthesizing ideas into your own world view. You saw the world with such wonder, such an eagerness to understand its complexities. That trip was a testament to your spirit, your ability to find joy even amidst the chaos.

And who could forget that rainy afternoon we spent at that indoor American baseball facility? The joy on your face as you swung the bat, the concentration in your eyes as you tracked the ball, the pure elation when you connected for a hit. You had such a natural swing, a fluid motion that spoke to your innate athleticism. I watched you joyfully, seeing you as both the excited child you were and the determined young man you were becoming. We laughed together, cheered each other on, and for a few hours, the world outside faded away. It was just you and me, sharing a moment of pure joy, you were safe with me, a moment that I will treasure forever. These moments, these precious memories, are etched forever in my heart, a reminder of the beautiful bond we shared.

My wife and I even braved a comedy club with you, the laughter and energy of the crowd washing over you. You may not have understood every joke, but you were entertained by our unease with some of the humor and we secretly cherished it (knowing that you felt perhaps too overprotected by us). You also experienced the collective laughter in the room, the shared experience of human connection. You loved being part of the audience, feeling the energy and the excitement. You laughed along with everyone else, your own unique laughter adding to the symphony of sounds. It was a reminder that even in your unique way of experiencing the world, you still wanted to connect to something larger than yourself. Another small yet beautiful moment.

Back home, you found solace in the routine of the helping us prepare meals. We went to the gym together, the physical exertion a way to channel your energy and focus your mind. The rhythmic clang of the weights, the steady beat of your own heart, these were the sounds of your inner strength. You were determined to build your strength and endurance, and I admired your dedication.

And since it was the winter when you came to New York, oh how you loved the snow! Your first instinct at seeing snow was to dive into a pile of snow and making a snow angel whilst shouting "I love snow! I love snow! You had a way of transforming an ordinary task into something extraordinary, I would always step a step back and watch you in wonder, finding beauty in the simplest of things. A billion small moments of joy were a testament to your resilience, your ability to find beauty in the world despite the challenges including mental health issues you faced.

In general, you had an incredible sense of humor, a quirky and playful way of looking at the world. You could find the funny side of any situation, and your laughter was infectious. You loved making people laugh, and you had a knack for bringing joy to those around you. Your humor was a gift, a way of bringing light and laughter into the world. You were also incredibly kind and compassionate, always willing to help others in need. You had a big heart, and you cared deeply about the people in your life. You were a loyal friend, a loving Son, and a true inspiration to all who knew you. You taught me the true meaning of empathy, of seeing the world through the eyes of others.

But the world, my dear Son, did not always see your beauty, your intelligence, your kindness. The world often focused on your differences, on the ways in which you did not conform to societal expectations. And this, my Son, is the greatest tragedy of all. That a world so focused on conformity, Why, I ask myself over and over again, why did this have to happen? Why was my beautiful, loving Son denied the support he needed to thrive? Why do we live in a world where autistic individuals are so often marginalized and misunderstood? The answers, my dear Son, are complex and multifaceted. They lie in the systemic inequalities that permeate our society, in the lack of funding for autism services and those dually diagnosed with other conditions, and in the pervasive stigma that surrounds

Lampard Inquiry Commemorative and Impact Statement

neurodiversity. They lie in the fear of difference, the discomfort with those who do not fit neatly into pre-defined boxes.

But your legacy, my Son, will be one of change. Your memory will forever be a beacon of light, guiding us towards a more inclusive and accepting world. A world where every autistic individual is valued, respected, and supported. A world where your light continues to shine brightly, illuminating the path towards a brighter future. We will fight tirelessly to ensure that no other autistic or dually diagnosed individual suffers the same fate as you. We will advocate for increased funding, for better training, and for greater awareness of the unique challenges and strengths of autistic or dually diagnosed people. We will push for a world where neurodiversity is celebrated, not stigmatized, and where every autistic person is given the opportunity to thrive. We will fight for a world where autistic children are not forced to fit into a mold that does not suit them, where they are not judged for their differences, where they are celebrated for their unique ways of being. We will fight for a world where autistic adults are given the support they need to live independently, to pursue their passions, to contribute their talents to society. We will fight for a world where autism is not seen as a burden, but as a different way of experiencing the world, a way that is just as valid and valuable as any other. We will fight for a world where autistic individuals are not seen as "less than," but as fully human, deserving of love, respect, and dignity. We will fight for a world where your memory serves as a reminder of the incredible potential that lies within every autistic individual, waiting to be nurtured and unleashed.

My dear Son, your life, was a gift. You taught me about love, compassion, patience, and the true meaning of acceptance. You showed me the beauty in diversity, the strength in vulnerability, the power of human connection. You taught me to see the world through different eyes, to appreciate the nuances and complexities that others often miss. And though your time on this earth was tragically cut short, the impact your life had on your family in the UK, USA, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand is immeasurable. Your legacy will live on in the hearts of those who loved you, in the memories we cherish, and in the fight for a more just and equitable world.

I will remember all moments we shared, from when you were a child running carefree at the old Castle to young adulthood talking and texting and simply sitting together and watching the world go by. All the moments were precious; a reminder of the deep bond we shared. You will forever be a part of me, my dear Son. Your spirit lives on in every beat of my heart, in every breath I take. You are the sun that warms my soul, the moon that guides me through the darkness.

My dearest Son, I love you beyond words.

May your soul find peace, and may your legacy be one of hope, acceptance, and progress.

With eternal love, Your father
Nyarumba Nota, Esq.
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