

Jodi Arias' letter to Travis' family

July 28, 2008

To Travis's family,

Of all the letters I must write, this is one of the most difficult, second only to the one I must write my own parents. I thought at length of the things I should tell you all, but after talking with Detective Flores and Blaney, they convinced me of the importance of telling you all that I know, that you deserve to know. Now, I think that they told me this not primarily out of principle, but to build their own case. That is their job, it's what they do. I knew that. Nevertheless, their pleas have stayed with me since I last spoke with them 12 days ago. And the more I have pondered it, the more I have come to agree with that 100%, for if it were my own brother, I want every detail that could be had. And if an arrest was made, I have 1 million questions for the person in custody, first and foremost: why?

I don't have all of the answers that you seek, but as I sit here today and put pen to paper, even on Travis' birthday, I'm going to try to answer as many as I can. Because this is not a Q and A forum, I don't know what questions you have precisely, but I do presume that you gathered enough of everyone else's opinions to form your own notions of the kind of person that I am, and the kind of relationship that Travis and I had. Since things up call me in this way, and since Detective have already made it clear that my case is hopeless and theirs is rock-solid, I have no reason to hold anything back at this point, nor do I want to go to my grave having withheld anything that might help you piece some things together. It is no longer about me and the things I don't want you all to know. You deserve to know. Besides that, Detective Flores said anything I might reveal about Travis would never and could never change your opinion of him, and since my fear that was the only thing holding me back, I feel like I can now shed a little light on what was our situation. I have a tendency to ramble but I will keep most trivialities to a minimum. However, I do feel that starting from the very beginning would be the best so that you will have a brief synopsis of our history from beginning until now. This may or may not clear up some of your questions, but to me, it's worth trying.

I met Travis at the rain Forest Café at the MGM Grand in September 2006. We later marveled and mused at the irony of meeting in such a place, as we later discovered our mutual passion for a healthy planet and the environment in general. He confidently walked right up to me, stuck out his hand and said, "Hi, I'm Travis." I cordially responded with the usual niceties and figured that would be it, since in that moment, kiss was just another of the many new name I was trying not to forget. I continue to meet other people as we walk through the casino, but Travis made it a point to walk by my side and keep a running conversation. There wasn't any kind of magnetic attraction that I could feel, but in that short time we discover just a few of the things that we had in common: traveling, the UFC, the 49ers, and the drive to create an amazing life. After that

weekend, I didn't expect to hear from him again. But surprisingly, he called the very next day. A few days later he invited me to accompany him and some friends to church in Murrieta. That following Wednesday, he gave me a copy of the Book of Mormon. On November 26, 2006, Travis baptized me at the church in Palm Desert, where I was living at the time. He said he never met anyone more prepared to receive the gospel. Joining the church with one of the best decisions I've ever made and has been one of the greatest experiences of my life. I know that Travis will be richly rewarded for the role he played in bringing me into the fold.

Our relationship during that time was ambiguous and defined. There was no doubt a mutual attraction but we were in no way officially dating by Christmas of 2006, Travis had grown to mean a lot to me. He was determined to "Mormonize" me further, so I received a generous lot of gifts that Christmas to serve that very purpose, everything from a CTR ring & scriptures with my name engraved on them, and a copy of a painting of Jesus Christ, the Proclamation of Families, and a biography of Gordon B. Hinckley. His generosity never wavered the entire time that I knew him, not once.

It wasn't until February 2, 2007 that we decided to make things official. Things went really well despite one small hang up: Deanna Reid. I had no hostility toward her, from what Travis said, she seems like a very nice girl. But he made it clear that she could under no circumstances ever know about us because if she found out she would freak out and he was tired of dealing with her every time he tried to date someone. I was very understanding of this, as I had dealt with a similar situation in the past.

We began to progress to the point where the talk of marriage became more and more frequent. We often talked about family structure, baby names, how many children we wanted, boys, girls, etc. Each time he referenced the future, he included me in it. To me, this was a natural progression. In May 2007, I have to move out of my home in Palm Desert because I could no longer handle the mortgage. Travis insisted that I move closer to him so that we could have a more "normal relationship," although he expressed concern for Deanna's reaction, saying that if she found out it would be "World War III." As great as things were going, something just seemed off about the Deanna thing. I knew that he still loved and cared for her very much, and I thought that was admirable, but I didn't understand why he couldn't just tell her to back off. So in a snap decision I decided to move to Big Sur, CA instead. Travis was upset and hurt. I assured him it was temporary and that things would work out, but he wasn't happy that I lived even farther. So we began to make arrangements for me to move to Mesa. We had to keep it top-secret from Deanna. It was then I realized that if Deanna was happy, Travis was happy, and then Jodi was happy.

Sometimes things happen that seem like they're not part of the plan, but that is pure illusion. No matter how painful it is, we must trust that the hand of God is at work in our lives.

After Travis and I returned from a fun trip to Daniel's Summit, UT in June 2007, I acted on impulse and a gut feeling doing something completely dishonest. You see, I have been in a few relationships before when my partner was not being completely faithful, and there is a distinct feeling that comes with it. Travis had been interacting with some girls in my presence that gave me cause for concern. I knew he was the flirtatious type, and I had witnessed it on countless occasions prior to that point. I am not a jealous person, but something about the way he conducted himself that time caused me to question his level of commitment to our relationship and to me.

The dishonest deed which I had mentioned was that I looked at the text messages in his phone. I thought to myself, he said he has nothing to hide, so why not? A flawed logic, I know. I fully expected to find a few miles flirtations w/ other girls, as this was his MO anyway, and he was not secretive about it. What I found, however, was far more, including several references made of the many, separate, intimate rendezvous he'd had with other girls including plans in the making for further associations of the same kind. I checked the dates to make sure I wasn't getting worked up over nothing, but as feared, they were well within the range of when we began dating "exclusively."

I didn't freak out, I didn't even tell him. I didn't know what to do. We had another trip planned to Niagara Falls, the Sacred Grove & Huntington Beach, so I decided to sit on it, get through that and then make a decision. It ate at me, and as soon as we got home from Huntington Beach, it all came out. He was very apologetic. He said it was wrong. There was no way I couldn't forgive him. Despite his shortcomings, he has been very good to me. However, there was also no way that I could trust him any longer. I decided we should just be friends on June 29, 2007.

This was a very difficult decision for me because I loved him very much. It was especially difficult because he begged me to marry him that same day. He said things would be different. Up to that point, a proposal was expected anytime, but once the trust is gone, it is hopeless. I'm not perfect either. I violated his trust by reading text messages that perhaps should have remained private. My justification was I had the right to know, I'm not saying it was okay.

Fast forward 3 weeks to July 2007. I hesitated to follow through with plans I'd already made to move to Mesa, but Travis is a very persuasive man, and at the hand of his persuasion, I folded and decided to go. I used to wonder what it would have been like if I'd accepted his proposal. But I don't think things would have changed.

Here's why: about a month before I moved back to CA, March 2008, we decided to have a "come clean" conversation about everything, everything, everything. He confessed that most of the time I'd been living there he'd been dating someone (Lisa Andrews). The subject of dating other people had come up all of 4 times between us while I lived in AZ, 3 of which he brought it up, and he stated that he wasn't dating anyone. I never had any reason not to believe him,

because there'd be no reason for him to hide that from me. I'm not the type to have a crying emotional meltdown over something like that the way Deanna has in the past. In fact, I would have been happy for him. So the shock came not in the fact that he lied again, and cheated on yet another girlfriend, but that this time I was the "other girl." I felt very ashamed. My first thought was for Lisa, I should tell her everything. But they'd long since broken up and Travis had taken a decided interest in Mimi Hall. Besides, talking to Lisa not only would have destroyed our friendship (mine & Travis), but it would have caused a lot of unnecessary drama and pain.

After listening silently for a few minutes while he continued gushing about Mimi, I could see in his eyes that he was very happy. I asked him how she felt about him, and he jokingly responded by saying that he doesn't think she even knows he's male. We both laughed and I reminded him of the charmer that he is and that it's only a matter of time. He rolled his eyes and said, "Please, whatever you do, don't give me any dating advice. I get enough of that crap from Sky Hughes, I'm sick of it, I can handle this." I didn't say another word. If anyone knew how to win over a lady, it was Travis. So we left it at that.

But when it was my turn to come clean, his attitude change 180 degrees. All hell seemed to break loose. He lost his temper completely and flew into a rage. He began punching himself in the head so hard that he injured his neck and his back and could barely turn his head from side to side. I was afraid to get near him, but I wanted him to stop. Travis never hit me in the face, but he bruised other parts of my body. It was easy to shrug off a few visible bruises with my friends. I could blame it on work or clumsiness. That only happened on two occasions. The second time was on a Tuesday, in early April 2008. Two men at the Tempe business briefing actually joked, "What is Travis beating you now?" We just laughed. Playing along with their joke was the only way to protect his reputation. I know it is common behavior for women in abusive relationships to protect their partner by covering for him (or her) and by making excuses, but I didn't see it so much like that. Travis and I were not in any kind of committed relationship at that point, he was not my "partner" any longer, and it was only a matter of days before I rolled out of town in a U-Haul truck.

By putting several hundred miles between us, any further opportunities for abuse (not to mention immoral conduct on both of our parts) would be prevented. But even when I moved away, he didn't let up. I stopped to sleep in Hollister, still hundreds of miles from my destination in Yreka, and Travis call me in the middle of the night, angry that I'd moved, angry that I'd dated other guys. It was so confusing to me because I thought we were on the same page about me moving, and I knew how much he like Mimi. We both knew we were never getting back together, but it was like he was determined not to let me off that easily. I really cared for him. His cruelty and abuse never knew it made me angry. It only invoked pity and remorse. And shame as well. For he acted that way out of pain, and the last thing I ever wanted to do was hurt him. I know you all probably hate me even more then before you started reading this letter.

Well hang on, because the plot thickens, and by the time you're done reading this, you most likely won't consider me worthy of your own spit. Travis told me that I'd hurt him more than the death of his father. He is not one to dramatize things, so I knew he'd been sincere when he said that. I didn't fully understand why he felt that way. How was it that he can date and have relationships but if I did so he branded me a whore? I knew he was hurting, but I didn't get it. Especially since he liked Mimi Hall so much.

Tanisha had made mention online that I was obsessed with Travis. Obsession would not be an accurate way to term it. But if obsessed means that I've cried every day since his death, then maybe there is some accuracy there. If obsessed means that I couldn't stay away, then there is a bit of truth in that. I could not say no to Travis. He would not let me escape his influential grasp. He called me at all hours of the night. The reason I was at his house so frequently was because he invited me over. Most of the time it was in the late evenings when the "coast was clear". He would send me sweet text messages in the middle of the night, beckoning me to get out of bed and sneak over to his house. It was too hard to resist most times. If I didn't respond to his solicitations, they would be followed by a heavy and relentless onslaught of the ultimate guilt trip.

I know I should've been stronger, for his own spiritual well-being and mine. Naturally, I was flattered that he was so attracted to me and wanted to spend time with me. Usually, the feeling was quite mutual. But it became obvious, especially after our behavior continued even after he met Mimi, that neither of us was going to be strong enough as long as we live in such a convenient proximity.

I've never regretted my decision to move back to CA. There are, however, some decisions that I do regret, and I cannot tell you how remorseful that I am for my inactions. Let me clarify by saying the following: I had a trip planned to Southern California and Utah the week of June 2-6, 2008. Travis found out and tried persuading me to come to AZ instead to visit him. I told him I just didn't have enough time. He acted sad and hurt and try to guilt me into coming. I stood my ground though and said no, but I played up all of the positives, like his impending trip to Northern California. We were we were going to check off 3 more things on the list of 1000 places to see before you die, which were Crater Lake (although he been there when he was very young, he wanted to re-experience it), the Oregon coast, and the Shakespeare Festival in Ashland, OR. But he refused to be consoled and just said, "Ok, whatever, I see how it is, you don't love me," just his usual rhetoric, guilt trip lingo, etc. We hung up the phone, and I could feel my heart once again being pulled in his direction. I knew that if I went we'd have fun. By the time I arrived in Pasadena, I made the decision to go to his house.

I arrived in Mesa around 4 AM on Wednesday, June 4, 2008. He was already expecting me and was very happy to see me. So was Naps. I missed them both so much, it had been months since I'd seen either of them. Travis was awake when I arrived. He waited up all night for me. He and Naps were in his office and he was watching some silly video on YouTube.com, some

kind of dancing robot girls or something. I was exhausted from driving, so after a few more YouTube videos, we went to sleep as the sun was rising. We slept until about 1 PM.

When we woke up, among other things, we tried looking at photos from past Church History trips, they were on 3 CDs that I had made a year prior, but they were pretty badly scratched, not to mention Travis' laptop had recently contracted a virus and it was difficult to bring up the disk drive. He had instant Quaker oatmeal for lunch. I remember him as clear as daylight sitting in his office chair, feet kicked out, in his pajamas eating oatmeal, waiting for his computer to accomplish a simple task, but having no luck. I sat on the floor next to him, petting Napoleon, looking around the room.

The poem I'd written back in February was still on his whiteboard: roses are red violets are blue, T-dogg's the best, forget all the rest, Napoleon's pretty great, too." Anyway, when we realized we weren't getting anywhere w/the pictures, we went back upstairs. I took pictures of him in the shower, but they were tasteful pictures. We were going for a sort of Calvin Klein advertisement kind of look.

Travis and I and the rest of the Pre-Paid world knew about the Cancun trip a year prior when it was announced, but those who were eligible weren't announced until early in 2008. When he found out he was going, he began working double overtime on his body and by May & June was feeling very confident in his own skin. If it weren't for that fact he might have not agreed to do those shots, who knows? From this point on, things are blurred and confusing.

I was sitting/kneeling on the floor next to the shower, going through the pictures I'd taken when I heard a really loud pop. I must've been hit on the back of the head because the next thing I knew I was lying next to the bath tub. My ears were ringing and Travis was screaming, but he sounded so far away although he was right next to me. I'm really sorry for this. I know you're going to hate me even more than you already do, but as hard as this is, I keep telling myself that if it were my brother, I'd want to know.

When I came to, I saw 2 individuals standing near the bathroom in the bedroom right where the carpet ends and the tile begins. They both began walking toward us. My only thought was to run into the closet, possibly by-passing them so I could get out of the room, via the other door to his closet. But as I reached the other door, I was stopped by a male pointing a gun directly at my forehead. I was made to get on my knees near the armoire and was told not to move. By this time I'd surmised that the other perpetrator, now standing over Travis, was female, but both people were wearing black ski masks, black gloves and dark clothing, with the exception of the male who was wearing blue jeans.

He left the room, and without much thought I charged the female who was standing over Travis. I shoved her hard enough that she fell over Travis, who was conscious but quiet at this point on all fours w/his right hand holding his head. The girl had fallen near the left sink, close to the trash can in the corner. I pulled on Travis saying, "come on, come on!" He came forward

lethargically but wouldn't stand up, and he kept saying, "I can't." I only got him about halfway down the hallway of his bathroom, I kept urging him but he said, "go get help, go to my neighbors," I didn't want to leave him, I felt like I was going to pass out, my whole body was tingling painfully all over, I just kept pulling on him.

At that point I was crying and kept pleading, "come on, please!" and he said, "I can't, I can't feel my legs." The girl came at me w/ a knife but I was able to grab her wrists. I was already weak and I felt like I could hardly breathe. She tried kicking me repeatedly in the knees. I tried blocking her and holding her hands but she was making repeated attempts to stomp on my feet, landing her target a few times. I was at an unfair advantage because she had shoes and I was in my bare feet. At the time I didn't notice the pain, maybe it was adrenaline, but my left foot was later throbbing and bruised so I know she got me at least once, probably more on that foot, and she had caused two of the toenails on my other foot to bleed, which I didn't discover until later as well.

Again, probably adrenaline. I we struggled and I was able to throw her off of me again, but out of fear I ran as she was about to double back and come after me. Again I was stopped by the male perpetrator who had come back into the room. He yelled at her to stop. He said that's not what they're here for. (I'm sorry about my handwriting, I'm shaking as I write this). She argued with him, saying they should "do me", too. But he said no. He asked who I was but before I could respond (I could barely breath by then, let alone speak), he grabbed my purse and began to go through it. I was on my knees in the bedroom, Travis was still midway in the hall of the bathroom, the female standing over him, yelling at the male.

He got out my wallet and look at my driver's liscense. He took the cash that was in it and besides gas receipts I'd accumulated up to that point of my trip, I had the registration to my car (which I no longer kept in my glove compartment because I'd cleaned my car out of all valuable items and paperwork, because it was going back to the bank any day). The registration has the address of my parents' house printed clearly on it. He said to me as he began to stuff things back into my purse, I know who you are and know where you live. I know exactly how to find you, and I can find your family. Unless you want them all to die, you keep silent or I will silence you.

I agreed, but the woman kept shouting and arguing with him. She was "shouting" as quietly as possible. He kept telling her to shut up, that that's not what they were "here for." He finally gave under the pressure because he held the gun to my head and tried to fire but nothing happened, just a click. I shoved past him w/ my purse which was then on the floor next to me. He seemed to make no effort to stop me, but as I flew down the stairs I swear I could hear footsteps behind me. I ran out front door leaving behind my shoes, and slamming the door as some last-ditch effort to create any kind of obstacle to slow down whoever was pursuing me. My rental car was parked in the driveway.

I was shaking and hyperventilating and crying. I kept my eye on the front door as I backed out and drove away (awful, I know. I didn't look as I backed out. I probably should've never been driving in that kind of state. It wasn't heightened awareness, it was blind confusion). The front door never opened. I don't know what time it was when I left, but I'm guessing it was sometime between 4:30 and 6:30 PM, just don't know. There were 2 young girls outside playing. I don't know if they noticed me. One was maybe 9 or 10 years old, the other looked maybe 13 or 14, I'm not good at guessing ages, they both had blonde hair and they were running west down Queensborough Ave. on the north side of the street. That is one of the last details that I remember of Travis' neighborhood.

When I left, Travis was alive, although he was hurt. My phone was dead, and as cowardly as this is, I probably wouldn't have called for help if I could've. I was racked with fear. I knew that if they were capable of doing what I'd seen them do, then they were capable of carrying out their threats.

I did not harm Travis. I did not take his life. But looking back on the way that I acted, I might as well be held equally responsible for his death. I have two brothers, two sisters, and two parents, but all I kept seeing was my dad and my youngest brother, and all I could think of was their safety.

A huge part of me regrets my last minute decision to go to Travis' house that week. Part of me has faith in the notion that all things happen for a reason. I wish I could give you more. I did not commit a murder that day, nor would I ever harm Travis. The evidence against me was presented to me by Detective Flores. There is a lot. The only explanation I have for that is this: I was there that day. I never committed a crime, therefore it never occurred to me that I would need to cover my tracks. Whoever did this came prepared.

All I can say now is that I am deeply remorseful for the pain you have been experiencing. If I could give my life in exchange for Travis' life so that he could live here again amongst the people that love him, I would do so w/out a shadow of hesitation. What happened that day was horrible. I'm so sorry that I didn't have more courage to stop it, or more power. My heart has ached to no end during this entire traumatic experience. Putting on a smile and pretending things were fine for my family didn't work out so well. I felt like I was a danger living near them and began to make preparations to move back to Monterey, where I'd lived 4 years ago.

I loved Travis very much as a friend. We had our fair share of arguments, but I would never intentionally hurt him. I did hurt him emotionally, and for that I am very sorry, too. But above all, I hope you can find peace. I know that his killers are still at large, and each and every day I've been praying not so much that they are brought to justice, but for my family's safety and protection. At the end of the day I have to give it all to God. God is fair and just. And regardless of what the world believes, I am so grateful that it is ultimately His opinion that counts.



Again, I would never hurt Travis. He has shown me very little other than kindness and generosity. He would give me the world if he could. He assisted me in moving (to & from AZ), he let me store my books and artwork at his house when I had no room for them. He was constantly doing little things for me, just always full of thoughtfulness. We traveled to many places together, each determined to conquer the book 1000 Places to See Before You Die. I hesitate even mentioning all of the little knick-knacks he'd accumulated that adorn his house as a result of our travel together or through gifts from me that he treasured and proudly displayed for fear it would taint your opinion of those same items, which are no doubt now in your possession.

I know this letter may only raise more questions, but I hope it also answers others. Again, I know that God is just and fair. Ultimately, whoever did this will be held accountable. I think we can all agree on that much. Like I said, what prompted this letter is that I know you all deserve to know whatever information I have.

I also feel like I should explain the following: there have been many comments made about my smile in my mug shot, which I was fully expecting. It was cocky, I know, but so was Travis. And anyone who knew Travis well enough know he was cocky, also knew of his happy and positive outlook on life. I know of my own innocence, and so does our Father in Heaven. For this reason I cannot be sad. I also asked myself, what would Travis do? Barring the fact that he would likely not find himself in such an unfortunate set of circumstances, he would, no doubt, be flashing that smile of his that he always did.

Like you, I wish that I knew why all of this happened. Forensics can tell us what, but not always who, and nobody seems to know why. Detective Flores suggested a few possible motives, but to me they don't make sense. He said maybe I was angry or jealous. Travis has never done anything that would incite that kind of anger. As far as the physical way he retaliated during two arguments that we had, my own father has done worse to me as a means of discipline.

The only other thing Travis has ever done to upset me was be unfaithful in our relationship, but nobody would expect me to be thrilled over it. I'd forgiven him long ago. Either way, he'd have to get in the back of a line of ex-boyfriends who are guilty of those same folly in relationships with me. The detective said that perhaps I was jealous that he was going to Cancun. As I mentioned, I'd known about that trip since last year. There is no way I could break up with a guy and then expect him to take me on a trip of that magnitude. The idea of accompanying Travis on a trip to Cancun was as short-lived as a snowflake in Mesa during the month of July. There was never any question or discussion of us going together.

I just don't harbor any hostility toward Travis, and I never have. I know that we both struggled to move on, but we both wanted the other to be happy. Travis was a good man. Our relationship was never perfect, but it taught me so much. Knowing Travis has been one of the greatest blessings of my life.

I know it would bring you a great sense of closure to know that his killers were brought to justice. Ultimately, the persons responsible will be held accountable. I, however, will not serve one day in prison for a heinous crime in which I had no part.

Travis lives. He is not far, and it won't be long before you can see him again. One day all of our questions will be answered. I just hope you can all find peace. My prayers are with you and have been since the inception of this nightmare, and so are the prayers of many.

With deepest sympathy and humble sincerity,

Jodi Ann Arias

“...and your sorrow shall be turned into joy.” - John 16:20