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Law Personal Statement

Contradictory as it may seem, my low GPA is indicative of why I will excel both as a law student and as an attorney. It results from a shortsighted attitude I took on for myself as teenager in order to cope with an unimaginable loss. Only when I suffered another overwhelming bereavement was I able to lift myself out the self-imposed prison of mediocrity. I relate this neither to gain sympathy nor make excuses, but because it so fundamentally shaped who I am and how I came to consider a future career in law.

On Valentine's Day 2002, I woke to my mother's screams. She had found my younger brother, Tucker, blue and lifeless in his bed. During the eternity of waiting for the ambulance, I performed the CPR I had just learned, desperately trying to ignore the voice in my head telling me that it was too late. But reality eventually came crashing down. He was already dead.

Previously a gregarious and ambitious teenager, I retreated from the pain of my life into books. I elevated typical adolescent apathy to an Olympic sport. I stopped doing schoolwork whenever I found it pointless. My only goal became to arrange my life around my immediate comfort. I carried the same attitude with me to the Culinary Institute of America, especially for tasks and courses I saw as superfluous. Naturally, my performance in several liberal arts and management courses suffered. While I was in the midst of my tenacious indolence, my youngest sister, Alana, became very sick shortly after being born during my senior year. After graduation, I went home to take care of her healthy twin, Darcy, so our parents could stay with her at the hospital full time.

Alana's passing that fall jolted me into the recognition of how I was avoiding any pursuits that would bring me fulfillment or enjoyment. I realized I was associating personal growth with forgetting my brother. However, witnessing her twin, Darcy, continue to flourish prompted me to appreciate what a privilege it is to grow. Determined to make up for all the opportunities I had squandered over the years, I moved around the country, actively seeking out people and experiences that challenged me. As a way to keep a steady income as I moved around, I started doing simple research tasks remotely for a company that assists state governments in recovering money that was taken fraudulently by major oil companies from environmental clean-up programs.

It turned out that the seemingly tedious work I had been doing for American Cost Recovery Management, which superficially might have seemed like a sign of renewed stagnation, was exactly the challenging and fulfilling pursuit I was searching for. I enthusiastically moved to full time. My interest grew as I became more involved in the cases and got the sense that I truly was helping advocate for our clients. As I visited all the understaffed and under-budgeted government offices, it became even more of a personal triumph each time I was able to contribute to their cases. My only consistent frustration was that I knew I could be more useful if I had a better understanding of the law. I postponed applying to law schools last year and almost did it again this year because I was reluctant to abandon the clients I had been working so closely with. However, I was reminded by one of the lawyers on our team that there is great need for effective advocates, and not just on our cases. It became an inescapable fact that the best course of action I could take to help the people I serve is to go to law school.

Previously, the idea of serving those seeking justice would have sent me into a spiral of avoidance. However, my passion and ambition for this work has freed me from my complacency. My GPA has become a symbol of my wasted potential, which now propels me to aim far beyond what I would be capable of if I had lived a life free of grief and failure.

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