

For those who do not know me, my name is Jake Miller. In my early childhood, I usually bounced around with friends. There weren't many that I stayed with for longer than a school year. That is, until I met Cole. Cole and I first met on the first day of third grade where my assigned bus seat happened to be paired with him. I had moved to my house about two months prior, leaving me a nervous wreck about being alone with no friends on a brand new bus route. I took my first step on to see an entire bus full of kids I had never seen before. All I could do was stand there frozen. Then I heard a voice and a familiar name; my own, "Jake". I looked over and there I see a kid with a buzz cut and a big smile on his face. He said, "You sit with me!" as excited as could be. I had no idea who this kid was. I don't even remember seeing him, but he greeted me like an old friend. We instantly clicked. We talked the whole ride and hated that we had to part ways once we arrived at our different classrooms. The next day, I forgot his name.

But it didn't matter. He didn't hate me or get mad. He just laughed with that big grin, told me again, and the conversation continued. From then on, Cole Philhower was my best friend.

I had never met someone like Cole. He was unique; but a very good unique. I could tell him anything without having the fear of him going and telling anybody. He was a true friend. The more time I spent with him, the more I grew to love him. With every sport we played together and every trip we took together, the more we got to know each other; the more I knew him as my brother. As he grew up, I found out how much he had control of his life. I always thought he was just the luckiest kid in the world who could get away with anything; but later on, I realized every action was done for a reason, every word spoken had meaning, and he planned out everything. Whether it was the white Rockstar he was getting the next morning, or the hefty investment he was bound to sell six months later, he was

always on top of things. Talking about business plans was part of his everyday routine. He constantly looked for ways to manage his money, manage his time, and become the most successful business man in the world. He could achieve anything he set his mind to.

Cole was also an amazing friend. He would always be there for you when you needed to get out of the house; all he needed was a call and ten minutes later, the jeep would roll up the driveway, music blaring, and off you went. It didn't matter he got twelve miles to the gallon on a good day. His friends were more important. Needed a ride to practice? Needed a ride to school? Cole was more than happy to pick you up and never asked for anything in return.

Over the ten years that I knew Cole, we never had a rough go at our friendship. There was never drama, only good memories. Just a couple of months ago, when we were sitting outside my house, Cole and I were sitting in

silence. We didn't need to always talk. We could just relax without any worry in the world. But this one day, he spoke up. He told me

"I love my life."

Then he explained that he literally had no regrets. Up to that point he was happy about every decision he had made and loved every second of his life. And I completely agreed with him. He was always happy. The very few times I saw him sad or struggling, he would bounce back right away and be the same happy kid with a big grin on his face.

Cole was amazing. He loved his family, friends, sports, and anything he put his time into. He made it fun for himself. I consider myself eternally lucky to have gotten to know him, spend time with him, and know him as my brother. And even luckier to have stepped on that bus on the first day of third grade, and sit down next to the best person I have ever known.