

## VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENT

Your Honour, people always say, "I know what you are going through and feeling". But no one can really know what we are going through, each person's experience and reaction is different. Even parents that have experienced a similar situation do not know exactly what we are going through and feeling because the relationship between a parent and their children are not the same. Our relationship with our son (Dapo) was very unique and incomparable. We openly communicated with each other; we had close relationship with our son to the point where his friends called him a "mama's boy".

Oladapo was a very hard working child:

That had a bright future ahead of him;

That was always trying to help his parents and friends financially;

That wanted to get his father out of driving a taxi;

That was very sensitive to others;

That was always a peacemaker;

That always put others needs before his.

Dapo was a kind of child that you'd love to have as a son. I am well aware that the sentencing can never heal the pain in our hearts but it is imperative that justice prevails. We need to show the youths of today, the young men and women just like Michel Belance out there, that there is no viable justification to leave their homes with a weapon. We need to make it clear that killing another human being is not and will never be acceptable.

You cannot know how we are feeling; our lives have not been the same and will never be the same since that horrific day. Many times I (mother) was tempted to commit suicide, my life seemed useless without my only son. When Michel decided to plunge a knife into Dapo over and over and over and over, I am sure he had no idea that he is plunging it into us over and over for ever. He will never appreciate how many people he was hurting. It has taken everything within me (us) to take each day as it comes, the nightmares don't seem to end, now we draw our strength and will to live from our two girls.

Your Honour, unless you are a parent yourself you will not be able to know what we are feeling and going through in a way. Our pain cuts even deeper than that, my husband and I are immigrants that came to this country for a better life. We suffered from day one without being on welfare, no government assistance and we still managed. We struggled to raise devout, fruitful, law abiding good citizens. Then, just for someone to come and put an end to our hopes and dreams.

In Nigerian culture, the son is considered the future of the family; he is the strong hold and most important part of the family as he carries on the name of the family. And now there is nobody to.

I am writing this from the deepest sorrow in my heart. Our lives carry on the family's name, the Agoro name ended that night forever. The pain has not just strained us mentally and emotionally but its has impacted us physically as well. My husband and I developed health conditions because of our son. Our

older daughter cannot continue her dream to become a doctor because the site of people in pain hurts her to the core. Our youngest daughter's grades are slipping as she grieves for the loss of her older idol, her role model. All our lives have been turned upside down. We were one happy family because we had each other; it is not the same anymore, and it will never be.

Your Honour, we therefore wish to appeal to use your good judgement to put this boy away for a long time so that he will not be able to kill or harm anybody again. I am a mother, watching this boy who since the trial seem to have shown no remorse. He isn't even sorry for what he has done, taking a life does not seem to mean anything to him. It is hard to accept to death as senseless as this. We never had a chance to say good-bye, we were never prepared.

Your Honour, just imagine that your son went out to have a good time and never came back home, we will never see or hear him again. This is a boy that we put all our hopes and dreams on to take care of us in our old age; this is part of our cultural expectation. This dream as been taken away from us. Oladapo was taken away from us.