

Dear Mr. Dornifried,

Our son Abhijit was born to us on the 26th Of May 1978 as the younger of our two children. From early childhood he showed signs of brilliance in academics as he grew up in the by lanes of a locality in North Kolkata (erstwhile Calcutta). This we figured out as he would help his sister in solving problems in Mathematics although he was younger to her by a few years. He completed high school in the summer of 1997 and after performing very well in the school leaving board examination and securing an excellent rank in the state engineering entrance examination he joined Mechanical Engineering at Jadavpur University in Kolkata, one of the best universities to offer undergraduate engineering education. During the four years he stayed there he not only did very well in his studies but also made a number of good friends. He was by nature an outgoing person and could make friends easily. His friends loved his easy going personality and found him to be very warm and affable. After completing his studies at Jadavpur, Abhijit got admission to the Indian institute of Technology at Kanpur in the department of Mechanical Engineering to pursue a Masters degree. He did very well there and secured a perfect CGPA. As before here too he made a lot of friends and was a very popular student. At the end of two years he completed his Masters and joined GE India in Bangalore in the scope of a Research Engineer. At GE he performed very well and within the period of two years (2004-2006) for which he worked there he was successful in acquiring a patent along with another colleague. Also it was during this time that he started to develop a strong interest in photography and chess.

He left for the US in the summer of 2006 to join Duke University as graduate student in the pursuit of a PhD. He wanted to eventually join academia and this drove him to leave his job and seek higher education. This was the first time he was traveling out of country and we were somewhat worried about him. However we were relieved to know that his friend from Jadavpur university Santanu's sister Rinku and her husband Samarpan were living close by. A few days after he reached Durham, where he received temporary accommodation at another student's place, Santanu took him to Rinku and Samarpan's home to get them know each other. This turned out to be starting point of a strong brotherly bond that developed between Abhijit and Rinku and Samarpan over the next year and a half before a diabolical crime took our son away from us.

Abhijit used to call us at least every weekend and sometimes in the middle of week. During the month of January 2008 he got very busy with his qualifying examinations and had stopped visiting Rinku and Samarpan's place for the weekends. During this time his roommate had also left for India and he was staying alone in his apartment. He had changed apartments a while back and this place, as we came to know later, was further away from his school than the previous one. As he was studying for the qualifiers he would be staying late at the lab and we assume that also did the same on the night of the 17th. What transpired after that would be

known to you. It still makes us cringe in anguish to think of the suffering of our son during his last few hours. What did he do to deserve such a fate - thus is a question which keeps haunting us. He was a hard working brilliant student who was liked equally by his faculty and his peers, who loved to enjoy life to the fullest, had a wonderful heart and loved to give, and had a bright future ahead of him. We were robbed of our son - a loss which would never be filled - Manasi and Rinku lost a brother, and so many like Santanu lost a wonderful friend. We wonder what sins must we have committed to receive such a punishment, such pain and anguish, such agony.

His friends at Jadavpur University put in efforts and pooled money to initiate an alumni scholarship in Abhijit's memory at his department in Jadavpur university; his alma matter, Duke University, introduced a fellowship in his name for international students, and his department at Duke started a photography event to celebrate Abhijit's love of photography and life - something which shows how much of an impact his loss made to his friends, advisors and anyone else who knew him well.

We, parents of Abhijit Mahato, earnestly request the jury to conduct the trial of his murder and provide the strictest punishment possible to the perpetrators. A life so full of potential was shortened by a crime most senseless and evil and the ones who are guilty should not be looked upon with any mercy.

I also request the jury to kindly excuse Rinku Majumder and Samarpan Majumder from attending the proceedings. They have been through a severe trauma six years ago and attending the court would make their memories of the event fresh which can severely harm their mental and physical health. The loss of Abhijit had brought Rinku to our lives, much like a daughter. We remember those days in the aftermath of this event, Rinku would call us ever so often and talk to us, share our pain, help us through these most painful times. It gradually led to strong bonding among us and she visited us in our native place in Jamshedpur the next time she visited India. We have found a daughter in her and are very concerned about her health which is very fragile and for this reason we want her to stay away from all this. We have lost a son, we do not want make our daughter relive her suffering all over again.

We have faith in the Judiciary of the United States of America and God almighty and believe that justice will be done - our (Abhijit's parents, Rinku and Samarpan) absence from the court room would not impact it - and the guilty will be meted out the severest of punishment.

With Best Regards,

Sitaram Mahato & Arati Mahato  
(Parents of Abhijit Mahato)