

# Justin Carr Wants World Peace



## POSTS

# A TREE OF LIFE (FOR TWO JUSTIN'S MOMS) WAS IT A COINCIDENCE?

DECEMBER 25, 2020 | SUSAN TOLER-CARR | 14 COMMENTS

## WORK, LIFE, BALANCE?

Two Sons

Two Moms

Both named Justin

I can't make this stuff up!

It's a story I had inside since last Christmas 2019.

The day my life changed on 2/22/2013 was a Hard Stop for all things that I once knew.

Including duties and responsibilities as:

Justin's Mother

and as a Career Professional Engineer

And as time continues to move around me, sometimes I can't escape feeling the emotions of seasons and timeless rituals and their impacts that hit me like a hurricane.

Those distant memories of Joy celebrating milestones stopped too:

Birthdays

Anniversary

Holidays

**Christmas—the Biggest one of the Year meant NO TREE... NOT for me.**

I would fall out at every glimpse of one these past 7 years

So, I have not decorated the house since 2012 —**no tree, no lights, no gifts because there was No Justin!**





Justin loved, loved, loved all things Christmas.  
He knew we would celebrate with Darrell's Family.  
Then travel to San Francisco to be with my Family.

There was the Gumbo Feast at Uncle Butch's and Aunt Sue's house.  
Opening presents and putting on shows with the cousins  
And the White Elephant game with families collectively strategizing for capturing the grandest of  
them all prize.



Justin also loved celebrating Kwanzaa. ( an annual celebration of [African-American culture](#) that is held from December 26 to January 1)





My 2013 Birthday was about 45 days after Justin died. All I wanted to do was crawl under a rock and cry, and it showed when Darrell tried to cheer me up and take me out to lunch.

Tina, our waitress, introduced herself and asked if we were celebrating anything special. With tears in my eyes, I sadly said: "It's my birthday."

Tina asked: "Why do you look so sad?"

I said our son died...

Tina kept her composure and held back her tears, and asked what his name was? I said, Justin.

She said I am so, so sorry. I can't even imagine. My only son's name is Justin... I will take care of you today, ok." I can tell she was jilted (as I was saying those words) when she walked away. It's shocking you know to say: My child died!

We finished lunch. Tina and I gave each other a big hug like we did not want to let go.

### **Fast forward four years later, 2017**

As I left the Bank, a woman approached me and said: "You are Justin's Mom. Do you remember me? I am Tina. I was your waitress on your bday four years ago, and I have a son named Justin too. I recognize you because you are wearing a Justin Carr Wants World Peace t-shirt, and you carry a story I will never forget. "Our eyes of sentiment and compassion locked, and we hugged and departed as she hurried to get in the long line.



©2013

[www.justin carrwantsworldpeace.org](http://www.justin carrwantsworldpeace.org)

*“Smile for Justin”*

Fast forward two years later, 2019

I get an email.

*“My Dear Susan,*

*I've met many people working at Mi Pisce, and many of them have stories to tell. But for some reason, yours always stuck with me, and I always wondered how you dealt with the cards you were given. I guess it's been about six years now since I first met you and just a couple since I ran into you in Bank of America. It doesn't*

*seem that long ago.*

*I thought of you frequently before, and I think of you daily now as I try to adjust to the new life that I hate, without my Justin. My Justin died in a car accident on July 12th. It's been over a month, but it seems to get harder every day. All I can do is pray and hope that in time.....but I don't think that time will really change anything. Does it? My Justin was my only, as was yours, I believe.*

*Thinking of you, and now I can say, feeling your pain.*

*Love and blessings to you,*

*Tina”*

I trembled as I read the email; I told Darrell we have to go to the restaurant. Now! We had not been there since 2013.

We walked in. We asked to be seated in Tina's area. When she approached our table, no words were necessary. We jumped up and hugged her. All I said as I looked deeply into her eyes was: "What time do you get off of work? Come to our house." We ate, went home, and within a few hours, Tina was at our door.

At first, there were many minutes of silence.

I told Tina that no words could replace her unimaginable loss of losing her son. I shared with her what my friend Valerie told me. Losing a child changes you. We are different. Our arms are empty. Our arms are full. Our eyes are sad. Our eyes are curious. Death impacts the body and mind. **Like the naked branch of a tree, you grow differently in the air.** It's ok. There is no timeline or method for dealing with loss or grief.

She told me her Justin loved the color blue, the Dodgers, and his family and friends. His trademark was a puzzle he has tattooed on his arm. We laughed. We cried, and we are forever connected.





@julia\_picarelli1

## 2019 and Beyond

Tina and I talk and walked (before COVID) and share moments of gratitude and memories of each of our boys.

Tina is creative in her thoughts and her gifts are abundant. She gave me this puzzle and other gifts that showcase our Justin's!!



TINA'S SON JUSTIN LOVED THE PIECE OF THE PUZZEL " BE PATIENT " SOMETIMES GOD ONLY GIVES YOU ONE PIECE OF HIS PLAN AT ATIME"

Justin's favorite swim stroke was the butterfly so butterflies now have special meaning to us. I was in shock last Christmas when she gave us this tree that she made full of butterflies carefully placed. It made me smile. So this year I finally decided to turn on the lights and showcase the beauty surrounding our life. It is time to put up a tree- at least this one.





It is time to turn on the lights that are all part of the tree of life.

Our Justin's will be proud that their Mom's are connected and will carry both of them in our hearts. Forever.

Thank you, Tina, for shining your light of love on me. You have helped me. This little light of mine, I am going to let it shine.



The 2019 Tree came with a custom ornament from Tina too.



AN ORNAMENT FROM TINA. "YOUR WINGS WERE READY BUT OUR HEARTS WERE NOT"

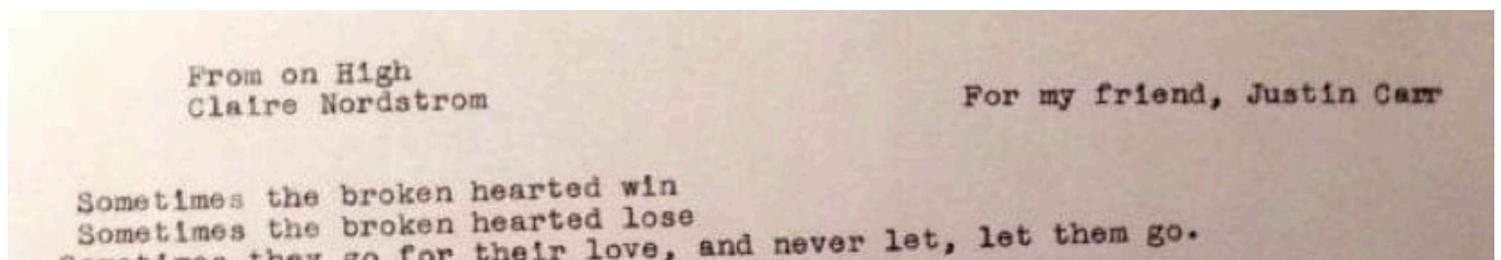
**A broken tree bears exceptional fruit. We are all of the same branch reaching towards the sun.**

REACHING FOR OUR SONS... THE SEEDS WE PLANTED TO GROW...

OUR TWO SONS ARE STILL TOWERING OVER THEIR MOMS...

WATCHING US FROM ON HIGH

JUSTIN'S FRIEND CLAIRE PUT HER THOUGHTS TO PAPER IN THIS SONG SHE WROTE IN HONOR AND MEMORY OF HER FRIEND JUSTIN IN 2014



You gotta be some watcher from on high  
Don't let anyone bring tears to their eyes  
Let them love, let them live, and let them fly.  
Now you're a watcher, watcher from on high.

And I can see you smilin' down  
Listening to the song I sing for you  
Your memories seep through our veins  
Sends a message, to our hearts

You gotta be some watcher from on high  
Don't let anyone bring tears to their eyes  
Let them love, let them live, and let them fly.  
Now you're a watcher, watcher from on high.

You gotta be some watcher from on high  
Don't let anyone bring tears to their eyes  
Let them love, let them live, and let them fly.  
Now you're a watcher, watcher from on high.

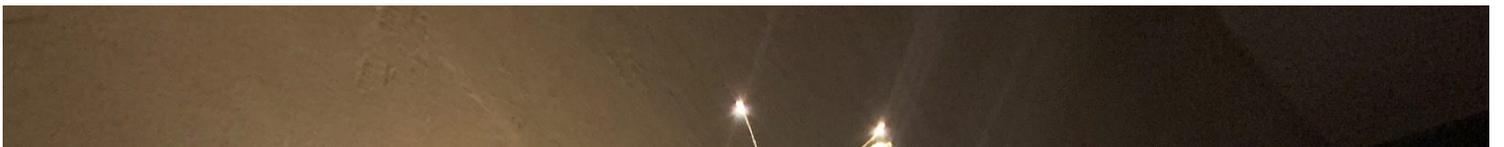


JUSTIN AND HIS MOM TINA





*JUSTIN AND HIS MOM SUSAN*





Holiday Blessings Really sending 24/7 Blessings to all of us living who get the gift of life.



I CAN'T MAKE THIS STUFF UP...

These are my thoughts this Christmas Morning, 2020.

• #BEREAVEDMOM

• #JC4WPMOM

• #JCWWPFOUNDATION

• LOSTCHILD

• SILENT GRIEF CHILD LOSS

## 14 THOUGHTS ON “A TREE OF LIFE (FOR TWO JUSTIN’S MOMS) WAS IT A COINCIDENCE?”

 **Ellen Garrett**

JANUARY 1, 2021 AT 4:53 PM

Susan: An amazing story of love, connection and mutual support. My heart goes out to Tina and you and Darrell. I do believe that the magical spirits that were Justins are still with us. Protecting and comforting you, Darrell and Tina. Providing a light to inspire so many people through hard times and joyous moments. There are moments that occur, not as often as I would like, when I feel the presence of my father. Or the presence of my loved best friend, Raymond, who left the earth way too soon. They are always smiling and calm and supportive. I will imagine love, support and strength for you, Darrell ad Tina.

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**Abbee**

DECEMBER 28, 2020 AT 7:59 PM

I am stunned, really stunned. You and Tina were meant to meet, to comfort and understand each other in a profound way. What really comes through is how powerful the love of a parent is and how we are always connected to our children. Thank you for sharing this beautiful and heart moving story.

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**Anonymous**

DECEMBER 27, 2020 AT 8:03 AM

There are absolutely no coincidences in life.  
Thank you so much for sharing this Story, as well as your others!  
Susan never let your light stop shining!  
Love you.

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**Kathy Lesley**

DECEMBER 27, 2020 AT 5:32 AM

What an amazing story and thanks for sharing your connection with Tina. I must say God does works in mysterious ways. Continue to let the light shine through .....Justin's butterfly tree is magnificent! Blessings and Peace   
Kathy & Victor

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**Margaret Riemer**

DECEMBER 26, 2020 AT 9:39 PM

What a beautiful post, Susan, beautiful and moving and tragic and heartfelt. Your words go straight to my heart. And I am thinking of you, and of Tina, and of both Justins, and of the beautiful butterfly tree...and wishing that we could go back in time and have them both here with us again.  
Love to you and Darrell from Margot

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**Karlita**

DECEMBER 26, 2020 AT 6:47 PM

Dearest Susan, your story swirled and rushed through my soul. Thank you for sharing this. Sending you so much love and to your friend Tina, too.



**Kevin Carroll**

DECEMBER 26, 2020 AT 5:49 PM

Darrell and Susan,

Thank you for sharing your story. We so much want to know WHY? Yet, we know there is no answer to this question. And so we are challenged to ask WHAT NOW? Your “what now” is not only a loving tribute to Justin, but an inspiration to many others, as well. Susan, your Dad and mine were friends. I wish I had met Justin, and I hope that some day I can meet you and Darrell.



**Amber**

DECEMBER 26, 2020 AT 3:25 PM

The two Justin's are continuing to shine light on their moms and all of us.



**Anonymous**

DECEMBER 26, 2020 AT 12:05 PM

So beautiful Susan! Thank you for sharing the story of Tina and her son, your new friendship and how she helped the Christmas lights come on this year! We are truly connected indeed. Comforting to know that your two beautiful Justin's have one another and know their moms have each other as well. We love you both! Justin will forever be in our hearts and minds.



**Terri Grant**

DECEMBER 26, 2020 AT 6:13 AM

Wow! Just wow! I called my college friend on Christmas eve as she is just beginning her struggle to deal with life after the loss of her only child, Stephen, to a car accident last month. I don't know if she'll be able to read this story yet but I will share it with her so that one day she'll know there are others that can truly understand her pain. Love and prayers to all if you suffering from the loss of a child. This time of year puts a lot of pressure on folk to be happy when they aren't.



**Nancy Good**

DECEMBER 25, 2020 AT 7:44 PM

You connected me to Tina and now I have two Justin's in my heart. You are all blessings in my life.



**Ric Bussey**

DECEMBER 25, 2020 AT 7:30 PM

That is one amazing story!

I'm going to say this now, GOD WORKS IN MYSTERIOUS WAYS!

Like you said, you can't make this stuff up.

Her experience touched you in a way where it has inspired you to say, its okay to put up a tree.

I know Justin Carr loves it!!

We love you Susan & Darrell!

My heart goes out to Tina!

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**Allison Banks Herbert**

DECEMBER 25, 2020 AT 7:26 PM

Beautiful story that shows we are all connected. Thank you for sharing your story about your journey with Tina. God bless you both.

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**Lynn Ianni**

DECEMBER 25, 2020 AT 6:47 PM

Blessings and peace to you, beautiful lady, mom forever...❤️❤️