Dear Mark, Kathleen, Emily, Adam, and Daniel,

I feel like I just woke up the other day and was 34 years old. I know life can go by quickly and my twenties are what I like to refer to as horrific. I do not really know what happened. I owe all of you an apology. I know from what I have heard about life that another thirty years can go by just like that and that in that process it might come to pass that our family shrinks from 6 to 5. I want to stop that from happening. I miss my family. I am sitting in the same house we grew up in and I am wondering where did everything go wrong. I know where everything went wrong. I went and left the people I loved behind. I know traveling to London disrupted my life in such a way that there is no looking back. I am not the man that I am supposed to be. I am not your brother or your son anymore, not the way I am supposed to be. Ill never be that man that never went to London. I am the man that did.

Im sorry. Im sorry for living my life the way that I have. I am sorry for causing you the harm that I have to your lives by experiencing mine the way that I have. All of you used to have an older brother that you could look up to and a son that you could be proud of. Im not the brother you can look up to anymore and I am not the son you can be proud of. I made too many mistakes. Took on too many friends that I should not have. I just do not know what happened.

I should have rehearsed before I took on this life. Sometimes when I am depressed I tell myself its okay because I had no choice but to be here. I had no choice but to show up so I can behave any way I want to because I am here through no fault of my own. That is not true. I need to be more than more considerate of the people around me. I need to be at least somewhat considerate. I have always only thought about myself and only ever what would be in my best interest. I never took my family into consideration in anything I have ever done. I have just never had that mind set.

Maybe it has something to do with being the oldest, that oldest mindset. I do not know what it is. I know a lot about myself at this point in my life and what I know so much about myself does not transfer over to really any of my siblings and my father. I spend a lot of time talking to mom and grandma but I never really talk to Dad or Emily or Adam or Daniel. Not the way I should be. I am the weak link in the family. I am the one that made the mistakes that no one else ever made. I am the one that broke all of our family rules and I suffered as a result. I have seen so much horror in my life. I have seen things that change a man forever. I have had so many conversations with astonishingly insane people and I want to believe that I am not as insane as some of these other people but I know I am. I know I am a pain in our family. I know because I am just never there. I honestly have no idea what you really think about me. I know that our family was brought together for this time period we have to live as family members and I have no idea why my life was as hard as it has been. I know that your lives have been hard as well and that quite possibly some of the worst memories you have had with this family have something to do with me. I am the reason from what I understand that we are not talking as a family. I am the reason that we are not the family we could be.

I am the reason that we are not cohesive as a family as though our family was never meant to be as profound as it could be if one of us fell. I fell. I fell hard. I fell so hard I do not think I will ever get back up. Look at Emily and Adam and Daniel. The three of you have beautiful careers ahead of you and Emily and Adam have children and Daniel is amazing with children as a school teacher from what I have heard. I know so little about each of my siblings from you directly. Whenever I talk to Mom I always ask about each of you and I get second hand stories about your lives. I am broken. I know you hear the stories about myself from Mom and Dad yourselves. I am always the one that has the worst story to tell. I do not know why that is. Part of me wonders why I am attracted to such horror in my life. I understand that life has a way of making everything better with time. I do not think it does. I do not think what we experience as siblings will be made better with time. Unless I reach out to us as a family and let you know I want to be there at Christmas talking with you this year. I miss my family. I miss my cousins. I miss the way it used to be.

The university changed me. I was exposed to a lot of new ideas and ways of living and I embraced all of it whole heartedly and then the coffee and the internet and the people and the shows and the travel and all of it stressed out my life and threw me into rehab more times than I can remember. Literally. I know I was hospitalized over a dozen times and just like the classes that I took at the university I cannot remember most of them either. I am an author now that lives on disability. I make meager income and all I have is really time to think and reflect and I want to reenter the working world but I wonder if my twenties prevent me from ever making sense to anyone ever again.

I really am an amazing person. I am. If I could sell you on a conversation with me. A prolonged one that goes into the depths of where conversations can go. I experience life differently than most people. I have developed this perspective from having years to reflect and I need to write this letter. I need the five of you to have something from me that is to all of you. Im never going to be the same. My twenties were awful and now I am an adult and all I know is that I miss you. I miss a life that I never had the chance to lead. I miss being an older brother and a member of a family. I have a big heart. I have poetry inside of me. I have these amazing qualities that never get spoken of and I also have these moments where I was witnessed behaving as poorly as a man can behave and I feel like if I had the chance to rejoin the family maybe all of our lives could be better. If we talked more. If this letter would find you wanting to know about me.

There is a lot I never had the chance to tell you in this journey in life. I never had the chance to have a beer with Adam and let him know that I love him. I had a beer with Emily at the Comet and we had an great conversation. I never had a beer with Daniel ever. When we are at our best we are amazing. I know this because I am sitting at a unique computer that has a unique view. Its right where I can sit and type and see the four of us holding up degrees from schools where we learned what we were training to learn throughout our youth. I think our family is special. We have six people in it with six degrees from five schools of higher education and we have all worked so hard in our communities and we have all done so much but I have brought the most pain.

I think about the story of our family and I know I need to spend the rest of my life apologizing for the last ten years of my life because I was never there. I think it has something to do with me why we are all not as close as we could be, as much of a family as we could be. I provided all of the awkwardness that a family could ever hope to never have to overcome and I am sorry but I do not think sorry will be enough to make up for 18 psychiatric hospitalizations. Why would you want to know me? Why would you want to hear my story? Why would you want to have a family with me in it? Im lost. Im fallen. Im weak. Im nowhere in life but filled with memories of a decade that is astonishingly confusing. I have this talent for writing that I am hoping will benefit me at some point in the future. I do not know maybe one day I will have a book for sale through a major publishing house on some fictional story.

You only get one family. We are the only family we will ever have and I know how the story goes. I have seen the movies where this story line comes from. We go the rest of our lives never really getting to know our older brother and our oldest son because he broke in such a way that he is unfixable. I am unfixable. I am always going to have something wrong with me but I try so hard to fit in. I try so hard for people to like me. I do not know why I went to London. I do not know why I made the decisions I made. I do not know why my life is the way it is. I am just surprised to be alive most of the time really. I should have died a couple times by now and sometimes in my reflections I wonder if I have.

I know I am dead to most of you. I am someone that you could never imagine or want to imagine ever talking to again because I am the man that went through a tragedy. My life is a tragedy and I am sorry for that. I know if I had never gone to London, I would be working at a high priced design firm by now and would not be who I am today the broken desperate symbol of who not to be that I am. I did go and got involved in psychadelics and then I was hospitalized in London for the first time as you well know and then that led to 17 hospitalizations in the states and now I am 34 and thankfully still alive. I could have died a couple of times. I did not though. I am still here. I am not your older brother though. I am not your proud son anymore though. I am just Nicholas. This man that has weight problems. This man that has copped a smoking habit and you have real lives that I have never really been a part of. I ask about you whenever I speak with mom though. I know Adam is working for a spin off company. I know Emily has been to Beijing. I know Daniel is overseeing future artists and keeping children safe from the outside world. I ask about you whenever I can because we never speak.

I know I have a father that found a unique path to surgery and they may label him an assistant but he is a surgeon to me. I do not really know anything about surgery so I compare him to me and maybe compared to a med student surgeon he is an assistant but to me he is a leading surgeon because he is my father. I have a mother that takes care of her mother six days a week. I have an amazing family. I have a family that succeeds wherever there is success to be found and dozens of places where none is to be found. I have a sister that sees people through hard times and car crashes. I have a brother that graduated from a business school that is famous. I have another brother that crafts wax sculptures of arteries and veins that lets me know how proud he is of his father even if that was not the point of the exhibit. I have an amazing family. Sometimes I wish I was amazing enough to be a part of it.

Your Brother and Son,

Nicholas Lawson