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00:00 OPENING POEM

01:00

OPENING CREDITS [music: When It Rains]

03:40 FATHER

03:45

If money is wealth, then my father was a well-to-do man.

03:50

By today's standards, that would mean someone whose worth was measured in the multi-millions of dollars.

03:56

But back in the 1950s, not adjusted for inflation, that meant someone whose net assets totaled in the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

04:07

And so, not quite a millionaire back then, he had all the financial assets and options of a multi-millionaire today.

04:16

If knowledge is power, then my father was a very powerful man.

04:22

Because of what he knew, he could do things for his nation that few people were capable of doing or even understood.

04:30

This gave him certain leeways and latitudes when it came to his behaviors, with exceptions and indulgences being routinely dispensed in his favor.

04:42

Even one of the most dreaded and feared senators of his era, Joseph McCarthy, tried to attack him and failed.

04:50

That is the kind of power father had.

04:54

My father was an electronics genius.

04:57

And his father, as the family story went, routinely sailed on merchant vessels in the 1920s to fix television sets in South America.

05:08

The only problem with this heirloom tale was that televisions did not arrive in South America until the 1950s.

05:16

But what there were a lot of down there in the 1920s were radios, including lots of American radios on American warships and on some secret American Military outposts.

05:29

Of course, you never said what you really did when you worked for an intelligence agency.

05:35

And given what little people in the states knew of their southern neighbors, in my time televisions were an agreeable cover story.

05:44

After all, lying was nothing new in my family.

05:52

I am the second of two physicians in my lineage, both of us being on my father's side.

05:59

The first one lived in the 1800s, and his name is never spoken amongst us because not only was he the first doctor in our family, he was also the first murderer, too.

06.12

It seems this name unknown man was also well off, and he had enough money to support both his wife and his mistress in equally lavish fashions.

06:23

But one day, tired of his extramarital affair, he took his illicit paramour and drowned her in the Mississippi River.

06:32

Caught, charged, and then tried on the east side of the waterway, his lawyer proved that he had illegally ended their affair on the west side of the river.

06:42

Therefore, no east side court had jurisdiction in his case.

06:47

More importantly, this meant that no west side court could now retry him, as the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution prohibited double jeopardy.

06:58

I have been told that this case is taught in some law schools as the first time anyone got away with murder in the United States on a legal technicality.

07:08

But it would not be the last time something like this happened in my family.

07:16

My paternal grandfather's involvement with military radios, before and after the first great war, led him straight into working on radars during the second one.

07:28

Living near an airfield the that serviced both Pacific and European theater warplanes, he soon recruited his teenage son to help out.

07:37

Thus, my father gained unofficial and shortly thereafter, official entry into the secret world of rapidly advancing military technology.

07.48

Being in the right place at the right time, he absorbed everything so fast that when he stood to defend his graduate Master's thesis, the professors on his review committee, on recommendation from the United States military, passed him without asking any questions because they did not know anything about his chosen topic: transistors.

08:16

Transistors appeared in the late 1940s, and they quickly replaced their hot and bulky predecessors: electronic vacuum tubes.

08:26

Their importance becomes clear when you realize that if you tried to build an iPhone today using vacuum tubes instead of modern, microscopic transistors, that you'd end up with a product the size of a 200 story building that was constantly on fire from all the internal heat that it generated.

08:46

None of the technological advancements we routinely take for granted in our lives now would have been possible without this amazing invention.

08:56

Being front and center during the advent and proliferation of transistors as the key to miniaturizing electronic devices, in the early 1950s, my father became one of a handful of rarified men working at the Radio and Radar Lab of the Camp Evans Signal Laboratory at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, when the infamous senator Joseph McCarthy walked through the door.

09:22

McCarthy, who was then running rough shod over both congress and the country with his red scare hearings, was concerned that this top secret installation was actually a hidden hornets nest of communist sympathizers, and he had come to vet out and uncover the clandestine traders for himself.

09:43

Unfortunately, he was not alone as he was accompanied by his ever present legal assistant: Roy Cohn.

09:58

Today, most people remember Roy Cohn as the sinister, self-loathing, closet case homosexual lawyer played by Al Pacino in the 2003 HBO miniseries Angels In America.

10:13

In the 1970s, a more select crowd knew him as the lawyer who shared his nasty bag of legal tricks with a then aspiring real estate entrepreneur, and one day President, named Donald Trump.

10:28

But in the early 1950s, Cohn was simply a man who was trying to walk into a highly restricted area without proper clearance.

10:37

McCarthy himself had authorization, but due to a paperwork snafu, Roy did not.

10:44

So my father, being the stand-in for the absent duty officer of the day, duly escorted the defiant and screaming Cohn out of the facility.

10:55

This embarrassed McCarthy to no end, and both he and Cohn swore a personal vendetta against my father for what he had done.

11:04

But in the end, after stern warnings from army brass, even the all powerful wrath of senator Joseph McCarthy was no match for father and his protectorate.

11:17

This episode not only established my father's importance to national intelligence in no uncertain terms, it exponentially reinforced and nurtured his own feelings of self-importance and impunity.

11:31

In the end, this headiness would take him deeper and further into the hidden state of cutting edge military electronics, until the 1970s when he was placed in charge of quality control for the transistors that would run the largest spy satellite ever built: KH9 Hexagon.

11:52

Being overlord of these crucial ghosts in the machine for our country's secret Eye in the Sky only furthered to fatten my father's grandiose self-esteem.

12:03

And his handlers were only too happy to keep him pumped up, though out of public view.

12:10

For in addition to all the dark knowledge and national secrets he had accumulated over the decades, my father harbored even darker, more dangerous, and deadlier internal secrets, themselves a kind of double jeopardy.

12:26

My father was both a homosexual and a pedophile.

12:35

My first memory of childhood is when I was two years old.

12:40

I was with my parents.

12:42

We were all in the bathroom together.

12:45

We were all naked.

12:47

My mother was sitting in the tub in shallow water.

12:51

I was sitting facing her between her wide open legs, my back to the faucets.

12:57

After pressing the palms of my hands against her erect nipples for a while, she tried to get me to touch her pubic hairs.

13:06

COME ON ROBERT, PLACE YOUR HANDS RIGHT HERE, she cooed as she pulled my tiny fingers into the dark, curly, coarse fibers.

13:16

I did not like how this felt, so I pulled away making my mother scoff in disappointment.

13:24

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE MISSING, she admonished.

13:28

I KNOW WHAT HE LIKES, demanded my father in response as he stood beside the tub, holding a drink in one hand.

13:36

Then, he reached down, grabbed my upper arm, and yanked me out of the tub with his free hand, banging my head on one of the faucet handles before setting me on my feet.

13:49

I started to cry.

13:51

OH STOP WHINING, he insisted, as he put his drink down on the toilet, firmly grabbed the sides of my head with both of his hands, bent his knees slightly to lower his hips, and then began forcing his erect penis into my small mouth saying, I KNOW YOU LIKE THIS.

14:12

They both began laughing as he made short quick jabs with his waist, each time pushing the head of his penis farther into my toddler sized oral cavity.

14:24

The more he pushed, the more they laughed, and the more they laughed, the more excited he became.

14:31

Even though the back of my head was throbbing, I suddenly realized that I had stopped crying because I could not.

14:39

I could make no sounds at all, as the entire head of his penis was now firmly lodged into my mouth.

14:47

Then, a few jabs later, I realized that I had stopped breathing because his penis was now blocking the back of my throat.

14.56

The last thing I remember was looking up through silent, tear-filled eyes to see the blurry image of a wild beast roaring and thrusting above me.

15:07

This is the first time I recall passing out.

15:16

I was the youngest of three sons, all born to my father a year apart.

15:21

The first he loved, the second he murdered, and the third he raped.

15:27

I do not know the specific details of the arrangements my parents had, but my oldest brother was obviously off limits.

15:36

My father had a voracious sexual appetite which did not include my mother, so that left me and my middle brother.

15:46

One day, my mother took my oldest brother out shopping with her.

15:51

He was five, and they would be gone for several hours.

15:55

Even though I was only three, I knew it was the weekend because on the weekdays my father was always away at work and my mother had to take care of us.

16:06

But on the weekends, my mother was free to go out and enjoy the day with her oldest son, as father was there to take care of the two younger, more demanding children.

16:17

For us, this was terrifying, because whenever we were alone with him, father wanted to play.

16.25

My father had a particular game that he enjoyed more than any other.

16:30

It was called spanking.

16:33

Once my mother had been gone a sufficient amount of time, he would quickly hustle us both off into a bedroom and start demanding that we tell him everything we had done wrong during the week, while he yanked off our shoes, pants and underwear.

16:49

Knowing what was coming, we were both too scared to talk.

16:53

But that made no difference as he already had a pre-planned litany of backup, bad behavior in his mind.

17:01

Sitting us on the bed on either side of him, both naked from the waist down, suddenly he would pull one of us face down onto his lap shouting, YOU SPILLED YOUR MILK THIS WEEK, DIDN'T YOU, YOU SPILLED YOUR MILK, as a sharp slap would land on one of our tiny, naked bottoms.

17:22

The hand would momentarily rest there while roughly squeezing both soft cheeks, before a stiff finger would begin probing the outer anus.

17:33

Then, as quickly as he had began, he would throw the current, half-naked boy off his lap and onto the bed behind him, only to grab the other naked child to force him face down over his lap.

17:48

This is how it went, one after the other, as he shouted louder and louder.

17:54

And with each repetition, my father would remove a piece or two of his love lower clothing.

18:00

Then, continuing while mostly naked himself, he would start masturbating with one hand while grabbing, spanking, probing and tossing with the other.

18:12

On good days, this is where it would end, with him suddenly making sharp bouncing movements on the bed, often ejecting the hapless naked bottomed boy who was then over his lap onto the floor.

18:26

After he was done, he would immediately shout, PUT YOUR CLOTHES BACK ON, as he grabbed his own and stormed off into the bathroom.

18:36

On bad days things, would go much further.

18:46

I am not sure why, but one day my middle brother had enough.

18:52

It was obviously going to be one of those bad days.

18:55

For if father did not ejaculate quickly enough, he would suddenly pull one of us to sit upright on his lap.

19:03

Sometimes, he would just thrust his erection between the cheeks of our bottoms.

19:09

But if that did not work, he would probe the outer folds of our anus with his penis until he came.

19:16

This was always a one-on-one, as by that point he would be too excited to toss and grab anymore.

19:23

On that particular day, it was my turn to be the one sitting upright on his lap.

19:30

Why he protested, I do not know.

19:33

But after a few strokes between my cheeks, as I felt the head of a stiff erection start to press against my tightly squeezed hole, my brother suddenly jumped off the bed and, still half naked, pointed up at my father shouting, STOP, STOP IT, STOP IT.

19:53

My father was too engaged to notice or hear him as he attempted to shove his penis partway through my anus.

20:00

And though he had never done full penetration with us before, it was still enough to bring tears to my eyes.

20:08

So, as I began to yelp, my brother kicked our father hard in the shin.

20:14

Father became enraged and, throwing me onto the floor, leapt to his feet.

20:20

Then, with both hands, he snatched my brother up by the throat screaming, DON'T YOU EVER DO THAT AGAIN. EVER. EVER. EVER.

20:32

And with each ever, he drove the top of my brother's head into the wall, so that by the second ever he was as limp as a rag doll, by the third ever there was a small, blood stained hole in the wall, and by the time he realized what he had done and let go, allowing the still warm body to fall onto the floor, my brother was dead.

20:54

He was four years old.

20:59

Seeing all of this, I slowly sat myself up and started to cry.

21:05

My bottom hurt, my shoulder and the side of my head that had hit the floor hurt, and my soul was in agony.

21:13

I had never seen death before, but I knew that my middle brother was no longer alive.

21:20

At first, my father was motionless.

21:23

But then, he began frantically pacing up and down the room, faster and faster, angrily hitting his head with both palms, mumbling and then screaming, WHY? WHY? WHY?

21:38

I CAN'T DO THIS.

21:40

I DIDN'T DO THIS.

21:41

I'D NEVER HURT A CHILD.

21:43

I'M NOT A MONSTER.

21:46

Then suddenly, he swung around and thrust his face downward into mine shouting, YOU DID THIS, before running out of the room.

21:57

I continued to sit there crying, even after he had left.

22:02

At first I did not know what he was up to.

22:05

But after a few moments, I could hear him yelling into the telephone.

info@speechless.film
22:09 I NEED HELP NOW.
22:10 I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.
22:12 IT'S NOT MY FAULT.
22:13 YOU HAVE TO HELP ME.
22:14 GET SOMEONE OVER HERE NOW.
22:17 I do not know how long I sat there, but it was long enough for me to cry my tears dry.
22:24 And I never moved, even though I was so terrified that I had both pooped and peed all over myself.
22:32 But suddenly, I heard noises.
22:34 Banging noises.
22:36 Lots of banging noises.
22:38 The banging noises of black shoes with hard soles quickly moving down the hallway and into that bedroom.
22:46

And there were lots of black shoes.

22:48

Enough to fill the room kind of black shoes.

22:52

And each black shoe was attached to legs covered by black pants, so that the room was awash in both black shoes and black pants, all moving quickly to and fro.

23:11

From my floor level vantage point, a pattern soon emerged of black shoes and black pants moving in unison, an ebb and flow, filling the room and then filing back out again.

23:24

And every so often, a white hand would dip down into this black sea of shoes and pants.

23:32

One to retrieve my dead brother's limp body.

23:35

One to retrieve a fallen blood stained rag.

23:39

One to retrieve bits of torn off plaster.

23:43

One to set down, and then moments later, retrieve a bucket of fresh white plaster.

23:48

And finally one to retrieve me.

23:53

The black shoes were everywhere, and they lingered for several days.

23:58

They were there to clean up after my father.

24:01

They were there to greet, comfort, and if need be, confront my mother and oldest brother.

24:08

They were there to hear a story, tell a story, and ultimately to control a story.

24:15

Because this was not about the death of a toddler, and it was not even about child homicide.

24:21

It was about a real and present threat to national security.

24:26

If we live in a world today of institutions that are too big to fail, at that moment in time it was all about a person who was too big to fail.

24:37

My father had erred.

24:39

My father had sinned.

24:41

My father had fully become the monster he would forever be.

24:45

But my father was too important to crash and burn.

24:49

So, the black shoes were there to indulge him, to protect him, and to grant him absolution.

24:57

Keep in mind that only a generation ago some 60 million people had been killed, and the world was weary of sadness and tragedy.

25:07

We were living in a new era of unbridled consumerism and physical gluttony which demanded everyone have a white picket fence and a two-car garage.

25:17

The loss of a single child would not stand in the way of progress, nor would it threaten a powerful man, even though he be a murderer.

25:27

So old stories were either hidden or erased, new stories emerged, and the black shoes stuck around as long as it took for everyone to get on the same page.

25:39

This included a new villain: me.

25:42

Though never outright accused, their change in attitude from indifference to loathing made it clear that the black shoes had convinced my mother, older brother, and the remainder of our small, immediate family that I was somehow to blame for a tragedy that was best left forgotten by all concerned.

26:02

Shortly thereafter, with a few lingering black shoes in tow, we moved to a new home, in a new town, to become a new family of four, forever leaving our old family of five and one dead toddler behind, never to be talked about again.

26:21

It was as if we had entered a surrealistic Federal Protection Program against ourselves, with new and improved versions of everyone emerging on the other side, except for me.

26:33

My mother got a bigger house, my remaining brother got his own bedroom, and my father was elevated to a key role in a top secret spy satellite program.

26:44

But I still could not speak, and from that day forward, my brother hated me, my mother sought her private revenge against me, and my father silently declared me as his eternal enemy because because of what I had seen.

27:06

As for my father's libido, with just four of us left, the rules were now changed.

27:13

My older brother was still off limits, my mother was still of no interest, but I was now full game, a macabre promotion for both surviving my first three years of molestation and witnessing my first murder.

27:29

This was made all the easier by the fact that in response to all this trauma, I continued to be mute.

27:36

I was three, and out of absolute fear and terror, I had still not spoken a single word.

27:44

So, after we moved, my parents found an agreeable doctor who, for an agreeable price, declared me officially autistic and sealed my fate.

27:55

Like all autistic children back then, by about the age of nine, I would be incarcerated in a mental institution for the rest of my life.

28:05

Though it would take a few years, my parents were now guaranteed that, sooner or later, I would get a life sentence and, like my lost brother, that they would be free of me and my memory forever, to live the remainder of their lives as a happy family of three.

28:23

Better yet, until then, this meant that no one would ever care about what happened to me, because I was not worth caring about.

28:33

All of this suited my father just fine, as it meant he could take our remaining time alone together to a whole new level: full penetration and vendetta.

28:45

Up to that point, my father had expressed a kind of restraint, limiting his pedophilic, anal pleasures to just the tip of his penis.

28:54

But after he had tasted blood, all bets were off.

28:59

Though I have tried, it is hard to describe the pain associated with a grown man jamming his hard erection in a toddler's lower colon.

29:09

The best I could come up with is this.

29:12

Imagine someone is forcing a bowling ball into your mouth, except it is not a bowling ball, and it is not your mouth.

29:26

After we had moved, settled in, and were left on our own without any further guidance from the black shoes, my father wasted no time in establishing our new relationship.

29:38

While my brother enjoyed having his own room for the first time, I immediately came to dread sleeping alone.

29:46

For him it meant the first tastes of independence and privacy.

29:50

But for me, it was a form of isolation and solitary confinement where a lone jailer was free to come and go as he be pleased in the dark of night.

30:00

Given what was coming, had such a choice even been available to a small child, I think I would have chosen my earliest memories of oral sex over full rape.

30:12

Unlike the spanking game, our new time alone together was quicker and without any role playing.

30:19

There was no dialogue or pretense, and there was no limit to the degree of force or penetration.

30:27

Well aware of what was about to happen, each night as the sun began to go down, my crying and screams of protest would begin.

30:36

But instead of consolation, this was the signal for the new game to begin.

30:42

STOP CRYING.

30:43

SHUT UP.

30:44

BE QUIET YOU STUPID, STUPID, KID, announced both of my parents.

30:50

STOP IT NOW OR YOU'RE GOING TO BED.

30:53

I MEAN IT.

30:54

RIGHT NOW.

30:56

ALL RIGHT, YOU ASKED FOR IT.

30:58

And I would be yanked down the hall by one arm protesting, stripped naked, hastily dressed in pajamas, thrown into bed, the light turned off, the door closed, and I would be left alone in the dark to wait.

31:13

Wait for my punishment.

31:15

Wait for the monster.

31:17

Wait for the horrible pain to begin.

31:20

So, I would lay in my bed rocking myself to sleep in tears, in fear, to become exhausted before the assault had even begun.

31:30

And my father waited, too, for my mother and brother to go to their beds, for my room to go silent, and for his queue that it was time to start.

31:42

By the time I would awake, he would already be upon me, my pajama bottoms down, one of his large hands pressing my face and mouth forcefully into the pillow.

31:54

He knew he did not have much time, for he could not risk waking anyone else, and he could not risk suffocating me and adding another child to his count.

32:05

The black shoes had been willing to intercede the first time, but it was too soon to ask for any more help.

32:12

And so, with one hand vice gripped against the back of my head, and the other supporting him on the bed, he would ram his penis into my rectum, thrusting wildly to reach a quick and expedient orgasm.

32:27

Then, he would release me with one hand, and as I began gasping for air, smack me in the head with the other, pull up his pants, and before turning to sneak out of my room, hiss, SHUT UP, YOU START CRYING AND I'LL REALLY GIVE YOU SOMETHING TO CRY ABOUT.

32:47

This would become our weekly routine, at least once, often twice, sometimes three or more times for the next year or so.

32:58

After a while, we all became so used to it that even I took part in my new role.

33:04

As the sun would go down, tears would start to form in my eyes.

33:10

But rather than being dragged and yanked by my arm, I would quietly turn, go to my room, close the door, undress myself, get into bed, and rock myself to sleep.

33:23

Then, when I was awakened by the hand attacking the back of my head, I would squirm just enough to take as deep a breath as possible, and then let my face go into the pillow, relaxing my entire body so as to limit the pain, the damage, and at times, the bleeding.

33:43

Little boy bottoms were not meant to hold such things, and the bolt of lightning agony of tearing intestines was less apt to occur if I just became passive, pretending I was somewhere else safe, far away.

34:00

In a sinister manner, we became a unit, a team, a sick kind of family with clockwork efficiency, the proficiency of which was ultimately determined by the amount of alcohol on my father's breath.

34:15

The stronger the smell, the more likely I would bleed.

34:29 **MOTHER**

34:34

There was nothing normal about my family, but in those days, there was nothing abnormal that money could not hide.

34:42

What you have to keep in mind is that child sexual abuse is a silent crime.

34:49

If it happens to you when you are a pre-teen or teen, usually you know it is wrong, but you are too ashamed to talk about it.

34:58

These are the kids who often run away turn, to hard drugs, or commit suicide.

34:05

But if it happens to you when you are really young, preschool young, the unexpected thing is that you think it is normal because you do not know any better.

35:15

So, my childhood was a baneful event of endless abnormalities hidden behind a wall of wealth, and my mother loved that wealth more than anything, or anyone, else.

35:29

Given my father was literally face fucking me in her presence by the time I was two, she had to have been more than all in for this abomination of a marriage to have made it that far.

35:41

Add to that the fact that she did all the laundry, there was no way she could have missed all of my spilled blood.

35:48

But the killing of her middle son had obviously been more than she had been willing to wager.

35:55

And one day, after they had moved us, she disregarded all of the black shoes' advice and warnings, taking matters into her own hands.

36:05

She knew my father had a thing for little boys, and pretty little boys in particular.

36:11

But what if the little boy in their house was not so pretty.

36:15

What if instead of being all sunshine and smiles, this three-year-old was fearsome to look upon.

36:22

What if she could take away that nasty honey to which he was so irresistibly drawn.

36:28

Well, there was only one way to find out, and she was not about to wait for another death before giving it a try.

36:37

That morning, after we had already settled into our new home, the black shoes were gone, my father was at work, and my brother was outside playing, my mother came up behind me in the hallway, reached down, grabbed me by the hand and said, GET UP AND COME WITH ME.

36:55

THERE'S SOMETHING I WANT TO SHOW YOU.

36:57

Rising, I obediently followed her as she led me into the bathroom.

37:03

Closing and locking the door behind us, she lifted me up to sit on the sink's curved edge, instructing me to hold on to it with both hands so as not to fall off.

37:15

Then, she reached over and picked up a tiny, flat piece of metal while saying, HOLD STILL, THIS WON'T TAKE BUT A MOMENT.

37:25

Before I realized what was happening, her hand which held the tiny object began fluttering in front of me, causing what felt like small scratches on my forehead.

37:37

But when I started to move my face, those small scratches became searing, open lacerations, and I quickly felt specks of blood dripping onto my arms.

37:49

As she continued flailing in front of me, ever more determined to have her artisanal way, I instinctually turned and raised my left hand to protect myself from her, which only resulted in slashes on my left inner elbow and the top of my left shoulder.

38:07

Yet, as promised, by the time I had started to scream, it was all over, and she carefully set the razor blade down again, after having inflicted about a dozen, crisscrossing red lines upon my face and left side.

38:24

With a look of triumph on her face, she lifted me up and set me on my feet lest I fall off the sink and hurt myself, then turned to leave me alone, bewildered, and screaming in the bathroom.

38:29

How angry and disappointed she must have been later that evening after my father came home, and, alone in her bed, she finally had to admit to herself that he had never been interested in my face after all.

38:54

As horrifying as it was, my mother would actually tell this story to others, even with me present on occasion.

39:03

But each time there was a twist as, in her telling, she was never there.

39:09

Instead, it was the inquisitive child who had actually climbed onto the sink all by himself, stood on its impossibly curved edge, opened the medicine cabinet with both hands, carefully removed the blade from his father's razor, and then sliced up his own face just to see what would happen.

39:30

BOYS WILL BE BOYS, she would chortle each time after saying the razor blade part.

39:37

Sometimes, if she had too many drinks before embarking on this cover story, she would even give the title role of wayward protagonist to my older brother.

39:47

But she could never give him the permanent scars I have carried on my upper body for the rest of my life.

40:02

Shortly after the razor blade incident, and through the remainder of my mute years, my mother doubled down.

40:10

Rather than confront the monster in her bed, she blamed me for his unfathomable, errant behavior and began beating me whenever he was at work and my brother was either at school or out playing with his friends.

40:26

There would be no warning as she would suddenly and silently appear standing sternly in front of me.

40:33

More often than not, after breakfast, she would position me somewhere convenient to play on the floor, the hallway being one of her favorite confrontation spots.

40:45

Just seeing her two concrete like feet planted motionless before me was enough for my eyes to water, knowing what was about to come.

40:55

Looking up, I would see her angry face staring down at me, and, after a few more moments of her intimidating glare, she would start shouting angry words.

41:07

Like the wind up of a jet's turbine engine, her voice would become louder, shriller, and faster, until I was being assaulted by a non-stop barrage of hateful accusations and obscenities.

41:21

Around this point, she would grab my arm and yank me to my feet, so as to shorten the distance between my face and her hate speech.

41:31

This was my signal to leave.

41:34

As her words approached near deafening decibels, her right hand would slowly start rising from her side toward the ceiling.

41:43

With each incremental upward ratcheting of her arm, I would feel myself falling backwards, down into a deep, black tunnel.

41:53

At first, I would be able to see the entirety of her her angry face in the circle-like opening far above me.

42:01

But as I fell farther and farther into this bottomless void, the entire field of my tunnel vision would be filled by her gnashing, sharp teeth encrusted in blood red lips.

42.15

Then, as if by magic, a small face would appear in front of her, its tiny hand pulling the tunnel door closed, so that I would immediately lapse into total darkness just before her blow impacted my head.

42:31

My long lost brother had come to rescue me.

42:36

Upon awakening, I would find myself laying on my bed.

42:41

My whole body would ache, as she would often add a flurry of kicks into the mix after she had knocked me unconscious.

42:49

But her aim was less than perfect, especially when she would swing her hand down on me with full force.

42:57

Often, instead of an outright knockout punch, this would result in a glancing blow to the side of my head, with the majority of her force then being directed downward to land between my neck and shoulder.

43:12

The results of this miscalculation were two-fold.

43:16

First, this meant she would have to hit me again for me to fall down so she could exhaust her remaining stress with her feet.

43:24

Second, as an adult, my left shoulder is almost one inch shorter than my right, due to the number of times she broke my clavicle.

43:36

My mother's beatings went on unabated in parallel with my father's rapes for nearly two years, until I finally found my voice, and a once disposable punching bag and sex toy suddenly became a witness and liability.

43:53

Had I never said anything, I would have probably died decades ago from neglect in an institution worthy of the Spanish Inquisition.

44:02

Yet, this sudden change in course did not improve my life.

44:07

In fact, going forward from that day I finally spoke, things only got worse because of the wild card mother and father had yet to play: my oldest brother.

44:29 BROTHER

44:34

My brother never had much to do with me when I was being molested and beaten by my parents, and they meticulously scheduled their malevolent behaviors to coincide with his absence from our home.

44:47

Mute and unable to express my predicament to him, he was at best indifferent to my existence, whenever he was not annoyed by it.

44:58

This played right into my parents' hands, as it was easy to convert this apathy into hatred, once they had convinced him that I was the reason he would never see his best friend ever again.

45:10

Since our familial transformation meant they could no longer abuse me, my parents quickly trained my oldest brother as their stand-in, fulfilling their need to be sure that there was always someone around to keep me in line.

45:26

One of their favorite ways of engendering my brother's animosity toward me was a game called Not Enough.

45:34

It usually involved a trip to the store where my mother would buy a candy or cookie for us to eat on the way home.

45:42

But, when we got back to the car, lo and behold, there would not be enough.

45:48

OH, my mother would exclaim, I THOUGHT I HAD BOUGHT TWO COOKIES.

45:53

WELL, LET'S LET ROBERT HAVE IT THIS TIME, SHALL WE?

45:57

Then, as she would hand me the treat, I would look over to see my brother seething, enraged.

46:04

Try as I would to offer him half of the sweet, he would always refuse and push me away.

46:11

Once it had touched my hands, it was now anathema to him, and all he wanted after a few rounds of this game was to destroy me.

46:22

By the time I reached my sixth birthday, my brother was already beating me up on a regular basis.

46:30

Rare were the days that I made it from breakfast to bedtime without a swift smack across the face, hard punch in the stomach, or sharp kick in the ass.

46:41

Complain as I would, my parents would always shrug off my charges stating, OH, YOUR BROTHER WOULD NEVER DO THAT, leaving me feeling hopeless and abandoned, until one day when they were forced to witness the truth.

46:57

I do not remember what triggered him, but given there was seldom any rhyme or reason to his aggressive outbursts, there is little basis to think he had just cause on this particular day, or on any other.

47:11

So, as my parents unexpectedly returned home from food shopping early one afternoon, my father stepped through the kitchen door to see my brother engrossed in the hallway, sitting on my chest, his knees pinning both my arms to the floor, as he furiously landed blow after closed fist blow into my face.

47:33

Heedless of the damage caused by dropping the bags he had been carrying onto the kitchen floor, father sprinted through the kitchen, scooped my brother from on top of me, and, holding him off the ground while violently shaking him, screamed, NEVER, NEVER HIT HIM IN THE FACE.

47:52

IT LEAVES MARKS OTHER PEOPLE CAN SEE.

47:56

At that moment, laying battered on my back, I knew the odds of surviving my childhood were very low.

48:05

This was how I lived my life for many years until I entered high school.

48:17

Children who are ridiculed and made fun of on a regular basis grow up to be adults with very low self-esteem.

48:25

But children who are beaten on a daily basis grow up to be anesteemic: people who have no esteem.

48:33

Low self-esteem means you compare yourself poorly to others and see yourself as being inferior to them.

48:41

Being an anesteemic means you lack any basis upon which to compare yourself to others, as you do not consider yourself to be human.

48:51

So, by the time I was a freshman, I had become like Kafka's cockroach, scurrying to hide whenever caught in the presence of superior life forms.

49:02

Strangely though, after having been fully hammered into this subhuman metamorphosis, it was in high school that an unexpected change occurred.

49:13

Being he was 2 years older than me, there was an unspoken rule on campus by the time I arrived.

49:20

Do not mess with my brother.

49:23

However, that rule did not apply to me, since it was easy to see on day one that I was by no means anything like him.

49:32

So, it was not surprising that right after lunch on my first day as a freshman, while standing outside by myself waiting for the bell to signal the start of our next lessons, some upper classmen decided to saunter over to me.

49:47

The toughest of these boys, though not nearly as tough as my brother, stepped forward and, pushing me in the chest, sneered, I BET YOU'RE A WEAKLING, AREN'T YOU?

50:00

Then, with a single shove, he knocked me to the ground, after which they all had a satisfactory laugh before walking away.

50:10

Heartbroken to suddenly realize that high school would not be the respite from my miserable home life I had hoped and longed for, I gathered myself and my books together, as the bell finally rang for class.

50:25

Little could I have known what was about to transpire.

50:30

Later that same afternoon, after our final class for the day, and less than 24 hours into my first high school year, all the upper classmen went off to get their sports assignments, while the freshmen were gathered in a large room for a final orientation to their new lives.

50:50

As we sat there in the too warm room, sleepily listening to detail after detail, regulation after regulation, and expectation after expectation, suddenly there was a loud commotion outside of our window, and we all turned to see students, faculty, and staff hurriedly running toward the sports field.

51:13

It seems the boy who bullied me earlier that day had turned out to be quite clumsy, having somehow managed to have fallen down behind the gym building, blackening both of his eyes.

51:26

From that day forward, there was a new unspoken rule on campus: do not mess with my brother, and do not mess with his property.

51:36

Already anesteemic and a quick learner, I resigned myself to being the equivalent of social effluent at school, avoiding all contact, all trouble, and any more beatings than were absolutely necessary.

51:53

Oddly, attaining this new level of near non-existence made my first few high school years some of the most peaceful of my early life.

52:13 CHRISTMAS

52:18

After my brother had graduated high school, flunked out of college his freshman year, and a few months later, in yet another black shoe like episode, evaded prison time on a drug possession charge, he returned home just after I had completed my third year in high school.

52:38

Given my near-perfect obedience to his new, unspoken rule, I had actually managed to make most of my way through high school with minimal trauma.

52:48

Thus, it should not be surprising that I had mistakenly come to believe the worst of my upbringing was behind me, and that everything would somehow be easier from then on.

53:00

With what I had already been through, there was no way I could have imagined that the Christmas Eve of my 17th year would be the worst of my life, a night when I would almost die twice: once at the hands of my brother, and once at the hands of the police.

53:19

By that Christmas, I had already been driving for a year and was the proud owner of my mother's secondhand car.

53:27

Unlike my brother who my parents had bought a sports car, a detailed van equipped with wall to sealing carpet and a full-sized bed, and even a Formula 4 race car, I was satisfied to have anything they would allot me, even if it had zero teenager appeal.

53:47

As night rolled in, it was accompanied by a storm that would drop almost a foot of fresh snow in a single evening.

53:54

But that did not deter my brother from wanting to see a friend of his, presumably to buy drugs.

54:01

Being his car was in the shop, he convinced me to drive him there.

54:07

Given there was not much snow on the ground, yet, and more than willing to do anything that would keep the peace, I agreed.

54:15

But as we set off, it soon became apparent that this was not going to be any regular snowstorm.

54:22

By the time we had covered the few miles into downtown, the sidewalks and road were already a few inches deep beneath new snowfall, and the white wind whipped flurries were making it difficult to see either the traffic or holiday lights.

54:39

This is why, as we were passing the county courthouse, with just a few more miles to go, I realized that it was too dangerous to continue forward.

54:49

So, I stopped the car and refused to go any farther.

54:54

We had to turn back then and there, if we were to ever make it home safely that evening.

55:01

Suddenly, like so many times before, my brother snapped.

55:06

At first, it was as if someone had poured cement into his veins, as he sat there swollen and rigid.

55:14

Then, as if bursting out of a full body plaster cast, he spun around in the front passenger seat and began wailing his fists into my face.

55:25

DO WHAT I TOLD YOU, he roared.

55:28

KEEP DRIVING.

55:31

Knowing he had already ruined my life, I would be damned if I would let him wreck my car.

55:37

So, even though I was stunned and in fearful dread of where this was heading, I pulled the keys out of the ignition and, with no time to grab my jacket, threw myself out of the driver's door and into the middle of the snow covered road.

55:53

On any other night, this would have been a fatal mistake.

55:58

But being this was the worst snowstorm in memory to hit our town on Christmas Eve, there was no one in sight to interfere with my escape.

56:08

Hearing the passenger door open on the car's far side, and then the sound of my brother's feet pouncing onto the pavement, I picked myself up as quickly as I could and ran to the other side of the street.

56:22

But I was no match for him, and he knocked me down from behind onto the frozen concrete, almost as soon as I had reached the sidewalk.

56:32

Forcing me onto my back, and jumping on top of me, he yelled, GIVE ME THOSE KEYS.

56:38

GIVE ME THEM NOW, DAMN IT, OR I'M GOING TO KILL YOU.

56:42

But then, he looked down to see that I already had a defiant, death grip on them.

56:48

And so, without waiting for my response, it was as if I was suddenly reliving the day my father had forbidden him to punch me in the head anymore.

56:58

This time, however, there was no one to lift him off and admonish him.

57:03

So, with both of my arms again pinned beneath his knees, except for one or two errant hits to my throat, he landed punch after punch into my face.

57:15

Thankfully, there was one person who did actually see all of this: the night watchman in the courthouse.

57:23

Passing by the front entrance checkpoint, he was not only surprised to see a car stopped in the middle of the road that night, he was shocked to see what was happening just outside his door.

57:35

So grabbing his coat, he ran out into the storm and, approaching my brother, shouted out, STOP THAT OR I'LL CALL THE POLICE.

57:45

Undaunted by this interloper, and without breaking his beat, my brother spun his head around, and in an animalistic voice warned, GO AWAY OR YOU'LL BE NEXT.

57:58

Then, like a hyena returning to the carcass he had just defended from another carnivore, he resumed working on my face.

58:07

The man immediately turned and ran away, vanishing into the falling snow.

58:13

As I felt my head bouncing between his fist and the sidewalk, I knew that I did not have much time.

58:20

My throat was already starting to swell from the cartilage he had broken in the front of my neck, and both my eyes were almost completely swollen shut.

58:31

The damage was mounting up fast and furiously.

58:35

That is why, in a desperate attempt to save myself, I slung the car keys over him, up into the air as far as I could into the snow covered courthouse lawn.

58:48

Pausing just long enough to spit in my face, my brother sprang up off of me and ran into the white covering on all fours, ravaging it with both hands as he searched for his object of desire.

59:03

Looking up, I could still see a few windswept specks falling toward me, and with the little strength I could muster, rolled myself onto my stomach so that I could crawl away from there as fast as possible.

59:18

With no gloves and no coat, the below zero wind was like a knife on my skin, and the ice covered sidewalk felt like broken glass beneath my bare hands.

59:30

Nearing the corner where a side road met Main Street, I began to crawl across the intersection when I suddenly heard the car's engine roar to life.

59:41

He had the keys.

59:43

Flooring it, the tires spun wildly against the slick pavement, as I prayed for the strength to make it to the other side.

59:52

Just then, I heard the jerk of rubber gaining traction on the roadway, and I knew I had mere seconds before he would run me over.

60:02

Overwrought by too much snow, too much wind, and too little time, I tried to crawl too fast, causing both of my hands to slip out from under me and my chin to strike the pavement.

60:16 NO. 60:17 NO. 60:18 I HAD TO GET UP. 60:19 I COULDN'T JUST LAY THERE. 60:21 HE WAS COMING TO KILL ME. 60:23 PLEASE, PLEASE HELP ME. [sound effect: tires screeching] 60:27 HE'S COMING. 60:28 HE'S COMING. 60:28 HE'S COMING. 60:29 HE'S..... [sound effect: impact]

60:45

[sound effect: wind]

That night, a police officer had been on duty at the station when a call came in from a frantic night watchman.

60:53

Someone was out in the storm beating a child to death on the sidewalk in front of the courthouse.

61:00

Wasting no time, the officer and his partner jumped into their car and headed as fast as they could to the crime scene.

61:08

But by the time they had arrived, both my brother and my car were long gone.

61:14

However, searching the nearby sidewalk, it did not take them long to find patches of frozen blood beneath the falling snow.

61:23

They followed the trail as far as the corner, but it stopped just a few feet off of the curb.

61:30

Not knowing that my wounds had finally frozen closed at that point, they were uncertain which way to go.

61:37

So, this man continued straight across the intersection, while his partner turned down the side street.

61:45

Moving slowly, after carefully passing a few small shops, he began to hear faint, strangled sounds in between the gusts of wind.

61:56

The snow was falling even faster than before, and as he inched toward a recessed doorway to an abandoned storefront, the noise became stronger and more concerning.

62:09

Unsure if it was being made by a person or a wounded animal, he slowly drew his revolver.

62:16

Then, peering around the corner of the snow covered entryway, he could see a small huddled mass a few feet away, curled up with its head against the setback door.

62:29

A deep gurgling, growling sound came from the thing laying at the other end of the covered entrance, making him grasp his gun with both hands, as he raised it to firing position.

62:42

Then without warning, the mass uncurled itself, rising onto all fours, back arched, slit eyed, deformed skull, caked in frozen dirty snow and dried maroon blood, fresh red froth pouring from its mouth between broken teeth.

63:03

Reflexively, his finger crossed the trigger to shoot the rabid dog.

[sound effect: gun clicking]

63:08

And he was just about to fire, when an unexpected noise froze his hand in place.

63:14

HELP ME, I had coarsely mouned, before collapsing back into unconsciousness.

63:23

Incredulous that the half dead creature laying on the cold ground in front of him was actually a little boy, he quickly regained his composure, holstered his gun, called out to his partner, and as gently as he could, wrapped me in his coat, carried me to the patrol car, and then raced off to the local hospital.

[sound effect: police siren]

64:50

CLOSING CREDITS[music: When It Rains]

67:29 **WEBSITE**

67:31 COPYRIGHT

67:39 END