

Sometimes I Dream

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This story will probably be updated from time to time as I remember to add things I have forgotten or new things come up. However; The start of the story is a dream I had the other night it is not real and it is not something likely to become reality but from the dream came the story and the way of telling the story and so I hope whoever reads this realizes that I've suffered with this for almost 16 years and have lived and survived and you can too!

Dream/Reality?

So I had a dream last night and it was a little strange but at the same time something that could easily occur so maybe it was a blur between dream and reality. The beginning of the dream was nothing unusual or at least maybe to me it wasn't unusual because I've had dreams of myself being hurt by others before but surviving and learning that the anxiety and panic won't kill me. However; in this dream I was walking out of Walmart with my counselor from doing a session and as we passed the checkout I heard a woman yell and I turned around and I see a man pull a pistol out and hit her in the head with it and she falls to the ground. In my mind I hear and feel my 'dark side' take over. I think we all have a dark side and I took that phrase from a Eric Church song called "Dark Side" and I can relate to it all too well. Anyway ever since my cousins murder back in 1997 I can't stand the thought or the sight of seeing a man hitting a woman. So in the dream I feel my 'dark side' take over and I immediately close my eyes take a deep breath and I run towards the guy with the gun and I don't see him I see the man who murdered my cousin and I'm scared for her life and I'm charging him. He sees me and turns the gun towards me but he's too late as he fires three shots. One misses me and one strikes me in the right side of my chest right near my arm pit and it's a through and through shot and the second one goes through my chest and right into my right shoulder blade and shatters my shoulder blade. I don't go down though due to the adrenaline coursing through my veins and I grab his arm holding the gun and I quickly snap it and as I snap it the gun points back towards him and he involuntarily fires two shots into his own chest and hits the ground dead. At that point I look down and realize its not Brandon and the girl isn't Jessica. However; I reach down and help her up and ask if she's ok and its not until she and my counselor point out I'm bleeding that I even know I'm shot. I slowly sit down against the counter and then the police come in and I show I.D. and of course all the witnesses explain what went down.

As the ambulance arrives they load me on the stretcher and my counselor goes to my truck and gets my backpack that I always carry with me that has all my meds as my safety net and he supplies it to the EMT's and he takes my truck to my house. I don't call my wife as my counselor wakes her up when he gets my truck back to my house and makes sure she knows I've been shot and what happened before he jumps in his truck and drives to the hospital. On the way to the hospital I call my mom and let her know what happened and that I'm fine and that she needs to call my dad and also go by my grandparents and let them know in person cause that's not a call they need to hear at their age. Then by that time we are at the hospital and they take me

back and do x-rays and check me out and immediately take me back for surgery to remove the fragments of my shoulder blade. As they get into the surgery they find more damage than initially thought as the surgery is going on my wife shows up and a little later so do my parents and grandparents and my wife's grandma and since my wife stays up all night she says there's nothing she can do and so for them to call her when I get out of surgery and goes home and goes to bed; which pisses off not only my family but her grandma as well. I come out of surgery several hours later after they removed many bone fragments and bullet fragments and basically removed my shoulder blade. As I wake up my mom is in the room and she tells me my wife went home but they called her and she's on her way back up there. I inform my mom that when she gets there to let her in immediately cause she will have a quick visit as the divorce will be imminent since she can't even stay at the hospital while her husband is in surgery.

So my wife gets to the hospital and as she comes in the room I inform her I'm fine but she needs to pack all her stuff and be out of my house before I get out of the hospital as we are getting a divorce as she has continued to show herself as selfish and somewhat uncaring and that to me it was extremely selfish to go back home and to bed while her husband was in surgery for gunshot wounds. She gets pissed and I don't care and tell her bye. She leaves the hospital but the news as they always do they hear about the guy that took down a gunman barehanded and all that. So my wife leaves the hospital and I'm in ICU for a few days and then I get moved to a regular room. I get the lawyer involved and he starts drawing up divorce papers. Then in come the news people wanting to have interviews etc... I indulge a few of them with a few little tidbits and surprisingly due to the actual wounds my anxiety attacks stay at bay as it seems when a person who suffers with anxiety really has an injury the anxiety is no where to be found or at least it is for me. Anyway this one reporter/documentary maker I admire hears about it and comes into the hospital and wants to interview me and wants the whole story my life, the steps that I took that brought me to this point and what I think about the future as a whole now that I have no shoulder blade and am unable to work for a while due to the injuries. As he is one I admire and have seen his movies I decide I will indulge him in telling my story though I don't see my story as significant or worth telling.

He brings in his cameraman and his microphone and we decide to start out the story in the present showing me with my bullet wounds in my chest and back so I take the top of my hospital gown off and show the camera the wounds with the stitches closing them up and the back where my shoulder blade tattoo used to be was in tatters. Then the filmmaker asks me to start out by explaining what happened that day and I tell him that as I was leaving Walmart I saw a man hit a woman with a pistol and knock her to the ground and that to me that is the biggest no-no in the world. A true man never lays a hand on a woman and that I had a cousin murdered by an ex-husband who walked through a restraining order to put her in the ground and that when I see a woman beat by any man my blood boils and I get real upset and I just can't control my reaction of being pissed and wanting to go on

the attack. I inform him that the 'switch' was flipped and I did not think about myself or anything else but that I attacked him. He asked me how I was handling the fact that I killed someone. That's when I explained the difference to him and stated I did not kill anyone that the young man with the gun died at my hands but I didn't kill him. It was his CHOICE and ACTIONS of bringing a gun into Walmart and hitting a woman that started the sequence of events that ended up with his death. And that when I charged him and he fired at me and shot me that put it in a self-defense situation and that I never pulled a trigger or anything else but that instead I did break his arm that was holding the gun and when it broke the gun was pointed back at him and that it fired twice into his own chest. So yes; he died at my hands and it was not something I was proud of that a man had to die but that I was proud I took the action because I firmly believe I saved the life of that young woman and maybe just maybe it was validation and vindication for not being there for my cousin when she was murdered; but that he died through his own choices and actions and that I did not kill him because for me to kill him it would have required intent on my side to have him dead and that again the sequence of events leading up to his death were started by his own choices and actions and that in the end that's what everyone must remember. That choices and actions define us and define what can and does happen to us.

He then asks me about these attacks I have and how I have survived with them and the pain and fear that accompanies them. So I tell him let's start at the beginning. This will be long but maybe just maybe by starting from the beginning we'll be able to further understand and see what it is that keeps me going daily. He agrees to this view of things and so I start at the beginning and let him know that as a child I was relatively happy. I grew up with problems like all kids do. I was smaller than most in school and was bullied and picked on but I was also headstrong and wasn't worried about that. I told him that up until 1994 my life was normal and like most. That I had ups and downs and I had good times and bad. In 1994 as a thirteen year old teenager almost fourteen my fights/arguments with my dad heated up and I finally said basically "F--- it and quit playing baseball. You must understand up to that point baseball was my dream, my passion, what I wanted to do with all my heart and soul. My dad kept telling me to get my head out of the clouds and get my feet on the ground that no one from my little hometown would ever make the pro's. I told him I was good and could play; he argued back that playing baseball was taking up our summers for vacations and so he wanted me to quit. I gave in and that today remains one of my regrets that I didn't stick up for myself and my dreams harder than that. However; that summer proved to be one of the last summers that I can recall being truly happy. Granted after that summer I still had my dirtbikes to ride and still rode horses with a few friends and even worked a few county rodeos but to be happy and actually understand that it was happiness that was one of my final summers. That to this day I am not even sure that I know what happiness is anymore. But that summer we took a trip to Kerrville, Texas and at that campground that summer was probably the last time I really knew happiness and knew who I was because from that time forward my life became a whirlwind of activity that was everything that I couldn't control.

However; let's back up a little further and I'd like to explain that I was raised in a small West Texas town and grew up shooting guns, riding horses, riding dirtbikes, playing sports all things a young boy growing up in the country does. To this day I believe in the 2nd Amendment and the right to carry as I believe people should be able to protect themselves. However; I also grew up in a Baptist Church. I was saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus and that I tried to live my life according to the bible but that it was a fine line to walk as anyone who is a Christian knows. I loved my country music and I wore my boots and Wrangler jeans and my pearl snap shirts and some t-shirts and cowboy hats or caps everywhere I went. I was a country boy and proud of it. However; in my school growing up I didn't have girls that liked me or wanted to date me or were proud to be around me which at the time was fine because truthfully I was in love with a young girl who I was best friends with from church but that I had not let her know it yet as she was 3 years younger than me. However; at this campground at Kerrville we started out in the swimming pool but I wasn't one for swimming so I got out and changed and my dad and I actually went in the game room and began playing pool. In walks this little girl I think if I remember correctly she was 12 or 13 my age as I was 13 almost 14 at the time or she was a year younger and she wore her boots and jeans just right and I remember thinking she was a good looking little girl. She asks if she can play the next game. My dad gives me a wink and says sure and we finish the game and this little girl (and I wish I could remember her name 20 years later but I'm unable to) she turns to the jukebox and turns on a good song. The interviewer asks what song and I state that I'm not going to say the song because I'd love to hear from her again someday and after 20 years the only way I will know if she is the girl from Kerrville is if she can tell me the song she put on the jukebox cause to me that song brings back those memories. However; she puts the song on and we play pool and I don't remember how long or how many games but I remember we talked, we laughed, we had a great time. The rest of that week she and I hung out and I held her hand and we'd laugh and talk and just do things around the campground together. Then this one night my family went to her families campground and all hung out. Well as we were there she and I were together talking and her brother who was a year or two older was there as well and he and I were ok together and then in the gathering darkness we hear noises in the woods behind the camper. We looked and there were three or four little Javelina's and her brother and I hear her and her mom or my mom either way a few of the women state they're so cute I'd love to have one. This was back before fear was known or I had brains at all. All I knew is the girl I was with at the camp wanted one so her brother and I headed out to catch one I mean they were small it was no problem. However; her and her mom and my mom and dad etc... they all stop her brother and I from going further because as they stated if there are little babies the momma isn't far off and she will tear you up. They convinced us to go back to the camper and we hung out. It seems that was our last night there and I left after that. Being young and dumb I didn't get her name or phone number to stay in touch. I believe she was from south Texas but can't be sure after all this time. But that's one of the happiest times I recall was the time being with her at the campground cause she liked me for me and I knew I was a country boy and knew I was dressed how I wanted to be dressed and acted the way I was destined to be.

After that trip we got back to our hometown and it was back to the normal grind of church and school and few friends and watching baseball on T.V. and riding dirt bikes and horses and back to jumping

on the trampoline and shooting my guns and just living life best I could as a young teenager. Then after I turned 15 in 1995 I finally told my friend from church I loved her. Course that was the biggest mistake of my life. It completely altered our friendship and to this day we don't have a friendship. From growing up in a small town together I still have ways of keeping in touch with her and I know her family and she knows mine so she and I will never be so far apart we can't find each other but she was 12 when I told her I loved her and that scared her. We tried to continue to be friends but it was hard because I wanted nothing more than to hold her and to be her boyfriend as I always felt like I was destined to be a father and husband by the time I was 18 and I had been in love with her for years and she was really all I could really think of. Well needless to say me telling her I loved her strained everything between us and eventually the friendship completely dissolved and I shoulder that responsibility and blame because I couldn't let go and just be friends. To me she was everything. So my world began to shrink and change at that point then came April of 1996 which is when my life completely turned upside down and it hasn't ever been the same since. In April of 1996 my younger brother who is 3 years younger than me was diagnosed with stage 4 cancer and the doctors didn't think he'd live to see his 13th birthday which was in June of 1996. I still believed in God and still believed he worked miracles and I prayed constantly for my brother and Lord willing my brother survived and is still alive to this day and is now 30 years old. However; at the time it turned my life completely around and upside down and sideways. We made several trips to Dallas and my parents spent many many hours with my younger brother in the hospital which left me and the baby brother who is 10 years younger than me with family and friends as our parents were in the hospital with my brother. Then in July of 1996 my parents split for good and ended up getting divorced. It changed my life in other ways because who do you go to? Which parent do you spend your time with. I mean up til then my dad and I had a hit/miss relationship like I guess most sons/fathers have but it seemed to improve after the divorce. Then in August that year I got my drivers license and my dad bought me a 1984 F150 for \$2,000 and since I had a truck and license I decided I'd try out for the baseball team. However; due to my brother's cancer and taking care of my baby brother I couldn't play. I don't blame anyone but his cancer was so advanced and so many trips I couldn't stay on the team and play ball. So I dropped the idea of playing baseball in my Junior year of High School because I had to be the older brother and help take care of the baby brother and continue try and help out around the house and go to Dallas with the family to see my brother and more. I can't explain all the difficulties and things that we went through with all of that and how it changed my life but it made things topsy-turvy and then came July of 1997 and the more I think on it the more I think maybe that was really the last time I was happy and I mean extremely happy. My little brother that had cancer was doing better and my grandparents, my Aunt and Uncle and their daughter and my dad and all my brothers went to Alabama to visit family down there who lived on the Tennessee River and owned a jet-ski and boat. We arrived out there and I saw my cousin Jessica for the first time in years and it was like no time had went by at all since the last time I saw her. Saw her brother David too and once again the three of us were close like we had been before. We all rode the jet-ski and had fun trying to throw each other off and all. Jessica was 18 as she was born in '79 and she did have a son and was in process of getting a divorce from an ex-husband who beat her while they were married. That pissed me off and I told her to tell him she had a cousin down who wanted to meet him. She actually asked me if I wanted to meet him and I said no I was gonna beat his ass. She took her son to his dad for visitation which he had to have supervised visitation and he made her mad and she told him to come over that she had a cousin from Texas down who was gonna beat the hell out of him. Needless to say he never showed but it

didn't harm our fun we continued to play board games and play in the river and on the jet-ski. Now you may think its strange to say about a cousin but Jessica was absolutely gorgeous and should have had a fabulous life and a great life ahead of her but sadly things don't work out the way we all hope. Anyway my two best memories of that summer is David and I ended up getting really sunburned and our backs started peeling and David's mom was rubbing aloe vera on his back and peeling the dead skin off and Jessica came and sat behind me and did the same for me. My own cousin young and beautiful did what she didn't have to do but she sat there and rubbed aloe vera on my skin and peeled my back. That's a great memory to me because its something most family members wouldn't do for another unless they really are close. Then came the day before my family was leaving to head back to Texas. I was at David and Jessica's mom's house and Jessica came to me on the front porch and said hey I'm going to go spend the night with a friend tonight and won't be back til tomorrow after y'all leave so be sure and tell everyone I love them and had fun and I'll see 'em next summer. I looked at her and said sure and then she said I love you Colby and I'll see you next summer and she wrapped her arms around me and I hugged her and said I love you too Jessica and I'll see ya next summer and I watched her walk to her friends car and leave. Little did either of us know that would be the last time I would see her or talk to her.

We left Alabama on July 6th I believe it was and headed back home to Texas. When we got back home on the 7th I believe it was; my dad drove back to Snyder and the apartment he was living in and I drove me and my brothers about 7/10th of a mile back down to my mom's house from my grandparents house. She wasn't home and I thought nothing of it but I ran into town and bought some groceries cause we came in on a Saturday night and there was nothing in the fridge and then by 9 pm when she wasn't home I began worrying and I called several of her friends and no one knew where she was so I being the oldest got my brothers in bed and Sunday we woke up and went to church and after church we ate with Pappy and Granny and then when we got home around 1 pm my mom still wasn't home. So I called all her friends again and even called her dad (my other grandpa) to see if he knew where she was. No one knew. So this being the late '90's we didn't think too terribly much about it figured she would be back home but it was strange. So my brothers and I went to church that afternoon and after church let out guess who was home. Yep; our mother was. I asked her where she had been as I had been taking care of her kids for over a day and she had taken a trip to Destin, Fl. with her then boyfriend who is now my stepdad. I was mad; I mean very irate. I informed her then that I had worried and called all her friends and even her dad looking for her and no one knew where she went or why or when she'd return and I told her then and there that she'd never ground me or punish me again until she acted like a parent again as she knew when we were supposed to be back home and she didn't notify anyone that she'd be gone a day longer. She got upset too and stated she was with her boyfriend and didn't think anything of it as Granny and Pappy were just down the road etc... and I told her to her face at least I was having to be the adult and so I was done with being punished and from there on she didn't need to expect me to call if I was going to be late and I wouldn't have a curfew because at least I wasn't out sleeping with girls. She was crying and stated she didn't have sex and I said well I didn't believe it because I didn't know any man that'd pay for a full vacation and hotel room etc... to the beach without getting something in return. Then I asked her to leave my room. I stayed mad at her

for a while but eventually as all things do I got over it and we again have a good relationship.

From July of '97 til October life was about normal. Church on Sundays, school during the week and riding dirtbikes as much as I could and just about every weekend driving 30 miles north to Snyder; the town my dad lived in. Then came the morning of October 13th 1997 which changed my life forever and showed me the first time that I had a 'dark side'. I mean up til then I knew I could get mad and I'd punch things and not people and I had a temper and short fuse but this certain morning changed everything in my life and truthfully was probably the time that I started really wandering away from God as I couldn't believe what had happened and why. That morning I woke up at about 6:25 a.m. to a woman crying on the other end of the phone and she asked for my mom. Which by that time my mom was at work at the hospital and I recognized the voice and I said "Aunt Linda she's at work; what's wrong?" and my Aunt stated the following "We lost Jessica last night". My mind started reeling I mean I had just had a bad dream that night where I saw two people shot and I know as you read this you'll think I'm a quack or whatever but I asked her "what do you mean we lost Jessica? Jessica who?" Aunt Linda between sobs stated that we lost Jessica Killgore that she was murdered that night. It hit me then and there that there was no next summer that he did it; that my cousin was gone and he murdered her. I knew instantly what happened. In my dream I didn't see faces but I felt a closeness and connection to one of the people murdered and I knew her ex husband went through the restraining order and killed her. My very next words to my Aunt Linda was "that son of a bitch; I'm gonna kill that son of a bitch" and all I heard from her was "please do". Now I'm not a murderer and never thought I'd have the urge to kill anyone but to be honest I really wanted him dead for what he did to my cousin and I wish it had happened in Texas so that he'd have the chance of the death penalty. Anyway I had to get my brothers up and get ready for school so I held it together the best I could and dropped them at school and Dylan was a freshman at high school where I was a senior. I got out of the truck and walked into the cafeteria and walked straight out of it brushed past my girlfriend who could see there was something wrong and tried to ask what the problem was and the schools vice principal also saw me and knew something was wrong. My face showed all the emotion and turmoil. I walked outside to some new buildings just built that summer and in front of my girlfriend at the time and the vice principal I punched the wall one time and knocked a brick out of it. I calmly put the brick back in the wall and the principal asked me to come to him and I walked over and followed him to his office where I informed him what had happened and why I punched the wall etc... He sent me home for a few days to recover and try and regain some peace. I wanted to very much go to Jessica's funeral and the more we learned about her murder the more I recognized that I saw the murder go down in my dream the night it happened. Now again you may say I'm a quack or whatever but I felt her terror and I knew things in my mind about what went down before they were told to me. I really feel I had that connection with Jessica that as she was fearful and these things were going down she reached out to me and all. Whether any of it is true and how much of it is true is all skeptical even to myself but I can't deny the fact that I knew things about the murder before I was told of the facts of it. However; despite my protests and my screaming and yelling and punching walls etc... my parents and grandparents wouldn't budge and I didn't get to go say goodbye.

I really think that's when I began questioning God and the point of him being in my life when I was trying to live this great and good life and I couldn't find love because I ruined the friendship with the one girl I loved and I lost my favorite cousin the one I had just seen months before and got to hug and say I love you to, not to mention my parents divorcing and my brother having cancer. I tried to pretend I had things together. My mom tried to get me to go to counseling but I wouldn't go. I was a man by god and men don't share feelings and we don't need counselors telling us anything about our lives. So I went to one maybe two sessions then I refused. I continued growing up and in about November '97 my F150 my dad bought me died. My dad refused to buy me another vehicle and so at 17 years old in December of 1997 I grew up even more and bought a brand new 1997 Ford Ranger extended cab V6 5 speed. I wanted a truck but couldn't afford a full size so the Ranger it was and I was proud of doing it myself. Now I won't sit here and say I paid everything my family helped sometimes with a payment here and there and I haven't always been the best with money but I bought my truck. Granted my parents paid my insurance but it was MY TRUCK and I took care of it and had appreciation for it. I graduated from High School the next May and was excited for college coming up in August/September. Right after graduation I moved in with my dad in Snyder. Then in August I registered for college at TSTC in Sweetwater which is about 35 minutes east of Snyder. I got registered and started college and was working at Sonic in the town I lived in. I was enjoying life and trying to lead a good one though I wasn't necessarily listening to God anymore. I rarely prayed and with my older cousin I started drinking some and then came August 1998. We were told my brother's cancer was back and this time it was worse than ever and that the last time that they fought it they did all they could with chemo and radiation. They gave Dylan the option of dying at home or doing a surgery they had NEVER done at Children's Medical Center of Dallas. Dylan being the fighter he is opted for the surgery so on October 30th 1998 Dylan went under the knife. A surgery that was supposed to take 12 hours took 22.5 hours. I was up just about the entire time stressed and worried. A little after midnight we went to Aunt Linda's house as they lived in Dallas and we needed to try and rest ourselves. The girl who had been the love of my life actually called around 2 a.m. I believe it was and asked how it was going and tried to comfort me. Again growing up in a small town she'll never be so far away we won't be able to track each other down. The next morning Dylan's surgery was done and he was in recovery for a while then moved to I.C.U. We were all frayed and worried about how he'd come out of the surgery but despite the fact that I didn't believe and pray like I should anymore God stood by my family and Dylan came out of it fine and is still here today. Then after October of 1998 came my first panic and anxiety attack in December of 1998 though I wouldn't know it was a panic and anxiety attack until almost 9 months later.

This one night in December my cousin and I got off work at Sonic and went and picked his then girlfriend up from her house and I drank one wine cooler cause it was all she had which wasn't enough to even bother me as I could handle alcohol. Anyway we took off heading to Big Spring, a town about 35 minutes south-west of where we were on a two lane

highway. As we got probably halfway between the two towns I started feeling real sick to my stomach and pulled off the road and threw up to the point I was dry heaving and I even sat down in the grass and took a #2 as my stomach was all sorts of messed up. I didn't know what was going on with my body all I knew is that something wasn't right so I jumped back in the truck and told my cousin I needed to go to the hospital which were we closer to and they both said keep going we were closer to the other town. So I put the hammer down as neither one of them knew how to drive a standard transmission vehicle. I was doing 105 mph and the governor of the truck would kick in drop us back down to 100 and then I'd raise it back up as I was scared and thought I was dying as we got to a hill on the highway I remember a truck passing us and then I felt my eyes feel heavy and I thought I yelled I need someone to drive. I heard them say what and I said it again. Next thing I remember is hearing them yell "pull over pull over". Now I don't remember putting the truck in neutral or applying the brakes or even turning the wheel but you can't tell me God wasn't watching over us because when I awoke and got out of my truck we were on the shoulder of the other side of the road. I had crossed the oncoming lane and pulled over on its shoulder and was stopped about 10 feet from a sign. I got in the passenger seat and turned the heat on me to keep me awake and I side shifted for my cousin to drive us into the town. We made it and at the first gas station we stopped and I got water and crackers and ate them and drank it because by then I was feeling fine. We went to the all night Walmart they had and purchased the Christmas presents we had went there to get. I was feeling great so we made a pact no one would say anything about what happened and I drove us back home and had no issues. However; I think the idea that I passed out is what does limit my driving but we'll get to that in a bit. After that night life kept turning and I had no other problems with it and I continued to drink with my cousin and hang out with him and go to college etc...

For Spring Break 1999 Granny and I decided to fly out to Alabama at the request of my Great-Aunt Carole who is Granny's sister. Now by this time my cousin David had actually dropped out of the family and wasn't speaking to anyone at all not his mom or his grandparents or even me. We arrived in Birmingham and Aunt Carole met us and took us the 1.5 to 2 hours back to their hometown. We went straight to their house and Granny and I put our stuff up in our rooms in the house and then Faith (Jessica and David's) mom came over and we all visited and talked. We didn't really bring up Jessica and I wasn't ready to see the grave. I wanted a good week and wanted to keep believing she'd walk in and say hi and I'd wake up from a severe nightmare. I saw her son who was about 2.5 to 3 years old by this time and I held him and played with him as Faith got him for the weekend. Well my last night in Alabama as I hadn't seen Jessica and she never came in I asked Faith to drive me to their Walmart so I could buy a rose and then go to the grave. She knew I was tore up and she agreed and drove me to Walmart and then to the graveyard. Now keep in mind this is springtime in the south and the temperatures were chilly and I should have taken a jacket but I never used one back then and my hair was long enough it would blow in the wind. Anyway Faith drove me and Jessica's son Kale to the graveyard. I asked to be alone for it and Faith pointed out Jessica's grave which is in a nice area and there's a large tree nearby and though it wasn't bloomed cause of being early spring it was nice and it was on a little hill I had to climb up. Now whether it was Jessica there or my imagination or someone else I'll never know but I know I climbed the hill and I felt chilled by

the cold wind and felt my hair blowing in the wind etc... but I got to her headstone and I stood there and was quiet for a minute but then I said "Hi Jessica, It's Colby and I'm sorry its been so long" At that point in time I can't explain it nor will I try to but I all of a sudden I quit feeling the wind hitting me. My shirt wasn't billowing and my hair wasn't blowing and I got warm almost like someone put a blanket around me and wrapped their arms around me. I remember looking around and up and the tree is still swaying in the wind and I look down and the grass is still swaying but I feel nothing but warmth and comfort standing there. So I talk to Jessica; I tell her about her son who was a awesome kid and he was doing well and was in the truck with her mom and that I missed her and was very upset I wasn't there for her when she needed me and that I loved her. Then I said "better get back to the truck and go because its late and they need to close the gates soon and your mom and son are in the truck waiting on me but I love you and miss you and I'll be back to visit you soon" I leaned down to put the rose on the ground and as I did and turned my back from the grave to walk down the hill I felt chilly and my shirt started blowing and my hair started blowing as well. I got goosebumps and turned to the grave and said "Jessica? Are you there?" however; whatever it was whether it was Jessica or my imagination or whatever was gone. I personally for my own feelings choose to believe it was Jessica there and she was doing what she always did for me; she was protecting me and holding me keeping me warm just like she would have if she was really there and I think it was her way to say that everything was o.k. I'll never forget that feeling nor will I ever forget her and what she meant to me. I promised to go back soon and yet its now 2014 and I haven't been back to Alabama since because after that Spring Break is when my attacks really began getting me.

Now some doctors who I've talked to think my panic attacks were caused by heredity as my dad and grandmother had them and some think its stress of those three very rough life experiences in a short amount of time and some think its a matter of all of it. Me I don't really care what caused it I'd just like it to stop as over the years it has limited my life and become a central point around which different things have occurred.

Now I don't recall when my second attack was but I remember my third and fourth attacks very clearly and it wasn't til my fourth attack that I actually went to the hospital and found out basically nothing was wrong with me. My third attack happened as I was driving to Dallas on August 23rd 1999 to go to my Aunt's house as I was going to stay there and go to three consecutive Rangers games against the Yankees on August 23rd thru 25th. I pulled into a convenience store in a small town and found the restroom and used the restroom and threw up and pulled myself together and told myself it was nothing as I had faced it before and then got some water and drove the rest of the way to Dallas. When game time came I drove from north of Dallas down to Arlington and watched a great game between the Rangers and Yankees. Then after the game it was dark and probably close to midnight but I had no trouble navigating my way back to my Aunt's house. Then came my 19th Birthday August 24th 1999. I drove

down to Arlington early because one of my step-dad's friends had arranged for a tour of the visitors clubhouse for me and his niece and nephew as he was good friends with multiple people in high places with the Rangers organization. It was a great tour one that most people don't ever see. I even got to meet one of the Yankees pitchers during the tour and it was great. Then I hung around Arlington til game time and then met up with my dad and his then girlfriend to watch the game. I got hungry so I ate 2 hotdogs and drank a coke never thinking anything of it and maybe it wasn't the food, maybe it was the heat who knows but in the beginning of the 7th inning my dad and his girlfriend went back to the hotel. I on the other hand was going to stay til the end of the game and go back to my Aunt's house. Well that didn't happen as planned. By the end of the 7th I was in full blown panic attack mode. I found a nurses station and took over the restroom. I couldn't stop throwing up and using the restroom and I felt like I couldn't breathe either. I was scared out of my mind. I had no idea what was happening but I felt like I was not going to survive at all. They finally called an ambulance for me and took me to the hospital. After several hours and tests etc... the Dr. came back and stated that there was nothing wrong and to follow up with my personal physician. Dad took me back to my truck and I followed him back to his and his girlfriend's room and I slept on the couch in their room as I was still shaking and couldn't stop. I finally fell asleep but I was so shaky and all that I left my truck in the hotel parking lot and rode with dad the 4 hours back home to west Texas. I slept most of the way and shook and threw up etc... It was not a very pleasant trip for me. Then a week later I got my truck back as my Pappy and Granny were up in Dallas area and they drove my truck home.

During the time without my truck I was back to going to classes as I went to summer school and I was driving my dad's truck and having no more problems though I did see my Dr. and he said it was panic and anxiety disorder and that it wouldn't kill me and there was nothing to really do for it. While I was without my truck I did have one attack on a Sunday night. After church in my hometown before heading back to Snyder I stopped and saw a special woman in my life; she's like my second mom. Her daughter (who happened to be the girl I loved for years) needed a ride to a babysitting job just north of town as she wasn't to turn 16 til November that year. I told her I'd take her. Well I took her but on the way I got sick as we turned off the main road and traveled out into the country and I don't know why but something about it triggered me to get sick. We got to the house where she was going to babysit and the family knew us both and I stayed there as I was too sick to drive. When the dad of the kids got home she drove me back to my mom's house and her own sister came and picked her up from my mom's house. The next morning I woke up and was fine and drove back to Snyder with no problems. On and On the cycle has gone for me ever since. I'll get through several weeks/months/years even without a major attack but it is a vicious cycle and has really limited my life and my enjoyment and happiness. As I stated above the last two times I recall being completely happy was when I was with Jessica and my family in Alabama in July of 1997 and prior to that was the time spent at the campground in Kerrville when I was about 13 years old. Even now at 33 years old I have moments of being happy BUT there's a difference between being happy and having happy moments.

The next several years of my life are a series of ups and downs and moves from town to town. Heck I even made a trip to Colorado Springs, Colorado to move my best friend after he graduated college in May of 2000. I drove up there pulling a trailer for him and then the very next day I turned around and drove back home never once encountering an attack. I was still having attacks but the attacks were random and didn't really impact my life as such. However; I didn't graduate when my friend did I failed one class and I was not happy with it plus I wasn't too thrilled with the idea of having a inside job anyway. So I didn't go back to school immediately. At first I was working at Sonic still and then I found a full time position as a lineman's helper/electrician for an oilfield company there in Snyder. It was a good job and I learned quickly plus having the background in electrical work I had from my granddad teaching me residential wiring at 9 yrs old it wasn't hard to pick up industrial wiring. Then one Saturday I got called out to work and we had to work out in between Colorado City and Snyder middle of nowhere. As I was out there we were changing out a pump jack motor. We unhooked the old motor and moved it off the base. I then picked up the new motor which in reality weighed probably close to 400 lbs and lifted it off the truck and carried it to the base. As the motor is center-weighted they do not carry as heavy as they really are so I carried it over there and when I went to set it down on the base my glove on my right hand got caught on the motors base plate and I was not able to remove my hand in time and my pinky finger was crushed. Literally blew it open. I held it together and told my journeyman I had with me that I needed a band aid when he asked why I showed him and my finger was split so bad it was down to the bone. He said I needed more than stitches and so to get in the truck. On the way to get in the truck I passed out due to the amount of blood coursing through my finger so quickly. I awoke seconds later with him over me bandaging my wound. We drove to Snyder and they sewed my finger up with 8 stitches and told me I couldn't work for two days. I recovered fine and my finger still works though I am missing feeling in the top half of my finger where the finger was split open other than that I have use of it. Amazingly as I will continue to say when there's a real injury the panic and anxiety are nowhere to be seen. It seems that they only occur when there's no real injury and no real threat. Anyway, my journeyman went out and finished the job as the motor was already there it just needed wired in. As the two days passed and I was off work I had to continually hear from the family that I needed to get my degree so I could get a job with insurance etc... It finally got to the point that I finally gave in and quit my job with the electrical company in January 2001 and registered to take the one class I had remaining. I took the class and passed and in May 2001 I ended up getting my Associates of Applied Sciences degree in Computer Network Technology. However; as I stated I wasn't keen on working inside and working with or on computers.

So after graduation in May I moved down to Brownwood, Texas on a whim and went to work for an Uncle at a place called Asplundh trimming trees out of power lines. I was enjoying myself and met a girl who's still one of my best friends and she and I still talk a lot and I consider her family part of my family. However; in December of 2001 I had moved on from trimming trees to doing electrical work and the company I worked for laid me off in December so I had to go where the jobs were so I left Brownwood and went to

work in Sweetwater for a Oil Field electrical company. I worked there for about 3 or 4 months until we worked in a cotton gin one day and the next day I ended up in the hospital with an asthma attack. So again I went looking for a job again and found myself back in Snyder and back working at Sonic. I worked there for a short time and then in the middle of 2002 I found a electrical job at a company in Lubbock and so I moved up there. I was enjoying myself in Lubbock. I even got to the point I wasn't on any medication for my panic and anxiety but I found out I was turning into an alcoholic and basically self medicating. Luckily I wasn't completely addicted to the alcohol and I took my last drink in 2003. However; in Lubbock I met a girl who I did fall in love with again. Thought she was the one but she continually told me it wasn't her. But we ended up rooming together at a house just outside of Lubbock for a while and I was enjoying my time spent with her but then in late 2003 around October or November I got sick. Not with panic and anxiety but truly sick but I couldn't afford to go to the Dr. After roughly 3 weeks of being sick I finally got to the point one morning where I could hardly move at all. I had been faking it holding Brandy off from taking me to the Dr. by telling her I was getting better but there was no faking it that morning. She called 911 and I took an ambulance to the hospital where we found out not only was I finally recovering from the flu and a stomach virus but there was one other illness plaguing me though I don't remember what it was. However; in the three weeks I had been sick I had dropped from 145lbs roughly down to 113lbs. Needless to say its a diet I don't recommend. Although again my panic and anxiety crept up on me and my Pappy (the one man I've always admired and looked up to and IF I ever become half the man he is I'll be proud of myself) drove up to Lubbock the next day and took me back to my hometown to recover as I had lost my job while I was sick as well. So again I ended up moving and about 3 weeks later Pappy rented a U-haul and my younger brother Dylan, Pappy and I went to Lubbock and loaded my stuff up and Pappy drove the U-haul home and Dylan rode with me in my truck back to our hometown. Mark another town off my list that I haven't visited since. I haven't been to Brownwood since I moved from there in 2001 and I haven't been to Lubbock since I moved from there in 2003 and I haven't been to a baseball game in Arlington since 1999. Is anyone else seeing a pattern here yet?

So in 2003 I moved back to Colorado City and lived and spent time between my mom's house and my Papa's (mom's dad) house. Unfortunately I wasn't settled enough to actually remain living with Papa. I did stay with him some and he did need help as he had emphysema and his health overall was not great however; my panic and anxiety kept me from staying with him as much as I should have. He was a good man too but I wasn't as close to him and at that time being a wreck with panic and anxiety I wouldn't have been a good caregiver for him either. One of my regrets is not being able to stay with him and be there for him. However; I finally got settled into being able to drive into town again as we lived 5 miles out in the country. So in early 2004 I found a job working for my banker helping him with the dirt work of his foundation for his house and so I started doing that and then not long after that I took a job delivering pizzas for Pizza Hut there in Colorado City. As Colorado City is where I grew up I got comfortable and adept at driving around the town pretty quick. I was back in church there in C-City and though I was going I mainly went to work the T.V. booth as I had worked in it since I was 9 years old. It was more a tradition and help for Pappy than anything else. Not long after starting work for

Pizza Hut I found a full time job as a mechanic (more flat fixer/oil change specialist) for a mechanic shop in town. I enjoyed the work and I could do it pretty easily. Had two accidents while working there and again as I mentioned at the beginning of this story my anxiety stayed away during the injuries as they were real and could be felt etc... One day working there as I was airing up a flat tire and a bubble formed on the outside of the tire and before I could get out of the way the tire exploded I ended up deaf in my right ear for about 3 days and spent the next 2 weeks pulling little slivers of steel out of my face and neck. It was not a serious injury but to a panic and anxiety sufferer you'd think it would set me off, yet it didn't and I worked the rest of the day even after that. Then a few weeks later I was in the oil change bay and was walking near the oil change pits looking up at the tire rack searching for a tire. My boss was in the pit changing oil and she asked me to grab her a filter so while I was looking up for the tire I backed up and was going to cross over near where the pit was and normally we'd have plywood pulled over the opening however; at this time she didn't have the plywood covering the hole and I fell in and my right side cracked against the concrete wall and I flipped into the pit. I lost my breath and it took me a while to get up and out of the pit. Unfortunately I was unable to lift anything and was in pain. I tried to drive home however; the pain was too severe so I called my mom who was at work at the hospital and she came and got me and took me to the hospital and gave me 3 Ibuprofen tablets for the pain. Of course all the nurses wanted to look and so I showed them and all of them agreed I had either cracked or broke at least 2 maybe 3 ribs. Either way the pain was unbearable for weeks it was tough to find a comfortable position to lay or sleep. Although after 3 or 4 days I was back at work changing oil and fixing flats. I'd wrap my ribs and do my best to fight through the pain. I was also still delivering pizza's at this time.

Not long after my ribs had healed in early 2005 I was visited by the man who owned one of the parts stores in C-City. He wanted to hire me as a salesman. I was intrigued and listened to the offer and it was a good offer so I took the job and went to work as a parts salesman. I kept in touch with my friend from Brownwood and I quit my job at Pizza Hut and was working as just a parts salesman and once again I was successful in what I tried. I started dating Susanna (my friend from Brownwood) in 2006 I believe; she was living at her grandmother's ranch in Albany for a while. As I still wasn't able to drive myself out of town my Pappy and Granny or my mother would take me to Abilene and I'd meet Susanna there and then she'd take me up to Albany to the ranch. It helped and I learned how to travel some but never got to the point of going there by myself. Then later in 2006 we broke up and I took a second job working at Alco in C-City which is best described as a miniature Walmart. Anyway I worked there part-time during the week and had my weekends free. Then in February 2007 I decided I was going to sell my little Ford Ranger and buy a Dodge ½ ton pickup. The dealership found the truck I wanted and sold it to me for a good price so my mom, baby brother and myself went to Abilene one Saturday and picked up my truck.

It was a beautiful deep blue ½ ton quad cab 4.7L V8 with a 6 speed

manual transmission, Lone Star edition pickup. I loved that truck and I bought it because at 26 years old I had given up on finding love or anything of that nature well lo and behold life had something else in store for me. Using Myspace I actually found a girl named Jody who lived in Abilene and we had actually talked for several months prior to me getting my truck but I never thought we'd date or even turn into anything so I bought my truck and then in March the Rattlesnake Roundup came to Sweetwater and we decided we'd meet there. So that Sunday March 17th 2007 I drove my truck over to Sweetwater in the rain with my little cousin Kayla with me. I got to right around Roscoe and my panic and anxiety started taking over and I called my Pappy and talked with him and I kept pushing myself and made it to Sweetwater and once there I was fine and met Jody and her brother and sister. We walked around the Roundup and talked and visited and actually started dating that day though I didn't realize it. The next weekend I believe it was she came all the way to C-City and we spent the day together at my mom's house. Then not long after that I actually got the courage and drove myself all the way to Abilene and spent the day with Jody and spent the night in a hotel. That was my first time driving myself to Abilene or anywhere out of town in years. Jody and I continued to date and about a month and a half into our relationship I was driving to Abilene by myself for the third time and around Tye I started having a panic attack and I called my dad and talked to him and threw up in a cup I kept in the truck just for instances like that and I actually made it to Abilene. Then I met Jody and her family was going to a family reunion at the Abilene State Park which is several miles south-west of Abilene. As her family was riding with her I drove myself down there. We stayed the whole day and then came back to Abilene. This time I was going to stay in her grandmother's trailer however; the anxiety of the day came back and hit me and the smoke in the trailer bothered me so I asked and Jody took me over to her mom's house for the night. Well that night I awoke with a major attack and couldn't calm it down for all my trying. So about 2 a.m. I called an ambulance as my truck was at Jody's grandmother's house. Jody actually did come to the hospital for a bit with me but I told her to go home and sleep as I'd call when I needed her to pick me up. I was in the hospital til about 8 a.m. and then I called Jody and she came to the hospital and picked me up. I was still shaky and couldn't drive so I called my rock the one guy who always came through for me; Pappy. He said he'd be over after church and he'd take me home. So Granny, Pappy, and Nathan came over and picked me up. Nathan drove Granny back home in their car while Pappy and I went home in my truck. I told Jody on the way home from the hospital that it would be a long time before I made it back to Abilene as I knew what this attack would do to me and I knew it would cripple me again like it had in the past. I informed her that I would not blame her and in fact would understand her if she decided to walk away then. She told me she wasn't leaving me for that. So for the next year and a half I worked at the Auto Parts Store and Alco and Jody would come over once or twice a month. I'd pay her gas and try and take her out to eat and all but it was wearing on me not being able to get an hour away. Finally in 2009 my life changed again.

I don't remember what part of 2009 it was exactly; seems it was around May or so but I took a lorazepam and my mom attempted and actually succeeded in getting me to Abilene. Jody's Grandmother had already said next time I made it over I was welcome to live there. So when we got there I told mom I wasn't going home that I was staying as I wasn't taking a chance on going back to C-City and it

going another year and a half before making it back over. So my mom left me there with some clothes and I called my bosses at both stores. Don who was the owner and my boss at the auto parts store was understandably upset as I was a good worker and I was really the only one who knew how to run the place but he also understood why I had to do what I did. I quit both jobs that Sunday and then on Monday I went around putting in applications and told myself I'd give myself two weeks to find a parts job after that I'd look at fast food jobs. However; Napa Auto Parts hired me that Wednesday after arriving in town. They hired me as a driver knowing I had knowledge as a salesman. I started out driving and I did fine for a while then again my driving started becoming a problem and they promoted me to counterman and again I was back to selling parts and doing a good job at it. Then in May of 2010 I found a house and actually purchased it. I now had a long term relationship and a house and I went and traded my blue truck in for a 2009 Dodge ½ ton this time with a automatic transmission since Jody didn't know how to drive a standard and I wasn't comfortable with a vehicle that she couldn't drive too. During this time I worked two jobs again. I was working at Napa and at Kmart for a while and then when I got fed up with Kmart I got a job at Taco Bell and was working both places. Then Nana (Jody's Grandmother) happened to see an article in the newspaper of a computer company doing some hiring. By this time I was warehouse manager at Napa here in Abilene and I was making decent money but things were still tight. I called the computer company and they set me up an interview and I went to it and did well on their basic knowledge tests they gave and they ended up hiring me and so in April of 2011 I went to work for Genesis as a "system analyst" which was basically production support. I learned fast and picked up what I didn't know or had forgot from my college days. I excelled at my job as I had all my other jobs and at the end of 2012 I got promoted to the 'E2E' Team. E2E standing for End to End which meant I had oversight over all the various applications that interfaced on the ordering system we worked on. Then came our litter of puppies.

In September of 2013 our husky had puppies and we raised them and after they were 6 weeks old we found them all good homes and after the last one left in October 2013 I cleaned the area we had them in and one of my phobias and issues that accelerate my anxiety is cleaning products (chemicals) and I used them without a face mask etc... After cleaning everything up my mind began racing and I couldn't stop my mind and the attack I was facing. I finally called an ambulance and they came and got me and took me to the hospital. More unneeded bills for something I already knew there was nothing they could do for me. However; they gave me some phenergen for my stomach and some more lorazepam to calm myself down. After that I began working from home as with my job I do have that luxury as I have a company laptop. I do not intend to take advantage of this ability to work from home but this attack in October really limited my traveling. I found a psychologist and began seeing them and getting my meds straightened out and found a counselor as well. Now in April of 2014 my meds are pretty well set and while I'm still working from home I'm getting more adept at moving around town again. I can get to the grocery store and pharmacy with relative ease and I'm working on moving more and more outside that zone with my counselor with the hopes of being back in my office before years end. I hope within the next 3 months at the latest; but one thing I've learned about these attacks is you can't set time limits you have to work within your comfort zone and means to overcome it.

My life is still changing and will continue to do so. There are ups and downs and no one can judge or see what's around each bend in the road. I'm still here and still will get up every time I get knocked down but the more I struggle with this the more I believe maybe its time to get right with God and see if he can start helping me in overcome this. I know prayer works as I saw it with my brother and I know we experience trials and tribulations in this life but my trials and tribulations were more than I could handle and I walked away and there's been times I've questioned the decision behind all that. I'm still a Christian and believe in God and the Lord Jesus and that he saved me but I don't let him have control over my life like I should and maybe that's where the beginning of the end of panic and anxiety lie. In the giving up of control to God and stepping out on faith that he'll hold me and help me and save me from myself. However; that's the story of my life up to this point. I'm going to keep going forward and keep trying and that's all that can be done.

At this point the interview ended and the filmmaker who I admire looked at me with a mixture of admiration and sorrow. He informed me he understood the trials that can be faced in life and while he couldn't understand the depth of my issues with the panic and anxiety he understood that it was something real and something that shouldn't ever be wished upon anyone. He then prayed with me and left me alone in the hospital room again to continue my recovery from the gunshot wounds I received. Around this point in time I awoke and kinda had a blurred line wondering if this was reality or just a dream and as I laid there waking up in bed I realized my shoulder did hurt due to the way I was laying but that it was a dream and a dream only. However; it did put things in perspective and I'm thinking in the next few weeks I'll be trying to find a church to begin attending and meeting more people in this town and attempt to begin a closer walk with the Lord as maybe it was his way of telling me I needed to put that faith and trust in him. We can only go forward and can't change the past but as those of us with panic and anxiety know all too well the anxiety monster loves to bring up our failures and downfalls and mistakes and everything bad that has ever happened to us. It brings us into a negative spiral. I think its time to wake up and find happiness again and time to learn to live again. It will be much harder to do than it is to say but I believe I'm up for the challenge and I believe it will be a challenge that will be met and exceeded!