

7/8/11... It took me thirty some odd years to tell my mother about what happened, as we discuss it today we are not sure if it was her or one of my uncles that walked in on me in the tub but we agree on the time frame.... Another incidence comes to mind I know this happened in 1970 because I remember being six years old, we were moving to Fremont, CA with my mom's new man and my sisters Candy's dad. Fremont is a little town about twenty minutes down the freeway maybe thirty, anyways, mom was busy taking loads of furniture to the new house and I remember her telling us that while she was gone she wanted us boys to stay in the house and she made it very clear to the babysitter. At this time there was four of us boys the oldest Tony he was about ten years old, and then there was me, then my little brother Peter who was four and then there was Chava (Salvador) who was almost two and too young to be outside unsupervised so really was not involved in our adventures, so after my mom left with the next load of things, it didn't take long for my brother Tony to sneak out and then me. We used to play kick ball behind the apartments across the street, and that is where me and my brother tony were when we heard tires screeching and a distinctive THUMP!, I remember yelling to every one that this was going to be a grand ol crash! Understand that in this year of 1970 one of our favorite programs on Saturday T.V., was the crash em up derby, so hearing what sounded like a wreck got visions of the derby running through my mind, I remember running through the shortcut around the apartment building and getting to the front before everyone else, what greeted me has haunted me my whole life... my little brother Peter was lying a little ways down the street using the curve for a pillow (later I found out he flew forty feet through the air) I ran up to him and I started yelling to him "Peter, Peter! wake up!, wake up!" I remember his eyes being cracked like tiny slits as I kept begging him to get up, I was holding him by the shoulders and next thing you know he goes limp in my arms, to this day I always wonder if it was at that moment that he left us for good or if he went into a deeper state of unconsciousness, I like to think he died knowing his brother was holding him. After I felt him go limp the landlord of the house we were moving out of appeared out of no where and pulled me away and the next time I saw my brother Peter was in his coffin at CP Bannon, everyone I know seems to finally see that mortuary home, you see there was a little girl who lived across the street that was Peter's age and they would always play together and ride her tricycle I can still see him paddling that trike and her standing right behind him as he peddled with that all too familiar look of determination all boys the world over get on there face when focused on the task at hand, I remember being at the viewing and my mom told us boys to go kiss our brother goodbye and I will never ever forget that kiss, I mean to this day I still see my brother lying in his coffin, looking at peace as if he would wake up at any moment and want



to go play at one game or another, still see his smile and the twinkle in his eye when we'd come up on some treat or snack.... the years may have flew by, I may have gotten older, my hair has turned gray, but the memory of that time lives on burned into the fabric of my childhood as are so many other childhood traumatic experiences... The service was held at St. Anthony's and he was laid to rest at St. mary's cemetary in north Oakland. He was laid in the same grave with my sisters who died a week apart after birth they were twins. It's funny how we don't realize how many things happen in our lives as children that help shape us into what we latter on become in life until times like now as I sit at this keyboard and am forced to remember, to re-live, re-visit, go down those long dark unused pathways of my memory and even now I know that I have barely scratched the surface, that there remains an abundance of these experiences that happened to me that to the average person would snhock but in my world it was just another day and a part of growing up in Oakland, CA.

I remember finally moving to another house a couple of blocks away it turned out to be right across the street from Garfield elementary and I guess it was the fourth grade that I started going there, I remember my first teacher being Ms. Mendoza, she was Filipino. Boy, did I have a mad crush on her all I wanted to do was be in her good graces and so I excelled in her class as I recall that was the year I was a superstar in math, not only did I do good in my studies to get her attention I would even act out at times and even now I have to smile at the things I did even at that young age. The next incidence that comesn to mind wasn that time my mom and step-dad were sorting bills and stacking money on the stereo, it was one of those 1960's stereo the one that looks like a cabinet and opens at the top and has a record player and a radio, anyways, a ten dollar bill snome how fell behind the stereo and on my way to school the next morning I dropped something and as I bent down to pick it up I noticed the money and took it. All I could think about was all the goodiesn I could buy with that ten dollars, I couldn't remember ever having a whole ten dollars to spend and I figured finders keepers right? Well thats not how it worked out for me..... iwent to school and at recess took a couple of my friends to Mr. Jackson's store which was a block away from the school, now Mr. Jackson new all of us kids cause we all lived in the area and frequented his store for goodies all the time , goodies like, rope licorice, bazooka bubble gum, sunflower seeds, half pint little plastic bottles of juice, and my favorite giant jawbreakers, amongst other things... so I treated everyone and at the end of the day came home feeling euphoric like my day could get no better that is until I walked in and my mom and step-father Ceasar were waiting for me and real casual like asked me where I got the money to buy all the candy, and me with this big ol smile on my face oblivious to the storm clouds that were building over my head snaid real



proudly right there mommy! under the stereo, needless to say that did not turn out too good for me, remember the extension cord and my step father beating the crap out of my hands and that being followed up with being made to kneel for an hour or so, he had some unique waysn of punishing us, that time he opened newspaper on the floor and spread tiny pebbles and I had to kneel on these pebbles for whatever amount of time he told me to with a suitcase held over my head, my step-father was raised in Mexico and I can only assume that these tortures were brought from his own childhood..... (to be continued)...

Paul Behind the Wall.....7/14/11..

Note: It is quicker to write me a letter than it is for me to receive a blog posting. Don't know why but just food for thought.