

① Thank You For Being You

Pimps, Playa's, Hustler's, Gangster's, Molester's and Crooked Preacher's, when I was a child I met them all, some over and over. They came, stayed awhile and then bounced.

And then, there was Dub, this man is my little brother's Dad, I for whatever reason honestly still, even as I write this, have no idea who my biological Father is, The 1960's and 70's, not my era, and I've always been told to stay out of grown folks business.

I don't want the story of my life to ever be told without the mention of a Man we call Dub.

Dub made sure that I called him Daddy, it was the only time I have ever been embraced in that way up until I was 11 years old.

My first birthday cake that I can remember had a Candy Tiger on it, with 8 candles on it. Dub's wife DOT baked it for me, she created my first birthday party, it was one of the best days of my childhood.

Dub began to ask me to come along whenever he would come to Compton and pick up my little brother for the Summer, Christmas and special occasions.

Dub took me fishing out on his boat, he never yelled at me, cursed at me and never whipped or abused me. His wife DOT prayed with us every night before we went to bed, when I lost a tooth, she would sneak money under my pillow for me to find the next morning, she kissed us goodnight and when I wet the bed she didn't wake me up with a beating with an electrical extension cord, instead, she had already ran hot water for me and changed the bedding, and on Christmas they both treated me equal to my little brother, all of these things was foreign to me back home in Compton.

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I never stole from Dub, never disrespected his home and for those very valuable moments in my life I saw and experienced a hard working man, he worked so hard that he could be the greatest father in the world literally while sleeping.

All of those years, I had no idea of what kind of work Dub did, all I knew was he worked the grave yard shift at a company where he had to wear a uniform with his name on his blue shirt.

Before I came to death row, I was in the county jail and had broken my hand in a fight, so while at the County hospital, the doctor was explaining to me how my hand wasn't broken and just sprained, on my way past the caf. I noticed Dub mopping the floor in his uniform, and it hit me, this dude had been a hospital janitor for long over the extent of my 26 years on earth.

I remember sitting in the holding cell rewinding my life with Dub as a child and decided that this dude was not my father, he was the only person I was able to say was my real life hero, a real man, hard working, loving and caring. Dub wasn't a talker, however, it was his actions that spoke volumes to me.

Dub and Dot always gave, they never asked for nothing, I never talked about San Bernardino whenever we was taken back to Compton, but what I will now say to both Dub and Dot is Thank You, and another thank you to my little brother because if I remember correctly, I tried explaining to him what it was like not having a father, when he cut me off and said "You can share mine with me."

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Caring, passed down to a new generation, my life is filled with stories and experiences so dark that I plan never to explain, but what about those moments when I was left in the care of people that never left us alone to fend for ourselves, the Black people that still live in the same home for well over 40 years I'm sure, still married and still with the same phone number today as they had when they first moved in that house.

My thank you takes on a new life because Dub and Dot respected me for as long as I can remember. How many lil black boys can say that an older Black man respects him? I'm willing to believe that the hood is swarming with what I like to call Angels in the Hood.

Both of my children are just now beginning to learn about my life, so I want them to understand that it was Dub and Dot that was my examples of proper parenting, they are my proof that no level of abuse and disrespect is more valuable than good old fashion lovin, and that lesson was taught to me by two of my greatest teachers, Dub and Dot.

On behalf of my dead beat biological father, I want to extend to Dub and Dot my most sincere apology, for doing a better job in your sleep than he has ever done up to this point, I want to say again

Thank You for Being You!

Love Always XYZ187

