

Brought to Light

My romance with Barbara wasn't all peaches and cream and we had some major blowout's - mostly over leaving the area - She had a lot to lose and to give up - plus putting her trust in me to stick with her had to weigh heavily on her mind - Especially since I had walked away from her a few times over how slow things were going - I wanted my children and that wasn't happening - all I basically had was a millionaire's roof over my head and a sexual partner - nothing else - no job or transportation - plus my chances for employment was hindered by my concession to Barbara to not shave and let my hair grow out - in an area I already stuck out in, like a sore thumb ! The fact that my children were still living in squalor, never stopped eating at my heart... Plus, I learned why Mary didn't want me moving in - she was expecting a major settlement from a car accident, she was in - ah - there were other reasons and all of them had me feeling like I was racing the clock and losing - if I were to get my children back ...

Writing about my children like this has me wanting to defend myself, as I failed to be the father they wanted and needed me to be - plus - both my son and daughter decided to estrange themselves from me due to my present circumstance - I can only imagine the horror stories they heard about me as they grew up and witnessed my failure to rescue them when I arrived in Florida - In their formative years - I always spent a lot of time with them - especially my son since he was the first and three years older than his sister - I loved playing my guitar and singing to them especially at bed time - I must have played and sang ' Puff the Magic Dragon ' a million times - there were a host of others songs they liked and I preformed for them - I also loved reading to them at night instead of watching television - hell - my son had a library card at five years old and he and I held hands walking to the library every Tuesday evening as we both chose our books to withdraw - they don't remember all the places I would take them as I worked at expanding their young minds - we visited all the museums in Chicago more than once - One time my son disappeared on me and I began shouting as loud as I could calling out his name - in my mind I was ready to close down the museum - when he popped his little head from around the corner with a look on his face that knew something was wrong - every weekend we did something new from fishing - swimming - going to the zoo - flea markets - where the four of us rode in a barnstormers plane as I put aside my fears of all of us dying in a plane crash - I truly felt I was being the best father I could be - while I dealt with other issues it seemed wanted to destroy my life ...

I have never come to terms with the discrimination I have endured over the years - I have always considered myself a good and decent person - yes - I had some drug problems, but I always tried to correct them - I didn't want my world to collapse around me and it bothered me that it was - I was always athletic and played all the sports - in grade school I was named the most athletic student - I don't want to blame anyone for my failures, but there have been some contributing factors that influenced how I dealt with aggression toward me !!! As a child my Mother named me ' One Eagle ' - she in her own way knew I was going to face many obstacles in life due to the color of my skin - at the age of five while outside playing (I was raised a free roamer) two older boys started picking on me and knocking me around - I ran home crying and my mother asked me what was wrong - to my surprise when I told her - she balled up her fist and hit me in the face so hard I flew across the kitchen and slide down the wall - sitting on the floor while she stood over me saying did either of them hit you that hard ? I had to admit neither did and she sent me outside to find them and to hit them back - I never found those two - but from that day forward no one ever hit me as hard as my mother did or escaped my wrath if they struck me - which was something that got me into a lot of trouble over the years ...

I had learned a couple of my friends from Chicago Heights, moved down to Florida and weren't that far away - I called them and got their address - knowing if things, didn't begin to change with Barbara - I would have to move on - then one day Barbara and I, got into spat over our lack of money - I had just learned how much on paper Barbara was actually worth and I made it clear I couldn't go on living under her conditions any longer - that I wanted custody of my children and if she wasn't going to help me - I'd find another way - so I took one of her diamond rings and pawned it for six hundred dollars and got on a Greyhound bus to stay with my friends ...

My friends were very supportive of me - gave me the couch to sleep on, helped me get a job working with them, doing carpentry and got me a great deal on a car for two hundred dollars - things were looking up - except now I was even further away from my children and no closer to gaining custody - then a few weeks later when I came home from work my friends mother told me Barbara had called and wanted to speak with me - I was missing Barbara's companionship and decided to call her back - Barbara said she missed me and been giving my idea of leaving Florida together with my children a lot of thought - asking me to please come see her and work things out .