

## **Words Uncaged submission**

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### **Decisions & The Dictatorship**

I was born and raised in Little Rock, Arkansas; I am the youngest of five boys. My brothers and I were raised by a single father, in a housing project called “Granite Mountain,” more commonly known as the “Killing Fields”. The name speaks for itself, we were surrounded by murder, heroin addiction, gangs and crime, this was my home. As it turns out the misery and human depravity that make up the killing fields is trans-generational, my mother and father were born here as well. The killing fields is where my father grew to manhood, met and married my mother, fathered five boys, watched my mom become addicted to heroin, and die of an overdose on a cold urine stained floor in a public bathroom, this was my home. When my mom died my father changed in ways none of us never saw coming, he found God! I suppose this was his way of dealing with my mom’s death, perfectly understandable. The problem was, he went too far. I tell you these things to provide insight to the eyes of our father, our decision maker, our monster, and the environment that made him.

Within my family dynamic there was always a decision maker and that was my dad, he not only made the decisions for our family as a whole, per his self-proclaimed right as head of the house hold, he also dominated what should have been our individual decision making. I really shouldn’t use the word “individual” because my dad never recognized individuality, in my family those lines were blurred, in my dad’s mind we were five bodies with one mind, his! When we opened our mouths, he fully expected to hear his thoughts and opinions. This was prior to my mom’s death, which meant my father was still the “benign” dictator! The violence we later came to know was minimal. At this point, his dominance was based on the force of his personality, brute force would come later.

After my mom’s death, my father fell into religion. He had always been a God fearing man, but nothing like what he became. Growing up in the south, religion had more of a hard edge; it was more Old Testament, hellfire, and eternal damnation. My dad’s newly adopted version of Christianity went even further, much further! He became what I would call a southern fundamentalist Christian. In my opinion this is the equivalent of Taliban style Islam defined by intolerance, brutality and perhaps most frightening was a moral certainty and fervor that always accompanied his brutality. The once biblical verse my dad always quoted was “Don’t spare the

rod,” this typically preceded the beating of myself or one of my brothers. Can you imagine the mind of a man who actually believed a bible verse gave him the moral justification to beat a child, his child? This was how my dad punctuated his decisions. Violence was the only form of communication that surrounded his decision-making. Violence was the language of my father’s God and we all became fluent. The reality of my household is that my brothers and I lived under a religious dictatorship, sustained by control through violence and abuse. In this way my brothers and I were no different than the people in Iran or Saudi Arabia, we were voiceless captives without chains.

In my dad’s on way he thought he was teaching us morals and values, what he failed to teach us is how to make our own decisions. What he ultimately succeeded in teaching us is “Hate”! He unintentionally taught the sons he loved so much to profoundly, deeply, totally and completely Hate Him!!

In closing, we come full circle, we return to the killing fields, where it all began. In the very fields, my dad was born, raised and at some point infected with the poison that would eventually dominate his heart, soul and mind. Born from despair after my mom’s death, this poison would couple with his religious fervor. This union would produce a “Grotesque mis-representation” of all that is good in God. This grotesque mis-representation was my dad the dictator.

History informs us as to the fate of all dictatorships, they fall!! Two days after my 19<sup>th</sup> birthday my dad placed a pistol against his temple and brought his dictatorship to an end. Several days after my dad’s death my brothers and I stood on our porch and asked each other, where do we go, what do we do now? None of us knew, we never learned to make decisions.

(fiction)

The End!