

How To Say Blueberry Pie In Ojibwe

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At some point from innocence into becoming an adult, I stopped including my higher power as a part of my day. As I move forward, from time to time I actually remind myself that I deserve everything that I put my effort towards.

I dedicate this book to everyone that I have ever known, directly or indirectly, it all adds up in the end. Some more than others, even if it appears miniscule, without ever having those moments, I would never have known the difference.

How To Say Blueberry Pie In Ojibwe

I want to start with the introduction of addressing my reality that I am certain of, and from that which I was led to beyond belief. God has allowed everything we experience to become what it is. Our mother earth (Aki -Ojibwe translated word). Provides the physical elements to make the recipe. When you reach that amazing point in spirituality in knowing that this is your own personal experience, and that all interactions you have within it are just you interacting with God, it eliminates the feeling or need for fears to exist. I have been caught up in such fear of nothing but my own self image. Most importantly, creates the ultimate relationship that guides you through dealing within your relationship with yourself first, letting all others follow with the grace of God. Life is a beautiful dance of exploration and discovery. Do not limit what the possibilities can be. To share some significant experiences about my life, allowed me to no longer have to question my past. I am attempting to acknowledge the mistakes I have made in life, so that in the future I deal with each mistake as I make them throughout life. I have accepted that all individual views are correct, but what is most important doesn't have to be correct for truth to manifest itself into understanding and acceptance. To not have to face confrontation, and continue to speak about others in negative ways. The challenges I face today are very different, but I am certain that they were only to strengthen my perception in life.

The first memory of having something happen to me was when I was around three years old. My family and I were driving home and a road that led off the main road is where I had seen a man who was standing in the middle of the road. Only he was only a solid black shadow. When I told my parents I had seen what I had seen, they turned the car around and asked me where I had seen him standing. We went close to the spot and I pointed it out. There wasn't anyone there, but the fact that I had pointed it out, was significant enough to gain their attention. I often think about this as a dad today. How I would find a valid reason to believe my daughter in any way, but how often is it that children's imagination get away from them. Especially mine, but after an honest inventory of my past. how much I could tell the imaginative from the truth. How much do we credit our children with being honest with us? More importantly, why is it that they should ever know, or we even ever accept that they would tell us anything but the truth as parents?

When I was four, we had been living with my aunt in Cass Lake, MN. It was around nine in the morning, and the adults were visiting, while a few of us kids played around in the living room. They had started to ask each of us what we wanted to be when we grew up. Of course, there were the expected answers of children that age. A cop, doctor, and firefighter is what the other kids had said they wanted to be. Some memories are so clear like it was yesterday, and some others when reminded are like they never happened, although you know that they did, when a person is reminded with enough details. When one of them had asked me, I responded with "I am going to take care of my mother." This was one of the very few earlier memories that I have prior to the age of five. Still to this day I think about the seriousness and even the depth of my voice, as I had said it. It wasn't long after that when I was brought into a sweat for the first time. A man that my mom knew had brought me into my first sweat lodge. Since then he has passed on, so upon writing this book I could not ask the questions that arise. The most pressing of these questions is why I remember going in, but do not remember coming out. I had

no recollection of what happened after about 2 minutes in the dark, and then no memory from that point on.

When I was five years old my mom was serving on the local Indian council. Being that she was not part of the Leech Lake reservation but from the Nett Lake reservation, it was against the rules. But even with the restrictions of the rules of the reservation, she served on the local Indian council with four other local people. It was the most prosperous it ever was in Sugar Point as a community. They had raised money through bingo, donations, and events that they could use to create community involvement, to have a fund that locally provided assistance to the community in which we lived.

Growing up my family had a neighbor who was over all of the time. Like all young children, we accepted each other without question. She and I would play all the time when she wasn't with my sisters, and she always tried to pee like a guy. Kids never question such things, but I still am being reminded of the day I showed up at her house, and I needed help to get dressed at that time in my life. I showed up in a little dress that was one of my sisters, and being that it was a Saturday morning, there were more than the normal amount of people who had seen me. Our neighbor and friend still to this day, would always say to me throughout life and still from time to time, "Matthew muffins, where's your dress"?

Around the age of seven, my uncle (who was really just one of my dad's good friends), had sat me down and said that he wanted to tell me a story. It was winter time and he started by saying "this might happen to you someday". He had been waking up in the middle of the night and he slept with his window open. One night he started to hear what he thought was the wind. He explained how it sounded like a voice was calling him. He disregarded it as the wind, and over a short period of a month or so, multiple times this had happened. Until one night he listened closer and he clearly heard his name being called or it seemed to sound as if it were. My uncle went outside, and there was an old man standing in his yard away from the

house. The old man said “you must help them”, and he had seen a vision of animals. My uncle said “that is why I became a conservation officer.” It’s funny but in hindsight he was staying with us because of poaching a deer, but I know a couple things now. One is that he was adopted by my grandmother, and in our way that is binding, so wouldn’t my uncle be equal to my father when it comes to hunting and gathering rights regardless of him being white? And that the vision was not about saving the animals, but the spirits of those animals because those spirits are what keeps our people and nation strong.

Just to give you an idea of how well respected my dad was, and the faith everyone must have had in me for unknown reasons still at this time. When I was in fourth grade, he came to the Student of the Month awards ceremony, where I was given an award and recognized by the student body. He brought me some gifts, a new sled, some clothes, a toy, but the coolest thing of all, an emerald green buck knife. Now it doesn’t end there. Mrs. Doro, my 4th grade teacher said “I will show you what your father has in this box really quickly, but take it in the bathroom”, now my friends, Darrel and Steven Johnson, Israel White, Dustin Kitchenhoff, and Jamie Sizenbach reaching for what we thought was an innocent and trustworthy look, or what we thought should look like, as one person abiding by her rules that I was going to be the only one to see what was in the box. We were all amazed, but of course I had to give it back to her until after school. She reminded me that I was not to take it out of my backpack until I got home. Which I gladly honored her by bullshitting her with the utmost honesty of a ten year old.

Around the time I was nine a few things happened historically worth mentioning. One is from the excitement of the new democratic president Bill Clinton. I do not remember the details, but I did send a letter to the president with actual concerns about our people. I remember my mother and my oldest sister Leah telling me the address of General Delivery 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington D.C. I had received a letter thanking me and addressing my concerns along with a

picture of Bill's family. Not many people remember this part, but school was just finishing for the summer break. It was the only time us kids in that community were told to stay inside, with strict rules of a minimum of 6 hours. I remember watching planes flying over the trees a few hundred feet back and forth, but I do not know why and never bothered after no one seemed to remember it happened.

The summer that I had turned 9, I heard the wind for the first time in my life, where it clearly was more than the everyday taken for granted sound of the wind. I didn't think of what it was until much later in my life. My mother, sisters and I were sleeping together in an upstairs bedroom that night. There was a bed dismantled and the box spring was laid at an angle in front of the window facing the road, so no one was sleeping near the window. I could hear the breathing of my mother and sisters, and it was the middle of the night around 2 or 3 a.m.. the window was open, and below the window and coming from the ground I could hear it slowly get louder and louder until it was clear, something was whispering my name, but it was clearly a sound behind the sound that I thought it originally was. I do not know why I had crawled onto the box spring in front of the window. I was afraid of everything back then, but I somehow managed to fall asleep. I never looked out the window, but looking back it seems like I was positioning myself in front of any danger that might come to my mom and sisters.

Around the beginning of the summer when I turned age 10, I started to develop a relationship with my grandmother Lillian Gale, and later my aunt Dolly Robinson. My dad had given me the responsibility of mowing my grandmother's lawn, and grandma would give me \$20.00 each time I mowed the lawn. She always had a Fingerhut magazine that I would look at all the nice cool things that were in there that would boast of small easy payments of the items it contained for sale. Then one day I saw my first love, a cherry red electric guitar. I didn't even know how to play a guitar back then, but I loved how that thing looked. My grandmother said we could save up the money I was making by mowing the lawn to buy it. I

ended up spending the money, but she helped plant the seed along with my dad's desire, for my want to learn how to play the guitar.

Now my dad was an alcoholic according to current views, but there are many different ways of saying you get relief by... and well you know some people breath, some people have sex or gamble, and my dad loved pledging his allegiance to the "King of Beers" Budwieser, and without even having to check, most people had a respect that sprung from curiosity and life experience, but my sister's and I, just like most other families would have to say that we had the greatest dad ever.

We were staying at my aunt Stella's house down the road. My dad made repairs to it, while she was out of town, and while it would be empty enough without having to step over anyone to get the things done that he needed to. I must have been staying with my mother that night he passed out on the side of the road. He had said that my cousin Terry Robinson senior was driving home, and as he rounded one of the corner's on his way home, he couldn't avoid noticing my dad. My dad was asleep in his truck, parked in what could be considered a dangerous place to park and sleep, considering the vehicle was running and it was still in drive position. Assuming that my dad had probably drank too much, but most importantly had more proof that he worked until such situations would happen, where he would work himself and push himself to his limits. Well Terry had moved the vehicle further around the corner so he was safe and left him in his truck. When he woke up, he thought he was experiencing DT's (Delirium Tremens) from his drinking because there was a large spherical light, but not uniform in the sense of a ball, floating just above the trees. He started driving home and it followed him. There was no beer when he got home, so clearly he needed one to figure this light in the sky situation out. So he went to my uncle Darrel's house who owned his own bar at the time, so he figured he was just getting home about that time of day. He said that he was too tired to wake up and join him. My dad then decided he would go to his friends camp site who was staying in Federal Dam, and his name was Shawn

Martinez. When he got there, Shawn and his wife offered him a beer, and his girlfriend both acknowledged that was clearly what they were all seeing.

Shawn grabbed a camera and his camcorder and they went over to the old Soo Line train bridge and started taking pictures. When all of a sudden the batteries died and the camera was not responsive regardless of what he tried. Shawn then got out his camcorder and they started taking a video. It recorded only for a few seconds, when the batteries died on the camcorder and he just got the battery off the charger before they left. My dad said they watched it until just before sunrise and it just took off into the sky. He would always tell me and my sisters stories about it and say “spooky.....hummummmummmummm”, which my sisters and I always laughed at.

Without saying, being that my father had issues with alcoholism, I would like to correct the alcoholic stereotype. My father was gifted in a lot of way's, either that from which experience could only give discipline, and a lot of something that still to this day, I could never really explain, but a lot of people in this world have seen it in people that have a way of leaving a significant impression on you. Having no separation from the spirit world that exists right in our world all around and in us, is the sum that I can conclude, regarding such explanations or way;s to create closure. I know now that instead of listening to the direction of the spirits, that he chose to have a relationship with his children first, and that should never be choice, although I myself complicated this view for a long time in my life. Drinking beer was what he liked, and it also according to most other people who seem to have no experience in the direct opposite person's life. In addition to never seem to just avoid becoming part of their life. People say that use of drug's and alcohol drown out the connectivity with our spiritual realm, but then clearly hypocritically, using peyote and in modern medicine, there has been opium use for years for its ability to curb pain, when it is clearly critical and there is the possibility of going into shock. Our dad invested in our seeking of knowledge when we were children, and he didn't

leave a nest egg for us kids when he passed. He made the choice of making sure we could handle everything in life, by personally taking the time to make sure. This has led all three of us to a deeper understanding of wisdom, direction, and support to go through and attain anything in our lives, while providing a loving environment and place to always call home, my dad was a comical expert, and cocky.

That all aside, whenever he had gotten a little hammered, I would try and wake him up, and it was impossible to wake him up. Sometimes I think it was an act in order to get me over my fears. So at night when I felt scared and I couldn't wake him up, I would run to my grandmother's house. Her name was Lillian Gale or "Skokem" which was a name my dad would call her, but our family still acknowledges her simple great way of life and living. She lived about a half mile away from my aunt Stella's, and I would run as fast as I could at night, when I couldn't wake him up. I would run to grandma's house, and I would close my eyes and run, only opening my eyes to see if I was on the road. When I got there, I wouldn't be showing fear or excitement, but rather would politely knock on the door, and regardless of how soft I would knock, it was like she was waiting for me. One time my shirt was still wet and she did not have a dryer, so she set up one of the racks from the oven to dry it out. I had just fallen asleep when I heard her saying "oh oh", and I got up to check, and we laughed when we discovered that the oven had burned a hole in my shirt. I love my grandmother through eternity for having that moment. She really was a great individual, with the simple mistakes like that I realize that is what counts when we look back. Those little moments of happiness.

My dad taught me to drive when I was five years old, and by the time I was eight I could drive a stick shift by myself while he rode along. That year he bought himself a newer vehicle, a Ford Bronco II. He would always tell me that if anything happened to him that he wanted to know that I could handle driving out of that situation.

It wasn't very long when my first time I was pulled over by the local Cass County cop Bob Curbowski. I was kind of in fear when the officer said he was taking me to jail because I was only 11. At the last road leaving town he turned back on to the side street and said you are lucky I know your dad. My fear was quickly erased when they were discussing what happened on the ride home, because the officer was not going to let me or my dad drive home, but were laughing when he said "he did everything right, I just couldn't see anyone in the car driving". I had been yelled at a little bit when we got home, but he never forgot to bring it up over the years and laugh with me.

The following summer when I was turning eleven, my aunt Dolly had started to come pick me up and spend time with me. She would take me visiting people with her and I would get to spend the night with her over at my uncle Darrel and aunt Sandie's house. That time was fun with her. She once had taken me to a local restaurant owned by a local lady, that has been around the area like most people from here, or for the duration of her life. She owned the restaurant that was formerly located down by the public access to Leech Lake in Federal Dam, MN. That was a time when her and my uncle Kirk Kottenmeyer or "Captain Kirk," as the locals called him, were selling their convenience store. While at the restaurant she allowed me to order whatever I wanted. She had to point out to the staff of the restaurant, whom she knew very well what it was that I had requested to eat, and was laughing when I said I wanted a chicken caesar salad with sweet tea. She looked at me, laughing thinking I needed to put some weight on, because I was a very skinny and small kid. She thought that since I was going out for the first time that I was ever able to order what I wanted, that I should be fattened up in no time, considering my skinny self still to this day. My mom and dad never had just some crap food at our house. Later after their divorce, mom always had a consistent variation of different recipes. I still remember my dad cooking for us, and he would

be so shocked that hamburger helper was so easy and in a box. My, my, what will they think of next.

Around this time in my life, my dad had been teaching me the fundamentals of living off the land when he could. At the age of around ten, he had already entrusted me to use a gun, and due to the pull back weight of the compound bow that he had given me, didn't think that I would figure out a way to use my leg's and arm's to pull back the 75 pounds of weight. Well, I came across an old .22 caliber rifle in a small shed he had built at our house. So it only makes sense that my dad had had no clue it was there, since I am sure that the man that never forgot a thing in my life had put it there. There was another friend named Gerald Northbird who I had done a lot of duck hunting with when we were younger. Gerald, Israel and I thought we could be cool, with a sawed off gun, when really it did not improve its capabilities. It was the type that did not have a magazine or clip, and had a similar but smaller barrel below the top one that it used to reload itself. So when we cut the barrel off and shortened the stock, we were now as real as one could imagine it would look like. We had thrown the evidence in the water across from my house. A year after my dad had passed away, I was working on fixing the floor in the utility room at our house. While under the house I found the barrel of the .22 that we had thrown into the water 25 years before in the top rung of a cinder block, and on the bottom was a pure white packet of pepper, from the disposable utensil kits that we served my fathers celebration of life meal with, after he had been found dead. There is no possible way either of these could have got down there, let alone for the black pepper packet to still be pure white. There was so much moisture underneath the house that it would have started to turn brown in a matter of hours. Unless a certain person were to actually admit the truth, I could do nothing but assume forever about how it actually had been placed back in my life, and underneath the house.

In the utility room there was a large hole in the floor and due to a slight miscommunicated misfortune of my friend Israel. He had come to stay with me

once he found out he had end stage liver disease. He had told me that the doctor he was seeing had given him an estimated 6 months to live. I wanted to confirm that this was what was said, so I asked Israel to speak with his nurse and he said yes. Of course that is what they had all tried to confirm with me, but trust me when I say that I know better. So I just prayed at that point for help for my friend and the knowledge to be able to help.

As a confidence building exercise we started to replace the floor in the utility room and had cut up the plywood on the floor to replace it. I had let him run the saw, knowing full well this was something he had never done. This instilled a new confidence in him that allowed him to heal. Also it allowed him to put his focus on something that was dangerous and could hurt him. By taking his mind off the idea of what could be, I had reset the trauma in him for what is reality, with the simple request to help me do something from which there was a clear and present danger.

He had called out of the blue one day, and had asked for money. I asked why and he broke down and told me he was going to die. Now this is my best friend, and has been all my life. I got him a ticket to ride a bus to Cass Lake. He then came to my house, and I could tell that he was sick. For the first three days I was easy on him and accepted his need to acclimate to what I was about to do. On the night of the third day before he went to bed, I had informed him that things were going to change a little with the way that I would be treating him. He said it was going to be ok, but of course was still in the mind set that he was going to die. The next morning he said good morning, and I replied good morning as well. I waited for him to start talking about dying. I then said “fuck you, your my best fucking friend and I would go out and harvest a liver from a kid if that is what it takes!” Now he was taken aback by this, and that was all part of his healing. Over the next couple days I never let up on him. I kept increasing the reality of how far I would go for him, while pointing out that I would really go and take another life for him, be it an adult or not. You see, the trauma he was experiencing was from the life he was

living in the Duluth wet house called “San Marco.” When people are together they start to evolve into the same type of definitions. The doctor was used to telling people that they would die, because that is what the person had already come to accept.

Just like women working together in the same building starting to have the same menstrual cycle. We are all connected in sync by a higher power, that allows for us to live in a biological and organic harmony. You see this throughout the environment in birds, fish, and any other type of flora and fauna that live in a group fashion. We are just as organic as the rest of what is placed on this earth.

After those couple of days he went back to San Marco, but he decided to enter treatment. One month later he called and informed me that the same doctors had told him he did not have anything to worry about anymore, basically nevermind, our bad. How many of our people succumb to another’s belief when it comes to death. Do not believe any other person no matter who they think they are. It is in your own personal belief and knowledge from God that is real and can heal your entire life. My friend Israel is still alive today, and has been living the most independently he has ever had, without any worry of death. Although, we must remind ourselves that we can not forget that we had achieved this knowledge only because of the unhealthy inconsideration that we never placed with ourselves.

The next experience I had that was truly spiritually inspired was when my sisters had moved in with dad and I. We were living in a house that was owned by a local elder named Sam Goose. That summer I was participating in little league again, with my two friends Donald Geving and Jerrin Wilson. Our coach was a guy named Bob Kvasnicka, and he had and still has a very pleasant but beautiful wife named Krine. My dad had said that when he was young, he had been a pitcher and of course, like father like son, wanted for me to be one as well. He would practice with me from time to time in the front yard. He made me consider the art of

pitching and he would ask me to go as far as to try and throw a knuckleball. Each time I had no success but my sister Leah had taught me and others growing up to keep at it until you get it. Like I said though, my dad would drink so much I could not wake him up.

My sisters would come home late, and when he was awake, he would wield his parenting professionalism by informing them of their wrong doing of being out late, especially with all their shenanigans from before they lived with us. I mention this because at 12 and 14 they were the owners of the biggest party house, and I never got to attend. I was only ten, but the fact is that my sisters threw the best parties. Both of my sisters have since grown into more family oriented partying, but Leah was always the creative one. They were from a generation that could handle having fun, looking out for each other, and no one really ever got hurt beyond a little regret of the thoughtless adolescent choices we make when we are young.

One night I heard the exterior screen door open and then the interior door open. It was then that I was accustomed to yell “he is drunk and passed out, it's ok”. Only this time, there was no voice to answer. Now my bedroom door was open, and I remember seeing someone standing in the living room, and I thought my eyes were playing tricks on me. But clearly there was a small person that was maybe four feet tall in a top hat and long coat. It was a jet black silhouette and almost appeared as two dimensional it was the eyes that stood out. They shined like diamonds in the sun. It never moved, and I just shrugged it off due to my fear of accepting that that was actually there. It was later that night, I had a dream where I was running on what looked like dock sections between bases on a baseball field, and then I was standing at the mound and I threw a knuckleball that went down and up.

A couple days later, same scenario. Only this time the bedroom door was closed. The interior door opened and I said the usual. That's when I heard the first step of something big, entering the kitchen area of the house, and each step after it seems had taken forever. Now me and my dad shared a room, but of course he was

sleeping and drunk, but there was a small gap underneath the door and light had shown through it. Without any doubt in my mind, I saw the light disappear like something was in front of the bedroom door. That's when my fear kicked into overdrive, so I hid underneath my blankets. Then I heard the door open and through the light through the blankets I saw a shadow moving towards me slowly, and each step from something that weighed a ton. But it came and stood by my left side. Now I know, that was what saved me now. That was the spirit of Jesus. It was funny too, because I was so scared, but it just stood there. I remember getting to the point of realizing that no matter what it was, I had to face it. My dad would always tell me to face the music growing up, but at this time I never had taken that into account. So I got the courage to face it and prepared myself. I jumped up and prepared for attack, I couldn't believe that nothing was there, but it was around 2 a.m. that that had happened each night. I was standing there bewildered after realizing my surroundings were not what I expected, because it was nine in the morning and my dad walked in and asked if I wanted breakfast. Now I can only say that God is amazing, but where did the time go. I could have sworn that it could have been no longer than one hour that I was underneath the blanket before I jumped up. I am still praising Yahweh for the amazing ability he has.

Later after breakfast I had to just let my experience go to confusion and at that time had no way to rationalize what had happened. My dad asked me to practice pitching after finishing eating, so we went out to the front yard. He had asked me to try throwing a knuckleball and I gave it a shot. Neither of us could believe it when it happened, but it went up and down just like in my dream. As soon as the ball hit his glove, his face went blank, he dropped the ball and walked inside without saying anything. I waited a few minutes before joining him inside, and when I got in there, he had a couple beers finished already, and he said "sit down kid, I gotta talk to you. The other day I had a dream where you were running on pallets or dock sections, and you threw a knuckleball like you just did out there". I am sure when we confirmed we had the same dream, that was the deciding factor for what followed.

We looked at each other and decided we were going to get away from home for awhile. So for the next week we went visiting friends and family and staying at their houses. We went back home one day, and we were both skeptical about returning home. We stopped at the mailbox, and he asked me, “do you feel like going home”? I said not really, so he said well check the mailbox, and inside there was a check for a little over seven hundred dollars he was not expecting, so we stayed gone from home for about another week.

When we finally came home, we decided we would stay up all night and set a net for fish. We went and checked it around midnight, which I now know is not a good idea, but there were a few fish in the net we got, and set the net again for the night. We stayed up all night, and around 6 a.m. we went and retrieved the net, but I will never forget the color of the air. It had turned a completely hazy shade of purple.

Now there was an older lady named Elmie Swanson that lived in Federal Dam, and my dad wanted to bring her a northern that we had caught. We were on our way when the storm had hit. We could not see a thing, and right outside of Federal Dam, I heard my dad say “oh holy shit”! That is when an 80 foot spruce tree was thrown on top of the car. We came to a complete stop, and with the front window shattered, my dad backed out from underneath. I remember as soon as we passed the city limit sign and the first road of Federal Dam called the Peter’s pond road, the storm seemed to be contained behind glass, because it just stopped. There wasn’t even any wind, when clearly a hundred feet ago, there was a tornado or something equivalent. I was literally watching it happening. Well I am sure it was from the shock of the storm, but that sweet little old lady wasn’t feeling sweet that morning, and sent us on our way. Of course my dad was determined to do good with this fish. So there was another elder named Glen Campbell that my dad would call “The Wichita Lineman”. Just our luck, while coming into Boy River, another 80 foot pine tree was across the road, and since we just drove directly back into the

storm, he couldn't see it as we drove right through it. We were a bit perplexed, but he went inside, and when I woke up, it was a beautiful day when I woke up in the car. When we returned home, the house was damaged pretty badly and we lived without electricity for about three weeks, but it wasn't all that bad. The entire community had felt that storm but no one was hurt.

The next year, my Aunt Lavina and uncle Frank Marion, had invited me and my oldest sister Leah out to Olney, Maryland which is where they lived. My adopted cousin Michelle was always my favorite. I remember being young and she would carry me around and play with me. When they were around, our whole family would seem to come together, in a way not only her but all those throughout my life who love me, are constantly picking me up and carrying me whether they are aware of it or not just by being an example to live by. My aunt Lavina had found a discount on Amtrak tickets through the purchase of the Disney movie "The Aristocats." Leah and I learned how to travel by that trip. We packed food and the few things that we would need to spend as little money as possible, and stuck together. She wanted to walk around the Chicago area when we had a short layover, but the East coast West coast gangster rap had me a little scared of the tough streets of Chicago. Later my dad's friend Earl Machart whom I would call "unkle." Would boast about how tough they are in Chicago. I call him my uncle with a k because he is very different but almost family just the same. I like the way he makes you earn his friendship. He may be tough, but one of the best people to be in your corner.

When we were out in the Olney area my aunt had arranged for my sister to have a job for Indian Health Service. While they were going to be at work, I would be home alone. So my aunt asked me what I wanted to do in my life, or what I wanted to do with my life. My sister had chosen to learn how to play guitar, and my aunt said our family was artistic. She said my uncle Burt did wood burning drawings, Leah had played saxophone throughout school, and that she could yodel. So following in tow, I said I wanted to be an artist to give her an answer, how the

hell did I know what I wanted right? Of course I didn't expect her to follow up with another question. The neighbors had a pool, there was a home gym set up with punching bags, a pool table, and of course, what every red blooded native wanted access to in 1996 that was from the reservation cable. So her question was "well what kind of an artist"? I think I can thank Eddie Murphy from his role in "The Distinguished Gentleman" for my answer, which is still odd how quickly I replied "con".

I had taken the suggestion of taking a class in a martial art at a local YMCA type of setting called Tang Su Do. This was a combination of Tae Kwon Do and Jujitsu. I advanced very fast due to my uncle's constant work with me since he was a black belt in this discipline. Although I was tested to see what I understood about what I knew when he would ask me to perform the various punches, blocks, kicks and different kata styles that are a requirement of each belt degree level. I don't think I have ever tried to use it in any way other than me trying to be defiant with my dad.

When we got home from our trip I had side kicked him in the chest because we were not getting along and he was drunk, he handled it pretty well, and later would laugh and say I "kung fooed him.", I am not really proud of those mistakes, but he made me feel comfortable still knowing we were both wrong in those types of situations. In addition to the martial arts class, the 1996 summer Olympics were going on. My uncle and I paid attention to the different events pretty closely, but they were aware of my running. My uncle had been exercising himself a lot, and he involved me when he went to the track. That is when I was inspired to participate in the 2000 Sydney Olympics. I trained really hard, and my uncle made it seem easy when he would steadily keep me focused. Of course I had to run circles around the track on him, it comes with the territory of trying to be the best, right?

One day I wanted to do something different and feel like what I did was making a positive difference, and plus I was jealous as heck of my sister. She was

always perfect and still my personal inspiration to always exceed in anything. She was the one person who taught me that a no never meant no, it just meant not that way, which really taught me to never stop trying to go for my dreams. Well any way, that day I had started looking at cook books, and I found out how to make chili. So of course, large illustrative wording and complication must be the best way to make chili. Ever since then I have never made chili with cloves, but regardless of the robust stench due to my expertise in measurement with the cloves, it tasted pretty good. Throughout the rest of the summer I never attempted the cooking for us, but I did get to watch Metallica videos on cable, and Kirk Hammett was the most amazing guitarist to me at that time. We had also had the chance to go to the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C. and went to the play “Beauty and the Beast”, and later went to New York to watch the play “Cats” on Broadway. I remember just thinking that that play in New York is why the rest of the world thinks people from New York are different and weird, I was raised in Disney.

What me and my sister returned home to were two different worlds. She went home to her now husband's house. I went home to my dad's house where he was drunk and probably depressed because I hadn't been around and like I feel as a parent of a sixteen year old now, feeling a little mediocre because every parent wishes for all the time in the world with their children when it's already passed or passing. Like myself currently, it was a lesson that had to be ingrained in our being throughout the hard lessons of life, when it comes to the fight within oneself for how to be and be completely happy with the influences around us. Plus when society says that you have an issue, they always keep up the accepted default of drinking and depression, in addition to wreaking havoc on the ones around you through their concerns, and accept all the pity you can get to get through these minor issues. Believe me, when that is all you are taught through everything around you, it is very hard to get creative and let that water come sliding down the proverbial ducks back of life.

Throughout life, relief boils down to just comfort, and what is it that can make you feel the most comfortable?

Due to my selfish need for new clothes, which I am not sure when that had started, but was probably just a phase. I was two weeks late to start my first year as a 7th grader. My first day was going pretty well, until my 6th hour class at the gym. Now because I was late and didn't even have an idea of what school would consist of for me, and due to the socially acceptable uniform of baggy clothes due to gangster rap. I found out that everyone had done a mile run, to see how they would perform in such an event. So lucky me, all my new and old friends were in and out of the gym, watching from time to time, me run in baggy clothes attempting to do my best. Now I forgot the dream of being in the Olympics, and really was just shocked at how this would affect my popularity, which actually I found is what I do when I have a heavy task. I go to my dream world. I do not think of what I am dealing with. Upon finishing the last lap of the Northland Remer schools dirt track, the teacher Scott Bachman was all shocked when he read the timing of like 6 minutes and 46 seconds. I had never thought of time as a factor, I just ran when I needed to. He also did the mile run with the other kids, which while physically and mentally prepared, and with the proper attire such as gym shorts, ran a time of 7 minutes and fifty something seconds. So I guess not bad for someone who was more self conscious of this event affecting his personal popularity.

I made it two weeks into school and I let what others thought prevent me from continuing towards the Olympics. It was with a few friends, Mike Watson, Darrel Mitchell Jr. or "Son", and my cousin Byron Whitebird at an older ladies apartment in Remer, named Deanna. She would let us drink and smoke marijuana at her apartment. It was then that I started to smoke cigarettes. Tobacco in a pouch that we smoked out of a pipe, just like Sherlock Holmes, that first time. Not that that provided any class to our mindless actions that are still some of the best memories I have. Even with the dream of running in the Olympics fading fast, my friends all

wanted me to participate in basketball. Everyone who was on the team had been practicing already and of course I started late. So I was unable to play in a few games, but it was a great experience when I finally got to play. All my friends and my younger sister Renee who is two years older than me attended my first game. Now with all the hype of gangs from gangster rap. Mike, Son, Byron and son's younger brother James who we call Goob, had used the same gang sign as the Vice Lords that they adopted into their own little gang. I still can't figure out how from the VL sign that they came up with, PPH, or Pimps, Playas, and Hoes. In hindsight, there was no reason to place logic with their reasoning, it was all just for fun, just kids wanting to be as significant as a large organized group. We all at some point in life pursue being part of something bigger with a sense of support in brotherhood. I see how my own young mind has evolved to maturity over the years as to want better for those around me, rather than just myself. That was not a factor when my friends were all there to see me play all 54 seconds of the last quarter of the game, and in that time, I scored 4 points, stole the ball once, and even was set up to shoot two free throws, but so excited I was shaking, I missed both shots, but not too shabby as my cousin Steve Gale would say.

So one day my cousin Byron had asked Son to come stay at his place for the weekend. Now my best friend Israel and I joined up with them. We were looking for something to do, and they had just returned from a neighbors house down the road where they stole a carton of Pall Mall cigarettes without filters. They had dared me to stick a worm in my mouth since the ground was littered with them after the rain, in exchange for a couple of packs of cigarettes. Done! Well we kept walking in the direction where they just absconded with the stolen cigarettes and not because they were courageous, but really hard headed. We went down to the lake across from another elder couples house in the community. Ken and Debra Brown had a few daughters, Cindy was the oldest, followed by Lisa and Jenny, or as we all use to call her "glug", due to her own father's personal choice for a nickname. Well of course between all of us our combined mental ability to comprehend that this boat and

motor we stumbled upon belonged to Kenny, equaled to what you view on the toilet paper when wiping your rear end. So lucky for us, Byron and Son knew what they were doing when it came to starting a boat motor. Now since the plug to let the water out of the boat was not in its proper place, the boat was filling with water, and after we started moving it ran out and we got the plug put in. Down the shoreline about a mile, we went to shore due to the waves getting bigger. We were getting wet and we lost interest from the excitement of what little we knew was considered grand theft of a boat. This was Sugar Point, the elders for some reason would tolerate our cluelessness of respect for another's property, man these people love us, or have just been through a whole hell of a lot worse.

Well the next day, Israel and I went looking for Byron and Son. They were walking from where the boat was left and were drenched up to the chest. They of course lied to us saying that it was no longer there, and they "tried to look for it", I mean obviously them being that wet was to convey the idea that they went to the utmost extreme in their search. Now Israel and I had been going to the same school every year with each other, and also had been next door neighbors in addition to best friends. But at that time, we just looked at each other knowing full well that they were trying to cover up their tracks, in case we had told on them. You know those looks you get from your best friend that only you two know and you know the message was received. Clearly this was mostly influenced by Son I am sure now, and Byron was just a helpful accomplice. Later that night when me and my dad returned from shopping in Grand Rapids, I seen the police lights in front of Byron's house, which later became a regular thing for me and him. Not at my house, but always at Byron's house. So of course, being the criminal mastermind I was, I had set out to go to my older friends house in Bena named Phil Delapaus.

How Phil and I got to know each other was from the only person I ever considered my real older brother, Leedon Beaulieu and his brother Jesse. I think it was around fourth or fifth grade, the road that goes through our community was

paved. It was a whole new world to us then. Everyone in the community would just be together, all the time walking up and down the road. Sometimes the number of us would be around 20 give or take, but this affected our springtime mud season when we got to miss a couple days of school due to the road not being accessible, It was a while until all the parents realized they had to commute to work and remembered we all had very useful legs. I'd like to think that our bus driver Duane Sepin actually could not live without seeing our little faces at least five times a week maximum, so as a man from God's country, would definitely prevail through rain, snow or even stuck behind my uncle Andrew Johnson. His spirit name is Noodin, which means wind in Ojibwe. Noodin would drive ten miles an hour everywhere at all times of the day. So if there was rush hour traffic, which I could understand to be hell in the twin cities, but not in a community of maybe fifty people with usable transportation. Of that amount maybe thirty had been commuting to work around the same time. But by the grace of God, and a million years under his belt as a bus driver for every ancestor that I could ask in person, he was on time, every time.

Well I started walking towards our former house, which was a trailer down the road to hide out. It was vacant, and no one that I thought would try to find me there. It was real quiet and dark, and of course there has to be an old burial ground right next door that was overgrown with trees where a tipi used to be. I don't know, nor ever asked why this was, and even later where it went. But I was well aware of the story we were told when we were young. So I started to become paranoid due to inactivity of any cars passing by the trailer house. So I figured it had to be any time when they would discover my hideout, so I started to walk towards Bena. It was dark and had to be around 9 p.m., but I was determined to never go quietly. So when a car would appear I would get in the ditch to hide. Just my luck it had rained a lot that year. So the ditches were as far as I could get. The water where I would go in was up to my chest somehow every time I had to hide, so why continue to the safety of the woods, right? Plus the added factor that it was mid October did not compute due to my determination and mindless focus on making a clean getaway. It

was around 12:30 p.m. or so that I gave up hiding. I made it to a place on Cass County road 73 we locals called the sliding hill. Let's face it, our people are gifted in many ways and I found out luck has nothing to do with it. Well a couple brothers named John and Jerry Mitchell just so happened to come driving along, and I still yet to figure out why he was in that truck, but the name of that man is Ron Burnette. Coincidentally the grandfather of the woman I am completely in love with today.

Now Ron had been a bus driver for as long as I can remember for the Bugonaygeshig school located between Bena and Cass Lake. I had rarely ever seen this man, let alone ever thought about this man drinking. Yet there he was, and they picked me up and let me go with them all night visiting. There was an elder named Jack Hammer, that later in life was eaten by a bear after he died in the woods close to his house. Then another elder named Curtis Pickett. Now my dad bought me a guitar the Christmas before with assistance from his good childhood friend Rick Lego, over the years Rick has taught me a lot about playing music on the guitar, along with his son Clay who is really good at playing my style of music. I hadn't really learned to play it yet at all besides making loud sound at that time. But to listen to this guy Curt was amazing and inspired me to learn how to play from that point on. During that night, Ron was telling me all kinds of stories and even gave me a couple beers. He limited me only to a couple and he didn't let me have more than one every two hours or so, but it made me feel like one of the guys. He told me stories of him driving the bus, and coming across people dead in the snow, but other than that I am sure this was a part of my path to keep me close to the elders.

In the morning, they dropped me off, and I had to go face the music. Funny thing, nobody had a clue, but everyone knew. I kept Israel's name safe, but there was no real trouble, but of course we could count on the two knuckleheads folding somehow, but that didn't matter because there was really only the scare of being questioned by the police, but worst of all, the shame of everyone knowing we had wronged an elder. Which if you give a couple days can be cured by almost anything

to keep your mind off of it, because they loved us. It is really hard to find cheap entertainment around where we live that is exciting enough to get the whole community talking like they will form a posse and go purchasing a pitch fork, or at least borrowing one from a neighbor for the rest of that tools life, and debating whether or not you want to miss out on Wheel of Fortune. Oh the toughest decisions in life are full of sacrifices unknown to everyone except the unfortunate soul making them.

That was the beginning of a life of crime consisting mainly of theft and breaking and entering and criminal damage to property. These are all part of the same crime, but I figure it has got to be a way for a person to really feel bad about what they have done, if a person going into this were to think about it.

My first time in a juvenile center was in the spring of seventh grade. I was placed on probation for entering the former house which we lived. Byron and I had decided that since the lady who lived there was no longer around, and the house was boarded up, that it was obviously abandoned and free to do whatever we wanted with it. Little did we know about it being reservation housing, but we did a pretty good job making a mess. Now I never saw Byron writing the word “shit” on the wall with some paint, but it had me a bit confused when I was picked up in school by a police officer and on our ride to Northwest Men’s Juvenile Center, he asked me “who rubbed shit on the wall?”, and this had me confused, but until I was in my twenties, never figured out that he meant wrote, and not rubbed. In this context, it makes us kids seem a bit off now don’t it?

When I was leaving Sugar Point, the other kids were just getting home to witness the spectacle that was unfolding. Now I got to say that my cousin Curtis Morris did not bat an eye when telling me he told on me for my own good. I was mad, but in hindsight, I am happy he did. That weekend I went to the Northwest Minnesota Juvenile Center. I called my dad, and was hoping since he always had my back, that he was going to go through anything to come get me, but he only said

“do you see what you get for doing such things?” He then hung up on me, I know that it hurt him just as much if not more than it did me.

So summer came and I had gone full blown into freedom. I cannot remember what it was that got me sent to the next place. Its name was Thistledew Wilderness Endeavors program. Now I always lived in my dreams, and never really noticed too much of what others were doing. I was told months before, by the very person I met there that he was going there. I had shown up to court, and from there they sent me to this program in Togo, MN. I was scared, but trying to remain tough. What a relief it was being asked what my name was and when I had told them, my friend Jesse Beaulieu said “Matt”, and I seen him sitting in a bunk bed at the very end of the room. This was one of the greatest experiences that I would have until later in life. The first few days were slow and we were driven to a place nearby, where we were left alone for three days with only a zip lock freezer bag full of food. I am the type to get hungry when I am bored, so by the next day at noon, I had eaten all my food. By the end of the second day I was complaining about not being able to make it to the staff member that came to check on me. I found a rock that was long and oblong shaped, and close to dusk, a rabbit came hopping up to my tent. I had prepared to eat him. Until I realized I had no way to cook him, and it was so beautiful just in its nature, that I watched it and fell asleep. The next morning I had an epiphany. I could eat what I saw the rabbit eating. Anything off the ground was metaphorically and physically beneath me according to my standards. So I went to a small swamp within fifty feet of my camp and found some blueberries, I rolled them up in a maple leaf, and it was such a shock of now having the confidence to see myself surviving throughout the foreseeable future. Which to my luck, was only about nine hours later.

Once they had gathered us all from our camps, the staff had all the soft shell burrito stuffing we could stomach. I thought they had left us for dead. We went back to the main cabin where we all met on the first day. Then we went further north to

Ely, MN, where we went rock climbing and that's when we really were shown what we were made of. After that, we had driven a while to the Superior Hiking Trail where we started a 256 mile hike with backpacks weighing up to 120 pounds. I didn't even weigh that much at that time. In six days we had reached our destination in Grand Marais, MN.

It was amazing how hard they pushed us. We were all really fond of a staff member named Steve. It still makes me laugh because as kids we decided to name him "shitlocks" due to his hair looking like a cocker spaniel who went through a cockle berry bush, and father time had washed away the debris leaving what most people from the rez would consider a nice warm coat. Or at least by a rez dog's standards. Any person from the rez knows that you don't get too close to any dog especially the mangy type that would be reluctant to wear this look. Just like people they come and go. A person has to be very depressed for trying to show empathy for a rez dog and usually is trying to make up for something they feel wrong about. This of course they will never make right. It really is only therapeutic for the dog to finally receive the sporadic blessings of kindness and symptoms of love, which never really lasts long, and comes with the side effects of a combination of cuss words and being told to go away with a kick and a shout.

During my stay at the Cass Lake satellite home, I had a couple things that had happened to me. One was that while on a home visit, Israel and I went out drinking. We ended up going to Remer in his dad's car one night. We got drunk had a pretty good time, and found a case of beer in a garage in Boy River, that was always there whenever we drove by on the bus. I was the one to go and grab it. He dropped me off, and the next day, he had come over, and we decided since I had \$13.00, that we would get another bottle of alcohol. Well my dad would not let me leave, and he decided to go and ask his brother Chad for a ride to go get a bottle. Now, the odd thing about this was that Israel was my very best friend, and to this day, still is. Only after he left, I didn't see him for another 12 years. He never left his house, and

even his dad would tell me he was home, but he would go and hide, and I would explain to him, that I just missed him through the crack of the door. He would always just stay away. Later on when we reconciled, we never discussed it, but I was just happy to have my friend back.

The morning of my birthday June 13, 2010 around 7:30 a.m., we were driving on a dirt road and just kind of cruising along slowly with no destination in mind. We were both high on methamphetamine. Up in front of us we saw a deer crossing the road and it would bend its head down while crossing. I just assumed it smelling for salt or food, and it reached the other side of the road where the ditch was. There was a branch hanging low and it attempted to stand up on its hind legs. The deer didn't reach it on the first attempt. The second attempt threw Israel and I into a confusion. When it got to its full extent and seemed to reach the branch, its front arms rotated backward like someone who would be double jointed, and when the front arms passed the head, black hair fell down its back, and it was a beautiful naked woman. Israel looked at me and I looked at him, he just turned around and we never said a word. He dropped me off at home, and when I got out we said see you later to each other. Two years later, one of us said something to bring it up and we both acknowledged the look we gave each other that day. Israel was the first to say it though, he said "I just remember looking at the look on your face, and I knew you saw what I saw!"

The spring after I turned fourteen, my dad's 50th birthday was going to happen on February 18th. We were on our way to Florida to meet up with my uncle Mike and his son Aaron Storer. The first night we stayed in a hotel somewhere in Indiana. I will not lie. My dad knew what my life would be like and what he was going to do throughout the rest of his. So he really let me do almost anything that any adult could do. All of my family would delegate me as the "designated driver" since I was thirteen, due to the fact that I had been driving since I was five and with little regard that I was probably the drunkest. Fortunately, I am not sure if they knew at

the time, but I really was blessed by our heavenly father. Of course these passengers of mine were my older cousins up to the age of my father of 50.

So we had decided we were going to have a drink at the hotel with some pizza to eat for dinner. Now the car we were in was a 1990 Ford Tempo that was originally my oldest sister Leah's first car. She and my sister in law Jessica Heinle were trying to show off to my two brother-in-laws and race down the Peter's pond road, hit some soft sand and laid the car on its side. We were right behind them, so we were right there watching the car turn on its side. All three of us jumped out to put the vehicle on its wheels, and the girls were standing on the passenger window. Stand back! Men to the rescue! Rather than letting them crawl out the driver's side door, we pushed the car over resulting in these poor damsels in distress falling on one another. Now that I write that, I see my sister Leah is really the only damsel in that situation, due to her hubby being the oldest one and barking orders to me and my other brother-in-law Raymond Geving. We then opened the hood of the car because black smoke was coming from underneath, and total shocker, it was on fire. Ray and Sean told me to pee on it. I wonder why they didn't just take the matter into their own hands being that it was their idea, but of course just like them, I clammed up and couldn't go at the time. I don't think I ever have before, nor after that situation, been in a position that I could not offer my assistance if such an emergency would arise. I am damn certain this was the only time I was asked for my pee. Until recently, I was never asked for this unless it had something to do with probation or a drug test for possible employment. Well all that aside, this chariot had a date with destiny in a little city in Florida named Fort Pierce.

About 4:30 a.m. the next morning my dad had shook me awake. He said we were late, of course we were, and here I thought this was going to be a month long vacation that we had planned. Like the four hills in life, I realized we all go through our phases of understanding, reluctantly I am just realizing this now. So we set out on our journey and at some point not too far down the road, my dad realized we

were both still kind of inebriated. So rising to the occasion, and never having had the opportunity to drive on the interstate which had a speed limit of 70 mph, I volunteered my services with no words just a dignified nod.

Now the speedometer on a Ford Tempo only goes up to 85 mph, and like any decent stallion riding into battle, had a tape deck with a respectable amount of bass produced when the volume was raised to about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the volume turned up. If you ever exceed that limit, you'll run the risk of embarrassment of hearing your factory speakers start to crack from the treble, but to this area of expertise is all the wisdom that I claim to know, if it is even factual I will leave that for you to decide. Some people enjoy a good mystery, or for that matter, being able to put the science together only to find out that me and my dad are meat and potato type of people. What's cool about any native is on the inside of us, how it got there only time will tell or when Jesus returns, I am sure he will give me an answer, as long as I don't have to wait in line like at Disney World's Space Mountain ride.

I had driven a few hours until around 8 a.m. when I began to get tired, not from driving, but more or less because my dad was sleeping, and he would always tell me to never give into that green monster, but of course I was jealous. We found a Wal-Mart parking lot and both slept for a while when we reached Chattanooga, Tennessee. The rest of the ride was okay, until we reached the mountains, where the car would overheat due to having a weak heart I am sure, but it allowed for us to take our time and enjoy the things we both never seen or had before, like drive through liquor stores. About a day and a half later, we finally arrived at my uncle Mike's place.

Now there are only a couple highlights I will point out. One was that my uncle Mike had informed my dad that he had achieved possessing a captains license for his sail boat which part of the reason for us going there, was to sail to the Bahamas to the island of Bimini. At that point it was becoming more clear to me, we are all dreamers, or for that matter great bulshitters, because once we got there, we went to

go see the boat. Only it was not in the water, it was sitting about 300 feet inland on some concrete blocks. When I was really young I was a Teddy Rupskin fan, but they could not pull the wool over this little lamb's eyes. I was in the ninth grade at that time you see, and I knew how to connect the dots. Plus I didn't see where the gravity drive in this vessel would fit any way. When I was younger, I had seen the first cell phone that was in a bag and it had a cord on it, so being years later I did remain optimistic, mainly for my dad's sake you see. and due to technology advancement that was unknown to me, but mostly because of plain stupidity.

So that was our first night in Florida with my uncle and cousin Aaron. What amazed me at the time, was that my uncle and cousin both smoked marijauna. So on our way to the boat, me and my cousin drove to a street known as Avenue D. That was it's real name. That is where we scored a bag of really, really good stuff, or at least to a teenager from Sugar Point. Nowadays there is so much potency to the stuff these kids smoke, I would rather not even look at it in fear of catching some sort of contact buzz. Other than that we had gone for a ride throughout the islands nearby with a couple of rubber rafts known as dinghies a few days later.

One night I was acting up and being a pain to my dad, I declared I was going to set out on my own for home. I had been drinking and smoking weed while playing guitar in the entryway of the trailer house. I would play and drink by myself, and was starting to get lonely for my nephew Anthony and my sister Renee. That little guy would follow me everywhere. I loved taking him for rides in my moms bike that had a baby seat on the back. I did almost everything with him then, he was my little shadow.

So I set off in I am not even sure was north, but ended up climbing a fence and dropping about fifteen feet down to a clear very well kept field. I had been on a golf course before, but this was a new land to me, so even with the elephant in the room flags clearly standing in a hole, I didn't realize that I was on one. The thing that was weird to me was the three to five foot shadows that were low to the ground

scurrying away. I must have walked in a circle or read the north star incorrectly, for I had not developed my native sense of direction yet, but was mainly laughing to myself thinking Harriet Tubman would probably never made par on this course. Well I realized I was going to have to dread facing that I couldn't make it in the wild once again. I climbed the same fence in the same place where I entered the golf course. The next day I told my cousin as we were driving somewhere I can't remember where. Along the way he had to prove to me where I was and what I had seen, and I am very happy he did. They were alligators.

The next activity that we had gone out to do was deep sea fishing. My uncle said that we were to catch a fish called a grouper. I had never seen these fish, so guessing when I caught one was out of the question. There was a jar of money that was a five dollar bet for whoever caught the largest grouper. Not one person caught one, but one person caught a lobster, another a manta ray, and of course the jackass who had taken the liberty of casting, caught a pelican. I only point this out because I learned through observing this first, because naturally my instincts were the same.

Well I dropped the oversized eagle claw hook that had squid on it for bait in the water, reeled it up, and like here in Minnesota with nightcrawlers, added two more to grease the wheels a bit. When fishing for walleye, about six to twelve inches from the bottom is ideal. It didn't occur to me as we hit around 12 miles from shore that 500 foot buildings were disappearing on the horizon, but I mean how deep could it really be, right? I continued to keep letting line out like I would sense when it hit the bottom of the ocean floor, which I am sure now, I was never even close. All of a sudden when I started to think that I wasn't going to catch anything. I started to reel in and the pole started to get heavier and heavier. Trying to save face and not show weakness, I was debating whether or not to place a foot on the back of the boat for support as to not go in the water. The people standing near to me were asking if I had a fish on, and I politely said no, it had to be a boot or something because that made perfect sense. The shark I had on became visible

after about ten minutes, and was about six feet long. Wow! Well that was the biggest fish caught that day, and because there is a law where only two sharks are allowed on board at any time, one of which my uncle caught that was around 8 pounds, I could not claim that fish. The captain came up and cut my line and away swam the biggest fish I had ever caught in my life. So as a result, and not one person catching a grouper, I was not entitled to the \$125.00 that was in the jar awarding the winner for the biggest fish caught. It had to be on board with us.

The next adventure was down in Key West. We were going there to go scuba diving. I had the opportunity to practice in the community pool in the trailer park where my uncle lived. So now we were off to really go see some cool stuff. Well we got to see the older bridge that was next to the new bridge where the movie “True Lies” was filmed. What was funny was along the way we kept seeing billboard signs about key deer. Dad and I were both laughing as of course we were masters of our domain when it came to hunting, About an hour later, neither one of us caught the group of deer just standing on the bridge in the middle of the ocean, and we were lucky these elusive beasts did not claim our little noble steeds life So there was the proof that even deer go on vacations, and love a little fun in the sun and ocean breeze.

We finally reached Key West, and we parked on a side street to the famous Duvall street where the party happens. We had sat in the back of the truck drinking beer and we had to go use the bathroom in a local bar, where there was some obscene writing on the wall and no labels on the door whether the bathrooms were for men or women. Come to find out much later that night, Key West is like the gay capitol of the world, and much like my neighbor Steph, I assumed they were masters of peeing standing up. My uncle Mike was determined to get me the chance to see inside a bar called “Sloppy Joes”. This is where I guess Earnest Hemmingway wrote a lot of his work. Well you had to be 21 to enter, but of course I have always had a VIP status and was allowed 30 seconds to go in and find my

future wife, according to my uncle Mike. Every single woman was beautiful in that place, and clearly needed my attention, which I had unfortunately left somewhere I had never thought to look before. Shucky darns!

Well after that, the rest of the night was downhill except for the fact that there was a drug bust right in the middle of the street. This really amazing looking 64' Impala with hydraulics was driving up and down the street all night playing the new Dr. Dre album *The Next Episode*. Who would have thought the Cuban looking fellas in the vehicle were selling cocaine to all of the tourists. I got to say though, the police in that situation came from nowhere. There were none visible at all, then all of a sudden there was a couple cop's armed with assault rifles that ran up and stopped the car, and a second later, there were trucks and cars coming from every which direction, even the beach. How in the hell we missed seeing them, I'll never know. The next thing I knew we were witnessing my dad and uncle walking towards us to the truck, and they were in an argument over money. My uncle told my cousin Aaron to get in the truck because they were going home. My dad who was three sheets to the wind said the same. As we were driving, I told him he better let me drive and he said no. I said I was getting out because I had to grab the wheel to miss a parked car and he stopped. Well we were on a one way street and traffic was piling up, so my dad had to go forward. That is when we lost each other. Even at that time I never had a thought in my mind that I wouldn't see him until he returned to Minnesota.

I found a bar that was closed where there was a payphone. I tried checking to see if they might let me get change, but no one was there any more, but of course there was a pair of pants laying on the ground with about \$17.00 in quarters in it. I called my sister Leah in Minnesota, she called my aunt Lavina in Maryland and a few minutes later, at least ten squad cars came rushing up out of nowhere. Now I had informed the police officers of the clear mistake they were making of arresting me. I was only looking for my dad and since Key West is about a half mile long by

a half mile wide, how hard could it be to find the only piece of crap car rez car on the island right? Well they never found him. He was sleeping down by some marina he later told me. What was weird to me and still is, when the officer asked me to give a statement and at that time I was unsure what that was, but I complied, and during the questioning I had informed him that yes I was a little drunk, and no me and my cousin were sneaking beer, and it was only my fault because I had wandered off and had taken a wrong turn. Then he asked me if my dad abused me, and I said hell no. Strangely, he made me remove my shirt to prove that there were no bruises of any sort, and he wouldn't take no for an answer.

The officer told me that I had to go to a juvenile center in Fort Lauderdale, about a little over 180 miles north. I had been in juvenile center's already and I started to cry because I thought I never had to go back. We made it about 500 feet from where we had taken off when we heard from dispatch that my aunt Lavina had paid for a plane ticket to Bemidji, MN. It cut my vacation short, but I was so relieved. A social worker met up with us, had taken me out for breakfast, and with the little time left before my flight home showed me around the entire island. She had kept reminding me of the significance of the conch shell, how to pronounce it like "conk shell", like I would need this information in case the plane crashed and I was marooned on a desert island like in "Lord of the Flies", resulting in talking out of turn like some asshole instead of waiting on the sacred talking shell.

That was the end of my vacation. Later I found out that there was a statewide all points bulletin put out for my father's arrest. This of course seems standard in this situation. On the flip side of the coin, my dad went to my uncle Mike's house to see if I had shown up there. My father and I have a tendency to believe we can always count on each other. Well I wasn't there, so he immediately started heading for home once he received the news of my flight. He had gotten tired and he was driving on the interstate, where he saw a hitchhiker, and placing much faith in our amazing judgment of character, picked up a man named Angel. Angel I never met.

My dad informed me of his basic physical characteristics by explaining the shirt he was wearing. So like most men, was definitely enough from my perspective to say that it was a good call. If you were to include the fact that I was speaking to the man who if there was concern, should be hacked to pieces from a variety of instruments that can only be left to the imagination. I say this with great confidence, as I am wearing a stolen Sherburne county jail standard issue uniform complete with the spork and shoes as I write this. So obviously book covers should never be judged, let alone oppressed if we are reluctant to emanate pure thoughtful thoughtlessness.

Over the next few years, I was in and out of the juvenile system. Since I started, I had been placed in a satellite home in Cass Lake, Thistledeew, Northwest Men's Juvenile Center, Central Minnesota Regional Detention Center, and finally landing in a satellite home in Bemidji, MN. The first time I entered the jail system was the first time I was arrested, and that was the first day that they would not allow smoking in a jail facility. Just a couple weeks ago when I was there, I asked one of the veteran female corrections officers how long she had worked there. She informed me that she had been working there for 22 years. Needless to say, she has the rear end to speak for it, and if evolution were to be true, definitely was a descendent from some sort of dominant species. This being materialized in my own mind mainly from boredom, and the fact she was in authority, but all jokes aside. I had to inform her that we both had enough time to take our relationship to the next level, and I dubbed her an honorary auntie. It's Christmas Eve today, and I am not sure nor care to find out if the mail comes today, but I am entertaining the idea that she will reciprocate with a thoughtful well voiced Christmas card to an address she does not know. I became of this understanding by observing females in the variable habitats and relationships of their choosing, and come to find out, they are a strange species. I cannot not even start to compare them to anything else, but without saying are at the top of the list of creatures I would not hesitate to pet. I apologize to God as I make this statement, because even the rez dog goes to heaven, but mostly because it wanders in from time to time in pursuit of her litter of puppies, because

rez dogs never die. Like the prairie dog there is a good chance they all have different dads, and even God has to love any puppy, and I am sure can't resist the scent of good puppy breath. Oh the beauty of natural selection!

Since I am on the subject of animal mating rituals. I would have to say that some females I have come to admire, are very much like the mongoose. Now your standard mongoose is a species that lives in a pack setting. Unfortunately, there are so few female mongooses per pack, that the poor female is constantly badgered into mating with the entire pack. Sounds great right? Well in the animal kingdom, they lack the need for attraction sometimes, I mean a panda is a panda is a panda. So uniqueness is really not present. Well she will start a riot with another pack of mongooses, only to upset the continuation of the same old genes being passed on. During this fight she will sneak off with a male from the other pack. Now a women's ways I will leave up to them. (As I am editing this, the panda part reminds me of Ronnie when she would say "panda,panda,panda.") So, ha, ha, yeah that's what you get for being mean to me, I made your words mine and even better.

Now the next animal I will have to point out is the peacock. The male peacock will start making a distinct call during their short gestation period, that say's lookout ladies. They all make the same sound though. And because of this it really comes down to their presentation of self. When a male mates, it will start making a different sound, and all the ladies flock to him judging from the sound that he was successful mating, so he must be a worthy mate. The funny thing is that late in the day, the males that are unsuccessful in mating will change their tune. They start making the same sound as a male who was successful mating. These damn liars are then blessed by all of the same females, who already have mated, but just in case, won't leave it to chance that they are not able to reproduce. That voice and saying is just ringing through my mind of "ohhh, I'm gonna have your baby", that was very much a part of my generation's entertainment. Damn you Dyshieki from the movie "Don't Be A Menace To Society, While Drinking Your Juice In The Hood". The

Wayans brothers are amazing at comedy and have a knack for humor that hits home with me, but a little known fact is that in Swahili, it is the word “kamouamouaku”, that really means doggy style. I gathered this evidence in the field in a hands on approach, while serving a little time in the Ramsey County Workhouse once. I met a Somali man that spoke every dialect of Swahili, and much to my surprise, ebonix.

So during the spring and into summer when I was turning 16, my sister Leah believed I should drop out of school, get my GED, and apply to college. I had to take my own route for her dreams for me though. So instead, my cousin Byron and I decided to start breaking into all the summer cabins that we could, and selling all the items we had stolen for almost next to nothing. We of course lacked being self conscious of the wake of shame we were creating, but had informed his mother Kathy Gale, that we always needed the car due to us having jobs. We called this work, and somehow we enjoyed going to work. We mastered the art of changing a tire in a matter of 5 minutes with team effort, just in case we would have to outrun any one who would question why we were in their cabin, or why their stuff was packed into the blue Chevy Corsica that was the only one of its kind in the area.

We started getting a little crazy a little closer to school starting. We stepped up our level of crime at that point. Now I will tell the truth of what really happened now. Byron, Jerrin and I had decided to attempt an armed robbery of a convenience store called “Gosh Dam Place”. Looking back, I am so happy that we did not actually hurt or scare anyone. Byron had the only cool looking ski mask on, and me and Jerrin were both wearing a pair of Byron’s moms panty hose. We had parked at the end of a clear cut out area along the power lines that was a straight path to the store. Now we mentally prepared, and ran up to commit our crime. Thank God the store just so happened to be closed for renovations. So you can imagine three jackasses looking at each other scratching their heads, wondering what to do from this point. We had not planned for this, so Byron had taken the liberty of defaulting to what we were already trained for and started hitting the entrance window that

consisted of bullet proof glass. We had to take turns due from our lack of exercise. We finally gained entrance and grabbed cigarettes, a couple cases of beer, and I wouldn't doubt a few pine scented air fresheners. We ran back to the car, and along the way to Remer, broke into a couple cabins. The thing that created the final end of our crime spree that summer, was when I couldn't resist but tell Byron to stop so I could see if I could steal a dump truck along side of the graves lake road outside of Remer.

Byron and I stole a car one time, but the keys were in it. We had to use it to go get a tire at his moms house in Sugar Point, and we were stuck in Remer. Along the way back to his car and to return the car we had stolen, I had the bright idea to break into the Ridgeview golf course outside of Longville on Cass County Road 7. I am pretty sure the owners lived right across the street in plain view, and it was only about 10:30 p.m., but Byron objected until we were standing in front of the place and he hurled a rock through the window. Well we started to grab everything that we could, and since the trunk would not open, filled the car with different golf apparel, golf club balls and sets of clubs, and as much of the 3.2% beer that were in twelve packs that we could fit. We literally could not see each other even while both of us were sitting in the front seats, because of how much beer we had. We transferred our treasures to his mom's car, returned the stolen one, and went to his mom's house and relaxed to a morning sunrise while driving golf balls into the woods, and wondering why we were not getting drunk because we each put down a twelve pack. Later we actually made a throne out of all the beer we had, and the 113 bottles of various alcohols that littered the ledge in Byron's basement allowed us options.

Upon entering the dump truck, I noticed a blinking green light, and a car coming quickly from down the road, so I jumped out and they were on to us. We were driving away, and Jerrin was hanging out the window with a sawed off 12 gauge and asking if he should shoot. I am so thankful that he is a good judge for

himself and that he just got back in the car, but my bro's and I are a little crazy. Well to speed up things, we were heading towards home, and in Boy River, there was a cop sitting on a side road. The gig was up. We later found out that we had been making the Star Tribune newspaper and no one could figure out who was doing all this. Later I was told that there were rumors in the story of some sort of organized crime group doing all of this, and I am sure that not one of us was even wearing matching socks.

Just to prove how far we would go. When the cops busted us later that night at the beach down towards the Battle Point cemetery. Jerrin and I had ran away, while Byron tried to hide in some bushes that were only about a foot and a half tall within 10 feet of the car, and I'd like to believe they saw him before ever seeing the car. As we were listening to the cops search we heard them call for a tow truck. So Jerrin and I made a blockade of the road with various pieces of junk, like a bike, some logs, and trash cans from Caroline Monroe/Goose's house and pretty much whatever she had laying around. Only the cops were still with the car. Like they were just going to give up, but hey, sometimes it is the thought that counted the most.

Now the rest of my days were spent in the Bemidji satellite home. It was a harsh reality, but my sister Leah would make sure that I had the opportunity to make it back and forth from where I stayed, to visit with my family. Before I was arrested I had been working a little bit for the reservation's youth division as a junior coordinator but having to duck from the police. My older cousin Tracy Gale was the youth coordinator. I don't really remember too much of my duties other than having fun with kids. We would go to events and you could say that I was a chaperone. Well upon me getting in trouble, of course I was let go from the position, but my last's months of compensation was saved by Tracy. She must have waited to turn my final time card in. Well because of this, and that year there was a bad crop when it came to the wild rice harvest, I entered into the satellite home with around

\$1100.00. I assumed I was going to be able to spend it how I wanted, but I was told that I couldn't. The satellite parent's Darren and Cindy Pruette, were stern and I am now thankful for their guidance. I had saved the majority of it, but it was used over the next year for a few necessities. Most importantly, guitar lessons. That is where I studied the most.

Entering into my 11th grade year, I had only 3 and $\frac{1}{3}$ credits for high school. So I really was not planning to graduate at this time and not really planning to go to college. Since I was 14, I had been trying to either get into military school, or prepare to go into the Marines. At that time, I figured even that was not an option and had no real direction. I had to attend the NMJC school and there was an additional incentive of going to the regular Bemidji district high school. Since I was really trying to just find something to keep me from getting bored, I even attended a couple classes at the alternative learning center.

9/11 happened, and I remember that morning well. I predicted the second plane hitting the second building because you could plainly see it prepare to crash. One of the staff members said it was impossible, and boom. That day something started to stir inside of me. I am not sure what it was, because I know myself a lot better now, and I know I allow a lot of time for something to actually have any affect on my next action towards any subject. I take my time to evaluate as much of the situation as possible, almost appearing passive.

January 3rd of 2002 came and I was free at last. The first thing I did was go to the Remer School to enroll because even if I would be a year late, I was going to graduate. Now once I got there, I went in to talk with Mr. Bernard, Mr. Akre and Mrs. Smith the music teacher, because I was going to join band. We had talked for about an hour, and then they said "well let's take a look at how many credits you have and see if you will graduate next year". We all assumed even that was a long shot. Still unbelievably to me sometimes, is when they said I needed 24 credits to graduate, and I had 36. All the focus on my guitar class and just doing my work in

the meantime, had made it possible. I did not realize that I was handling 12 subjects at all times while in the juvenile system. So amazingly, they said I had graduated already, with the additional incentive of being able to attend all the high school events.

Upon graduating and after my birthday of June 13, I then didn't really have a clue as to what I was going to do then. I had been in touch with a recruiter from the Marines and was getting all set to enlist, and then a college recruiter from Brown College (formerly Brown Institute) called me one day. I figured what could it hurt to talk with the guy. Now I made the meeting at my mom's house because I didn't have the \$50.00 application fee. We went through the meeting and I decided I was interested in Information and Network Technology. That all aside, I found out that I was not interested in computer's at all for a job. I mean let's face it, technology was bound to become ever increasing in the administrative side of careers, although I had never considered the broader world of possibilities. For some reason, I had a dream of going to get an education, coming back to the reservation, and making a difference, but I did not know how, what for even for that matter, or even if anything was really wrong with the way we lived. I never considered myself above anyone else, but I had a vision of never being limited and wanted for other's to also feel the same.

Well four months into college happened fast, and I was in a relationship with my daughters mother Jennifer. We were driving up north to Sugar Point to go and party for the weekend, and she started telling me she was feeling certain things. Now, I have never been in this situation so I had no basis of knowledge or experience to base my judgment off of. For some reason, I stopped the car right where we were, grabbed my nice whiskey glass that I would drink out of at the time. I filled it up full, and standing at the back of the car, I toasted to the moon and drank the whole cup. I got back into the car, and told her that we were not going to go party, but going to Wal-Mart to get pregnancy tests. She laughed and said no she

wasn't, but I knew better. Like I said, I never knew about this intuition before, things were just natural for me to do. I could do complex math questions, disassemble and reassemble something in my mind before ever had touched it by working backwards from a solution rather than focusing on the problem, and this was just natural for me. My current status is getting back on track to such a time, but due to a lot of drug and alcohol use and many years of depression, blaming others, not trying at all for anything positive and seeing a task through and the list goes on for my focus to be off. On and on I could list the negatives, but in reality the most significant part of my life was about to take place.

Now when it came to my new little girl coming into this world, my family and I did anything and everything to welcome my baby girl into this world. We did the baby books and had spent time looking online to make sure that we were the perfect parents. I have to hand it to the mother of Aaliyah, she gave up drinking that night I told her she was pregnant, she gave up smoking at the same time, and she had started changing her diet to create the most ideal environment inside her for our daughter. We even went to the lamaze classes for breathing. When Aaliyah was born it was the most amazing day I will ever witness, and when I get to it, I will go more into a recent dream that was so powerful it changed my life back to that time. I stood on a battlefield with Jesus. Yes, this part is written for you my sweet sixteen year old, your birth was comparable to meeting Jesus to me. You coming into my world was the ultimate infinite power.

When she was handed to me I swore then and there, that was my world now. Jenny was tired from giving birth, so I was blessed to let her sleep on my chest for the first four hours of her life. She was then taken to go get cleaned up in the nursery, but I had paid attention throughout all of the classes and books and internet sites, and they had all suggested that the first hours (and years) are key to the bond a child will have with their parents.

We had only been home for two days and I was attending college and worked at Pepsi in Burnsville from 11pm to whenever I would finish my route as a merchandiser. I had almost finished my shift, and Jenny had called informing me that a nurse had come to check on Aaliyah. She had developed jaundice, which I now know was common to children. We then had to go back to the hospital and she was placed in an incubator with bilirubin lights. What is odd to me, is that if a person were to actually plan for a child rather than just throwing darts at a dart board, you could plan to have a child in the summer months resulting in that child getting the much needed nutrients naturally. This is only my opinion though, but makes sense to me.

While we were in the hospital, I never slept for four days. We weren't there very long, and Jennifer and I noticed that Aaliyah's nose and face were developing small little beads of white. I didn't know at the time that a child's sweat glands are not fully developed at that time, and it was due to the incubator temperature being set so high. We both knew that an incubator was suppose to be body temperature, and it was reading between 99.5 which wasn't all that bad, but would reach up to 103.4 when we were not looking. This happened rather quickly and we started making adjustments. We figured out how to use the incubator, but when the nurse returned, we were told not to touch it, after we informed them that we changed the settings. The nurse returned the incubator to its original settings and within minutes it started to climb back up. Not trusting anyone but our own judgment, we changed the settings again. It was just fine until the nurse came back, noticed the change and I explained the same, she said "that darker babies get hotter". Holy hell! Freaking really? Now I was able to compose myself, and asked for another nurse, and of course she had taken another shot at us, and said "I think she is dealing with a little postpartum depression". I was too tired of dealing with someone who would obviously never help, and requested that another nurse come to replace her.

I am still bewildered by this, but our babies pediatrician was a man named Dr. James E. Dufort. His office is still located in Apple Valley and goes by the business name of Eagan Valley Pediatrics. We were constantly being reminded of his rating of number one in the state, and how we had been able to acquire him was unknown. We had basic MinnesotaCare insurance through the county, and they didn't pay for such things. This man went above and beyond not only with Aaliyah, but also would give me advice and talk to me about my marriage, including how to create a better relationships with better quality.

The rest of our stay at the hospital was a little more pleasant, of course this had made the mother of my child a little on edge, and I couldn't blame her. This was all new to us, and protection of our daughter was all that mattered. I dealt calmly with her until the last night we were to be at the hospital. I finally had to let all of my frustrations out. I informed her by saying "get the hell out of here! just go home and relax, I mean damn, it's about time that you do!" She of course acted like this was not exactly what she needed and wanted, like in what book is it going to be written where a mother needs a little time to herself? She had just been through the birth of a child, I think you can go get some gatorade at least, I mean even pro football players hydrate on a consistent basis. I understood what all women would desire after a nine month battle of change. Anything and everything. Doesn't even have to be limited to to the laws of physics right? I couldn't imagine what it could be like carrying a full term child, but I am sure that this laptop that I am using at this time has to be somewhat of a comparison. Since I cannot exist everywhere at all times, this is me winking at you.

Well I finally had a couple days where I was able to finally be at full attention with my daughter. You can never get enough of your new born baby. Just like the first time you ever experienced Facebook for most people. Now us people who migrated from MySpace already have the gist of knowing what to do, but still it is just as unique of an experience all the same. This one is yours, it really is just a

simple choice to realize, isn't it? No, it is not that easy, what makes it seem effortless, is when a person can realize that as an individual they do have a purpose, there is a need for you. It seems to get dark without your higher power to light the way, so slow down, relax and take all the time you need to deal with things and reach out to God first. That higher power made everything in creation! There is not one millisecond that God would not love to spend communicating with you, just like our need with our own children, The ability to create a child is a gift, but we are all children of God and came from what the earth has provided for us to exist.

So not trying to allow our daughter to be tarnished by the amount of stuff she seemed not able to keep inside of herself, that we grow to handle for ourselves later in life. I had the honor of now giving her that very first bath that seems to be all part of a every new parents story. Jenny and I were careful enough to be handling plutonium just like any other parent, and gave a heck of a team effort setting up the little blow up duck shaped bath. This we had received at the baby shower, that my family put together for us. Jenny was filling up the bath with the perfect temperature water, as I was standing guard just in case. She then had let me know that the water was ready, so I ever so gently picked up my little bundle of joy. I then was lowering her down to the duck, when all was a go for safety, bumped her dang head off the shower faucet. What the hell! The neat thing about it was, she never made a sound, didn't even acknowledge that anything was wrong, let alone open her little eyes. It's freaking incredible as I am writing this noticing how she has been a lot like me all her life. Not that I have any sort of tradition of bumping my head off of shower faucets, but I have had my moments.

The first year of Aaliyah's life was of course a bit of a transition of adolescent freedom. We were still fighting over who was better at being a parent, and who really loves more. I thought this would be easy to understand, but I never really had taken anyone else's view into account, and even more, never let my own opinion be the overall guide to solutions to compromise. It was the constant back and forth

banter that really started to create the environment for which was not appealing to anyone. At around seven months old, my friend Donald and I were sitting in the living room at my sister Renee's house. I had just made breakfast, and he brought some beers over to nurse a hangover as a good friend would, but people still to this day never get the fact that regardless how blacked out drunk I would get over the years, I never had a hangover. I dealt with psychological hangovers. And a little known fact, but when I was younger, I would not drink water for days. I do not know why I did this, but dehydration was never a factor later in life, because I was already acclimated for it.

Now we were watching my daughter crawl around on the floor, and at that time she was pulling herself up and balancing to move using her legs, I would often make jokes of her being a weeble and my nickname for her was "waffles." Just to ease your mind as to why, it was because there was a point in her life that every crap she would take, smelled just like different types of breakfast foods. I mean bacon, sausage, pancakes and syrup, and of course not bad eggs, but really good eggs.

Well she then just looked across the room over her shoulder, and took off walking. Donald was just as excited as I was, and was the first to yell "holy shit bro, did you see that shit"! As time goes on throughout life, I think about these days. The first time of everything for which there was to be a first time for myself. I used to get hung up on these things and feel like I was missing out. I would punish myself for not currently being part of life with those that I would miss. Following this behaviour would be decisions based off of my emotions, and is what created the options for my next actions. I would seek support only in the form of "poor me pity". That is very easy to find, especially when that is all you know as an option for attention. Attention is not exactly what we are seeking at this time, but to feel like someone understands enough for us to get through it. Only the fact is is that it was only for me to get through. The depressive action that I had taken was all I knew,

and the negative approach to picking up that lower lip of life. Being tough really means letting go of everyone's view and opinion of who you really are, and just letting yourself be the very best self that you can be. Even with careful planning I would continue to land in the pitfalls of life and without trying, I let this rule the world I perceived. There are a lot of tasks that I had let go of doing on a daily basis. All the way from brushing my teeth, washing my clothes, doing the dishes, and even trying to convince myself that it was comfortable to live without electricity. I had simply allowed for my own comforts to slip away by associating them with the people that I had to make me feel like I was needed. It is so obvious to me now, but when your choosing not to look at the problem, and making room for something that has never fit into your life, or anyone else's for that matter. I believed I could get the world to understand, that drug's and the constant daily alcohol intake, had nothing to do with my struggle. That these issues were due to the hate of others because people are jealous. Or they just didn't like to see another person happy, due to their own misery. How could I miss the big red flashing light right in front of myself? The only one that needed satisfaction was myself. That decision created the environment I knew I could thrive in. The rest would follow. Then the epiphany of never including anyone in my happiness, but just focusing on my happiness, erupted like a volcano for which I am able to exponentially get my life back on track, and to its fullest potential.

During a point in my life that I now look at not as a struggle, but more of just an experience to live outside my comfort zone. I was trying to find a way to replace the feelings that I had attached to my significant other. The comfort of having someone else to place my emotions on were what I was used to. I was so used to the codependency design that I was influenced by and throughout life by all those who were around me. You see, I could only see what I was supposed to do by observing, due to living inside of myself. I was a dreamer, that never had taken my own personal opinion, and view for that matter as valid. I would listen to how others felt

about how I handled a situation, and I would take it personally, which led to me living in a sporadic fashion.

Like a ball bouncing, that is how I lived. Up and down. Trying, hitting a ceiling and returning to the safety on the ground, where depression, anxiety, and negative feelings of pity are prevalent. I would fly so high so to speak, and then come crashing down to earth, not by a harsh revelation of reality, but because I couldn't stand to deal with all of the negative opinions of others. Like gravity, it is a strong unseen force that we emanate from our being inside of us. This was a weakness of myself in response to all of the negativity I would collect because life is challenging, and it isn't exclusive to just a group of people. We as a people have to confront the fact that tough love works only when in a reciprocal fashion, and it does not help to be a stranger and enforcing this act on someone we do not know.

Now my astonishingly gifted younger cousins Vanessa and Desirae were living together after my cousin Patty who was Desirae's mother, were dealing with their mother and grandmother's passing. All of us who knew her were all dealing with it in our own ways. At that time we were all becoming devastated by the mass amount of people we knew, passing on in a way that very few we could define as normal or natural. I had tried to offer my assistance to them from time to time, but had been running out of the energy that I had been running on. I had not faced my own resolve when coming to this crossroad for myself. Rather than taking time to take my understanding of the natural acts in life, I was holding myself down because I was named as a pallbearer at Patty's funeral. As I was standing outside on the road, I broke down inside of myself, I couldn't let go of the person I loved so much over the years. So I retreated to the safety of my sister Renee's basement until it was over. I didn't have to let go of her though, but that is the mentality that was instilled in myself at that time. People are not materials, and they cannot be kept for ourself, only the back and forth interactions that are between two people can only be harbored. Even then, after we look back, it is mostly the good that we talk about

with another as not to tarnish the legacy of those we loved, even those we didn't care to love at all.

Now in December of 2015 I had won enough money to buy a car, in the beginning of the month while at the Northern Lights Casino using my \$250.00 Christmas per cap money. It was a Mercury Sable and I liked that car. Well my mother, sister, and my niece Sadie were on their way to the Northern Lights Casino around a week later. About 5 miles from getting there, and due to ice and sleet, they had got into a bad accident. My sister and niece went home, but my mom went to the hospital. I know my driving capabilities, but I know not to rely on them when it comes to this weather. Well I as soon as I found out I went to the hospital to see her, and I was relieved when there seemed to be nothing wrong, but a few bumps and bruises. Well she had to use the bathroom, but she didn't want to be ashamed of having to do this. This was my mother, and I would do anything for her. Well trying to get out of the bed, the IV had come out, and she was bleeding all over the floor. I got the nurse as quick as possible. Well it didn't seem to bother my mom all that much, and before the nurse came in I cleaned up what I could of the blood. Well we got her to the bathroom, and after a short conversation, I told her I would be back to check on her. I went home, and over the next few days I was back and forth to check on her. Well the last night she was to be there, I knew she had a \$50.00 casino coupon to all three of the casino's that are on the reservation. Well since she did not plan on going, I asked her if I could give it a try. She said go on ahead. Well my cousin Dylan and his mother Kim were with me and waiting in the car. We decided to start in Cass Lake at the Palace Casino first, we didn't have much luck so we went to the White Oak Casino and it turned out the same. Well we were going home and I said "well we have one last shot, should we check out Northern Lights then." Of course we were going to. But it had to be four in the morning, and Kim was starting to get tired. Well that day I had won over \$12,000.00, and you know what I did with it? Well my mom was all out of Vicodin. Not due to her use or for her pain, but because someone had come and taken them. Now I know that my mom didn't

put up much of a fight. Because she loves this person, so I went out to buy my mom some pain medication, and she didn't even take them. They mostly went to the same person. So what did this really prove? I guess that is not for me to understand, but that wasn't even close to the amount that I had won, but at that time I was preparing to go to prison, and everyone knew this. So I got as high as I could and bought my first ounce of Methamphetamine for \$1400.00. Well I just kept getting high, kept getting others high, and stayed in the high stakes room, and this was where I went to get away from people. That is where I found peace. By spending all of that money, that I could have used towards my daughter, and because it was rightfully my mother's, I could have bought her a new car. I had completely given up, I had been trying to visit with my daughter and doing nothing with the courts, and I was tired of being yelled at everytime that I had tried to contact my daughter. I only wanted to be with my daughter in peace. And her mother could not get over what she had participated in and that was our relationship that did not exist anymore. She still carries herself in this way, and I wonder why. She will not just talk with me, and that's easier to accomplish without yelling. At least she could yell what the real problem is any way.

After my dad had passed away and the night of his final dinner that our family had, my cousin Lindsay Mitchell and I started to hear what we thought was the sound of a tropical bird. It sounded like "aaaah, aaaa aaahhhh" and we don't have that type of bird sound in Leech Lake. Eventually I would run into the woods after the sound and I never found anything, well nothing ever physical. I was running blind into the woods towards nothing with no fear. You see this was a teaching from my mother earth. Now it is the way that my life is handled now, without fear of what I am facing, and along with my sword of truth, that I have been excelling in its understanding exponentially just by my own understanding with Yahweh, and mother earth Aki's teachings.

One night about a little over a year and a half later, I had decided to clean my yard up at 3:00 a.m.. I could not sleep and that was happening pretty often at that

time. When I turned on the outside light, off of the corner of the porch six feet, there stood a 4 foot long 4x4 piece of wood standing on end. I could only see it through the small bit of line of sight that I had because the window shade had been pulled to the side about 3 inches. I had looked away for just a second until it registered in my mind. I opened the door, and before I could put my foot on the porch it, it had already been out of sight and crashing through the woods. Well what do you do when such things happen? What is the proper etiquette to this situation?

Shaking it out of my head, I went back inside to grab something to protect myself, and then it dawned on me. Whatever the hell it was, had run away, so regardless of its reasoning it was gone. I started to clean the house as a way to ease into going outside, like someone was watching me, I played it off not to be bothered. This was really for my own peace of mind, because Santa hasn't come to my house for a few years prior to that point, and I didn't have my relationship with God set in its place in my life. The mirror was in my mind, and in that mirror a pretty cool laid back kinda guy, who always gets the girl, never gets but a flesh wound, and is always celebrated when the dragon is slayed.

I went outside to start cleaning up the yard, and hit a wall when I realized I had left some tools in the backyard. Well the whole cool facade that I had come to see in my mind was dwindling down fast. I had to get rid of that damned mirror, but my mental rocks were not a part of the dream world I had created. Plus it takes a lot to build that whole masterpiece of a dream already. Of course, I forgot about the damn landscaping, right?

I then had to grab a flashlight to be able to see in the backyard while looking for the tools that I would need. I found a headlamp right away but had to have a backup. I used a 12 volt AGM (or gel battery) that is about 3"x2"x8" in its size. I then rigged it up to a spotlight designed to be powered by the cars 12 volt plug in receptacle. It had taken me at least 20 minutes to find all of this, because if you were to ask anyone I know, especially the woman that would put up with my disorganization at that time Ronnie, you would hear multiple stories of cleaning up

with or without me. I was a real mess maker, I couldn't help but get beyond the thoughts of what others might think of me, and literally would just stand still looking inside myself and dream what they would do in response to seeing me at that time.

I then thought to myself "I'd better be prepared in case this piece of wood would attack." Like that was the real problem at the time huh? There was a freaking piece of 4 foot long 4x4 running around my house, like it was a damned stray dog. Geez, the things I can rationalize and deal with really define my ignorance of my surroundings or is clearly a sign of much reservation mental damage. I would not rely all that much on the mental damage, it builds character, or I think that would be a way to put it. All the definitions in the world, and here I am describing what others would consider a psychotic breakdown, but it was what it was. You see there are many things in life that we don't give any validity to. We are taught to distort our view and when everyone thinks they are doing what is right, what is right is actually wrong. To experience life through someone suggesting that these drugs are good for you and these ones aren't. Drugs are drugs, but don't block out the reality that there is something so much more to experience for you to understand your path in life. There are so many ways our father Yahweh and our mother earth Aki are teaching us, and when we let go of fear, it is an amazing experience. That's how the stars we come so much to love are made, they let go of the normal acceptable ways and make their own way. Through my writing I hope you notice I am giving you all the tools to freely express yourself with the gifts you have been given in this life, it's my calling in life to not only become the star I should be, but to make stars of the people who knew me throughout life. While you read this part, you are starting to understand that it takes a group of people to say "this is our star", from those who are their in the beginning of that fire being started. The support we give to them, and never offering a negative approach will uplift them to where they dream of being.

I have to add that once Ronnie came home when we were first seeing each other, and I had walked home from Longville. She had stayed with my friend and I was mad at her and left her with the car. She had come home the next day in the morning, and opened the bedroom door and asked “do you have somewhere you need to be?” I had taken it as that she knew something I had forgotten, so I replied “yeah.” She closed the door, and I could hear something being wrestled around with, but I was still questioning of how to respond, because I was still waking up, and if you notice how I usually respond to things, I just took my time getting up.

Well I heard the car start. I watched her driving down the road and thought “oh well” to myself. A little later I was looking for my pants because my keys were in them, and I could have sworn were by the door. But they were gone. Well after a couple days she came home and told me she had put my pants on when she left to keep warm, because it was winter at the time. This was literally how she placed who controlled things in our relationship from that point. By the physical and literal action of wearing my pants, she had taken control. I can see her sitting across the table moving the piece into place saying “and... Checkmate!”

I had my little light show all rigged up so I started towards the backyard with that man in my mental mirror telling me to turn around, but that bastard looking back at him was saying “go forth to battle... it’s just a steeeeck!”

Once I was in the backyard, I was scanning the yard from left to right, when all of a sudden the headlamp I was using shut off. I hadn’t been using the spotlight, but brought it as a backup just in case I would need more light. I started trying to figure out why the headlamp light went out while standing there in the dark. Then it hit me. There was still something out here. I then turned on the big spotlight, and it lit the whole yard up. I do not think that my left to right approach provided any reason for what happened next, but that light went out too. Dumbfounded, I just stood there and let this register in my mind. The man in the mirror had run the hell out of there screaming like the little girl actor he was, and I was left with the bastard in my mind saying “that’s one heck of a steeeeck...” With only this as a guide for the

next action I would take, I had to default to what I do in such situations, and casually walk inside while saying out loud I added “oh I forgot to grab the.....”

When I finally was inside from the safety of “the steeck”, I tried to come up with reasons to rationalize what had just happened. Trying to ease the panic from my mind, and hopefully scare the elusive whatever the hell it might have been. I turned on some music, and of course to provide not only for my ego, but to ward off the mystery creature by playing the song by Avenged Sevenfold “Hail To The King.” This was in hopes that the creature would give in, acknowledge that this was my house, and maybe just through fear, never come back. At least if it did could muster up the ability to say sorry and fix my flashlights.

Well a few months later I was outside still trying to complete the task that I had started months before. Well all of a sudden I heard that sweet little innocent voice of my cousin Vanessa say “hey matt, whatchya up to?” I looked up my driveway and she was walking towards me. This was the first time she had ever stopped over by herself, because she would normally accompany her grandmother. Well the first thought and what I said to her is “what the heck you doing out this late?” It was around midnight, but what I had not taken into consideration is she was around 15 at this time, and the things I was doing in my life when I was 15 were a lot worse I am sure, or at the very least I would never hope to hear that my little cousin who I loved so much in her innocence, had already taken the plunge into being an actual person. No, oh god please no, your a perfect angel! Don’t try everything in life my sweet child! We all hold our hope that they will stay in their hellish sweet little angel ways, but they got to just disappoint our views every time. Much like the views of ourselves when we finally start to think “I just got to try it, everyone else is doing it, so why not me?” Oh the sweet serenity of ignorance and bliss.

I had told her to come inside the house so I could catch up with her. I had not seen her for some time, and really just wanted to take this opportunity to tease her to brighten up my day. She is always a joy to talk with like all children are, only her

direct influences were mostly adults, so she has had one of those adult mentalities most of her life, or as far back as I can remember. During our visit she had brought up that she was being told by some sort of psychologist or doctor type of person that she should consider Zoloft to deal with her emotions. Right then and there is when I made my decision on how I felt about these wonder drugs. I was witnessing my little cousin dealing with the separation and the first steps to healing after someone you love passes on. She seemed so sweet, but I knew that she was very uninformed. I mean if you think about it, who is really there when a person is presented with these options? Who can really deduce while in these situations, that it is natural for us to feel powerless and without. There is literally nothing that can be done to bring the people back to life! When will we all agree that this is hard for anyone, and that it needs to be resolved naturally and without prescription drugs, so that a person can grow into the better quality person that loves another fully until you can only love the people who walk forth through the memories.

Now my little sweet innocent cousin just had to get the upper hand on me. Well I was telling her that she shouldn't be out that late. There were weird things going on around my house and then I shared the story with her about the flashlight incident. When I finished the story, I had went to grab the headlamp and pressed the on button. It freaking turned on! Then I'll never forget she asked "well what do you think it was?" How the hell was I supposed to know? But I had to have an answer for this little goslin, so I just blurted out "it had to be aliens", while still being shocked that the light turned on. We were kind of silent for a second, and that's when she got me with saying "Matt...how do you know that I'mmmm not an alien?" Ok kid, time for bed cause your just scared the hell out of me, is what I wanted to say, but we were all ready to bring her to her friend Tori's house which is my friend Tonya Wilson's daughter. I had told her that I thought I might have enough gas to make it. So we hopped in my truck and went down the road. When we got there I had to hurry home as to make sure I could make it there. I ran out of gas when I had

driven into my driveway about 50 feet and talk about hitting aces, rolled right back into the spot from where it was parked before.

After that, the summer went by fast and winter had come. Ronnie and I had been back and forth in our relationship, but one day when we were talking, something I said must have finally hit home. I wasn't a terrible person. I thought at that time that I maybe wasn't in an ideal position in life, but was trying all the same. Well that woman loved me, what can I say, she sure knows what she wants, and better yet, what to do with it to make it it's best. She had asked me to go outside, which I didn't think about too much until later. She walked me out to the backyard and said "Matt, I am getting serious about you, and you better not let me down." At that time, I really wasn't opening my eyes to what she meant by this. I told her that I was serious, like a jackass, but I think she just needed reassurance for what she was thinking about. Women have a tendency to think that men can keep up with their mentality, and men always think that they have a good hold on things. Only the thing with Ronnie and I at that time was that we were both going in separate directions to the same idea of what we wanted in life. As long as we were going for the same destination, I was comfortable, but I hadn't taken her view or asked to many questions. Well I know she resolved whatever was going on in her mind at that time, because she did not explain anything to me. The very next day she sent me a text message where she had taken a picture of a petition for custody and parenting time that she had filed with the Tribal Court. At that time, it was like seeing the doors of heaven in front of me.

I had informed her of what the possibilities of the court's actions could be. She had just relied on the fact that we knew what we were doing, but she had not considered the space we would need, but neither had I. I was thinking about her and I, and she was thinking just about the kids. We of course had two different living situations growing up. In my house I had my own bedroom space for privacy, and she grew up with a much larger family under one roof. This taken for face value might not be considered as a problem, but with the improvements in full swing that

I was doing to the house, and by improvements I mean completely destroying things only to find out that carpentry is not my forte. I now had a timeframe to actually have things done, and that had me biting my nails a little bit. Like I said, the lady knows just what to do to get what she wants.

I am pretty sure that the petition she had filed was in the beginning of November, and it was not the greatest Holiday situation for us at that time, but she did arrange for me to have a phone call with my daughter for the first time in 3 years. I was not going to lose that opportunity. I mean my little girl had become a mid-teenage young lady, and I didn't know what to expect. During our phone call, she had informed me of some things, that really had taken a toll on my heart. I tried not to cry, but when she mentioned some things about her and her mother's future together being questionable, I had reasoned with her to think positively about their future, where in the past I would have probably used it to gain an upper hand to hurt my child's mother. I am wondering why we gravitated towards this way with each other. I mean, doesn't every parent just want the best for their children in the beginning when they are expecting? Then life happens, and like a tennis game we hurl the negativity that we bring home with us, or that we create right in our homes, right back at the very person who is just trying to make the best life possible with us. It isn't even that we were doing really anything wrong, it was more or less jealousy of what the other was entrusted with, and what I was entrusted with as not being equal, and in life the very things that allow us to survive should be talked about as a couple, so that you both know what it is expected of yourself in a relationship, and that would provide for the feeling of equality between two people to truly exist.

So the big day finally came, and I would like to add that my carpentry skills had not improved, nor did my ability to be organized, but at least at that time in our relationship, you could count on the dishes being consistently clean. Well I believe it was February 8th that the hearing was on, and we were kind of waiting in the lobby area of the Tribal Court. The thought crossed my mind that maybe the police

were on to me for my child support warrant. So if there was a problem with that, being the dumb country ass that I was being, and that becoming a real possibility, I really had to downplay my anxiety because of it. It was my first time in the new Tribal Court's actual court, and the Honorable Amber Ahola was the presiding judge over the hearing. Well of course, I knew her, but I am damn sure that that had no effect on her decision because how the hell would she know that I was part of this, Ronnie hadn't mentioned me, did she? And even to it's effect, I am sure that nepotism couldn't even be considered a factor in that situation, but when my mind gets going, you never know the direction. I never asked Ronnie and maybe when she reads this she will put that thought to rest for me. Besides, I had seen Amber only in a few situations, but I had faith in her ability as a fair and considerate Judge within the Leech Lake Tribal Court government system. Ha, Ha, Ha... Wink, wink, Amber I have a speeding ticket I haven't taken care of, you think you could let me off the hook?

We weren't surprised when everyone agreed that Ronnie was perfectly fit to be a parent, but I was taken off guard when the judge said she would be getting custody and we could bring them home after school. Prior to this, we had a conversation where I informed Ronnie that they might offer a temporary trial period for adjustment. Well she said that is the way it was going to go. When I heard what the judge had ordered I thought, Ummmm... Ok..... Ahhhhh Ronnie. I don't know what to do! Well she was all smiles and sunshine, and on the outside so was I. I mean this was perfection in the making. I was the only one shocked because I never thought how much that day of caring for her kids meant to me, let alone how much I desperately wanted to care for my own daughter. In my mind though, I was rearranging all of the tools from the shed that seemed to find their way into the house. I haven't thought about why I would do such a thing when they had proper placement. I had worked so hard to create a way to organize them with peg board and such. I had all the tools for greatness, but just a D- to pass for effort and attitude at that time when it came to fixing the house.

Ronnie had a smile on her face while sleeping on the ride home. I usually sleep when she is, and if I were to go and get busy with things, she would get mad at me for leaving her when she slept. This I still yet to understand. I would never have done nothing to create any problems in our relationship. Maybe she had feelings of something from her past, or her love for me and being with me was so important, that she needed to start her day with me. Maybe so we always walked throughout our day in an equal way. I know when she reads this she will answer me right away, so it's within these stories I place the questions as they come, so we live our actual story through my own stories and view, but of course I will be keeping as much of that woman for myself as possible. There is a lot we have yet to talk about.

When we picked up Letecia and Anthony from school, I'll never forget how happy they were to be with their mom. They never even blinked their sweet little innocent eyes when including me, like I had always been in there life. Now I realize that at that point we were all so overcome with happiness, that subconsciously we were all living our dream of being a family that did great things together already. The first task was already accomplished, we were together. That is all that really mattered.

Well after we had accomplished going home with the kids, I still had to go to see my daughter Aaliyah the next day. This had become when I started to get in touch with her mother Jenny after that first phone conversation. Aaliyah's mother had informed me that Aaliyah was going to have her wisdom teeth removed, the following day, and I had planned to be there. I had left Ronnie and the kids at the house for a couple reasons. The first thing we were a little unprepared and had no money, but this was just my concern for handling our own life. The other was that I was still in a state of question as to what the hell we were going to do to make our life shape into what it should be. When I had left, I went to visit my friend and mentor Jim Beckanbach.

Jim and I met in prison on the second day after I had been moved outside of the walls to the minimum security placement while at the Faribault prison, which

goes by the name of Dakota. The man who introduced us was a man named Kenton Stillday, who was the pipe carrier for our group there. Kenton had to point out that Jim's cellmate had an operation done which gave him the appearance of having breasts like a woman. Of course we had to use this to take a shot at him from time to time. Jim never had taken it personally and he even told me a story one time about when he was a young teenager around 16 years old.

He was hitchhiking with his cousin and they made their way down to Florida. It started to rain pretty heavily, and a man stopped to pick them up. The man brought them to his house, and he was pretty well off, I guess so any way, he said he had a nice house. Well either Jim or his cousin asked to use the bathroom. Well when he came back, he noticed that the man had clothes laid out for them with towels, and that there was no way in the amount of time that he disappeared he could have prepared it. Well the man had a lot of NASA patches and items around his house that indicated he was interested in the space program. His cousin had found a gun in the man's house somewhere, because they had become afraid due to how the man had prepared for them before he had picked them up. The man would not let them get there things from the trunk of his car as well. So in this situation, I can understand how fear could be an issue. Well they demanded he return there things while indicating that they were prepared to use the gun if need be. They then left in the pouring rain to continue on. With this story I want to point out that due to fear, neither one of them had asked the question:

“was it that you seen us before, and maybe drove by, and it bothered you to see us in the rain walking, so you prepared for us to be comfortable, before you came and got us?”

This I want to point out that if you do not question things, then fear controls the situation, rather than knowing the truth. Either way, Kenton and I had to tease Jim

from that point on, and it's the way I introduce him to my friends and family every time I do:

“This is my good friend Jim, and he'll have to tell you about the time when he was almost pooned by a spaceman.”

Back to me going to Jim's house to find guidance. Well when I got there all of the guys were sitting around discussing very important matters you know. Like so and so was doing who knows what and we were all like whaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaat? Well anyway, I had to get off my chest that these kids I just met were total sweet hearts, and of course they followed up with the proper response of saying that it is a good thing. Well I didn't even know what I needed to do at that time. Or what I really needed from this guy. If you really have to know, I was a little intimidated. The partner that I was with had placed me in a situation that I had wanted, but had not worked with me to prepare for it. Unlike myself who wanted to prepare in a physical way, she was already prepared to love all of our kids, she always had taken her road, which if I really thought about it, that was all we really needed to get to where we wanted to be.

Well I had not seen my daughter in three years. All night I had taken my time to get down to St. Paul. I was scared of what she might think of me, and this is why a whole nine years of self defeat, depression, and guilt had defined my own mental prison, restricting me to the darkest, loneliest life, that I would never even think could have ever happened to me. I was not going to miss this opportunity though. Ronnie became an example for me to overcome my fear of rejection and to rely purely on love being what would save me from defeat.

When I had pulled up to my daughters house, they were just getting back from Aaliyah's dental appointment. I had let them go inside, and they had not seen me. I then went inside, and my daughter was sitting in her top bunk ready to rest. The hug that we shared stopped time for me. My fifteen year old daughter was shocked to

see me and said “Daddy!!!” She was shaking so much like she never wanted to let go, neither did I. She was still a little sore I am sure, but that didn’t stop her from interacting with me as much as possible. She then had to go to the bathroom I am sure from natural causes. While she was in there, I had asked her mother if we could plan for me to be able to take her for the weekend sometime. I was floored and if I hadn’t already been stunned by this welcoming I would have fainted, but she said “well if you want her for this weekend, than that would be fine.” Your kidding me right? Ummmm... Holy @\$@#%#^%#%#\$%!!!!!!!

It was the best day I had had since the day before, only my little girl coming back into my life. Heavens doors opened that day. I can only blame Ronnie for making that possible for me. In hindsight I knew I had the power, but I’m proud to admit that the strongest woman that I have ever met, that was perfectly made for me, was the only one to blame.

Aaliyah and I were running around without a care for anything, grabbing whatever she needed like we were never going to have that opportunity again. Sadly because of what I chose, that really was. That isn’t something that I am afraid to admit, I had chosen to do drugs and drink instead of being the man that my family needed. You wanna know the most magical part of that? They would always need me to be that man, whenever I had finally picked up myself off of the floor, they would always need me. However it became, directly or indirectly in there lives. You see in life like a stone thrown into water the ripples have can effect either on the world around us, or as become as large as the entire world.

Well on the ride home Aaliyah mostly slept and I had just smiled and drove home. At first, I was in a rush, until I realized that I had accomplished the very act that I had been dreaming of but living like it would never happen. Along the way she finally had woken up. I never had an adult conversation with my teenage daughter, ever in my life. I had started by apologizing for all the time I wasn’t there. I was falling into the cracks of what I had become accustomed to, making promises

that I would not hold myself to. My heart was in the right place, but my reality was not being considered.

The last ten miles home she had brought up that she had been given some Vicodin. She never had the prescription filled though. I said something without even thinking twice about it. I was happy for her response, but very disappointed with my original question. After she had pointed out that she had been given that prescription, I said that I could sell them for her for \$10.00 a piece and she could have all of the money. What the hell had I become? I never even thought twice about it. When I was in her life daily, and even always before I had never even thought about that ever being an option. Here I was with the love of my life and was my reason for even holding on to life, and I just let something so unimportant to either of us walk right through and destroy what little hope she may have had for me. I was proud of her when she said:

“Dad I am never going to do drugs, I will be fine without those pills, and I don’t need for you to give me money that way.”

Even with the relief that she stood her ground, I realized how much our life back home would have an effect on her. I look back knowing that she made the right choice for us that day. I knew that she loved me, and not that I didn’t have the same for her. I was I concerned with how easy it was to do the simple Felony act of being a pill pusher, like other people were not directly affected by my actions, you may think that it is not what it is, but in reality, I was helping people poison themselves, and in essence killing them. It may seem like a minor act, but that is the truth, every little step counts.

Well it was evening when we finally got to our house. Ronnie came home with Letecia, and Anthony and the children all hugged each other, and acted as if they were family all of their lives. They spoke to each other like things existed before between them. I now know that in the innocence of adolescence we are

spiritually connected, therefore that is why I see this. We forget this when becoming into our teenage lives, or at least most of us do. It is another dance of understanding, in and out to finally walk that line in life. The very action of dancing is to be graceful in balance with ourselves through the knowledge of step.

Well I had stayed up all night, still thinking how wonderful a gift it was to have my daughter at home. I just had paced back and forth, each time in my passing staring at her in unbelief that this was happening. How could I accept having to bring her back home to her mother? How could I let go of the one thing that was worthy of my attempting to take my life so many times before this day? Because God had sent Jesus to me and blessed me with the spirit of Elijah, I can only see that this was the truth to my understanding, and for me to finally become the leader to my entire people. And you know what? It was only by suggestion that this had become. I mean really think about it. A voice I heard that had no physical presence made it known that it had been a physical person in my life from time to time. It had talked me through the understanding that within myself I had the tools. It had the ability to make one person believe to become an unstoppable and unbreakable person. Not to be exclusive to just my family, but to have such a confidence in myself to the ultimate level to lead and my family would be in awe, that all of my dreams would finally be realized, leaving not one person behind. With this teaching, I found that I had all of the ability within myself to achieve greatness and not just for myself, but to stand strong enough for an entire Native American nation to achieve greatness. No one has ever been beneath me, I would always make room for anyone once I came into understanding, even if the chance to interrupt my grace would manifest. That what this strength test was about, that I continue with each day of my life, with God and Satan responding “ohhhhhhhh.....damn ...he still get’s it!!!!!!!” I really truthfully mean everything I say, God made everything in existence! Do you really think God doesn’t understand our words? He is the reason they exist, what we do can only be because of him, we exist because of him. Not one man can say he is responsible for ever inventing anything ever, all wisdom and

knowledge is a gift to people as it comes, whatever shape or form. Because God should only be feared until we come into our being of one with him. Satan is only the teacher, an entity that quizzes us from time to time, getting ready for finals, for the ultimate test which is living the greatest life we can. Do not fear nothing, because this leads to the ultimate understanding, and that is what a Jedi is, and truly we are a nation born from the stars!

As Ronnie and I went on with our lives, the drugs and drinking were taking a toll on the view I had of myself. I would have moments with the kids to remind me to stay on the path and even though I was using, that I had never strayed from the path, but that it was part of my path in order to become better in my understanding. Ronnie would leave from time to time, and I would just place faith that she was with the children. I can accept the truth of her need for companionship, but the fact that she was capable of finding someone else to do so, was also something I came to understand. I could not deny her of what would make happiness in her life. That would be destructive not only to us as friends, but also to my own feelings and needs when it would become denied by her, or until I would change. By her taking the first step to healing ourselves individually from falling out of love, and losing faith in our relationship. That is a truth that needs to be learned. Friendship can exist with true love, we just are afraid to associate things with such a powerful word, so as to create a defense not to hurt. It is only an act of sex we are really missing, when which we really think about it, isn't all that big of a deal, but if shared with one person for an entire life time, cannot be bought or sold, only brought with us to heaven, leaving a legacy of admiration. A true friend that we can share our deepest secrets with, that is a marriage, and I believe everyone already knows your going to get married before it ever being declared by a couple, at least the couples that will last for a lifetime. We celebrate only because we all accept this truth of two people being meant to walk through the rest of our lives together. They become one, and one flesh by creating a child, and that is how our legacies live on.

Well the fall came that year of 2018. I had been placed in jail once again in Sherburne County, and was furious from the denial of doing anything wrong. Clearly non-payment of my child support was a sign that I had. I had been kept in custody for a few weeks and was released once again. I had the idea of getting a job once again, but did not follow through. I had come to rely on the people around me to allow enough rope to keep hanging myself, but with the extended hand of care to keep me from meeting my demise. I had only been using my anger and optimistic view as to get through each day.

One night during the winter, I had been laying in bed not really trying to go to sleep. I was avidly reading the Bible at that time, and was starting to regain a conscious ability to hear the words of God. It was around 10 p.m. and I heard three knocks on the back of my house. At the time I was not sure what I was to do with all of my knowledge I was gathering from paying attention to such things. When I heard the knocks, I immediately got up from bed and started cleaning the house. I had some cedar wood from the woods behind my house, and I was grinding a piece down on a grinder that I had to make my first ceremonial pipe, when I heard it say “can you hear me?” I thought this was clearly something that was in my head and continued. The voice I heard while grinding the cedar down continued to talk of things that I had placed out of my mind since, but I finally heard it say “go outside on the porch, here comes your stuff.” I walked outside just to see what would happen. I waited for about five minutes, and I then walked back inside, asked out loud “where am I supposed to go?” I ground down the cedar and it replied “go outside and step off the porch.” I then heard the biggest bird I could think of, and literally seen the larger branches of the trees surrounding me being blown downward by the wind that was created. As it flew by, I heard it drop something on the side of the house. As soon as it flew by, across the lake there appeared three blue spherical shaped lights. They were coming across the lake really fast and from the Walker area. When they had almost reached the shore on my side which had only taken maybe a minute, they dimmed and disappeared. After that night I

decided I would turn myself in to jail, so that I could be out for Christmas with my family. When I made it to Sherburne County there was a man named Victor from the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe. When I told him this story, he without hesitation said, “It was a Thunderbird.”

I was released and went to my godmother’s house. How Randie became my godmother is a story in itself. I now know why and what this was, I was preparing to not be around in life, and I subconsciously thought that I needed someone who I could rely on to be there for my daughter. This is how little of myself I thought. When we were both dealing with my father passing and later her husband Larry passing. We were confused over what to consider as to what we were. We were supportive of each other through our losses, and were reciprocal with our help and looking out for each other. Randie had asked me to tell her husband two days before he passed away where I said:

“don’t worry for Randie, I will do anything she needs for you, and anything she asks within reason, for you.”

Now I thought this was a burden later in life as we started to fight over things, but I had done that to everyone I knew. I had made all of those around me responsible for my own situation, if they did not accept what I was, than I had taken myself away. That had no effect on anyone but myself. I would take a few days maybe months at times for some people, but I knew that it was only momentary, I would always need them. Even if they just became part of my life, you can never throw away good people. The commitment that I made to Larry still stands, and I am thankful that it does, I needed her to help me become who I am, everyone else was fine with me living my own life, and she wasn’t. Everyone just said “be a man and handle your situation,” so to speak. But what was my situation? It was that I could not thrive with those who were willing to not believe in a better life, and create a better environment from which I had lived in until I decided for myself, and constant

prayer led me to a stronger will. I had to do it alone, but never alone, just alone with God to work things out in my life. Well another person might consider a more spiritual way of understanding, but this was mine.

Well when I jumped on Facebook to get in touch with Ronnie. I sent her a message, but what I saw all over Facebook was that Guy and April Greene's home had been on fire, and it was a total loss. I couldn't help but think of Ronnie all night, even though I couldn't get in contact with her. I was downstairs at Randies trying to figure out what to do. It was about 3:30 a.m. on January 3rd of 2019.

Well she came into the living room and asked "What are you doing awake? Your thinking about Ronnie aren't you?" I said that yes of course I was, I missed her so much, but I did not think about how much personal change I had to make at that time. We talked for awhile, and I still am wondering why Randie does such things, but she said:

"Ok here's the deal. You go up there do what you have to do. I expect you to drive safely in my vehicle, and answer the phone when I call. Here's my credit card, now go get your dream girl."

Now I don't know how to explain that besides true faith in someone you love, to gain what clearly is something that I loved. Only I had not thought of what was more important. Ronnie wanted me to be that person, who I know I am today, but I didn't know how to do it at that time. She only wanted me to hold up my end of the bargain and do what I needed to do, to create a home for us, and she would keep the people in that home together. It was all clear on paper, but I had to follow through with some truth in action in order to get her to believe, and I didn't know what to believe because from a basic view it seemed easy, but when I only thought of her and I, it really wasn't. I know she wasn't just along for the ride, she would make it real, even if most of it had to be justified. That is how I know that she loves me

beyond this life, she went through all of this, and still doesn't let that opportunity pass to let me know that I am her choice.

Well I got up there as soon as possible without breaking any laws, or at least getting caught breaking them. I had pulled up to this house next door to the Greenes house where I thought she might be at. Their house was still smoldering and I thought what the hell? How could there still be smoke at this time? You would have thought that the fire department would have done a better job, but I wasn't thinking about that at all really, mainly just observing. Well I went over to my uncle Darrel's house to see if he had seen her. He said he did, and matter of fact she came over with a gas can looking for gas a few weeks ago. I thought it odd how he acted like nothing was wrong that day, and there was little he said about the Greenes house burning down. I then went down to Ronnies grandparents and spoke with her aunt Renee Burnette. Well Renee didn't say too much and didn't have a clue to where she might be. The kids were at school so I thought I would just see them later. I drove around asking people where she might be, but after it was late in the afternoon, I decided I would go back to the twin cities.

When I got back, I finally received a message from her and she was in Auburn, California. What the hell was she doing out there, I wanted to ask, mainly out of jealousy, and due to the mix of things, I would never show that. Just the little attacks of anger to indicate that I was bothered, but never to admit jealousy. I was a man, doing man stuff, in my man ways. That's all there is to it, right? I believe by pointing things out like this is a fine example that these things can become questionable on how to handle when we really care. I mean who cares what she thinks of me, right? Well I did, and she does care what I think of her, right? Hell no! But if I didn't accept her natural way of being, would she ever accept mine, or for that matter, could I accept my own.

Well I had talked with her from time to time through Facebook using the video call feature, and of course, if I wasn't there it isn't ever good enough for her. Well she was comfortable. I knew she would survive, but I wanted to be with her, that

was reality. I felt I could have say in that situation, but I did not include my whole situation in life. She was the center of my family yet to be, and I felt powerless without her being there. I never just declared that I wanted the kids so much that I would handle that situation and let her come home on her own. We had started to talk about things, and the lady that made it all the way out there for some reason I confused that she couldn't make it back by herself. She made me think this of course, by placing the seeds of doubt, like I said, she knows what she's doing and like some dumb donkey walking after a carrot, I started to try to collect my carrot.

Well I had made it up to my cousin Rhonda Mitchell's house to make a few dollars to get a bus ticket to Nevada, where Ronnie had made it to. I helped Rhonda fix a few things, and then was trying to figure out a way back to the twin cities. Well I got a hold of my cousin Brandon Mitchell and he said that not only would he bring me down to Randies, but he would also drive me out to get her in Nevada. Yay! Well like two guys who think they know how to travel would do, we stopped at the liquor store to buy some beer, not just for us, but that was a good enough excuse. While Brandon was driving into Elk River, we got to talking about things, and I'll be damned if he didn't rear end some nice new Chevy pickup coming up to the second stop light going south on 169. The owner got out, assessed the damage, and just waved that it was ok. Well a man behind us came up and hit the window on Brandon's side of the car. He was the driver of the car behind us. When he did that, for some reason, I immediately got out of the car chasing him back to his car, because first of all, he was not part of it. Secondly, he was really not safe, and third to take advantage of the fact that Brandon had a Mercedes and I was wearing this black italian raincoat (or trench coat), and by some off chance he would be afraid of this old style gangster look. Well it worked and the guy was shocked to see me coming towards him, so I just laughed jumped back into the car, and Brandon pulled over by McDonalds. I asked if he wanted me to drive, and he said yeah.

Well of course I had to add to the drama! We were already in full swing all pumped up like we ran the world, so I was speeding all the way to Randies around

140 miles an hour, and I have yet to beat that record speed. In and out of traffic, he kept his cool, and we would hear a siren but be way too far gone to ever see lights. It's at these times where I see being young, wild and free are almost created ahead of time, because we hit every green light on the way.

When we got to Randies, her step son Allen was there with his cat. He comes to visit her from time to time, and is a pretty cool guy that our little trio is made of. We get together for holidays, or at least the ones where I wasn't in jail. Well Randie thought the world of Brandon, and I had a little more admiration for the way he handled himself. I had never spent this amount of time with him and if I did we were drunk. Well we got ourselves together, and started our journey.

He had claimed he was ready to drive and I confirmed this only because I was excited to get to her. I mean there is always excitement when travelling, but we were on a mission. Well we stopped at a bar in Le Sueur county somewhere and had a shot and a beer. The waitress was pretty good looking, and from time to time, and maybe it was the alcohol talking and beer goggles, but I have a little pizzazz. I said something that I just blurted out and she seemed to like it, of course Brandon was like "bro you could totally...", but we just laughed and left pumped up to hit the road.

Well driving down the interstate we didn't think that police existed anymore, like they don't make those way the hell in this cornfield would they? Well they do, and Brandon was pulled over doing 92 MPH. When the officer came to my side, I explained I had a warrant but was planning on handling it, and of course like every time before, it had worked against my plans. Well I was arrested and brought back to jail for child support. Brandon was arrested for DWI and we both ended up in jail. Later I was transported to Sherburne County.

I was ready to just face it I had thought, and this time was more relaxed about the whole situation. What the biggest factor of this situation was that I had started to use less drugs at that time. So going into jail, the anxiety I felt was a lot less. Well I went to court and my attorney informed me that I was facing 90 days and he

suggested we fight it. I thought what do I have to lose, worse case scenario I would be out in 90 days. He made a hell of a presentation and I had forgotten about the payments I made without a job. This only because I made bail to get me out of jail. I had paid \$6500.00 dollars off in a 3 month period, and they were asking for \$7500.00.. When I heard that even I was surprised and thinking, well they have to let me go. They didn't budge. Well the judge thought that there was fair enough of effort to reduce the sentence to 45 days. Then my attorney informed me that I had 17 days credit for time served, and that in that county they give you good time. What the heck right? I could do 13 days in jail that's a piece of cake. But for some reason I could not settle on that. Now I know that this may seem coincidental, but I seem to have a lot of miracles happen. Well I went to the Gamma unit where I was housed and I asked how many days I had to go, and the CO said he thought I was getting out on the 1st of April, which was 8 days later. Well a little later I bothered him again and said I have to have more than that. Well he checked and he said well I think it is only 5 days. Now When I heard that I was excited, and had to tell the first person that I could walk up to and pace throughout the unit.

Well this guy was all down on himself, so I started to try and raise his spirit by remaining optimistic. I had tried to point out the good things he might have had going for him, really only to keep my happiness for my own situation afloat. Then it hit me, and I don't know why I put it that way at that time. I said "you know these people show up to work just like at a Burger King, so you have to tell them sometimes and they'll just do it, watch." Well I then told the CO that I knew I had time served. It was time to lock down and just before dinner, so he said we would figure it out later. Well the second I shut my door he came over the intercom and said pack your stuff, time served. But really what does this story reveal? You could say on one hand I was right, but I didn't actually have any proof, and was kinda just showing off, but teaching this other guy to question things, and even if your wrong, if you desire a certain goal, just go for it and see what happens when that's all you got. Never deny the possibilities.

Well Randie came and picked me up in Elk River and brought me back to her house. For a few days Ronnie and I were talking and I was still making plans for this trip to save the princess. Well of course I had no money, but then a friend said that she would help. I was thinking to just walk out there one day, but after I came back after my walk, a friend offered to buy me a bus ticket to get to Reno, Nevada. Well I got on the bus at 1:00 p.m. and decided I would call my best friend Israel. Now of course my friend Izzy would not let go of the fact that Ronnie and I needed to stop doing drugs, but I of course informed my friend who was suffering from sobriety, that this was clearly a non issue. I mean really, I had not seen all of this. Well I finally got on the bus, while never forgetting to grab something to drink. I was reading the Bible quite a bit, and I think at all times, especially when your high and drunk, you should keep that connection open with God. I mean really, what created the stigma that we are too low to ask for assistance from him or help at all times? King Solomon clearly did this at all times, and he was blessed with wisdom and knowledge to handle the entirety of his kingdom. I think that it's a good example to where we just in our personal lives could use guidance by the ultimate power, or am I wrong? Well to each his own.

While riding on the bus I met a man who had been riding for four days already. I didn't think I would have such an issue, but I made the best of my situation. Everyone I had the chance to speak with I would talk about the spiritual awakening I was experiencing, and that I just had to share that with the most wonderful woman on the planet, that's why I was celebrating on the bus ride. I also had to mention that this was obviously the way to go as to give me a designated driver, due to what just occurred a week before with Brandon. Yes Ronnie, this is the truth of the man you love.

I had been riding all day and was nearing Kansas City. So of course I didn't know how to ride the bus, I thought this bus just went there and missed my stop. I got off in Kansas City, and the NCAA tournament was going on at that time for March Madness. Well I never did see any basketball happen, but when I found out I

had 12 hours to kill I decided to get a hotel room, and maybe check out the sites of this town, which resulted in me asking the hotel attendant if there was a bar in the hotel. She informed me that there was, and I thanked her and went to my room. Trying to be a disciplined person, I decided I would only bring \$30.00 to the bar, so I stashed my money under the mattress. Well getting down to the bar I wanted to meet people so I asked to play pool. These couple of guys were playing these two girls, and they both looked like they could have been from most bars that I have been to on a friday night. You know, one's got a little dress on, the other tight jeans with cleavage showing, but definitely not going to meet mom until after we found out there may be a new birth in the family type. I think they would prefer to go by American's, but with today's youth they got all kinds of names, and being that I was heading for my honey, I really just wanted to play pool.

Well after the excitement of too many drinks, I then decided that I would go to my room. The girls followed me and I assumed they were just going to their own room, but then something strange happened. They demanded money for what I could see would not be what I would consider a good time. I mean the basic mechanics were understandable, yes. But the idea of this being considered? Why would I go on and on about this one woman, and these girls stand there basically saying "oh great, sounds so lovely, you need a morsel to get by?" I mean clearly things are different in this neck of the woods. Well of course I declined, and I ventured back to the safety of the bar, where there were plenty of other people to whom I could point out this travesty. Nope, I take pride in giving my lady that gift, it's something that is truly priceless. And I can take that with me when I walk on from this life.

Well I went from that point and as a guy named Hector who was latino that I had met at the bus station were walking, when a man down the road like six blocks spotted me and yelled "hey yo man you need a coat!" He was a black guy, not afro-american. I could tell because he appeared to be black. Now I am not a person who judges anyone really, but I need to point this out because what the hell is going

on with everyone getting their feelings hurt over being called a name. Isn't a lot healthier to know a person's name, rather than point out the generalizations? I mean a fish is a fish, and a panda is a panda is a panda. Well this stranger and his girlfriend walked me over to their apartment, made me sit on the stairs. He came back with a Kansas City Chiefs coat that was nice as hell, and like the pro's would wear and brand new.

A total stranger saw me a total of (330 ft per block x 6) which is 1,980 feet, over a quarter mile away. We on the reservation act like we don't see who does what, where they do it, but more importantly, that we as a community are doing nothing about it? Should we call the police? Or do we realize that they need our help, rather than allow outside influences to "help" them? Is it not our duty to care for the ones we love and know? And doesn't it bother us when whatever we are seeking for a "fix" cannot be found? Maybe it's something that is at the heart of our people that something cannot be found? We have pow-wows but where are the centralized locations for normal gathering in our outlying communities that need spiritual direction. You see there are big things missing from our small worlds within this large world. You have to notice the large and small. Like the irony of the year 1980. It is the same year my oldest sister Leah was born, or who my dad would refer to as "Baby Rangs", because when she was a baby she looked like an orangutan.

I then was on my way to Denver, Colorado where I spent 12 hours on a layover and the first thing I saw when the bus pulled up was emergency lights from police and ambulance vehicles. Well come to find out later, there were two people killed right on the other side of the bus stop building. While standing looking out the door, a man ran by me with another man running after him. Well there is a couple walls dedicated to free stations to power mobile devices. The first man running by me had stolen the 2nd mans phone. Well there are a lot of homeless people in Denver, and I think I know why. All of today's younger people around the ages of 25 and lower, go there thinking about smoking marijauna and living the

dream of smoking their lives away, because of people like me who glorified it as if it were an actual person with rights. I mean people who are ten years older than me rarely do such a thing, but there are exceptions to the rule. Everyone that I grew up with idolized the act to the point where I can see them believing in this actually being a lifestyle. Everyone is advocating for legalization, but the fact is when it isn't legal it becomes more of a responsibility to actual maintain, meaning that you have to actual make it a hobby, and consequences that it would have if legalized would create the possibility for desensitization towards other drugs to become less painful to deal with, and this is what we see in our communities. Our next door neighbor is acting crazy and we put up with it, and I have a valid opinion because I was that next door neighbor. The fact that someone is high or drunk is a clear sign of some sort of distress or discomfort in one area of a person's life or another, or due to the trauma from unresolved issues having subconscious effect. What is the truth in this is that oppression from any person towards another does not help anyone in any situation:

You're not going to ever do that...

Get real...

That can't be done because...

Why the hell would anyone want to see that...

You need to get your shit together...

*You need to get a GED

*You need to go to treatment

*Your all f***ed up

How do these things affect your view when told this by a person that maybe has a stable life? Does it seem unattainable? Told to go to treatment makes me feel like I am not wanted. Being told I need to get a GED makes me feel like I'm not equal or that I lack the ability to know. Being told that we are all f***ed up, how has that made you feel? Has it ever made you feel good? We end up looking inside ourselves and become introverts, and believe me, native people are a dream people,

look at our arts and music. These are fundamental to our people, just like other people may have quirks or characteristics and generalizations. Our Anishinabe or any aboriginal people are still attached in such a way that we express ourselves outwardly. We don't have ADHD and other things. You know it to be true that native children all seem to have a knack when it comes to knowledge, because really where does it come from rather than where it is stored, and that is of a higher power. Let's just go back about 70 years:

The year was 1950, and if you ask any elder, and just use common sense, people were tough, lived a long life, respect was instilled in them, and they loved each other, and all lived long great lives without prescription medicines. More importantly, ask around, but I asked one man I have known all my life named Alvin White from Sugar Point. When he says something it is true, he only speaks the truth, he told me that back then cancer was not so prevalent, matter of fact, he thought that is what other people got and not us here from Leech Lake. Prescription medicines are what cause's cancer! Dennis Banks (Nowa Cumig) had told me he had developed diabetes a year and a half after the first time I ever spoke with him. After he started the "Longest Walk III" that started in La Jolla, California. He controlled his diet and sought the knowledge to take care of himself better. 80 days later he came back to his house, and I'll never forget how he told me personally that he no longer had diabetes. I believe that was in the spring of 2012. Who do you believe, because these are two men that I would never have doubts.

We can transcend the whole respected way of being on the same page, by letting people be who they are. Like a horse that is trained from birth, a person can make that horse move with little effort when they are full grown, it's all in the early stages of training. As an adult, we all have learned a new skill along the way. Matter of fact the Hart boys from Cass Lake offered to teach me to bead. I still want to learn

how to fly a plane. I think I can take a few pointers to improve my quality of life, and help when it just boils down to living in a more pleasant environment. When dealing with children, we only need not yell at them, and we are all children, because no one ever listens do they? Whatever we are yelling about is not even heard, a person will almost always repeat what they had done. They are responding to the noise and not the directive to complete an action. When we are all on the same level, there is no need for one to be disciplinarian over another, just a guide. If the core understanding is of love, we would know and understand when we let another down. This teaching inside ourselves will allow us to learn respect of self and of others, because the consequences can be limited to only the person committing the offense and understanding they had went to far. This would take us to actually lay out a standard. Holding another accountable for a wrongful action from the beginning creates a safe haven for boundaries with all when walking into those parts of life.

How do we accomplish this? Start simply with creating more public events that involve everyone in a family setting to be of purpose and have a responsibility to work towards an accomplished but reasonable goal. A three legged race, soccer, football, bocce ball, volleyball etc., or anything requiring team effort, Board games to make a group decision. By creating the need for a person, the rest will expect that person to be involved, and if they choose not too, in essence, that person would be letting the family down. At that time, an entire people can surround those who are not participating in this dance of healing our communities, so that we all can offer assistance to an understanding that collectively we all have an area of knowledge to share. Every little detail of information is knowledge, be it from a book, or by experience it all counts. Every single person that is not accomplishing some little success is a victim of our own selves not looking out for our neighbors an adult or child, we all have to strive to be our best. When I was growing up, I was told it takes a village to raise a child. Don't you think with all the complications of today's

life, that is a truth that even applies to the generations that seemed to not know how to attain greatness?

Every person you know regardless of who they are and what they have done counts. We all deserve to see the ones around us to do things that make us feel proud as a person, and as an entire people, but even more importantly as a community. We cannot be biased in any way because other people always have something to offer in the ways of knowledge and wisdom. No more wishing, no more hoping. How can we offer ourselves in sacrifice through our time with one another in a positive beneficial way, rather than offering tobacco to the spirits unbeknownst to the power of such things with little understanding, or teaching of why we do this. More importantly to the Anishinabe, because if you want to talk of old ways, we never had tobacco, we had Red Willow, or kinikinik.

In later years in my life. I had given up on the dreams that I had constantly been kicked for. Not only by myself to begin with, but more importantly set myself up for others to comfortably kick so to speak in ways that are designed to help. Lets face it, if I had my child right with me, I could never stop, I would never be able to let her down, I would overcome, unless I created the opportunity for someone to intervene. I would go to the ultimate for her. Now anything supporting separation of a family that is not dealing with major abuse, does not work. This created an industry and area of expertise that has limitations. Why not allow for a person trying to help to be limitless and allow for their knowledge to be taken into consideration at all times. I'll say it though, even with all the educational backgrounds. Isn't it plain to see that our great state of Minnesota is really a bunch of high paid babysitters with pizzazz and different views of purpose?

So just stop for a second right now, breath...

Let's jump into the corrections world. A police officer is not emergency personnel unless he or she has to be. Growing up in a rural area such as I did. I

would dream of those days where relations between an officer of the law and the average citizen were always greeted with a smile. Even in my past when they would show up when I was a teenager, and later as an adult. Many of the Cass County police officers knew me very well. The ones that really knew me would toss me the hand cuffs and say “get in”. They all know I don’t run, I would much rather not. Why keep off the inevitable happening and get back to life as soon as possible. When I would continue returning to the same environment and rely on the same way of doing things and the people that wouldn’t turn me away, it made me feel like this is good as it gets. That makes sense right? Well that could be yes and it could be no. If it is only you that faces the issues your having, than I would say yes. In reality, I can say with confidence that it is no. How many support groups out there do not have spirituality as the core of their group? How many strong families stay together and get together without this as the center from which they can always gravitate to? This is when I grab you by the shoulders, look you dead in the eye and say the quote “the family that prays together, stays together.” Ronnie loved the couple of times we prayed together, just me and her. This was when we were clueless if we would ever have our children back in our lives. I needed her to make my life worth living again, and she needed me to confidently inform her of the law regarding child custody and the Indian Child Welfare Act. Her rights to her children and how to go about it. I remember the day she sent me a text, and it was of the front page of the petition to get her daughter and son back.

Growing up we were taught how to be gangster by a bunch of lying wannabe’s who really don’t have a clue what being tough is, and what it means to be a gangster. The people who started these gang’s always had the mentality of creating a family that wanted better things for anyone that was without and the need to feel like they matter. Only with the glamour of materials they found themselves like most of us would default to “**making it rain**”. Why not though? Why wouldn’t we use the resources that one comes to know. In a neighborhood like mine where all people struggle from the same issues? I mean it isn’t like a person goes out and

comes back with the cure for everyone. They do come back from the liquor store with cases of beer and bottles of alcohol, or if they think they are really making it big into the drug game, from California boasting about their Cali connect. Logistics do count in this endeavor just as much as a FedEx package would. So I laugh as I shake my head and say “your not the first, and your not the last”. If you were that big in the game, people wouldn’t even know that you had anything to do with it. With methamphetamine it actually does have a shelf life, and so that being considered, doesn’t the ability to make it as close to the distribution area be vital? Wouldn’t it make more sense to get a finished product, to transfer with as little handling as possible so that like a farmer, your product be the one sought? These are common business practices that take very little thought when becoming serious about making that all mighty dollar.

For those dealing with addictions to Heroin, Methamphetamine, and Cocaine, the potency is really never consistent unless you're the one making it from a raw product to completion. Even then it takes an acquired skill set to actually know what the hell your doing. All of the at home chemists have stories of near misses, and deal with some sort of give and take relationship from dealing with it personally. If I have to say it I will, but do you really think that someone out there has not tried the drugs and be the one to make it, or do you think they have testing on animals, and human trials?

Distribution on the other hand is different. Most people are supplementing a habit and don’t be surprised that there are very few large distributors dealing in the Kilo range. This could be looked at and compared as Pepsi, Coke, and RC soda in competition for your money. Now on the reservation, I was actually talked to at a young age from a few people how to get pain medication from the hospital. I swear, that all that education does not mean a damn thing when prescribing a medicine to someone. We have all seen the scale for which the majority of doctor’s use to prescribe such medicines. I will remind you what it looks like if it doesn’t come to

mind right away. There are ten circles in a row, all with different faces from happiness to that ouch face, and that one meaning **“there is no other way of getting rid of this patient, so let’s give them what they want.”** I would like to add that one time my sister Renee and I were talking about how fidget spinners were starting to become so popular that there were rumors of doctors prescribing it to people with ADHD. We then started to joke with this subject saying that one day “whack-a-mole” would be prescribed to take as an as needed basis, once after breakfast, after lunch and after dinner. Now that I think of it, wouldn’t that really calm things down before dealing with the hellish environments we walk into sometimes in our various career choices. Just beat the hell out of that mole, and pleasantries will follow. We could 3D print custom avatars at home that looked like the ones who get on our nerves the most, and when times get tough just think to ourselves, “I can’t wait to get home and beat the living hell out of you!” No reason to ever even think of having to threaten to turn the family car around anymore. At this time I am happy to be writing these ideas down and thinking some smart dumbass might actually try this.

I will try not to get off track but will delve a little deeper into the reality of how heroin gets into this country. You don’t really think that the cast of “American Gangster” is really how it gets here today do you? Our very own Government was supported by us when the Bush administration started such things. How can we be in the Gulf war and really only get the result of a bunch of our american soldiers suffering from PTSD? My child’s pediatrician was very informative on this, and our lack of knowledge versus our acts of care do create the ability to make a mistake. Our american companies sent donations to support the cause, and because of the desert heat, and the large donation supply of diet soda sent for the war effort. This action created the opportunity for aspartame and other ingredients in soda, to have its effect. They do not allow a person to hydrate normally. So that not taken into consideration. The human body was compensating in any way that it could, and like a spaceship or a submarine, would only fall back onto vital services to keep the

body functioning optimally. They were not acclimated to the environment. Just like myself who once had taken a PBT on the side of the road and was able to speak clearly with no sign of intoxication while blowing a .52. I was literally supposed to be dead. This was happening as Lisa Jackson from Ball Club was trying to save me from being arrested. Thank you for trying to reason with me though Lisa, even though I only kind of know you, you showed me that you cared.

Codeine, Fentanyl, Hydrocodone, Hydromorphone, Meperidine, Methadone, Morphine, and Oxycodone based pain medications are opiate based. This is just my opinion so if I'm just bulshitting, please tell someone who gives a shit. All of these contain an opium base, meaning that our own FDA government regulations allow for the harvesting, processing and distribution to the ones we love and care about, be it illegal or not. Like any company on this earth, there is a tolerance for mistakes and damages. We all have bought those dented cans and opened boxes at a discount rate, only this is pure heroin. All the way from the top, we are poisoning ourselves because as a nation, and I do mean the United States of America, we can't just walk off the pain. We are letting a bunch of people from a classroom define how strong we are from a textbook that is compiled from a history that since the 1950's, has declined in the pain a person can actually handle.

Today, I see even our elders seeking attention by accepting the offer of money for the sale of their prescription medicines. I like the way most of them handle it though "oh you don't have the money? Fuck you pay me." Why do we not only participate in this, but also allow it to go on? Gabapentin is so prevalent and gang members claiming to have no drug influence are actually adopting these ways. Just like into our cultural ways. As time progresses, we let the toxicity walk amongst us. We play into the taboo facts and create humor out of something that should be revered. Our whole entire nation has lost respect of our self identity, and it starts with one person accepting another's toxins, while the rest of us sit idly by and allow it to continue. On Facebook, I see people talking of wanting to go back to prison, or

how they feel so alone. Well it is because of the fact that we literally cannot stand ourselves enough to stand each other. Look around, we have lost total value in just ourselves. Do you see now how this has become? Just think of your average day and compare it to when you were 10. Things really don't seem right do they?

Now from this point it may get a bit strange. One day I started to hear a voice. It was subtle at first, and I was using methamphetamine daily and of course, anything I do, I not only do it, I make it a lifestyle. Now other people smoke marijuana and do other types of drugs, not me, I am loyal to the point of only doing one drug to the point of idolatry. This was how mixed up I had become, this is what my world started to consist of. You see even when it seemed I had a heart, I only used it for my own self satisfaction to be accepted in the toxic group of people that consisted of some very loving great people. They were in the dirt with me, and everyone needs someone to talk with when the wall's created by ourselves blind us to the fact that drugs and alcohol are a very wrong choice. Some people experiment in their teenage years or later in life, but us on the reservation live with it as a means for income sometimes, but are very much surrounded by the influence of drugs and alcohol all of our lives.

How many people have looked at joining the Suboxone program for that \$1200.00 of extra income? Along with probation requirements of tracking due to Child Welfare's involvement in a family, and this originating from the original decision of getting high or drunk. It isn't what is currently happening in your life, It is always deeper than that. There is so much oppression from the very ones who got us started to make us become defensive. Why not focus on the very first time we chose to get high or drunk? What was going on at that time in our life? Who was it that made it available? What were the circumstances that lead up to that first choice to try it? The fact is all of us forget that God was present even at that time, we just forget because at some point in life, our parents became bystanders to the decisions in life we make. I cannot say this enough to remind you:

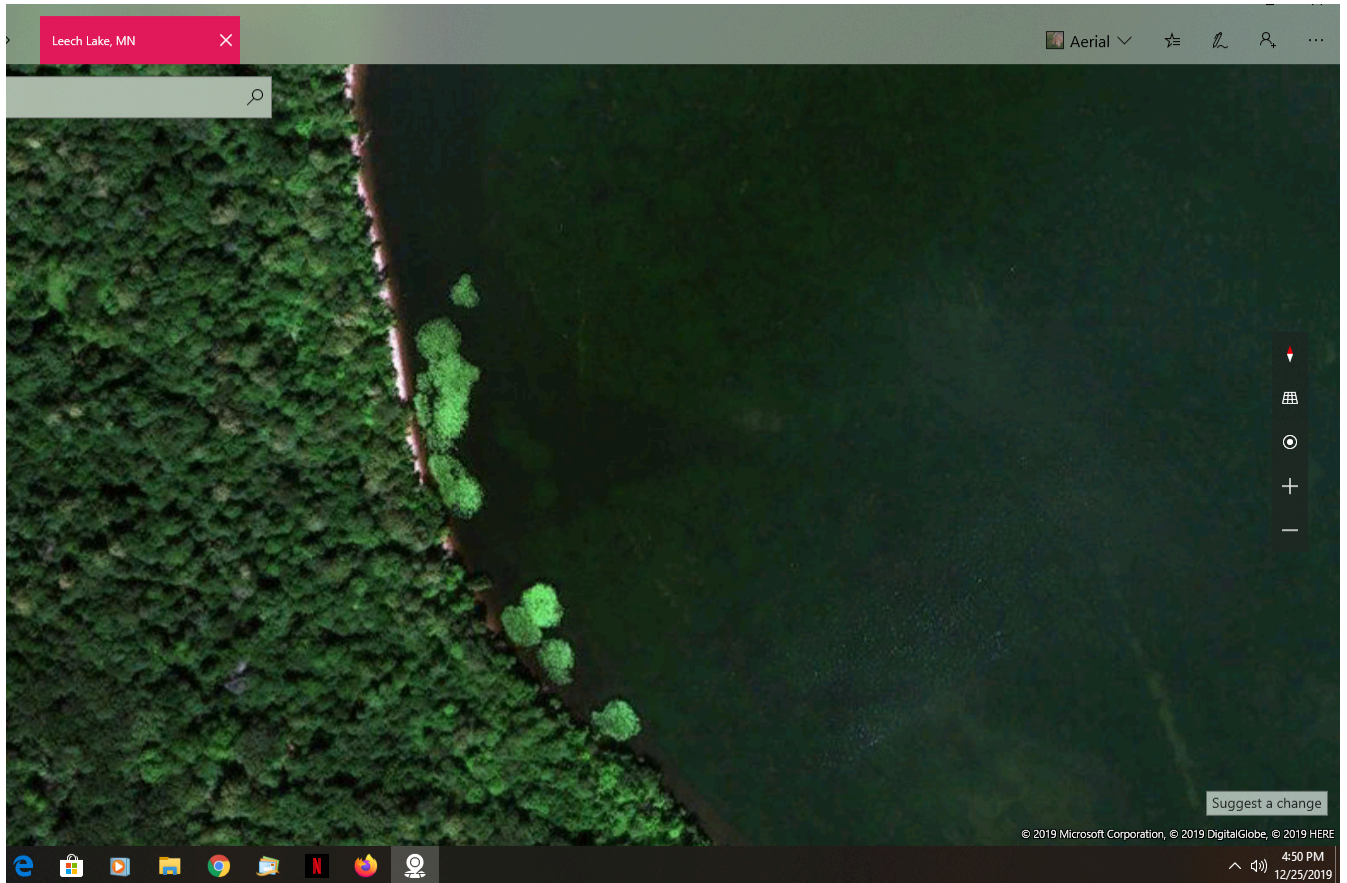
You are a child of God and created from our mother earth, communicate with them. Jesus was a model that would be the ultimate level to attain, but in our individuality we are not limited in life of attaining the ultimate level, and for you hackers or gamers, there are no shortcuts. No matter when you start, that level exists because Jesus was the Christ and is real! Just to explain what Christ means, it means to be anointed.

At first you will feel like your just talking to empty air, but your spirituality is in training, you don't get the hang of dribbling a basketball until you practice, and even more, you don't get good at hitting every shot until you make it a point to do so.

Now when Ronnie had decided to go away to try and curb her issues in California. I had given up on a lot of things to care for myself within my own life, but I was already declining when I had my first conversation with her. My daughter Aaliyah and Ronnie's two children Anthony and Letecia were my motivation to literally keep breathing. The idea that Ronnie was out there somewhere, made me use my anger to motivate me to show her what I could do, and of course what I was made of. I was living that dream of her seeing me doing good and missing out. I knew she would always love me, but I was not reading between the lines. The relationship I had with her I handled in such a toxic psychotic way. That's really what we both had acclimated to become as acceptable in our lives, as individuals and as a couple. So being that the rest will follow, so did the very people who loved and cared about us. Some would say something to a point, some would turn the other way, but most people would be flipping scared to even be caught in our company. They would never let it be known because in reality, we are very pleasant to be around, and they knew we can do amazing things. With our organizational and networking skills we acquired from a life of just trying to put broken puzzles back together. People believed in us, we just never used it in the right way, so they continually give us opportunities to see our true greatness. Now does this mean that

she was mine and only mine? No it does not. Or did the fact that we are made for each other even matter if one opens their eyes and the other does not? How strong are you? Could you watch the one person who asked you to marry you or vice versa, not make the choice to be in sync towards a full and happy reciprocal life?

The person that started Ronnies friendship with me was my dad Kenneth Gale. He had drowned across the street from the very house that my grandmother had lived in. We had lived there together ever since she had a stroke and was placed in assisted living, and my dad needed a home of his own to raise me and my sister Renee. Well I got a phone call from my cousin Patty Gale on October 23 of 2016. She had informed me that he went out to set his net for fish, she had to cook dinner after work, and when she went to check on him, the net was set, but the canoe was empty sitting beside the net. My cousin Brian Mitchell and I were at his house in Red Lake, MN. Nothing mattered to me, we were there in 45 minutes. When we arrived it was just getting dark, but it was the calmest day I have ever witnessed. My sisters, family, and friends were all searching around the shoreline, and I did the same. I went up to the house and looked around, and I knew right away what had happened. This is why he had prepared all three of us for the event of his death all of our lives. You see in the Midewiwin ways, gifts are very strong. My dad had never spoken of him being of an understanding of these things, he just let them become for me. Now I do not know what the reason for us as people to keep our spirituality to ourselves, but isn't it at its core about relationship? Why are we introverts rather than extroverted when it comes to this? Is it because of the influence that society has made on us that we covet a gift for monetary gain, rather than use it for the good of our people as one nation? I want to show you a Google Maps aerial photo of where my dad had chosen that we spread his ashes after cremation.



What is it that you see? Does it look like a man on his knees in prayer with three children behind him? This is the east side of Bear Island on Leech Lake where around 25 to 27 years ago, my father had chosen to have his ashes placed, and had personally brought my sisters and I. This was also where my grandparents Lillian and Burt Gale Sr. would have a fish camp so many years ago. My uncle Darrel told me a story of a time when he became a stole away and they discovered him hidden in the boat, so he got to stay and help with the gathering of the fish, rather than go to school.

Upon my entering my dads house, I noticed a couple things. The first was that his chair at the table was pulled out differently than he would normally have left it. The next was that there was a six pack of Budweiser by the foot of the chair if I had sat down and pulled it up to the table. The last final clue was the bottle of alcohol

on the table. When there was one last shot left, he would always hand it to me and say “corners”, and he meant for me to take the last shot. That is all that he had left in the bottle. I grabbed a beer, drank that last shot, and waited for my sisters. When my sister Renee had come, I handed her a beer. When my sister Leah came, we both joked by saying “Leah, dad would have wanted you to have this.” It allowed for us to calm our emotions and face the reality that our father had passed away. The thing that really calmed me is when my sister’s had spoken of how he might have handled his last moments. Renee had said “I can see dad already sitting at one end of the boat, and death being at the other end, and dad saying, well hold on here a second”, and then we all could visualize him not only negotiating the terms of his death, but also making a list of demands that if death would not comply with, he would not be going quietly.

Over the next few days there were so many volunteers of strangers, friends, and family that assisted in the search for my father’s body. My sister Leah would park as close to the shoreline as she could. She stayed there and would only go home for a shower and maybe grab something to eat. My other sister Renee and I would go over to support her, but we mainly would let the others conduct the search. After the police would end searching for the day, I would wait a couple hours, grab a push pole that I would normally use to gather wild rice, and go up and down the shoreline at various depths in hopes that I would discover his body. Of course my efforts did not produce, but it was actually therapeutic for me. It empowered me during the days that followed to focus on what I believed I needed to do. The first was to focus on my cousin David Chase and my other cousin Dylan Gale. David’s mother Tracy Gale was the first to pass on in life after I had just finished my stay within the Minnesota prison system.

Now I am going to divert to where I now see how God is omnipotent. I had been placed in the Leech Lake men’s halfway house after my 8th rule 25. On my mother’s birthday of December 23rd, 2014, my family had buried my cousin Carrie

Robinson. Carrie and I were close growing up. When we were in 8th grade, we were already dabbling in drug use. One day on the ride to school, my cousin Chadley White had overdosed on Colozanol. This is a strong antipsychotic medicine that I actually tried later on with the idea that my best friend Israel and I were going to become drug dealers. What I had accomplished with this was only to face the dread of two highschool friends Lynette Geiselhart and Tony Collins overdosing. Tony went home on Monday and never came back until a few days later, and Lynette was in 3rd hour choir class when she overdosed on the following Wednesday.

Well it wasn't long into 8th grade, that my cousin Carrie Robinson had developed some major issues, that to this day I never really asked about. She was never the same again. After we buried Carrie, within a week we were burying her father, Terry Robinson Sr.. My cousin Terrence Robinson who was the son whom we also called "Bubba" was a damn ox. He was a year younger than I but until his death, I never realized how much I relied on him. The following April we had been preparing to bury him as well. I was on my way home from my one-on-one meeting at the Leech Lake Out-patient program. I met my cousins Tracy Gale and Shannon Robinson on the very corner where so many years ago, my father had witnessed the light above the trees. An elder named Larry Hardy was driving me home and they were just stopped at that corner and outside of the car. They were both crying and informed Larry and I that he had passed on due to an overdose of Xanax. This had caught me off guard because Bubba did not do pills. About the year before his father passed, he would from time to time take Vicodin. I was kind of aware of this, but of course who really worries when your dealing with your own drug issues. All that aside, Larry of course had dropped me off at home, and I just kind of looked around to confirm with other family members that this happened. That was a week before we prepared for his funeral on a Thursday around 1:30 p.m.. On Tuesday the following week I had left work at the new Sugar Point community center. When I got home, I had a small amount of methamphetamine, just enough that would have

the effect of a cup of coffee to me at that time. My dad had harvested some cedar trees from the area around our house before with my brother-in-law Raymond Geving. Well I did not understand what spirit houses were, but I have seen this practice being done at our local burial ground in Battle Point. So wanting to honor my beloved cousin, I asked my dad where I needed to go to find it. He gave me the directions so I started out to find it and when I left it was 6:26 p.m. Now when I realized I had found it, something miraculous happened. I could hear what I thought was the trees talking. But it was the wind. It said “shhh shhh, is it really him?” This caught me off guard, and I just thought it had to be coincidental. I then heard “shhh shhh, I think he is going to say something.” I stopped and shook it out of my head and just walked around a little. Now I had grown up here. Been in those woods all my life. I had never noticed this area before. Well after about 15 minutes of walking around I sat down. I was kind of in a dream like state of discombobulation and what seemed like another 20 or so minutes realized it was getting dark. Now I didn't have a flashlight, but I had this small novelty light that was no help in seeing. While I was in the woods, I didn't even notice that it started to snow. Still in the dream like state of mind, I walked straight home in the dark. I remember looking at the clock and it was 10:36 p.m. and it didn't even register in my mind that 4 hours had passed by. I went straight to sleep after that.

While at work the next day, I noticed that my cousin Lori was finally getting her new appliances at her house. My father and I had been working on getting her soldiering done for her water pipes to allow her to move back into her house. When I knew that all she had to do was clean up her place. I told her that I was going to go over and I would stay there, since where I was working was just down the street. When I was done with work I went to her house and just got an eerie feeling about one of the upper bedrooms. Well I started cleaning and Stephanie Day, Patty Gale, Lori Gale and my father all showed up around 10:00 p.m. They brought something to drink, but I was running on the little bit of drugs I had used earlier, so I knew that if I drank I would slow down. Of course that didn't stop me, but I did limit myself

to some degree. When they finally left, I decided that I would sleep in the bedroom where I had that eerie feeling. Nothing happened that night of course, and I slept like a baby that night.

The next day was the beginning of the rest of my life, but I still have so far to go. During the day while at work and outside the community center, I had a vision that hit me so hard that I almost fell to the ground. Even when I closed my eyes, I could still see all that I had seen. Now I know that while out in the woods the previous Tuesday two nights before, is when this occurred. I was taken throughout history and time from beginning to end. I had the opportunity to be everything in existence from the smallest thing Yahweh makes, to what it feels like to stand beside the whole universe. I seen other life forms like us, other animals that we would consider non-intelligent and even found out that a tree blows our knowledge out of this solar system when it comes to intelligence. I started to cry, not out of fear of anything, but because it was so real. I finished up my day, walked back to Lori's and just sat down on the bed in the bedroom in a shocked state of mind. Around 5:30 p.m. my cousin Patty Gale and my dad walked into the room. Lori was also there but she did not come into the house. They asked if I was going to attend the Easter party that was moved to Thursday that week because of Bubba's funeral on Saturday. I somehow gave them a response of no, and was still in that state of shock.

Only about 20 minutes went by and all the light disappeared. Being in this state of shock, I didn't even care to question this supernatural event occurring around me. Well at the time, I had a galaxy S3 cell phone that had great graphics for my pictures, and music on it. It was the only light that I was able to see, and even when I had put my hand to the side the light would not reflect off of anything. I could only see what was in between my eyes and the light. I started playing a song by the group Shinedown called "I'll Follow You" and started a slideshow with all the pictures of my family, and it was perfectly in unison with the song. I had placed

the music on repeat, and I just watched the slideshow of pictures. Around the 4th time the song was repeating, I could see through the walls of the bedroom. I watched five shadows come up the stairs, then down the hallway, walk right through where the door should be, and sit around me, but it was like they were all right in front of me. I will remind you that it was completely dark and the darkest dark, and I never saw the outline of anything, just the motion they made like they were ascending the stairs, and like I said come down the hallway through the door that I couldn't see that I knew was shut and also was not perceivable. They had started to give me the impression like I was going someplace, like I was dying. I then heard Sean, Raymond, Donald, and my nephew A.J. right behind me where the upstairs window is. Sean was saying "if he goes we are going in after him!" Then the others would say "but we are not supposed to go in there!", and Sean's voice would say "fuck that shit, I don't give a damn, if he goes we will not let them take him!".

Now the shadows sitting around me would give me glimpses of themselves, like a small part of the knee, or a piece of their arm, just small little snippets of the people they were pretending to be. I have an idea what these shadows are, but can't entirely be sure yet, but they would never show their eyes. Well, I started to try and sing, yet I could not get out a word. After a couple times that the song played, I got out one word, then a couple more as the song repeated. The last time it played, I was screaming this song out so loud and tears were coming down my face. Just like that when it came to the last words of the song which are:

"if I could find assurance, to leave you behind, I know my better half would fade, I'll follow you down" .

The music just stopped. It was still on repeat, how the hell could that happen? I heard my sister Leah's voice join in with her hubby Sean right behind me say in the rezziest damn way she could "howah, I remember he could sing just good."

Then I heard Raymond say “hey you remember that time....” and their voices trailed off.

The shadows all stood up at the same time, and just like they had entered, left the room. When they were at the point of rounding the stairs, the last one went around the corner and all of the light came back. Well I had taken this as a sign of better get busy and back to getting my cousin Lori’s house clean. Only when I got into the kitchen, all of my family was outside, and when I mean all my family, I do mean all of my family from past, present, and future. They were all cheering and appearing to be celebrating. Physically they were not there, but they were there in spirit, literally.

Now there was a can of beer in the refrigerator, so of course I downed this due to the fact that my dad had claimed to experience DT’s and frankly I needed a beer and was thirsty. I was all out of cigarettes, so I walked over to my sister Renee’s house. It was around 11:30 p.m. and she was mad I came over so late. She was yelling at me and she went downstairs. Later she told me she went to go get me one, but instead of waiting I left her house and went back to Lori’s.

I remember standing in front of the door of the house, and just an overwhelming feeling of dreadfulness overcame me. I stood on the front porch for a few minutes, choked back tears that were starting to fill my eyes, and walked back in. That voice I just started hearing a while back had been trying to mimic different voices of people that I knew.

Now when it comes to mimicking, let me clue you in on some facts. AT&T was co-founded by Alexander Graham Bell in 1885. We take this for granted nowadays, but let's understand what he accomplished. He had taken your voice which in an air temperature of 68 degrees will travel at 767 miles per hour, and increased its speed to the speed of light. Meaning, that through technological electronic advancement, he turned our analog voice waves into electrical impulses.

This in turn was converted on the other end instantaneously as a person speaks. That was in 1885. One hundred years later, we added an extra step and started to convert to digital, that not only sounds better, but adds the increased step of having to convert from analog to digital which is based off of the computer language code binary. This is a sequence of eight 1's and 0's (each 1 or 0 is a bit) that is called a byte. Now there are 256 possible combinations. So that in mind, this sequence has to measure tone level, timing of pauses or quirks that a person has and all noise heard on one end or the other simultaneously in real-time. Now because there is a digital conversion, it requires a modem which we also take for granted these days to convert the digital signal on both sides, Converting and deconverting, to actually hear a recognizable voice from one end to the other anywhere in the world. The speed of light is 670,616,629 MPH. In one second it can travel around the world 7.5 times per second. Sounds pretty complicated right? But why do we place so much trust, in technologies that have such capabilities? Why do we judge each others texting or posts on facebook as if their body language or context isn't required most of the time. Most importantly, why are we thinking that the latest blurt of a decent quote is in any way or shape to identify who we are? What is even more amazing once you attain the level, is why you even require technologies at all. As original people don't you think that if you were in touch with your Creator so much, that in a time of need, or even just because you ask, God wouldn't relay a message for you? Like I said, this will seem strange, but it is amazing!

We can fill the air with knowledge or camouflage common sense with bullshit. Who really cares as long as it works. Unless we start making the right choices for what works, and we have to find that as an individual and come to an agreement. Believe in finding the truth for yourself, sticking to what you believe. Then as a group finding the same solution, because we all know what makes up the truth. So I might use a different name for explaining things such as the name of God. Do such things with such immensity or the complexities of God's understanding to myself really matter but only to me? Yes, it really does only matter to me, so those who are

taken aback at this, what I am saying is I am a person who truly loves diversity, and will not force a view on another person. If God loves you, just like my parents and family love me, that love I may boast about when speaking of the people who consistently surround me. So does it matter if my nickname is any different than your view of a proper name? This is my own divine personal experience. Yours matters to me, but we have to gravitate towards it really only mattering to ourselves and those who are accepting of it. Forcing anyone to accept the power of a higher power is part of your path. God is part of life, but we have to spiritually allow it to blossom just like any relationship in life, there is what we perceive as good and bad, but in the complexities of wisdom, we eventually find a deeper understanding of the darkness and light being a mix to centralize our morals, and learn a deeper respect of what love really consists of.

Well back to the better story. Any way, this voice had finally landed on my cousin Brian Mitchell's voice who I am pretty close with. Over the years his family had helped me from time to time and I know them pretty well. That voice came from the bedroom I was in and the door to the room was almost closed. It sounded like it was in front of the door though, like if he was there, would be standing in the hallway. It said "hey, come check it out", and I replied "man I know that ain't you" and then the whole house shook when it yelled in a booming voice louder than any human could produce "GET BACK HERE!". The house shook like there was an earthquake happening, and my knees almost buckled. Now right now I know that your thinking I crapped my pants and fainted, but I just cooly said "man fuck this shit I'm out of here", and walked out, not ran, walked. I got outside to the front porch and noticed that every light from every house was off. That was strange. I mean the street lights were on, but none of the outdoor lights from any house or even coming from the windows were on. Well I looked over at my cousin Tracy's house and then looked at my mothers across the street. When I looked at my moms house, a white ball of light formed right in front of me about the size of a

basketball, took off towards my mothers and stuck to the outside of the window. So thank you God, my decision to where I was going was made for me.

I walked over to my moms house, and walked in. My mom never locks her doors. Well I hadn't been to my mothers house in 6 months. I mean other than the time where 3 months earlier I was in the doorway and I got into an argument with my nephew and I left. Why we had been arguing is because the summer before, him and his now wife, which ironically is the daughter of my big brother Leedon, had decided to try and kill me or something.

Any way what happened is that about 8 months prior I had been helping my dad replace the shingles on the roof at his house. A.J. showed up with his new puppy and was totally disrespectful towards my dad. This made me mad as hell, but I let my dad handle it. Well just to make things worse he wasn't minding his dog, and it started to pee on the porch. Well with that my dad had had enough. He told him to leave, and A.J. was saying things like he was my dads slave driver or owner. Any way, a couple days later me and dad were just finishing up the house roof and were getting ready to start the shed, when we heard the phone ring. It was A.J. and he still had the same attitude. I grabbed the phone and said, "I'll be right there" as he was leaving a message and took off towards where he was staying at the time in Battle Point. Now remember when I said I was fast? Well I had taken off and when I got to the end of the driveway was moving so fast that when I hit the black top my momentum was taking me so fast, that I had to curve all the way out to the outside of the road. Once I got close to the other side of the road. I had to try and slow down, but the friction from my shoes was catching and my feet were going faster than I could lift them up off the ground. Spooky!...hum umumumum.... Any way I literally ran out of my shoes and my dad I guess walked down to the end of the road after I had left and retrieved my shoes. Now I am sure I was there in less than 3 minutes. It has to be a little over a mile maybe up to a mile and a half. I remember seeing the look on his face when I rounded the last corner, his eyes were so big

from the shock of seeing me, but funny thing, it was about a quarter mile still to when I would get to the driveway. Well I had yelled at him and said “Here I come!”. Well at that point he had to be scared, but I never went down there to even think about hitting him. I wanted him to know how much my dad meant to me, and that he disrespected him, and that he would now see what that meant to me to disrespect my parents. Yes I was mad, but I never even tried to swing at him. I ran up to him and he had a spade shovel. He had kept swinging it his hardest at me, I was swatting it away like it was an annoying mosquito and did not feel a thing. Little did I know that my arm was breaking in different places every time he hit me. Well his wife came from behind with one of those poles that you hang clothes on in a closet and stuck me right in the ribs from my back side and that set him up for a full swing above my left eye to the forehead. The first time it hit I said “what the fuck?” He swung again and hit the same spot, and I said “now your going to get it you little fucker”, well he swung one more time, and I finally saw stars for the first time.

I had been knocked out once before by a guy named Danny Church at my cousins wedding at Horseshoe Bay Resort, but I never seen stars. He just knocked me out cold. When I came to, there was a girl named Sunny that was straddling me and I found this odd, but I thought I was coming out of a blackout. Just before this I was heading back to this room with her and another girl named Lisa, so I thought some kind of freakiness was going on. Nope. Sunny was taking off my shirt crying, I was laying on the floor just coming back to, and I thought “man this is kinda freaky, but I’ll have to see this through for my country”. Well she got up off of me after getting my shirt off, and I realized we were in the hallway, I followed the sound of crying to the bathroom, only just before the bathroom there was a huge mirror, and this is how I found out my lips are full of a hamburger like looking muscle because it was outside of my face.

Well getting back to A.J. and I, I tried to run away but nothing worked and I couldn’t catch my legs or move anything how I wanted to for that matter. He caught

me in the ditch, and I remember passing out and coming to again, only to be getting bludgeoned by his wife with that closet stick. My mom had pulled up, and yelled for them to get away from me. I was in and out, but I remember standing, coming to on the front of the car, coming to again when I got the passenger door, and coming to when I got to my aunt Stellas.

From there I went home and it was my uncle Darrel who came and got me. He helped me into the house with my dad's help. I made it to my bed and passed out again. I remember it being around 5:30 p.m. because it was still light out and this was in the beginning of August, but when I had woken up due to having to pee, it was about 10:45 p.m. That was the most helpless I have ever been physically and because of that, mentally. I had tried to stand up and my knee cap on my left side was so swollen, and both of my ankles and in my legs in various places had been fractured. My entire left arm had been fractured in who knows how many places, so with only my right knee to put weight on, and my right hand to use to drag myself, I cried and cried as I inched my way to the bathroom. Once I was in front of the toilet, I remember looking up at it barely able to move my neck, and hanging my head and letting it all out. Even through all that pain I was in, what hurt me the most is that my nephew thought I would hurt him. Yup, I still loved that little guy, even then. After about 10 minutes on the floor I used the edge of the bathtub to pull myself up and sat down to take a piss. I just sat there crying for a few minutes because even peeing hurt. Then I got down on the same knee and dragged myself back to my bedroom, climbed into bed and fell asleep.

Now up until that morning my dad had been waking up around 4 a.m. and he would wake me at 5 a.m. to start working on the roof. He walked in the bedroom around 7, and said "you still going to help me son?" I remember that soft tone of voice he had. I said "dad I can't" and he replied "oh, well that's ok.", but immediately after I felt like I was letting him down. I already knew what kind of trouble A.J. would get in had I called the police, so I never did. What was I gonna

do? Everyone always called me “Matt Mouse”, but my dad would say when he would be challenging me, “well... you gonna be a man or a mouse?”. So I got up, ate breakfast that he would cook for me, whether I was in jail or prison, I know he would still cook for me, whether I was there or not, he always included me. I find myself doing this now in my decision making. I am starting to think about how it will affect Ronnie, Aaliyah, Letecia, and Anthony. Its things like that where I say with confidence, “Yes, I can literally say I was in love with my father, and he was with me and even still today.”

Well I limped my busted ass out to the shed, and he said to me “son, you have to learn to respect things”. Well there was a beehive on the left hand side of the shed, and he said “hold on a second, I’ll be back.” Well of course I had come this far and I had to prove to my father I knew what the hell respect really was. So I got all the materials on top of the shed, climbed up there and from start to finish, was done in a couple hours, while never getting stung once. I still hear him and see him from that day saying “fuck you, at least!”. Immediately after, I got on a bike and rode it to Federal Dam. It had taken me an average of 25 minutes when I wasn’t in pieces but it had only taken me 35 this time. Well I was going to see my friend Israel who was staying in Federal Dam at Les Ruschmiers house. When I got there he said “holy bro! what the hell” because my entire left side of my body was black and blue. I was wearing sunglasses and laughing because I knew he would get a kick out of it when I took them off, and I said “man bro that isn’t even the worst part, look at my right eye”, he has a distinct exhale laugh that people mention about him, and I had to say “little fucker, must of had poison ivy on that damned shovel”, because there was the signs of poison ivy developing on my forehead and around my right eye.

Ok, so now we know why I had not been to my mother’s house, it was I was allowing my nephew and his wife to just live comfortably with my mom. I didn’t want to intrude in their life or cause issues. I love those kids.

I had walked in to the house and immediately started crying. I had told my mom that I did not know what was going on, she asked if I was on drugs, and I thought technically no. Well I say this now, it was not the drugs. What I experience now is a lot more intense, but really graceful. That voice is softer, but I will not lie, when God comes into your life, it is so intense because he straightens your whole life out. I mean every little thing that you viewed as a mistake, he really makes you understand about yourself,

What calmed me the most about my mom's house was how calm it was. The first thought she had to offer me was the idea that she cares and knows what her son needed. I always loved my mom for always being that center for me. From time to time we smudge, and we practice some native traditions. I have gone and picked some cedar for her recently, but it really is my sisters who carry on the more traditional ways with her. Their children are involved with a more deeper understanding of anishinaabe language, and cultural traditions. I found a new respect for Sean when he explained that his son Logan, who is a traditional drummer and singer, and a freaking prodigy. Well he said he told his son that "those are his ways, and I had to tell him I have my way," I have always looked up to Sean, he is a great mentor and model, and if I could pick a husband for my sister, I would have went with someone smaller, but that's just the little guy in me talking. What can I say other than that my family is truly blessed by not only God, but the keepers of carrying on strong ties with family and understanding. We all have our place in our family. We are all needed in my family. That is not limited to just us and it only exists with us because we choose to see it. It can be found in any person, and within all families, but what I can say about natives, it is that coolness that's inside us, and even though we are scattered across this earth, we are one big family. Skin color doesn't matter, only acceptance.

When my mom also added she had made some chicken soup and it was in the refrigerator, I thought that has got to help. We were both wrong and right with that

choice. I had an overwhelming feeling to pray, and in a traditional way, that was the basics of what I understood at the time of our traditional ways. I know that my mom doesn't smoke, but I asked if she had any tobacco. She doesn't even allow smoking in her house, I mean she would never tell us not to, but we respect our mom. She said "hell no". That is when I heard the drums. Now there is a short hallway leading to the bathroom and two bedrooms in my moms reservation duplex. Her extra bedroom door was closed, and that is where the drum sound was coming from. The sound was quieted by the door, so I know that they were literally in the room. I asked her "can I go check that room?" she gave me that look that I have come to know throughout the years where she would rather be saying "what the hell is wrong with you!" But of course, mom is mom, and she said go ahead. When I opened the door, of course the drums became louder, she later explained that she did not hear a thing. Well there was a dresser with 9 drawers in columns of 3 drawers per column. I reached for the top left drawer, and the drums slowed down. I reached for the middle 2nd drawer and they slowed again. I reached for the bottom right drawer, and like a drum group finishes a song, there was that final hit to the drum and it stopped. I opened the drawer, and there were ashes in an ashtray. Now I had taken the ashtray out to my mom and said "mom look what I found?" Now the look she gave me was not out of shock, but I know she wanted to think that I pulled it out of my pocket, because really, who is that close to God, let alone the spirits? Well I prepared a small offering of my chicken soup with the ashes from the ashtray. I went outside, and thought for a while, I wanted this prayer to mean something. I went up to a tree, set my offering down, and started praying for everyone I knew, but mainly for those younger than me. Now my friend Jerrin has a brother named Tyler who lives next door to my mom with his family. I found myself praying for him a lot, asking for God to keep him safe and was walking around in the backyard of the duplex towards the woods. I started to just say what came into my mind. After about five minutes of this, I caught what I was saying, I was speaking to the trees and calling them by their names. Some of them were very long, and I couldn't

believe they were actually a name, but I knew they were, because at that time, I was connected to everything and developed a higher sense of being. I went inside after my prayer thinking “well damn, bet you didn’t know you could do that huh?” Feeling a little relief, I sat down to talk with mom, and enjoy the Chicken Soup that not only needed me, but also me needing it. I am laughing at this when I write this because I can see both of my sisters rolling their eyes and saying “oh geez, not that damn holy now.” For some reason I also see Carrie Johnson her sister Tonya Wilson and there other sister Elaina also doing the same.

Well my mom said she was going to sleep. I said ok, and prepared the couch for myself. Only my experience intensified about ten minutes after my mom went to sleep. I became two people. One was the person explaining things to myself and the other person who was my earthly self, was just along for the ride. I was explaining things and saying over and over “that I had to be the brightest light” and even using a mirror as an example, to shine it into the darkness through the windows. My spirit was explaining to me that I needed to find those in the dark. Like a lighthouse, I had to spiritually wash my windows since then, so that this attempt by writing this book in a matter of eight days could be seen and felt as far as the light would go from inside myself. Well after editing now, I am on day 10.

My spirit then walked us outside, and I went walking down the road towards the highway. It then walked us into the woods and it was around 12:30 p.m. at that time. It started to explain things to me about star navigation and when certain stars are not present that people have certain abilities they gain, and a lot of other things that I am sure that throughout my life’s journey will come to light. I walked back towards my moms and had an overwhelming feeling of having to go and check on Renee. I started towards her house, and then I saw what appeared to be a ghost on my moms front porch waving a fluorescent light that my mom has that has like a 10” cord. The door was shut, and all I could see was two dark circles for the eyes, and a dark oval for a mouth. When I had taken the entirety of this in, I reacted in

shock but only through my facial expression. It then smiled at me, and like a ghost would, was sucked back through the door inside the house. This was a teaching of that our ways of thinking there is safety behind closed doors to do the things we question aren't seen by God, but he loves you, so do not think he judges you for it. God loves to allow you to come into your own understanding, and then at some point we all act like the character Stuart from MadTv "look what I can do!"

You are a child of God, and don't act like you know it all, just humble yourself with your truth. Only you and God knows your truth, and that is all that matters, I mean really look at what people are willing to accept.

I speak for our Creator when I say that even I will love you, you shitass!

You are a gift to all others on this earth, becoming an adult only means God is yours now, that is the gift of presence, and why Jesus had lived.

I now know what this teaching was. It was a reminder that there are no emergencies, we only create the idea for us to react. The constant up and down teaches us to be disciplined in life, this is why this is. It really can only be found by oneself for oneself, and that is what the dance of wisdom is. Life consists of a series of dances, and if we sit still we can see that even in our learning of knowledge that there are the seven teachings that are the core dances. The Midewiwin know this, but amazingly, the Midewiwin are not exclusive to native people, that is just our word for spiritually gifted people, in which every person is. It is fed by the influence of those around us. But don't try to feed bear's, they'll eat you and that is a combination of common sense and respect for their power and being in nature. I mean you won't see me trying to tell another man that my penis is bigger than his, for then we have to find out the hard way, and that's just a waste of time. Plus that appendages use requires more than just the sight of it. There are a multitude of things that come into play, and I personally have the dexterity of a meerkat . I'll use

the quote my father would use that he had taken from the movie Dumbo “oh, the shame of it.”

Well the next day I went to work at the community center, and in the afternoon I had broken down to two women I grew up knowing. Jennifer Johnson and Nicki Boswell were visiting outside, and I started to tell them what happened. I couldn't contain my emotions and started to cry, and they really listened to me, and better than that, believed me. I swore I was done with drugs, but life happened and I think I made it through the weekend for Bubba's funeral on Saturday. I was there but in still in a sense of shock, and I didn't really participate. Just to explain the respect we had for our cousin/brother, all of us had taken turns carrying him in his casket from the community center to his grave. The distance is at least a mile, and all his life long brothers carried him. Now I only point this out because we can do this in life, and when we think about it, we really do it without thinking. Just being true to yourself allows you to carry those who need to be carried. People need someone to believe in until they feel God's presence if it isn't already instilled in their way, so I'll throw the bone out there, and point out that just being consistent in your life makes you a superhero. Like a samurai with the least amount of effort use every strike to your opponent to end the fight. Never throw any strike to just see what happens, this is what we learn to master throughout childhood and adolescence. Let every action that you make in life be what overcomes your challenge. I bet you haven't mastered the art of wiping your rear with toilet paper, and only applying three chances to wipe have you? I have, and believe me when I say, it is an acquired skill of total sense of being. This may seem funny when seeing someone explain this to you for the first time. This is a reality in life, and being in a vulnerable position is always a way to point out humor in another one's being.

Now up until the check distribution that the reservation has in the beginning of December, I hadn't really had much besides life happen. Well I used my to carry on my tradition with my mom, that we started just by being, We would go to the

Northern Lights Casino and I would cash my check, buy her dinner, and really only let her eat. I would get drunk and win money. I would then whenever I felt like it, walk around the casino handing people money who I knew, and even some strangers I would stick a twenty in their machines and say Merry Christmas. This had the effect of making my environment fun and careless, but would always create the fun chances to keep winning. Well I won enough to buy an older Mercury Sable wagon from my cousin Frank Robinson. They showed up and I had around \$900.00 to give him towards the \$1400.00 that he had asked. I couldn't go get the car until the next day when I had the rest of the money. With that car I learned a lesson. My cousin Dylan was now staying at my aunt Stella's with his wife Ashley and his mom Kim. They had come up from Florida in search of a better life, and from the drug influences that were present down where they lived.

Now when Dylan first showed up, I was in Elk River at the Sherburne County jail for non-payment of child support. I had been picked up by my uncle and cousin Jim and James Mitchell. Well James just got his per cap payment so we went to the bar in Ogilvie. Well I was drinking like a fish and blacked out. In the early morning hours, I started causing a mess in the bar and broke a few things. Now I don't really recall anything else after my laying by the curb in the street. I was later told that I had entered the door of an elder woman who lived across the street. I had never been to this town. I walked right in because only the screen door was closed, and I had asked for a ride. The woman stood up, grabbed me by the arm, told me no and walked me out the door. She then called the police, and when they asked if she saw which way I had gone, she said of course! He is sitting in my car. Yes, there I was, hoping her heart would melt from the passed out puppy dog face I am sure I was wearing. Well she never pressed charges, and even more, the police officer had given me the option to either go to jail, or go to the hospital. Well after much debate of a possible third option being offered by myself, I agreed to go to the hospital.

So the stipulations of my hospital stay was that I had to take a PBT and score 0. So when I finally did, I needed to get in touch with my cousin James who eventually ponied up the money for a cab to come get me. Now my uncle Jim and his wife would not let me stay. So I had taken off walking towards home. James caught up with me in the cab that had brought me there and told me to get in. He must have been a little pumped up from the argument he tried to have with his dad and said “let’s get out of here!” I asked him where we were heading, well we went to the bar down the street from the previous night. He declared he was getting us a room at the Grand Casino located in Mille Lacs. Only after a few drinks, ran out of steam and we started walking with no real plan. Now I don’t really remember the night to well, but clearly we were walking to the scene of the crime. We walked into the bar, the bartender remembered who I was, I apologized and he served James and I, a drink each. Now I drink straight tequila on the rocks, Cuervo preferably. Well we drank for hours and then James decided to grab a bottle of vodka for home and then dropped me off on the side of the road on MN highway 47.

Why the hell had I wasted the day drinking, when I could have been to the casino area by now, and who knows might have been home by then. Well being the asshole that I was, I grabbed the bottle of vodka which I am sure James did not notice. I was walking for at least three hours with my thumb out, when all of a sudden I heard a car slowing. And I’ll be damned if it wasn’t James in the same cab, and saying come on we are going to the casino.

When we got there, he started gambling. I still had a bottle of vodka and let him know. I was hanging around waiting for him to get a room and he never did. I then decided that I was just going to continue walking home. I set out for a 12 hour walk towards home that eventually led me to the Wigwam Motel just south of Outing where my friend Scott Carstens dad came and picked me up. I was so relieved, and couldn’t sleep due to my feet and legs hurting. They brought me home, and I should add that this was on the fourth of July of 2016. I was house

sitting at my aunt Stella's before I went to jail. My cousin Dylan and his wife had assumed I would not be back, and my family did as well, so that had taken the liberty of moving into my aunts. Well I wasn't going to argue with that, because I had just kept suggesting over the years that he make the journey up north from Florida, and finally get comfortable. I decided I would go to my dads and went to sleep.

He needed to understand what life is like and what you can do to get by from living off the land. I started going and waking him up every morning at 6:00 a.m. and making him set the net with me. After a while, he kind of got burned out, so we started to hang out less and less.

Well in February of 2016, I had gotten picked up by the Brainerd police. I was ready to go in and planned this for awhile. It was kind of odd that I was told by the officer "thank you for not grabbing that knife". I was kind of confused, but there was a knife in the door I guess, but I would never do anything like that. Well the result was that he let me slide on the glass pipe filled with methamphetamine that I left under the passenger seat of the car.

Well when I got into prison, I wasn't scared or intimidated. When I had been in E house for orientation I met a man named Greg Mountain. Now he was from what is called a wet house in Minneapolis. This type of government setting is for people who are struggling with alcoholism. Only the people there are allowed to drink in their apartment settings. This in turn makes it possible for a person to have access to healthcare with the additional additive of monitoring. Yes, this is the truth, the government will pay for you to be an alcoholic. There is another place in Duluth that does the same. Well that all aside, Greg struck me as a really humble soul. He would talk about his son, and say it like "I would say to my son... You know my boy, that is something you will figure out sometime, but your a good boy and you will". Talking with this man I found that he was very simple with his understanding of a lot of issues that really don't matter at all. His focus was his son. And even with

his son living in a home, where his father was an alcoholic, he struck me as a great father. His whole demeanor would speak for itself when he was talking about his son.

In contrast to my own life, I realize that I was a good father. I have always been a good father, but only when I could be present. There was a time when I worked for the Leech Lake Tribal Court and during that time, I collected myself enough to have consistency with a relationship of every other weekend with my daughter. I started to allow more significance of another influence into my life, and I believed it was my duty to save her. This is not possible, especially when I couldn't be that foundation for her to rely on. I was relying on us to make it, when only if I made it, she would have had the sense of security that she had the ability also.

Well I was moved into A house after 23 days. Now a guy named Cody Wheeler that was from White Earth reservation was my cell mate. He was a younger guy and of course like most of the White Earth members that I have met, blonde haired and blue eyed. I had finally received some money from the girl who I was not seeing obviously, but she was funding my account. Now I point this out, because I really do not advocate for anyone to support anyone in a jail setting. Ronnie has been trying to teach this to me, because I had brought it up at one point. I had said that in our relationship we should never support that being in jail is ok, and of course, jammed my foot as deep into my mouth as possible ever since. She on the other hand has never given me money while in jail, and I was reluctant to get a message left by her a couple of jail stay's ago. I really know that she was just excited for our life to come together, because under that tough exterior and somewhere in that sweet person inside, she has always believed in me. I can tell she does because she holds me accountable for my actions and words, even if that opinion is of other people, we both have a tendency to go to bat for them, especially when we are with each other. Most of our disagreements in the beginning had to do

with everyone else around us. We had some rough situations, but I guess you can't really feel love, especially when there is more consistency with former relationships where the other is battling to be with and without you.

A house is the oldest part of the prison. It has short ceiling height, and I was on the top bunk. Being I could finally buy some extra food, Cody and I had cinnamon raisin bread with peanut butter and coffee to wash it down. We were rookies so we didn't realize the terrible choice of over indulging and were passing gas all night, but it really entertained us. We just played games of cribbage, and talked about things of our past, dreams and goals. Well he finally went to sleep. I on the other hand always have to stay up and pace at night, no matter what jail or prison I was in. I finally had fallen asleep around 3:30 a.m. and had an amazing dream about being a rabbit. It was such a real vivid dream though. I was a rabbit running around my dad's yard, and I was just cruisin! I had long hair at the time, so psychologically it added to the effect of having long ears, and I was just throwing my head side to side, and I can still feel that feeling from that time, even when I am awake and just think upon that time. When I was running I was going faster than heck and I remember I was just thinking YESSSSSS!!!!!! and I was just running like the dickens in my little rabbit dream, and in my little rabbit mind. Breakfast was called, and Cody had tried to wake me up. When he hit my bunk, I did some kind full body horizontal jump into the air nearly bouncing off of the ceiling exclaiming "I WAS A RABBIT!!!!" We both started to laugh hysterically and I didn't go to breakfast, because it was really that real of a dream, and I could not stop laughing for at least a half hour.

After the weekend at A house on Sunday night I received my redbox. Now this is different than for what all you movie lovers think. It is a sign that your moving to another facility. I was being sent to the Faribault prison. I didn't expect to ever run into my really good cousin and lifelong childhood friend in the afternoon. His name is Kenneth Conger Jr. I was thrilled as hell to see him, it felt as though a

person was resurrected from the dead to me. I had only talked about him with my friends and family from time to time, mostly reminiscing, but from time to time when there was news about how he was doing we would hear word from his family. Over the next month, we had talked and visited a lot. We would just talk about things finally as an adult, and I was surprised how much I had forgotten, and more surprised how much he remembered. It was amazing at the time for him to tell me all the things I never thought he was present for, but more importantly, I realized that at a certain point, time literally stops for those in the prison system. He was not aware of current technologies, or the things that seem so important in life to the average person not in the system. I realize something from that, he is lucky in the sense that he doesn't have to deal with the crap we fill our lives with. He reminded me why we were so close, by just being the very person he still was way back when we could hang out together as kids.

I have to point out that I have never been part of a gang. The natives just like any other racial group stick together. There is the accepted idea that if you don't come to group, that there is a reason. Not that this hinders reason for you to be outcasted, but really people do things like extortion and other attacks on vulnerable people. If your not strong enough, that is what you are, and really even in society this is present. How many people take advantage of another through various drug deals with promises of bigger and better, and always to a rookie. We all have been there. It just comes with the nature of consumption. It is like saying "you want this or not fish?" "You wanna learn how to swim right?" "Well jump your ass in the pool and I'll be right there to make sure you don't drown, and make sure no one drowns you." That is what it takes, not just in prison, but right at the heart of where we live on the reservation. It has to start with self, be the one at guard for those around you, in the best way you can, prepare your purpose, make a stand, and in this way by the time you are older and capable of taking on the big show, you already know that bulshit will not knock you down. I give credit to my most recent teachers of this hard lesson: Tammy and Ron Burnette, Renee Burnette, Dale

Burnette, Clayton Slack, Brandon Shaugobay and of course the one who made it all possible, Ronnie CeceliaMae Burnette.

Tammy was so gentle with me and Ron was too, but without them to convey the message of shit or get off the pot, I would never have been so determined to correct my life. I mean Anthony and Letecia are two wonderful kids, and Letecia gave me a Father's Day present that was a keychain she had made. We were at my house and she innocently came up to me with such sweet confidence and said “here. I made this for you for fathers day. I made it because your the only father me and Anthony have ever known.” I was so caught off guard by the reality of what this little girl had asked me, I had to ask for it back from her. I was stuck on the fact that she called me her father. Yeah, that little girl stood up for all of us that day. I know that Brandon is her biological father, and besides, wouldn't I really be honoring him if I gave these kids my best? In reality at that moment and at that time, that is what we were, we were becoming a family again. Each one of us was playing a role. I just let it slip due to the oppressive view only of myself. I wasn't enough for them, I wasn't sober enough, or I thought I was a danger. And that is the truth, I really was. Not to them as in a direct way, but indirectly through my addictions. It has taken me awhile to finally gain traction to feel like I was enough, but even at my worst she made the choice to say that. My view of myself didn't matter to her. I was what I was to her, and that's what still matters at the end of the day right?

Like the first time I presented Ronnie with a ring as a present for our first Christmas together and she didn't know what to do. Randie had given me it to give to her. When Ronnie went to the bathroom, Randie asked if I had anything to give her for Christmas, and I said no. We had just come from Macharts bar in Federal Dam, where she had just seen an opal ring, and I could tell she wanted it. I didn't have any money, so I tried to come up with a scheme to get money off of Randie. Well Ronnie saw right through the bulshit I was trying to sell her, but she didn't understand that I would do anything for her. Just not right my wrong ways at the

time. I had not accepted the reality of it. I had not had someone to love for a long time, so I was humiliating myself and setting myself up for failure with Ronnie by becoming the proverbial black kettle. She had thought something weird was going on because Randie brought me to her bedroom to retrieve the ring as to keep it a secret to surprise Ronnie, like it was all my plan, and no influence from her. This had made Ronnie uncomfortable, and she asked to leave. When we got to the car, she was making accusations about me messing around with Randie in some sort of sexual way. I finally just pulled out the box that contained the ring. The opal stone was loose and needed to be reset, but I just hung my head, and said "I just wanted you to have something for you for Christmas." She was driving, she looked at me, back at the ring and me again, let go of the wheel and closed her eyes and said "ask me again!" She stopped the car and started crying. She hugged me, but that was our first Christmas, neither one of us had our kids and we both felt like why celebrate anything without them.

I had worked for Larry and Randie Rasmusson who had lived in the Boy Lake area since July of 2015. I had been walking to their place everyday for work, and even tried to hide the shame of walking home every night. Well they caught on to this, but they liked me enough to offer to pick me up and drop me off. Of course being indionish, I had to sometimes decline, but it was actually empowering me to do things on my own. I had been unemployed pretty much ever since I was separated from employment by the LLBO Health division in 2012. This was true freedom, having my own hours to schedule with a minimum of 8 hours everyday for cash. There were pros and cons to this situation, I know how to handle such an opportunity to let it be beneficial to its full potential now. But at the time, I really just fed my habits, but more importantly, started to amass the things that I wanted in life again. It was the start of getting back above the trees so to speak within my life. They were both very supportive when I went to prison, and they were there for me when my family was passing away left and right. Even when there was the shock that when my dad went missing, on the morning of the fifth day they were

searching. My oldest and star student from the guitar class that I would teach as a volunteer in Sugar Point to the local children, had passed away in a car accident. His name was Sam Wilson. This kid was a gentlemen, ever since I met him for the first time. There was literally nothing anything could say negative about the kid. He did what a good son would do by my standards. He respected his mother by respecting himself and not limiting himself to just the small world of the Reservation, and he never had a negative attitude that I had ever seen. Over a six month period after I was released from prison, I stopped counting after 17 family members and friends passed away. Which on the reservation friends are family to us. If you'd fight for them and with them, thats a family. We all didn't come out of the same woman, but we all came the same way. And your mom's hangover mac isn't any better than my mom's, it's just because we didn't have hamburger and she used hotdogs instead, and that's why you think your all high and mighty.

I use these euphemisms and little ways of saying things because I have found that if we just fall back on our childlike characteristics, things become simpler and easier to handle. We never lose ourselves when becoming adults, we just gain the freedom to do what we want. How many kids out there have ever dreamed about being drunk or being addicted to drugs? Don't be afraid to admit that your not grown up, because the best grown ups never grow up, and the oppressive people usually just learn to grow down, and that is why elders are so pleasant to be around. Your not the first, and your not the last, but there is only one of you. So you are my first, you are my last, because there is no one that will replace you, ever. That stands for every human that has ever lived.

There was a miscommunication while I was in prison. In Faribault prison, they have what is called a K building. From the sky they literally are in the shape of a K. There are four different areas where a person can be housed. K1, K2, K3, and K4. I was in the K2 area, and when I arrived there I remember two people that were

really cool, Ben Aubid, and another guy with the last name Nickoboine who had the nickname “Neckbone”. The third one who was the youngest, was where there was miscommunication. This guy had taken what I said out of context. Now had I understood what it was we were doing as a group, maybe I would have never even spoken out about this issue. There was a guy talking about being sent off and that he did not want to be. I said why the hell would you do someone’s dirty work? Clearly if you had any respect for yourself, you wouldn’t have to consider doing bad business practices, I mean extortion happens along with other things we in society think don’t exist, but even in the real world, indirectly or not, these things occur.

Because I had said such a thing, he had reported me to the group. After that, they made the decision to have me jumped. Ok... Well when it happened a couple things were going on. One is that I had it pretty good and had a steady income coming into my account every couple of weeks, but I would always look out for the other ones who didn’t have anything. I’m sure this kid that did the reporting was doing drugs because I had done them with him. Now, it’s not for me to judge what he wanted to do, but because we were in a group, why was the one reporting the issue not the one to handle the issue? I mean only that if he thought he was correct, why did he need approval? Well they made a guy with two weeks left to go do the dirty work. It just so happens that this guy was also from Ball Club. Now, I don’t really blame him for having to do what they thought was only their duties. What did bother me is that this grown man said he was part of a group that I was part and which I had to admit, had become my prison family.

Immediately after being forced into my room and attacked, I jumped up and ran out and called him out on it. He tried to act like nothing was going on, and clearly I had a problem with that. Maybe he thought I was soft due to the demeanor of kindness I had showed. In reality, he was jealous of that I had no problem not asking for anything in return and being able to do something for those who were without. I didn’t act like I was rich, I only shared what I had. That’s what real

people who fix food together, if need be fight together and do for each other. Weren't we already punished enough by ourselves? I mean the reality is is that we made a bad choice. Yeah I could have just kept to myself, but why aren't we that are in the system trying to give an opportunity for it to be easy to come back in? If anything, what the fuck are we doing for our brothers side by side?

Well after I had confronted this kid, I went to the phones to make a call like that was going to relieve me somehow. I never got a hold of anyone and just went to bed. Now when my cellmate and I rarely if ever talked. We didn't really like each other. He was black, and I wasn't impressed with the lyrics to his home made rap songs. That all aside, he offered me some advice because technically I had no one to get my back, but frankly I didn't care. I was more bothered by the fact that this guy acted like my friend, he never faced me over this issue. My roommates advice was to go to the Restricted Living Unit.

What that consists of is only 1 hour out of your cell a day with no one to interact with. Fuck that shit. He then said, well man if it was me I would fight him, but then he laughed, because he had the entire native group as his back right? Well I was all worked up from this and I was talking loud. Well his cell was directly next to mine, so I am sure he heard the whole conversation. It finally ended with I had planned to do nothing, lie low and hope that it blew over. I tossed and turned all night with the anticipation of going to breakfast because I didn't know what to do. I skipped breakfast, and right before getting released to your "job" there is an hour to do freely what you want in the K building. As soon as the doors opened I knew he would open his, and I caught him pushed him in his cell, and you know what? I said "I thought you were my friend!" He informed me that I just really fucked up, but I did not care, I meant what I said. He said well now we have to do something about this, and why the hell not right? So we started to fight, only thing is when fighting with me, I won't let you punch me, I'll get right against you, run around your ass like a freaking squirrel would and put you in various holds and knock you down by

choking your ass out and then lay the boots to you. But instead, my emotions were caught up in this, and I could tell he was a bit confused too, because he just said, knock this shit off, what's done is done and it's not my say. What the fuck?

Later I walked into the day area of the K building after work, and there was an old veteran inmate that went by the name of "Russia". He waved me over and said sit down bro, and offered me a piece of butterscotch candy. I was planning to wander around doing who knows what. Well he said "man bro you really got some balls, I never seen anyone do that shit here ever, and I been in 16 years. You know what the fuck your dealing with? You got everyone in the prison on you now with no one to get your back." I told him my side of things, and he reminded me to just stay low.

You know what though? Every native brother that wasn't supposed to even make eye contact would wave from the side when no one was looking. They all had kept taking turns almost to let me know it was cool between us. Every one of them.

Well this kid had kept coming back to me to try to extort me and say shit that was supposed to be intimidating and I was more or less just wanting a peace to begin again. Kenny Conger would be able to eat with me, but only him, and he would just say that there not messing around, but I know he was really looking out for me. If I was seen with him, people respected that and would not bother me, only thing about that was they already respected me. But having my friend to talk to through that meant a lot more than you could imagine when I had no idea what the hell I was dealing with. All I had to fall back on was the movies I had seen, and with the broad idea's you can generalize from that, you get the picture.

On a day they were suppose to have group, they found marijauna hidden in the ceremonial pipe bundle. When that had happened that kid said they were shutdown from group. Even with things the way they were, it bothered me. I went to go eat with Conger that day, and he said "man bro, this happens all the time, and it lasts

like 9 months.” Just with some questions that I had to ask myself something did not seem right. Well I signed up to go to the law library a couple of times that week. Now what I came to find out is that the prison not only couldn’t do that, but the fact that they were also supposed to fund anything that a religious or cultural group required as in their needs for prayer. This meant that all the money that the native brothers had been pitching in over the years was supposed to be paid for out of the prison funding by the Chaplin. Let me remind you of something before we get off track. He was a man of God, not a lawyer. He went by the restrictions of the prison in order to do his job.

I put in a kite to meet with him, but I also gave a copy of what I had to DJ Staples. Conger and him were pretty impressed with what I had come up with. DJ said he had already talked to the Chaplin, but I had a meeting with him a little later that day. When I met with him I was prepared, and surprisingly the meeting was short, he said well we will see what we can do, and you know what? Two days later they were back into group again. It was about three days later that very same guy informed me to sign up for group, and that the senior leaders wanted to talk with me. Who knows what could have happened right? Hell I didn’t even have a clue if what I had done had any effect at all, and hell just maybe I screwed something up. When I went out there, of course I had the majority vote. I had really helped my friends and prison family of brothers out. You know what that felt like? Just imagine, because after that, that is when the amazing things started to happen.

Three days later I was excited to talk with Conger about a few things at group, but before this we had lunch together the day before. At lunch I had said I couldn’t wait to be out, and he informed me to never talk about that. He said “people here are doing real time bro, and no one talks about it just because.” I was so short term I didn’t think about how long ago he stopped wondering about the outside. Or even if he wondered about the future for that matter. I don’t think I ever seen him cry in his life and he got me started, when I swore I was gonna do something for him.

Something big enough so that when he got out, he could live his life to its fullest potential. That was the last conversation we had.

In the morning the next day, I was called back to my K building and was wondering why. At this point I thought it was a set up for the kid who was in the next cell, but he actually had respect for me. You know what it was? I was being moved to minimum security outside the walls. That should have never happened. Not only that, on the chalkboard there was a notice for anyone to volunteer to go to the Red Wing facility where they house Minnesota's hardcore juveniles. I considered this right away, but it was a man by the name of Dave Kenyon that told me he was going there the next day, and I better sign up, it was the Minnesota state prison systems best kept secret. That short conversation led me up to go sign up. The next day I met a man named James Beckanbach, who is still a friend and mentor today. Between these two guys, they prepared me for what I am today, through the power of God. They were both in my pipe ceremony group while in Red Wing. I had become a pipe carrier, and that came with responsibility.

Now when you accept this, it isn't like you just smoke out of a pipe. In prison, in jail, or just when people need guidance it is a very serious matter that God respects. You get God's respect, he gives you whatever you want, and you know he hears your prayers. Matter of fact just a couple weeks ago I wanted to demonstrate the power of group prayer in the Cass County jail. There was a brother named Derek Hunt going to a parole hearing and he was unsure of what was going to happen. I already knew what was going to happen, because after he left A block, I said "hey you guys we should say a prayer for Derek, don't you think?" There was a man there named Jeff Jackson and another named Joshua Skullirud and a couple others names I forgot. They said yeah, and then I informed them that's all that it takes, and really that's all it takes. Positive hope creates positive differences, you know what this good vibes thing you are seeing now means or where it comes from? God is in all things and he has been right in front of us and beside us the

whole time. If you are blessed you hear the music or people talking in the wind of a fan, or through the air coming through the heating vents, or any sound for that matter, and even through running water, and don't act like I am the only one, because if you watch the TBN channel, they are even teaching people how to do it all over California, right on tv.

Now I know what your thinking. But know this first, our bodies are like avatars ok? God can use someone just like they say Satan can. I have met them both, and you know what is crazy? I started to even pray for Satan to be redeemed, and guess what? I even got his respect. So much to the point that I understand his nature and why he is. It is the teacher from the other side of the spectrum so you can learn discipline for yourself to live the best life possible. Let's not continue to not acknowledge the needs in ourself or accept that any one person is left behind on their own. Let's get back to a time when we would walk with a person until they can join us in that sacred dance arena, and we can all heal together. I don't like hearing about any person being in jail, I don't like to see anyone struggle let alone struggle myself. Stop and look at what is really creating the ability for people being toxic, it only consists of what we have let out of ourselves from what we put inside our minds, bodies and spirit.

Next Chapter.....

Today is 6/21/2022, and I have had some significant challenges since I left off. For the past 2 years, it seems everything I needed to fall in place did. One thing is for sure, and that is that the theory of gravity is flawed.

Centrifugal force creates the ability for energy to expel outward. So I came up with my own.

2nd law of thermodynamics and its application to attraction of water in multiple states of matter. Naturally we are attracted to cool things.