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### Wesley Nixon: My Dad

While growing up, all my dad knew was to work or be beat. His dad was an abusive father who was horrifying to the point that when he arrived home, everyone would scatter to their own rooms to hide. Only my grandma couldn't hide from him, having to share a room, she was beaten the majority of the time. Too young to do anything about this, my dad and his siblings would have to suffer and watch or else they would receive the same ten fold. This continued on almost all the way through high school for my dad, when he got sick of it. For his high school years, he competed on the swim team and wrestling, and balanced weights on the side. Using these skills and the muscle he gained to his advantage, he was able to put an end to his father's abuse. After arriving home from a swim meet, he witnessed his dad and mom fighting. Not until his mom was slapped did he intervene. He engaged in the fight and tackled his dad to the ground, being able to outstrength him, they fought there for about five minutes until my dad finally pinned him and held him. The look in his dad's eyes was one of defeat, as his sixteen year old son was able to beat him in strength, it was enough to put an end to the beatings and abuse.

No longer scared of what could happen, my grandma divorced my grandpa. This left my dad to take care of his younger siblings with his mom now dating again. Not only did my dad have to pick up three jobs to keep his siblings fed, but he had to help pay the bills of the house. One morning as he was about to leave for school, his younger brother came in asking for food.

He asked "Where's mom? Shouldn't she have bought something?"

“No, I haven’t seen mom in almost four days; there hasn’t been cereal for three”.

This made my dad feel super bad inside, so he ran to the store and picked up cereal for his siblings and made it to school late. Later, upon finishing high school, he received a lack of support on his way out of the house too. He planned on serving an LDS mission in which his mom responded

“If you leave now, don’t expect a home when you get back”.

With his mind already set, he left. When he came back, he was welcomed with immeasurable amounts of support from his family now that everything had calmed down. He not only felt loved by his siblings, but his mom welcomed him back with open arms.

One other person who was waiting for him when he got back, was his girlfriend whom he met working at the movie theater. She had waited the two years faithfully for him and was ready to be married. In which they soon did, and were excited to start a new family. Sooner or later, they came around and my older sister was born. She was the light and joy for a while, until I was born and became the new baby for a short amount of time. My surprise sister came only a few months later. Finally, it was all coming together. My dad felt like he was on a high, three kids, he was not abusive, and had a loving, and caring wife. He had even made it into a medical school and was preparing to become a doctor, until he was diagnosed with Porphyria. Porphyria, a disease in which the ideas of vampires and werewolves comes from. Not only this, but my dad had a stroke at a young age and got brain scarring, which interferes with his brain waking up process and causes seizures. This is a career destroyer, no longer allowed to drive and work he had to become a stay at home dad, while my mom had to pick up college again to become the income for the family. Feeling bad for the stress now put on my mom, my dad made sure to say

“I love you honey,” or, “How was work?”

whenever she got home and made sure to keep the house clean.

With no specialists in Salt Lake on his disease, we moved to St. George. This is a positive for him due to the lower elevation and warm air that helps with his high blood pressure and the aches he endures in mornings. But it isn’t the best because now we’re away from family and friends, in which we decided to do something about. We decided to host a family trip at our cabin that year to interact with everyone again and catch up. Soon, the time comes, and we all arrive up there and are having a great time playing games, talking, walking in the woods, and running around with our neighbor’s dogs. Though there was much to do, my sisters and I had been stubborn the whole trip, and wanted to pull the hammock out to enjoy. My dad fetched it and helped with the setup. Hours later, we found ourselves all on the hammock at the same time. The tree we were hooked to was dying and started to give way to our weight. My dad, the person I look up to, ran out in an instance’s notice and held the tree up in place long enough for us to move to safety.

“You’re awesome to be able to save us like that!” we said.

Without a response though, we knew something was wrong, my dad was too worn out; we needed to go home.

To conclude, even with an incredible amount of negative variables in his life, my dad has somehow managed to be one of the best people I know. He is truly the model figure in my eyes, and deserves the respect I give him.