

Subject: Fwd: Dad (your email)
From: Peter Pfeiffer <pcpfeiffer@msn.com>
Date: 3/14/2022, 7:13 PM
To: sepfeiffer@msn.com

FYI. Please don't avoid.

Peter

----- Forwarded Message -----

Subject:Re: Dad (your email)
Date:Mon, 14 Mar 2022 19:12:18 -0600
From:Peter Pfeiffer <pcpfeiffer@msn.com>
To:ralphp_online@yahoo.com

I'll try to mention a few facts. The "as I see them" is implied.

Dad was an incorrigible alcoholic--I never knew his father, he was never mentioned, and never even saw a picture of him. I understand he died young of alcoholism and I brought that up on more than one occasion. Once, after I was all but kicked-out on a visit, I told mother "When you come to visit here there will be no drinking." That was a long time ago--maybe 15 years ago. There is nothing unsafe about the air in Evergreen, Colorado. I have purchased at least 2 or 3 (expensive) cellphones for mom and dad, activated them, etc. Once when I was not living in my Maryland house--it was rented--I invited close Georgia friends to Flat Rock for one or two days (very responsible). I was banned from the house--told we'll pay for a motel when you come and visit. Once--technically not my house--mother came to my Atlanta apartment; middle of the day, I took off work--I think it was a time I bought them theater tickets in town and they actually drove the 2 hours. For 10 years I was scolded for not not serving h'orderves; take off work, in the middle of the afternoon, refrigerator was there for mom and dad and Kroger was around the corner... It was a euphemism for let us sit there and drink and insult you. Mother told me at one time: "we enjoy that," meaning drinking and insulting people. Once, it wasn't a visit at all--mom and dad got off the expressway to see me at Georgia; I was there on scholarship and to get the best job I could and all they did was complain that the restaurant I chose didn't serve alcohol (I didn't even know, it was good for some reason). Then they complained, the motel I had to book for them, had a cracked sink and I should never suggest it to anyone else again. They never even asked what courses I was taking. When I left there, after cashing in my FBI retirement and getting a \$5000 graduate student loan, I had to beg my new employer for money to cover sending my boxed possessions to Washington. I had \$80 to my name and mom and dad didn't give a damn. Dad quit smoking for mother but mother wouldn't quit drinking for dad. I used to like jogging before dinner; mother put a stop to that because it prevented the marathon drinking sessions. Once, I stopped for a barbeque sandwich on the way and arrived maybe an hour late; when

I arrived I was told "we were thinking of taking you out of our will." Always my own car and expenses and I took the check on because it was the only communication. I used to ask, "what is for dessert" only to try and make some kind of conversation. Dad, of course, came home and sometimes wouldn't even talk to his family. It was all because of a complete refusal to recognize the dangers of alcohol. It was always the most important and the only thing. I know: I stopped drinking liquor many years ago, but still, for a while (like when I was charged with a felony and misdemeanor for going in my back yard by a sheriff who knows me very well) I drank ice beer at times. I used to have cravings but I don't anymore... I learned in the aftermath of Beaufort, when I wrote that story, that drinking was far more important to my parents than I was and I was extremely conscientious and considerate since. Call it anthropology if you will--ethnography--I was there and I saw it and I know. I know the family secret and that is why she sought--planned, conspired, and still relentlessly carries out--to cut me out of history. Never having set foot in the four houses I have owned is just a symbol. Sorry, lost my train of thought... The specific reason my mother does not like me is I do not want to be an alcoholic, I wanted to be educated, and I valued exercise. When dad or Dorothy came to Colorado she didn't care and she didn't come with them; she never came along on a walk around the block... I was there and I never saw a sign of asthma; not once. I saw tremendous signs of stress from drinking. If I hadn't come there, and sat at the table when mother had breakfast, I would not have known her at all. RE exercise, and I'll stop... I knew the day was over when I saw the drink at the sink. I used to drink Coke, eat a bag of potato chips, and watch Speed Racer.

Before I forget, you may send this to your kids.

And also before I forget, as you probably know, I had an affair with Karen. I'm certain you know that is not true. I became irate when I had to keep telling her you cannot go to Kansas and play nanny while your father wanders around the neighborhood. Mostly I wanted to communicate to her that your kids are line for, read above: alcoholism and malignant narcissism. Try as I may, I never received any confirmation that this message was received. Sorry, I must mention, that reminds me of the cars and canons, which I wanted for a child--I think you should have been honest with your kids and told them they were half mine. That was my chief objective. I have always been painted as some kind of maniac of of course I disagree. I also tried over and over with Karen--including with the computer I sent her and many other things--if you don't want it, maybe your kids do. I made no headway there also.

I didn't mean mother lied. But overall, it is a lie. Someone should have tried again.

My theory until today was that mother sold the house for a pittance in order to pay Earl because he was too much of a jerk to give it to Susan or Susi (I still think of her as Sue). As I wrote to you, I was ready willing and able and offered to help numerous times. I asked "Why doesn't Sue buy it, keep it in the family?" The reply was "She doesn't have any money." Hence my theory. I even offered to buy and mother's reply was "You can call the realtor." If you know me, I remember exact words--similar to the expression, 'He is a writer, he remembers everything.' Anyway, around that time is when mother called me "an asshole" and hung up. I believe the Thanksgiving talk--one-sided information update was the last I had with her.

As I mentioned, hard to write and I thank you for it. I'm sorry, I consider it mostly boilerplate. I have another theory in the back of my mind--that mother did it to--and I am aware of my wording--so she could cover-up the source of the problem (drinking), be treated like a queen at the nursing home, squander the family money with no trail, completely hide what looks like her culpability, and

continue drinking every day. I only know I was not consulted and I was intentionally excluded.

Dad's death is only more proof of the same. I have expressed my lack of knowledge many times over the years. BTW, I haven't heard from mother in maybe... 5 years and she has been capable. She sent a check because, people with such problems, that is how they recognize relationships, in terms of money. And to see if I would cash it and if I am still alive. Having you do her dirty work is cowardly. I knew I would get a reply somehow. I expected an allocution (legal definition), not an 'if you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything at all.' (Have to add, I like the legal definitions in tort law--if you are partially responsible, you are responsible.)

I think this is where I was heading earlier... Mother is a smart woman. She realized long ago that I wouldn't lie for her. Remember that time when you and Karen wouldn't watch *The Prince of Tides*, still one of my all-time favorite books and movies? I gave my signed copy to Susan as a gift and I never heard she'd read it. It was probably my most prized possession. I don't believe in avoiding problems I believe in dealing with them. I had hoped you would agree.

I cannot control if or to whom you forward my emails. At the moment I am in the mood to send this to Sue myself. (You never tell someone to stop calling you by a nickname of their choice.)

I must close with, any association with dad was through drinking. I suspect it is the same way with mother. I used to think she did a great job holding the family together with a very difficult dad, but she had plenty years (and money) to change since then.

Peter

P.S. Many years later, when I told her the story, a girlfriend found a signed copy for me.

On 3/12/2022 10:44 AM, ralph_online@yahoo.com wrote:

Hi Peter,

Mom shared your last letter with me and clearly you are missing some information that may help you find relief and perhaps closure.

Dad passed away on October 30, 2014 after a long battle with Alzheimer's. He was in a nursing home with a special Alzheimer's wing for about 2 years. Mom was forced, against her wishes, to make the difficult move of placing Dad in the nursing home. The last couple of years prior to the nursing home were difficult as Dad lost touch with who and where he was. The final decision occurred when he was no longer able to manage simple tasks such as getting out of bed, sitting down or standing up, even with assistance. Mom became unable to physically meet the support needed. For the last year, prior to the nursing home, Dad was in diapers as he was unable to know when he needed to use the bathroom. I visited Dad a few times while he was in the nursing home and he had no idea who I was, was unable to speak, due to his brain forgetting how to speak. They say Alzheimer's is the long goodbye, and it is, because his mind deteriorated over time. He passed away when his body simply gave up.

The home in North Carolina was sold when Dad was no longer able to make the trip to Flat Rock, although it did sit for some time before being put on the market. Prior to Mom putting the house on the market it was discovered that black mold was throughout the lower level. The entire finished area on the lower level had to be stripped and cleaned. Mom needed to sell the home as it was no longer used and also to recoup the money they had in the

house to pay for Dad's nursing home. The nursing home was \$200 per day at the beginning of his stay and increased over the 2 years. The entire cost was paid out of pocket by Mom. Mom visited Dad almost every day while he was in the nursing home to keep him company and do some additional grooming so Dad would not appear destitute and retain some dignity.

I realize Mom can be stubborn, set in her ways and disapproving of things she does not agree with and, as she has gotten older, this has become more pronounced. Mom is virtually home bound; she gave up her car and driving about 1 ½ years ago. She does have a friend that visits once per week to bring her food, take her to doctor's appointments and have conversation. While she does not have a computer, and never will, she keeps up with the world quite well with daily Wall Street Journals, her local newspaper, news and weather channels on TV. I do assist Mom with some things that are easier via online resources. Her mind remains sharp, but her body is slipping away. Mom has had a few fairly major surgeries over the last few years that have kept her going and overall, all things considered, in pretty good health.

I feel sorry that you were not aware of some of this information although Mom did say she wrote you and called you a few times, leaving messages, shortly after Dad's passing but you did not call back. Perhaps it was for reasons that you felt was best.

As I stated, Mom can be difficult, but I do believe that after all these years, and with your belief in yourself, it is not necessary to continue attacking Mom. If you want to have contact, I suggest you accept what cannot be changed, such as history. If you are unwilling or unable to do that, cease contact. Only you can choose how you react and interact.

I am glad to hear you are confident and an optimist. I think those are essential qualities to being happy and being able to live life on your own terms.

Again, I do hope this allows you to understand what happened and allows you closure.

Rick