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Final Creative Project – Narration

Whispers of the Truth

Intro

I can't exactly describe the early stages of my life as a blur, simply because it comes to mind as more of a void. Most of my childhood stories came to me through word of mouth and I recite them here as best I can for your enjoyment. However, as I aged, I became aware of a constantly running monologue arguing with itself on the edges of my consciousness. I'm sure most people would claim to have some form of inner voice that they simply refer to as thoughts, but mine seemed different. Imagine the tagline that runs on the broadcast of any news program meets the same thing from ESPN plus quotes from several random movie or book selections all spastically shifting topics as my mind warped from one dimension to the next. All constantly narrating my life. If you get lost in the details, please understand that I don't control this subconscious narrator and that I probably know less about it than you. I now forfeit the fate of these stories to the tiny man that resides in my head who makes my life hell. Enjoy.

1

Growing Pains

Looking back on my life, several recurring themes and events seem to plague my consciousness with their presence, trying to force me into recognition of their lessons. The funny

thing I have realized about my life thus far is that quite often, trying to force anything to happen will prove futile. My mother could force me to make my bed or to productively help clean the house no more than maybe ten percent of the time. But perhaps I was just a defiant child who thought himself better than the common peasant laborer. In the beginning, she couldn't force me to do my homework or throw me into the pool during the summer and expect me to allow my toes to go numb while I was supposed to be learning how to swim.

The second funny thing about adolescence is that after years of defiance regarding such inconsequential things, my mother didn't have to force it anymore. By the time I entered high school, I did my homework before she even got home to cook dinner and I often skipped our family dinners to go to the pool for practice, which inevitably made her upset because she "spent extra time making my favorite meal," which, oddly enough, seemed to happen every night between Monday and Friday. Even though I now practice six days a week without question, it was a mere fifteen years ago that I refused to consent to her requests, and the disparity between her reactions sent me wildly mixed messages.

If you asked her now, my mom would tell you that she was responsible for making me mature and helping me to realize the importance of things like studying and staying healthy and active. My response would be something more like "I'm afraid of my mother." My past experience with how she handled laziness and lack of effort is what made me finish homework before she got home, mostly so that she didn't look over my shoulder while I was doing it and tell me I was wrong. Don't get me wrong, I wasn't a problem child, at least not to the best of my knowledge, although my mother's career choices might tell the story differently than I would. She started as a high school science teacher, meaning she had to deal with defiant kids all the time. But there is a huge difference between hormonal, dramatic teens and a one year old that

likes to bite your nose (or so I was told). I don't know if my dad ever questioned her decision to become an elementary school guidance counselor for troubled kids that never listened to her, although I'm sure he harbored some internal resentment every time she brought her work home with her. But there's the proof that I must have been a difficult one to handle. My mom made this change with me at home at the ripe old age of two, and I only see two possible explanations for it. Either I was bad enough that she wanted extra practice dealing with bitchy kids, hoping that I would become easier to cope with after years of experience was swallowed in abbreviated segments known as school days, or I was even worse than that and she thought if she went to work and dealt with twelve to fifteen temper tantrums a day I couldn't possibly cry loudly enough to phase her when she went to bed at night. Regardless of the reason, the guidance counselor in my mom came out frequently to whip us into shape. And when I say us, I mean my brother, sister, *and* dad, because apparently he was just as childish as we were, '70s afro and all.

2

Bedtime Stories

Suffice it to say I still learned a lot from my mother about life and making decisions and a bunch of other clichéd topics. But now that I'm living on my own all of those lessons come into play and it all hit me quickly within the first few weeks of college. The most important thing about a lesson is understanding what it means and when it applies, of which a really important part is timing. For example, stress relief is essential to keeping your head above water, especially in a college setting, and I've isolated several great methods of relieving stress that include exercising, napping, blasting music, screaming, and eating ridiculous amounts of food. The only

unfortunate thing about that list is that putting any two of them together gets you a fair amount of odd looks and annoyed comments. I told myself, *you're relieving stress at double the normal rate. A champion of multitasking!* Meanwhile the guy on the treadmill next to me was asking where I had gotten a pint of ice cream and a Big Mac. However, I was told one of the best ways to deal with stress is simply to prevent it by finishing what you started. This was a good idea for things like house chores because I could get them out of the way when I started and not worry about it hanging over my head all day, but it became more of a problem when my birthday fell on a school night. So after starting that 4,500 piece Lego castle, a six pack of Mountain Dew, and two large bags of Doritos, I followed my mom's advice and went to bed at two AM after having finished everything. This led me to think about amending the common statement that "nothing good ever happens after midnight." Despite how freaking awesome that castle was, the four bathroom breaks that disrupted my sleep between the hours of two and seven and the three naps that disrupted the following school day couldn't have been the result of a "good decision". So how does this sound? "Good decisions are never made when you're supposed to be sleeping."

Never change the nap schedule of a young child who might be coping with a mild case of ADHD. Seeing as this story takes place when I was five, I actually look back upon the event with a sense of pride at my advanced level of creativity and intuition, even if the spectators would not agree with me. It serves to note that no matter the level of mastery of a physical ability, it can often be overridden by a primal instinct. The nap schedule had been changed that day and I couldn't sleep. And when a "fire" threatened to devour the kitchen of my imaginary restaurant at preschool, I had no choice but to saturate the lovely checkered carpet with urine. Let's just say the other kids weren't able to sleep through the sirens blaring from the fire engine as I rolled out the first fire hose. My teacher laughed, my parents reprimanded me, and I praised myself for

saving the restaurant. But my parents definitely made sure I learned a lesson. Location, location, location. Good decisions are never made when you're supposed to be sleeping.

3

Family Feud

I was born only twenty months after my older brother, so as he grew and matured, I always felt pressure to keep up with him. You can imagine how animated our competition became as we challenged each other to be better and achieve more. This only caused problems when we were left alone together and one of us tried to show off. From Easter eggs and basketball to academics and eating, the two of us turned everything into a competition and nobody could stop us (although we tended to avoid making competitions out of our daily chores because that would actually involve *doing* the work). Being the younger brother, I usually lost more than I won, as he had a developmental advantage. But that made the scattered victories that much sweeter. And you can bet that I bragged and gloated and held it over his head every time I bested him at something. If only the victor of the countless battles had actually won something worthwhile, say a dime. At that rate, I'd have about \$3.70 to my name more so than I do now. And I most likely would have used it to buy a hot dog and a drink at a basketball game somewhere. I'll bet you \$3.70 that my brother would be happy to know that I the spoils I had collected over the years from our epic rivalry were used to buy a hot dog and a drink. But we're so similar he probably did the same thing. But with about twelve hot dogs and drinks. Totally worth it.

Confidence is Folly

My dad always claimed to have a big liking of professional sports, but if he had really loved sports as much as it appears he does, he wouldn't have settled our family down in Ohio. Seven professional teams in the state and they consistently compete with each other for the lowest position. Anyways, a couple years ago I thought it would be a good idea to join a fantasy football league; I knew everything possible about the Cincinnati Bengals and significantly less about the other 31 teams in the NFL. This is where I noticed that when it comes to discussing and analyzing sports, everyone pretends to know more than they truly do. This tactic can make you look pretty intelligent when the people around you know less than you and just shake their heads in approval, pretending to know what you just said. And once again, location, audience, and timing become wildly important.

Location: a sports bar somewhere between Clemson, South Carolina and Augusta, Georgia. Audience: the majority of my fantasy football league. Timing: poor. When my friend asked who had scored the most recent touchdown for the Colts, I confidently repeated exactly what the stat-line had fed to me, "Fleener, tight end." *Not bad, not bad. You answered correctly and before anyone else. You were on top of it.* "Wait who was it?" *Alright here's your chance to impress, use his first name and add some facts about him this time to prove you know what you're talking about.* "Curtis Fleener. Number 80. Tight end out of Stanford." Even just saying that in my head right now makes me sound like a tool. Well I was quickly corrected by the obviously more knowledgeable group around me because the guy's name was *Coby* Fleener. But I swear I had heard the name Curtis Fleener before, it just sounded right. And sure enough, there

he was. Curtis Fleener, Prussian immigrant to the US, died in Missouri in 1992. Bio taken straight off ancestry.com.

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One Sheep, Two Sheep, Cow, Turtle, Duck

Apparently I was an energetic child, almost to the point of ADHD according to my relatives – or “obstacles” as I liked to call them. My brother’s ninth birthday party went smoothly enough until my uncle commented to my parents that he was surprised I wasn’t bouncing off the walls, a comment which I may have taken just a bit too literally. I wish my inner demons had interjected themselves right here (it might have saved quite a few headaches), but all I can remember from those spastic laps around the house was a persistent rattling. My head rattled a little when I shook it too, but I think that’s just that damned inner monologue mocking me. I enjoyed reading and swimming. But not at the same time. Although we did debate physics during swim practice. I wish we had talked about football; I knew my football stuff. I’ve been told I talk in my sleep. I had trouble sleeping. I thought too much at night. I tried counting sheep before bed. And there’s the rattling again...
