



Crazy

Though I would trade the experience for anything, having an older brother was trying at times. If you are the older brother or have the older brother you know what it is to have stories built up for the soul purpose of rousing fear and anguish in a young mind.

The nature of being the younger sibling is that you always know that when all else fails, you have “My Big Brother” to kick some bodies butt. Yet at the same time comes the fact that he does not wrong and would never lie to you or so much as exaggerate the truth.

Needless to say, this all lead innocent minds down roads of fear and disappointment because ‘Big Brother’ likes to see you squirm in fear. Thus, all the concocted nonsense of wild dogs and creatures that goes bump in the night.

Years of conditioning leave one in doubt as we get older. By age 12 or so we listen but the pretense of doubt is common place.

It was nothing uncommon for us to walk and ride our bikes ‘half way’ to meet up with a friend coming over. And upon a return trip from just that, as my brother and cousin come running in panting and excitedly telling me of this “Crazy” man who chased them, I listened but believed it to be another line of bull.

So the story goes they were making their way back from their meeting point crossing the same parking lot we always did, when they notice this man heading their way. This man apparently had the air of some supernatural being because of the speed at which he moved. He was described as having Black eyes with a cold and crazy stare. He was a scraggly man with long nappy black hair and a nappy black beard. He kept his arms drawn in to his chest as if it were some sacrificial attack pattern. “They barely got away!”

All this to me was crap and was disregarded. However, that “same old parking lot” was a place I often ended up because it is a grocery store. Being in route to most of the places we as kids might go, it was always convenient to stop by for a soda or candy bar.

Of course my friend had been told this story and they were aware of “Crazy” lurking about. Too often we passed this way and had never seen him so how could it be that he existed without our encountering him. That question, nay never be answered because this was the day that would leave no doubt to the story.

As we made our way toward the end of the parking lot on our usual path, we start down a two lane exit ramp that led to the road. As we got below the hill out of sight from the parking lot, there he was from out of no where! Our choices were to take him head on or run back up the hill where we came. Being that those Cold Black eyes had already locked on us and his speed had increased in our direction we bolted up the hill in fear.



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Fortunately for use, the grocery store was right there and was the perfect safe haven. His pursuit was swift but by the time we reach the entrance to the Store he was no where to be seen. It was as if he had disappeared.

This was the first of many encounters with “Crazy!” Though we were all to scared to ever have a real exchange with him, we all over the years built his legend up to that of any Boogie man. We all believed he would one day get hold of one of us an do the most horrid things. Maybe even find us in our sleep, who knew?

Looking back, my brother and I have agreed that he must have been one of the many unfortunate Vietnam Veterans that came back from the war and found an addiction to coup with their own fears and pasts. His age and appearance match that thought.

Many years past and our Boogie man stayed in the back of our minds. Any time any of us had to pass that direction, the fear could be consuming.

Shortly before I graduated high school, I read an article in the Knoxville News Sentinel about a man being hit by a train in that same area. There in the article was his picture: Crazy had a name, Charles! He lived just down the road from where our encounters always happened. In fact, as far as I know his elderly parents still do.

I never pursued any more knowledge on this Boogie man of ours only that offered up by the news article offered up. A sigh of relief was followed by a great deal of disappointment as many years of fears and our self induced horror stories came to an end. In a split second, the life of this man who seemed so supernatural was unable to get from in front of the train. He was apparently thrown several yard to his death according to the article.

Thinking back, I will always wonder what it was he was pursuing us for.