

24 Years is Far Too Few

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On May 14 I woke up and spent most of the day finishing a take home exam for my Multi-Agent Systems class. I worked most of the day with a couple of guitar breaks. My wife was out with friends for most of the day since I had work to do. I was probably sitting in front of the computer answering a question about Partial Global Planning when 110 miles away my father was being brutally beaten to death apparently over a few hundred dollars worth of his possessions and a tired old 1993 Dodge Caravan. I went to bed and slept fine that night, while at 11:00 p.m. he was being pronounced dead by medical examiners.

My father was the most cautious person I ever knew. He always wore a seat belt, drove the speed limit, wore giant fluorescent orange gloves and hard hat when he cut down a few trees in the yard with a chainsaw, wore a helmet when he rode a bike, etc. He was even more safety conscious about my activities. My friends used to call him a "safety freak." Our family had a joke that whenever I lit a match, for a birthday cake or Shabbat candles or something, there was a predictable "Watch your fingers!" that would burst uncontrollably from my dad. On some days it was a nervous and fearful, "Ethan, be careful with those matches, you're not skilled!" It was this unyielding cautiousness that has made his murder all the more confusing to me. The one absurd contingency that he did not see coming, got him. What a horrible consequence of Murphy's Law.

I do not know if I'll ever be able to sort out why my father died, but it's very apparent to me why he lived. The problem is that I do not know how, in an impromptu memorial, to pay tribute to someone who meant so much to me, was such a tremendous inspiration to me, and who was so supportive and loyal to me. The internal tremors reverberating from this catastrophe make it doubly difficult to coax the words out. I looked up to my father so much. I guess the best I can do is to just recount a few of my fondest memories I had of him and describe the qualities he had that make his departure so tormenting. Trying to relate all of my feelings about him in a short memorial is futile. There's so much to say about him, and words fail in describing what a wonderful and loving father he was.

I'm infinitely grateful for all the audio and video recordings there are of him. I've listened to his voice on George Noory's "Coast to Coast A.M." archived shows several times over, and it's as if he's in the car with me again. His clean, articulate phrases materialize out of the speakers. His voice echoes in my head throughout the day, responding to ques-

tions that I might have asked him. I put his intro to the Correas' DVD on today before dinner, and it's like he's in the room again. I'm so thankful to hear from people who were at one time acquainted with my father. Every condolence I've received via the phone, the web, or in person is a real blessing. There are so many fond memories of my dad, I can only hope to recount some of the ones that have surfaced most vividly in these recent months.

We enjoyed many afternoons launching Estes rockets. I can remember the first one we launched. Dad lit the engine with a canon fuse, and ran for cover. I distinctly remember the feeling of awe I was in when it shot up hundreds of feet into the sky. I recently bought an Estes rocket at a hobby shop this past year because I was sentimental over those days with him. One night he explained rocket propulsion to me at the dinner table using a match and a piece of tin foil for a rocket, and a paper clip as a launch pad.

I remember all the amusement parks he and my mom took Kim and I to; there was a trip to Disney World and Land, King's Dominion, Canobie Lake Park, Hershey Park,

Universal Studios, and more. My dad would convince Kim and I to go on the scariest rides. I'll never forget the first roller coaster we went on together. As the roller coaster clicked and clacked up to the first summit, I looked over at my dad in terror and he smirked, imitating Han Solo, "I got a bad feeling about this." Just as we would drop down the hill, he would tell me with wide eyes and enthusiasm, "This is what it would feel like to be an astronaut. . . orbiting the earth. . . weightless!"

I remember talks with him after dinner, "pre-1989 Pons and Fleischmann announcement," about his dreams and

visions of the human race making contact with extra-terrestrial intelligence, and the history and future of space travel. He clearly had a passion for space as well; the middle name he and my mom gave me, "Armstrong," is a testament to that. There were several 4:00 a.m. Saturn viewings through his Celestron telescope when I was four years old that further attest.

We used to build models of moon landers and Apollo spacecraft and he would explain the importance of each in the NASA program. My father loved building models. He was sort of an old timer that way; he thought the concept of tangible toys was dying and was worried about it. He recently told me, "I remember when you could walk into a toy store and see row after row of model this and model that. . . All



Gene, Cheryl, Ethan, and Joanne at Ethan's wedding in August 2003.



Gene with his mom, Gladys, at Ethan's wedding in August 2003, being silly in his mom's hat.

they have are video games now!" He told me a few years ago that he still pondered, every so often, going into a hobby shop to buy a model. Model trains, model spacecraft, model boats; you name it. When we had an in-ground pool a few years ago (before my parents built their dream house), he bought a model submarine for their in-ground pool. I can recall the day he excitedly showed me his model submarine in the pool, just like a little kid. That was the thing about him; he never lost his child-like enthralment with things. I think it was what kept him going full-throttle at all times. He was never bored.

I could not leave out the temple services at the conservative temple in Holliston, Massachusetts, and later the reform temple in Concord, New Hampshire, when reminiscing about old times with dad. And I'm so glad he made me go to Hebrew school despite all my complaining about it. It would not have been as hard had I not grown up in New Hampshire, and been only one of two Jewish kids at school. My dad, for the most part, let me do my own thing and plan my own activities, but he definitely felt very strongly that I attend Hebrew school and get Bar Mitzvah'd.

When I was in elementary school, I sometimes wished my dad was more athletic or more interested in sports, like all my friends' dads. Of course, he could not have cared less! My sister and I would say, "Dad, you're a nerd!" and he would reply on cue, "Nerds make the world go around" and laugh. Nonetheless, he took me to a couple of Celtics games. He, of course, took seriously the educational aspect of attending these—witnessing the sociology of an NBA game first-hand. But once I hit high school, I was behind him all the way on the nerdiness, and was loving it. A few guys I knew were calling him "Huge Euge." One guy in my class told me, "Ethan, I'll never forget the day I woke up to see 'Huge Euge' on 'Good Morning America' [laughs]." A friend of mine addressed him as "Dr. Mallove" on one occasion, which I got a huge kick out of.

He got me into stamp collecting and coins early on. There was a mom-and-pop collectibles store named Vales in Concord that we frequented. "Dad, can we go to Vales?" I

would plead every weekend. He showed me his old Indian Head cents, and bought me a metal detector. I was out there in the yard at our old farmhouse in Bow, New Hampshire, digging up lots of old silverware and scrap metal before I called it quits, but we had hobby journals that told stories of people who would find treasure troves. He said when he was a kid he buried a jar of old pennies; it might have been in Norwich, I do not remember exactly. He told me he wished he would have just kept them. I had many fantasies of finding that jar when I was little.

I reminisce about his passion for knowledge. I miss so much getting together with him to see his green van filled with bins of science magazines and various and sundry parts and pieces to a device he had been working on. I would ask him what everything was and he would enthusiastically jump into a performance-style talk about what he was working on. I remember many occasions hearing, "Ethan, if this thing does what I think it does, you are going to see some major, *major* changes in the world. . .you just wait!" And despite the many disappointments he encountered in the new energy field, he remained relentlessly optimistic, and he was adamant he had found proof for the correctness of his optimism. Through all the trials and tribulations my dad underwent over the past fifteen years, I always got a tremendous sense of pride that my father could've made four, five, or "some number" times more than what he was making in new energy research, but chose to explore and search for truth. I never wished he had blown years away doing some "cog in the machine" engineering job for stability's sake. Not for a minute.

My father had a great sense of humor. He always snagged my college science textbooks when I was done with them. When I gave him my Halliday and Resnik physics text he said it was useful for him to get a snapshot of what the going beliefs were in academia. Then he joked, "I'll just go through this and highlight the parts that are wrong, and give it back."

There are far too many classic incidents to list. One of my favorites happened while I was in his van. I had just sneezed, and was searching desperately for a Kleenex. I was coming up empty, when I looked up to see my dad holding a hermit cookie. I looked at him with a quizzical expression, when he blurts out: "Here, blow your nose on this hermit cookie!"

There was an incredibly goofy, squirrely side to dad. We have a video from 1981 of him dancing around to some Michael Jackson song (I forget which one, but it was off the "Thriller" album). He was very creative with his dancing. At one point he grabs an old antique rocking horse, saved from his childhood, and starts riding it. Imagine this 5'8" tall, 170+ lb. man riding a tiny wooden rocking horse, whipping the side of the horse with a green plastic Tinker-Toy!

There were all kinds of odd, quirky things he did, like smush Marshmallow Peeps on the counter as hard as he could before eating them. He had this clicking sound he would make with his mouth. Nobody in the family could do it as fast as he could, and when we tried he would say, "You can never achieve the clicking speed of The Human Castanet!" Our family had a little white dog named Russell (he was a cross between a cocker spaniel and a poodle), whom dad loved, but he really teased the hell out of him. We suspect he was jealous of all the attention Russell got from my mom. Russell was a very territorial and protective

dog, especially around my mom. There was a constant rivalry going on between the two of them, up until Russell became too senile to get worked up over my dad's antagonistic behavior. "Hey Russell, you think you're frickin' White Fang?!?" he would jeer, as Kim and I laughed hysterically.

Ironically, he got hooked on the televised O.J. Simpson trial. The sheer absurdity of the whole thing. He would make wry jokes and get really animated about it, picking up a steak knife at the dinner table and saying, "Hmm. . .this kinda looks like an O.J. knife!" Or mock the expression O.J. had on his face when he was fitting the glove on his hand during the trial. He always cracked me up; I'll forever miss his comedy and wit.

I went through a phase in junior high when I was making homemade fireworks. I'm lucky to be alive, frankly! My father was there to not only tell me I was a fool for making them, but also explained the science involved in what I was doing—the thermal expansion and what not. He tried steering my enthusiasm for the fireworks to amateur rocketry, but instead I got into drumming.

There was a period while I was in high school when Chris Tinsley was staying at our house, doing experiments in the basement. I had a band that was rehearsing on the other side of the basement. We put together a raucous metal song about cold fusion. I wrote the lyrics; boy, was it terrible. Tinsley would come over to our side of the basement and say in that great British accent we loved so much, "Well, maybe you can convince Mick Jagger to give you guys a break, eh?" Then we would go over to the cold fusion side of the basement and try to get my dad and Chris to explain what they were doing.

My dad was very supportive. I'm sure he would have liked to have seen me go into science right off the bat, but I decided to go to the New England Conservatory of Music for my first two years of college—the polar opposite to a Bachelor of Science! But he supported my decision whole-heartedly, and he attended every performance and recital of mine that I told him about. He was most proud of the "Taste of Hannukah" and "Taste of Passover" shows I did with the klezmer group in Jordan Hall, mainly because they were shown on PBS. He even brought his elderly parents to that show, God bless him. He loved telling people I had been on TV playing the xylophone. Being an avid country music fan, I'm sure he was puzzled by my interest in jazz. He would routinely tell me to write a country song about cold fusion. Some of my earliest memories are of listening to a Waylon Jennings LP in the living room of our Holliston, Massachusetts home. The nostalgia attached to the Waylon Jennings and Willie Nelson duet recording of "Mamas, Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up to Be Cowboys," which he played ad nauseum when Kim and I were tots, will never fade.

I eventually changed my major from Music to Computer Science, though I had been enthusiastic about his magazine and research all through my time in music school. I suppose it was a mixed blessing that I had that mid-college crisis five years ago, which landed me back home for a year. I saw a lot of my dad that year, thank God. He would show me around the office and the lab. I never had enough physics to get deeper than the outer layer of the research he was doing, but it was always inspiring to see some new device he was testing and his intense enthusiasm for his work. With engineering school came far fewer visits to my folks' home, but my

dad and I had the type of relationship that disregarded hiatus. It could've been many months between visits, but when I saw him it was like we had seen each other the day before.

I admired his intelligence. There was not a topic I felt we couldn't chat about. We had long, extended conversations about world history, biology, religion, politics, and fill-in-the-blank that would go on for hours after dinner. He even had input on my Jazz Performance studies. He once asked while we were listening to John Coltrane in his famous green van, "What is it about jazz you like?" There was really nothing you could say to someone so enamored of country music. I will forever miss hearing my father's voice, his energized enthusiasm for science. I was always so amazed at how he could expound on something verse-after-verse without a vocalized pause or a stutter. I truly hope to see some of the visions and hopes he had materialize someday.

Since my grandparents played such a big role in my upbringing, it's excruciating to think of what my children will miss out on with my father's premature passing. I remember so vividly visiting my dad's parents, Gladys and Mitchell, in Norwich, Connecticut, and later in New London, Connecticut. This large store of Norwich memories have been stained by my father's murder on the site of these memories. Kim and I would always talk about how safe we felt in the 119 Salem Turnpike house with the hush of cars passing on Interstate 82. I distinctly remember arriving at my grandparents' home to be greeted



Joanne, Gene, Gladys, Mitchell, and young Ethan, circa 1989.

by a table of every imaginable food; never was there a square inch of table cloth exposed beneath the layer of plates of macaroons, hard boiled eggs, lox and bagels, etc.

I'll always remember the dynamics between my grandpa and dad. The dominating tone of my grandpa as he would drive his old blue Pontiac as my father would try to yell over his voice, "Daddy, there's no time to go to the aquarium today." "Eugene, you listen. . .we are *going* to the aquarium!!" My dad would always chuckle at Mitchell's mannerisms. Mitchell, like my father, loved giving data about anything he drove by. If we drove by some historic monument, grandpa had a ten minute narrative for it. The dinner table was always the most hysterical, with my grandpa trying to get me to eat as much a variety as possible from the buffet. Every visit to grandma and grandpa's included a visit to The American Steakhouse, and it was there that my grandpa would routinely be frustrated by the lack of food variety on my plate. He would lean over the table adjusting his glasses and softly say, "Because you do not know exactly what your body needs, it's best to have a variety," as he scraped a pile of fruits and veggies onto my plate from his. At some point, my dad would interrupt and say, "Now Daddy, please. . .enough.

He just wants his hamburger and French fries.”

There were lots of similarities between dad and grandpa, Mitchell. One of the salient ones was the inability to throw anything away. This was certainly part of the Mitchell Mallove legacy. Although, my dad was more discriminating than Mitchell; we never did have jars of nails and wingnuts lining the garage as grandpa did. Science magazines and books were probably dad’s favorite collectibles. I think he wanted to preserve snapshots in time; he liked looking through old notes he had taken. There’s a big box of his small spiral bound notebooks, which he carried around 24/7, that I still need to go through. He loved videotaping and photographing get-togethers and family reunions. I wish I had spent more time behind the camera photographing *him* all those days.

He had a funny system of paper and magazine piles in his office, because they all could not fit on his bookshelves. Pile after pile they lined most of the floor, save for a small foot-wide path to his desk. “They’re in piles, but they’re neat piles. I know where everything is in here,” he would say if someone moved a pile or criticized his style. “A clean office is a sign of a sick mind,” he joked with me recently. Our basement still has many a bookshelf of science magazines; it’s unbearable to think about the possibility of throwing even a single one of them away because I know how much he valued them. For better or for worse, I’ve adapted his phi-

losophy on orderliness. I keep my space only as tidy as it needs to be, no more and no less.

He was always taping TV programs and cutting out news articles that he thought I would be interested in. He would send photocopies of articles on a monthly basis with topics ranging from medicine to computers. One that stands out in particular was “Triumph of the Nerds,” a documentary on the personal computer revolution. It ended up playing a role in my change of focus to Computer Science. He loved learning about computers, though I think he was frustrated sometimes that he got behind in all of it. “Whatever happened to the days when you could look in the paper and see real engineering jobs. . . I open the Help Wanted section these days and all I see is a bunch of computer jargon intermeshed with unintelligible acronyms. . . BX3 software design position. Skills needed in RX-458EE, SWQ-98, and BVCFF on the 34Q platform essential,” he would kid. He got quite a kick out of the dot-com hysteria. “Did you hear about Johnny down the road? He’s in fourth grade, and he’s the CEO of a dot-com!” he would joke. He had great stories to tell me about his days programming giant mainframes with punch cards. I was so proud to tell him that I had got my first programming job last summer, and was anxious for him to see me finally complete my Computer Science degree this December. Although, he always warned me about the pitfalls of a 9-to-5 engineering lifestyle. I was looking forward to having long talks with him about computer technology. His excitement when he brought home a scanner with OCR software included was a classic dad moment; this typified his perpetual engrossment in technology. Whatever his new toy was—digital camera, large screen TV, or palm pilot—he showed it to me like a kid in a toy store.

Early on I observed how my father’s level of enthusiasm for his profession was so extraordinary in comparison with everyone else I saw; I knew he was very special for this. He thrived on the feeling that his work could open the way to a different and better world. That was notable; I never saw him livelier and happier at work than when he was doing *Infinite Energy*.

I wish I had had a chance to tell him, before he left, how special he was to me. How he really was my best friend. A few times, over the past few years, he told me that there was so much to the human body, the brain especially, that science could not explain. This has left me with hope that he exists somewhere now. I pray I’ll someday see him again so that I can ask him all the questions I’ll never get to ask him, tell him all the things I didn’t get to tell him, and show him all the things I never had the chance to show him while he was here.



One occasion where Gene’s whimsical side was captured—May 2000.