I was born into a family rife with dysfunction. Even as a young child, I could tell that my family situation, was not the norm. Mom and dad were always either out at the bar getting stone cold drunk, or locked in their bedroom fighting about the stupidest things possible. These fights included “Your mustache is too long, shave it!” I’m not even joking, my parents had a several hour long fight over a goddamn mustache, and it ended with my dad going to stay at a hotel for a night. With mom and dad either away at the bar or off in their room fighting, I would often be the only one left to care for my little brother, Eric. I raised the guy as if I was his own father, and I guess in a way I was. I was always there for him whenever he needed help in any way, shape or form. At least that was until I left for college. It pained me to leave behind Eric, but I just couldn’t stay in that house any longer. I made sure to leave Eric in as good a state as possible. I made sure to teach Eric that what our parents did was not normal at all. My only concern was that… Eric gets very, very upset whenever he sees our parents fight or sees them visibly drunk. Something about it just sets him off, and understandably so. I was always there to help console and calm him down, but since I was leaving, I had to teach him how to control his own emotions, and leave some form of an outlet, I believed at first that I had done as good a job as I had done, and it had worked very well… until one night.

I hadn’t been home in years, and I had begun to worry about my little brother. He had been going through a tough time with some problems in school recently, so his mental state wasn’t the greatest. Combine that with his current home situation, and I couldn’t shake this overwhelming anxiety over Erics’ well being. So I decided that instead of staying at school for spring break like I usually do, I went home over the break in order to keep an eye on my brother. Things were about the same as usual, mom and dad would get into fights constantly, would always come home drunk, and would constantly leave my brother to fend for himself. It was the exact same thing every day, until the day before I left to go back for school. I was somehow able to get everyone together sober for a family dinner, a rarity in my household. I had wanted us to all sit down and feel like a normal family for once. I had cooked a big fancy dinner for us all to enjoy, and for once we actually felt something like a normal family. That is until my mother made a remark about my dad's mustache and how he should shave it. It started with just some passive aggressive comments between the two of them, and a few minutes later, it had escalated into a full blown screaming match. Usually my brother is able to keep his cool, but something in him just couldn’t take what had happened anymore, I don’t know if it was because of his problems at school, or if he had just finally had enough of what had happened, but Eric finally decided he had enough. In a fit of rage, my brother screamed at the top of his lungs, yelling at both of my parents to “Shut the fuck up!”. My brother, unable to control his emotions anymore, proceeded to start banging his fists on the table in a fit of rage at the situation. Over and over and over again. I’m unsure what made him think this was a good idea, maybe it was in some sort of effort to regain some sort of control over his home life. I had begun to run over to my brothers side to try and calm him down, when my father got to him. Instead of trying to gently console his son, or try to calm him down from the clear mental breakdown he was having, my father walked up slowly to my brother, and socked him clear in the face. I couldn’t see any visible injury to my brothers face, but I could see the sheer mental panic racing through his mind. The man he thought was supposed to protect and love him, is now his own attacker. He fell silent, unable to speak at all. I was a quiet observer all this time, from the moment I was old enough to comprehend my home situation, right up until before now, but this was the boiling point. I was done.

It was at this point that I no longer saw the man who had fathered me as my dad. I only saw a pitiful excuse of a man who felt that hitting a child was an appropriate thing to do. Not just a child, his own goddam son! I looked the man right in the eyes and told him “I’m taking my brother and leaving, now. I am going to make sure you never see him again you filthy son of a bitch.” In response, my father told me “I look forward to never having to see the two of you again.”. My aunt and uncle ended up taking custody of my little brother after the ensuing court battle. My parents didn’t even attempt to put up a fight. In hindsight I should have pressed charges against my dad for assaulting my brother, but at the time all I could do was get him out of that abusive home. I don’t know what my parents are doing now, but quite frankly, I don’t care. I want nothing more to do with them, and I hope they rot in hell.