

It was November of 1996. Our family was going through a very difficult time of struggle and transition. My wife and I had jointly consented to separate for several months as we were trying to put the pieces back together to make our family whole again. Mom was staying with a couple across town and going to a sister church and I and the children were at home going to ours. We were both in counseling at our respective churches and had great hopes of restoration in the near future. It was a very difficult time for all of us, but possibly most for Angel. She had been incredibly empathic from infancy on and was often near tears during this time. It was a very confusing time for two beautiful teenage children who loved both mom and dad. I know she prayed for us earnestly and was eagerly waiting for us to be a family again. Although I tried desperately to be a good father I was not a model husband, not even close. And mom had her issues too, even though she was unaware of them at the time, but things were looking up. After a few months I had a deep premonition that mom needed to come back home, ASAP. I pleaded with her for about two weeks and she finally consented. She felt it was too soon but I told her something critical was happening, or about to happen concerning the children, so she agreed. Tuesday she told the children and Wednesday evening at church Angel stood up and announced to the entire congregation that mom was coming back home and that we were going to be a family again, she was totally ecstatic and giddy with joy.

Thursday evening mom moved back in and we all went out to Godfather's Pizza to celebrate, it was a very memorable time for all of us.

The next day was a very special one as several of our youth group, the one mom and I pastored for almost two years, were going to a three day youth rally in St. George, Utah. The guest speaker was Sean Smith, one of Angel's favorites. We didn't have the money to send her so a precious sister secretly funded her trip. Micah didn't care to go and stayed home.

To be certain the vehicle was ready for the trip the pastor of our church put it in the shop for any needed repairs. It ended up needing several repairs and was picked up only a couple hours before leaving for the rally. After work I met Angel at the pastors house where everyone was gathering prior to leaving and gave her a hug and kiss along with some money for the trip. That was the last time I ever saw my daughter alive. Three hours later she was dead from a basil skull fracture. At least it was instant and she didn't suffer.

A precious brother in Christ and close friend who had lived with us for several months the year before this had taken over the responsibilities of the youth group. A few months before this incident Angel's mom and I stepped down to tend to things in our home. The church owned a very excellent Suburban and Robt drove that to transport the youth group to the rally a little over two hours up I-15 from Las Vegas. Robt stopped for gas and Angel bought candy bars and soda's for everyone before leaving town. After making certain that all were buckled in securely Robt took off. Forty five minutes later everyone in the vehicle, except for Joel and Robt, were sound asleep; not the typical response to sugar in the late afternoon. Robt noticed the vehicle pulling to the right as they got near Mesquite and just figured he'd have it looked at when he got to his destination. At roughly mile marker 115 on I-15 north there was a loud snap forward of the passengers compartment and at seventy five MPH the vehicle careened to the right and hit a cliff embankment spinning out of control.

There were a total of eight passengers in the vehicle. Five of the youths had unbuckled themselves to get more comfortable to sleep.

The driver, Joel in the front seat and Angel my daughter in the seat directly behind Joel had all stayed buckled in, all the rest were ejected from the vehicle at a high rate of speed. A seasoned over the road eighteen wheel truck driver was directly behind them and witnessed the entire event, he stopped to assist. In his report to the state trooper, which our pastor who was on the scene

overheard, stated that that the driver could not have been at fault due to the violent movement of the vehicle to the right. He said it had to be a blown tire or broken tie rod to cause that kind of response. That critical report somehow got lost before going to litigation almost a year later. What was supposed to be a 3-6 week investigation took over 9 months. They said the damage to the vehicle was too extensive to determine the cause, ya right. The damage to the vehicle was extensive yet the front tire had not blown and the tie rod had come apart; I know this because it is what I found upon personally inspecting the vehicle in the impound yard it was taken to when I went to remove her belongings from it just days after the incident. The local newspaper stated that the accident was the result of driver error. I will not say exactly what I did as it was foolish, and definitely not Christ like, but the newspaper did print a retraction within 48 hrs. Let's just say two nine millimeter semi-auto pistols with multiple clips strapped to your belt carry a lot of weight when asking someone to do something. I highly doubt they will be quick to print such gibberish in the future. They had no right nor proof to blame Robt at all for the accident, he was already devastated by the whole thing. He was almost as close to Angel as her blood brother. But then I suppose it depends on just how much money is involved. We had ample reason to believe the tie rod, which had been adjusted for toe in at the garage that very afternoon, had been left loose. The work had been done by a nationwide garage backed by mega-bucks.

I cannot say which garage as we lack solid evidence and vital reports were lost. It was actually quite easy to forgive the mechanic for we are all human and capable of making mistakes. Unfortunately some mistakes are life threatening. But as for the garage and the corrupt cops and inspectors, I don't want to be them on judgement day. Just sayin!!!