

Project Pops  
2008 to 2019  
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At some point, I knew My Father was going to die.  
So, I started making notes after our weekly talks.  
Well, that's what I say now.  
Who knows why I started way back then?

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Project Pops: Dad Weekly Touch-Back  
Started 12-6-08

So, the first conversation (I assume) was written the day after.  
Truthfully (at this point), I haven't the slightest clue.

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12-5-08 Conversation (1:41, focused on myself): I ranted on about my cure for the police and fire departments. After call was over, <name> alerted me to the concept that now (while My Father is still alive) might be a good time to probe him for information. Thus, the starting point for next week will be where we left off this week: his job at DuPont and their fire suppression safety guidelines. I don't know that we {meaning I} need more of an entry than that. Obviously, my build up {mental construction} of my father's experiences are inaccurate. I have no idea what the inside of an industrial chem-lab looks like... even though this is a starting point for many of his stories.

{Denotes comments added after the fact: clarifications and the like. All third party names (and personal data) have been (or will be) replaced with <name>, <noun>, <place>, and the like.}

{1:41 means the conversation (this would have been a phone conversation) 1 hour and 41 minutes.}

12-12-08 Conversation (1:30, started slow but gained momentum, I tried to ease back and let Dad talk more): but now it is two days later and I can't remember a single thing of lasting importance. I was far more intellectually focused on current events and discussing the way things are, than anything else. We probably spent a good half-hour discussing why someone might want to buy a 30 year bond at 0% interest (security, compaction of wealth, no other choice). It is an interesting realm in which we both exist (devoid of both now and then). It is filled almost exclusively with ideas, thoughts, and opinions: most not our own and all of limited importance.

12-27-08: noticing the spreadsheet reminded me to call this week. {At the time, Project Pops was a line item to check off on my weekly to-do list.} During this conversation, we mostly talked about email and cell phones. Once again, I did most of the talking. <name> visited the day of Christmas Eve before <name>. What else is new in his world? I don't even know what book he is reading. While he worked there, <the family business> didn't have a fax machine. And Dad didn't have a phone in his house until he was thirteen or so. We, also, talked about education. I think we agreed that most education is a waste. Topics of interest to Pops included the railing lawsuit at the <residence> and California's continuing budgetary problems.

1-2-09

I listened to Dad tell me about the virtues of tariffs. I assume he gets these ideas from talk radio. The issue at hand was the steel used in California bridges. The theory being: since government money is used, US steel should be used. He's "reading" two books. The first deconstructs the Da Vinci Code. And the second is a history of California's Hispanic population. Hispanics will be

the majority in CA before 2030. Apparently assimilation was the goal, prior to the events of the 60s.

He got a ham for Christmas and is thinking about freezing some of it. He'll probably make pea soup with the rest.

It's a cold rainy day in CA.

My most profound perception {conclusion, realization, whatever} is (and/or has been) that he gets the majority of his ideas from talk radio and just sort of internalizes them. I probably do the same thing, but it is odd listening to someone else do it. It's probably no different than reading the typical entry on the Blogosphere. But it does beg the question: How does one differentiate between Original Thought and simple Regurgitation.

{Yep. These entries are in need of heavy editing.}

{Reading is in quotes (above) because the Old Man is blind (or nearly so, vision gets difficult to label accurately at the end points). And so, he listens to Books on Tape (or selections from the National Library Service for the blind).}

1-31-09

We talked about the news of the day and the BART shooting.

I enjoyed planning the bacon double cheeseburger meal we'll have when I come out.

{At the time, I was in living in Hawaii.}

Perhaps the most meaningful aspect of our conversation were the parallels between my current life and his: living out of a house (not commuting), not caring about the clothes I wear, wild grey hair, and the like.

It was a good conversation that lasted two hours. We covered the Amish, Polar Bears (why won't they just adapt), and car manufacturers.

In other words, the news of the day.

3-7-09

The big news of the day was the old lady they took out of his building in a body bag. Turns out, she lived on Dad's floor. It was all the excitement. I didn't really have the heart to ask Dad how he might feel about being next. He took it in stride, though. It seemed like he sort of enjoyed the excitement.

From there, we detoured into politics and Obama's socialistic agenda. But I wonder if either of us really cared.

The conversation ended on an upbeat and energetic note, as we started to talk about royalties... from songs, movies, and the like. In this subject, I probably dominated. As in, I talked too much. But he seemed to be having fun. And I certainly know I was.

3-13-09 Conversation (90 min): a good call that started slow, as we talked about the four-day rising market. "You made money!" The conversation then veered off to the 1% sales tax hike in CA and unemployment insurance. Dad got unemployment when he left <*the family business*> some twenty years ago.

{I did not collect unemployment when I retired, as the date of my retirement was fuzzy to say the least... and being retired (or nearly so) I wasn't exactly looking for a replacement gig.}

Perhaps more importantly was the talk of air-raid sirens and his new fire alarm. When they tested it, he put a pillow in front of the alarm... as say apposed to walking out of the building like a good little boy. This in turn led to stories concerning the air raid sirens of his youth. Three short bursts meant find a place to hide (preferably in a room with no windows), while seven meant everyone should go home. All the kids would line up by street and a teacher would take them home... the teacher staying at the last child's house.

He also told me how at night he would lay out on the roof outside of his bedroom over the porch with his brother... but they never jumped down or went anywhere.

{I don't know the year. But his brother died a few years back (maybe a decade before Dad) from a stroke. I visited him in the hospital. It was the first time I had seen him since I was a child. Actually, I can place the year better than that as the car I drove up was a Cadillac. So, it was 1995 or so, when his brother died. That's a good two decades before he died.}

3-20-09 (70? Min): good, lively.

We talked about the rising market, stocks, taxes, and IRAs. Also, about those guys {which guys} who got the bonuses and how the government is going to tax them. It's a bad idea in my book {to tax specific people or specific sources of income differentially}. Whatever the case, we discussed the pros and cons of various tax methods. But in the end, what do we know?

Then the conversation sort of veered off into a discussion about the Internet, telephones, and finally mass transit and buses. I guess, there was a super-train segue in there. It was fun hearing about his bus riding experiences as a youth, taking multiple transfer trips in Buffalo. for twenty-five cent (or maybe that was the cost of a movie), and so forth.

Modern life isn't designed to be lived without a car.

And then, we talked about our garden in Hawaii and how I baked cookies for the neighbors to repay them for the lettuce they gave us.

Speaking of which, I need to take those cookies over to them.

{And there you have it: proof positive my life was more social and community oriented when I lived in Hawaii.}

3-28-09 (54min, good, I took notes): Dad talked about his fire alarm. They had a drill. I talked about Hawaii's civil defense system. It's intended mostly for tidal waves {or so I will claim}. Four police officers died in Oakland.

As a child, My Father's Family put the key to the house in the milk box next to the front door. But it gets even better than

that. They sold master keys as the hardware store. And a set of twelve would get you into pretty much any house in the neighborhood.

One time, his cousin Judy skipped school for two weeks and stayed at their house: used the key to let herself in, walked the dog, and read the boy's comics. The school finally called. But in the meantime they knew something was up, as their comics kept on getting messed up.

The book I'm reading on the Restoration, led to a discussion about steel and Gas Fired Furnaces. Gas Fired Furnaces are (in comparison to electric): cheaper to run, easier to make larger, more dangerous, more likely to explode, harder to control the temperature, the exhaust needs to be vented, and someone has to light them... sometimes with an explosive puff that flares out.

From there we discussed bronze casting in both sand and the lost wax technique. This topic, in turn, led to talk about commemorative plaques, engraving, and how they make coins, which led the conversation back to stamps, their value... and from there, back to coins again.

Taking notes made Project Pops easier, and gives me a better idea of the extent of our conversations. I feel better.

Notes are Good.

4-3-09 (91min, good): Taking notes sort of slows the conversation down. But in truth, they probably just indicate break points.

Me: "Hello, Mr. Paufler."

Dad: "Well, hello there."

<Name> and Dad had pizza for lunch. It is Dad's B-Day on 4-4-33. It's news to me. So, "There you are."

We talked of surf magazines, skiing, and free diving in the ocean, which led to decompression issues, hunting, and whales and their oil. The whales were wasted like the buffalo on the plains.

And "There we are," says Dad.

News of the day consists of the frequency of multiple murders {the more things change}, suicides, stocks, IRS, and {the possibility of, I presume} a one dollar Federal Cigarette Tax. Since he lived near the Canadian border, this led to the logistics of smuggling {cigarettes and/or alcohol} down from Canada. But then, for all we know, Canadians are already smuggling cigarettes north to avoid their own (much higher) taxes.

The next subjects were bridges, toll roads, canals, the Panama Canal, oil tankers, and oil peak usage (somebody claimed our peak use was in 2006). We then deconstructed a Barrel of Oil {what is that} and it's derivative products, the value to be had from the barrel {or the oil, it's far too late for me to know which, at this point}, the smell of asphalt, carbon tetra-chloride {wonderful stuff}, and other cancer causing solvents.

In enough quantity, anything is a poison: like oxygen above 20%. Turns out, a free radical, like oxygen, is technically a “non-charged ion,” Got me what that means. I don't even know what a “Free Radical” is.

This discussion brought to mind cults {and/or non-mainstream groups), who play with the definition of words. What is \_\_\_\_\_? He who defines the words defines the basis of the argument. It's basically Definitional Terrorism.

{I haven't the *foggiest notion* (a Dad phrase, if ever there was one) whether the preceding were thoughts I shared or thoughts I felt like writing after the fact.}

Some eye doctor {who knows which one, maybe one on the radio} recommended fish oil for retinal repair and maintenance. Omega-3 probably means the fatty chain comes off of the third link in the chain off the end (the opposite side from the fatty acid). Omega is “Z” (i.e. the end). And A is the first link off the fatty acid's head.

Dental freebies {I presume toothbrushes and the like} were mentioned briefly... leading to a long pause, so we called it a day.

Happy Birthday! He's going to be 76.

April 4th 1933.

{My Father had a PhD in Chemistry. So, that sort of knowledge comes from him, not me.}

4-10-09 (147min): Me: 'Hello, Mr. Paufler.' Him: 'How's it going there?' We talked about rain; and then, the cell phone outage. Somebody climbed down a manhole and cut some fiber optic cables shutting down the phone system (cell phones included) in San Jose area. This led to a talk about terrorism, the threat to the power grid, and everything being linked by the Internet.

We talked of pirates: both modern and ancient. Apparently, there is a stand-off near Somalia with the US Navy involved. My money's on the Navy. From this, the conversation drifted to Marines, Annapolis (cadets choosing their own line of service), and <name> trying to join <an organization>. <name> is at the end of the interview process. So far, so good.

Negotiators were brought in for the pirate hostage situation. It was a mistake to attack a US ship. And then, we went back to the fiber optic outage, before the conversation shifted to my talking about my the eggs I am dyeing for Easter with organic dyes: mustard, red cabbage, and so on.

I went on to talk about soy bean seeds (I need to eat them up), my love of <store>, his shopping at <store> (for the home delivery). None of his canned goods are more than a year past there expiration date. Way to go, Dad!

Talking of food, I'm hungry. I'll have some hot and sour soup, later. I'm playing chess with <name>, so we discussed the nature of the game and my (sort of middling) obsession with it.

I use <service> to meet people. The <organization> got ripped off by some vending machine salesmen. We talked of back dues owed. And the problems of collecting bad debts. One has to find the person, take them to court, get a judgment, and finally, collect. But by then, they've moved again. <many> are behind in their dues: a nearly a 10% rate.

<manufacturer> warranty is to be honored by the Feds. Dad said that parts for the Imperial (the greatest car from my youth) were hard to find towards end: the brakes, specifically. Could <manufacturer> survive if the pension obligation were to disappear? Will it share the fate of Big Steel? <country> is presumed to be a rising power, in part, because <country> does not care about its people or the environment. {Opinions, of course, will differ.}

The conversation winded down with talk of water conservation and garbage disposal. I proposed that ethanol {for use with gas} is a Social Good because it gives us a bigger buffer against famine. Folks in <country> probably wants to eat more meat. And it's time to go.

Long talk, but it went fast.

4-17-09 (1:44): It was a good talk. We concentrated on the big bang, carbon dating and other matters of science.

But first we talked about rain. It's been a normal year. Dad gave me an update as to the Snow Levels in the mountains. "There we are," he said, completing his update. Ninety degree weather is expected Monday. Then, the conversation turned {or I turned it} to my writing for a while, perhaps a long while. We talked of manuscript printing costs, pens and ink, priming fountain pens, and my sleeping beauty story: when the girl bleeds, it is the menses, the story behind the story.

Next, we talked of pirates. I related my theory that if you believe in reincarnation you should put the bad guys in prison, so they don't come back as quick. He doubled the ante by saying you should kill the good guys... because most geniuses do their best work while young. So you restart the cycle earlier by offing Einsteins and other inventors earlier. Similar to the concept of molecular reuse. So call it, Soul Reuse.

We talked of the dynamic universe theory versus the static state, the expanding universe versus steady state. New scientific discoveries use the current theories as a basis, so they are biased.

This all lead to carbon dating, the age of universe, and the Shroud of Turin. Carbon dating is no good past 50,000 years. Dad did not know the cut-off for Selenium dating. According to Creationism, the world is only 6,000 years old. So, we were talking of dating things. And this, obviously, led to paintings, pigments, and forgeries.

There were lots of empty spaces on the periodic chart only 100 years ago. Change is not necessarily for the better. To wit, his building's new fire alarm. We then talked of smoke damage, water damage, rent protections, whether he should get an escape ladder, and his previous apartment having two doors. We spent a long time on fire fire related stuff. Then goodbye.

{I cannot remember the timing. But there was a fire in his building, like two floors and two doors down. I'm going to guess this was a few years prior to this writing. It had no effect on Dad... outside of the changes to the building. He didn't have to move or anything. And I might be wrong about the location. Maybe not even his building, just somewhere in the complex.}

4-24-09 (1:24, good): I did not take many notes this week. {The detailed write-ups come from taking detailed notes in the moment.} I started by asking him about the news. But there was nothing really new there. <name> is almost into <an organization>, or so it seems. Dad's fire alarm went off again. He didn't leave the building.

I talked about <name>, their relationship with <name>, and their indecision about moving. And then I talked about writing: that which keeps me sane. This led to Scrabble, games; and then, planes and high speed trains.

So much for this week. It was a nice talk.

5-1 (1:28, There were some long pauses. I was worried about the phone minutes. {And at this remove, I could not begin to tell you why.}): <manufacturer> going bankrupt and the swine flu are

this week's big news stories. This led to a discussion of school closures and my reminiscing about puking and the good old days of staying home from school. The frequency of plagues was discussed and whether AIDS counts {as a plague} or whether the last big one was in 1918 (or maybe the '50s from polio).

I talked about the art of the Godzilla movies. He talked about western town sets and studios. I talked about script writing, photos, and <service>. I came up with a good story idea (or at least, a gag) about a writer "colorizing" an old story.

We talked about computers synthesizing music, the slide rule, and old time mechanical adding machines. He used one during his statistical analysis class along with a hundred other students. What a racket. {It made a lot of noise.}

I probably talked too much. When I ended a topic, typically there was silence. I suppose, many of the topics are one sided. I'm going to have to focus on the common ground subjects a bit more: the history of epidemics and that sort of thing. I should, perhaps, ease back on talking about writing. It can be a conversation killer. It's more of a monologue.

5-9-09 (47: good, I set a timer in advance {for 45 minutes}): Dad talked for the first half mostly going down the news. 30,000 people were evacuated from Santa Barbara due to a fire with 50mph winds. The stock market is at 8500. Yippee!

{My, how times change. Ten years later and it is three times that}.

Dad explained to me the basics of free agency in baseball. For the first three years, players have to take whatever the team pays them. But there are league minimums. For the next three years, the players can negotiate their pay and if they don't like it, it goes to arbitration with the arbitrator making a selection of either the player's or the team's offer. It's a forced choice. After six years, the players don't have to play {for any one team} if they aren't happy.

Then we talked about *<state's>* financial woes. If they don't raise money, a bunch of prisoners are going to be let out of jail: illegal aliens mostly. I suggested a three-sided jail bordering Mexico as a possible solution. Such a place might make a good locale for a story. One is free to leave, but not to stay.

Then we discussed pensions. I'm against pensions pure and simple. And as a tax payer, they sort of get me all riled up. What a waste of money!

{I am against government debt, except as an instrument of foreign policy. I believe the government (and this generation as a whole) should have to pay as it goes, leaving the next generation free of any past encumbrances. And by the same token, I have no desire (absolutely none) to pay for the previous generation's decisions (call them mistakes).}

5-15-09 (1:03, good): I put the timer on for an hour. That worked good. There was nothing real enlightening. Last week I had sort of thought about asking him about *<family business>*, but I forgot. Maybe I'll remember next week.

We talked about the news. There was lots of discussion about 2,000 odd car dealerships that are loosing their franchises. We bounced back to this pretty often. Maybe chewing it over 3-4 times.

We, also, talked about housing, sound insulation, credit card mailings, and the price of gas. At the end, we finished by talking about ethanol and methanol.

I would like to try and pump him for more specific information. I should, perhaps, put together a checklist of events from the past for him to talk about. Not to be morbid, but if this information is not extracted from him soon, most of it will die with him.

5-22-09 (21m, good): My bowels started acting up and I had to go. But Dad didn't seem to care if I called back or not, so that was that.

We talked about the weather, the California monetary crisis (a \$20 billion deficit), and my writing. I'm sure I'll get something published sooner or later. How can I not? And that's about it.

It was a good conversation... even if it was, short and sweet.

{Ten years later and nothing is published and I have put almost no effort into the goal. I post to my private website, instead. It satisfies the itch.}

5-29-09 (45, good): I had a fast paced talk with Dad, while I was at the car dealership down in Kona waiting for <name's> car to be repaired and the oil changed.

We talked of current events and so on. Nothing fancy. In the end he started talking about zeppelins. I assume he is reading a book about them. What he had to say was pretty interesting.

6-5-09 (59min, good): I set the alarm as a timer. We talked of weather and the news.

We talked a long time about addictions, satiation, eating, drinking and that sort of thing.

The question was asked: Can you survive on pickle juice?

Then things turned grim and we ended up talking about suicide for the last fifteen minutes. I guess before that we talked about newspapers and magazines for awhile (in reference to where we got some of our information from).

It was a good satisfying conversation. Of course, now that I'm writing this, I'm thinking about how I didn't ask him about the old days again. But maybe when you get right down to it, neither one of us really cares about the old days.

{Five years go by...}

12-2-14 (): This does entry does not correspond to a phone conversation. It's been a few years, since I wrote an entry, two days since I last talked to my father. I'm clearing out the scrap bin in my writing directory. I'm not going to throw this out or post it to the web. Perhaps, the only thing to do is start anew...

{So, the very next week...}

12-7-14 (45min, set timer, good): As per one of our typical conversations, we talked of the news of the day, which included the Oakland Riots... or the Oakland Protesters. I suppose it depends upon one's point of view. Also, the drought no longer seems to be of importance due to the heavy rains.

My Father never really used a computer, never experienced the Internet, and is blind, so he gets his information concerning such things {about current events} from the radio. Today he said such things as 'What does a computer really do but add two numbers together?' which is perhaps technically correct, but is exactly the type of thing my high school math teacher liked to say and misses the point entirely. Computers are like cars (or more accurately the printed word or guns) in that they change everything (altering the structure of society).

Anyway, it was a good conversation. But before I call him next time, it might make sense to meditate for a moment on what I want out of the conversation other than just putting in my time and being able to say I that I talked to him.

12-25-14 (30min, rough, good, easy): The big news of the day was that I'll be unemployed shortly, say in a year. Dad countered with <name> getting a lateral (maybe downwards) transfer to a new location that <name> doesn't like... or so I hear. I haven't talked directly with <name> in ages. The new position is to have less responsibility.

<more names> are to visit tomorrow.

What else is new? It's raining. The drought is ending. It's not so cold in either CA or HI. And riots and civil unrest are in the news. But nothing that is really important to me. We just talked about whatever.

Dad was reading a book on civil rights, slavery, or something like that: the history of it all. So, that provided some insight into the present situation.

And then, we started looking forward to the New Year.

Dad retired (not entirely by his choice) when he was around 50. It looks like I will be doing the same. The only difference (if any) is that I'm planning on engaging in a second career. But the fact is, I'm not looking to start today, tomorrow, next week, or maybe even next year.

{And here we are, just a little shy of five years later, and I've essentially put no effort into the quest of finding another job. Well, maybe not no effort. But it was never my number one goal.}

# 2015

1-3-15 (45m, set timer for 30, kept going for 15 more, good): I got to talk about programming and the binary nature of numbers. Not that he cared, but he let me drone on. This led to a little bit about good old days (but not much), mainly focusing on how things have changed. Then again, perhaps the conversation was waning at this point.

He hadn't heard about *<name's> <incident>*, so I got to give him the news. Nothing else was new.

What is there to say?

It was easy.

I am sick.

Conversing with My Father is cheaper than going to a psychiatrist.

He was listening to both a book and a movie when I called. I wonder how much he would have missed it if I hadn't called at all and skipped a week... or two.

Still, it was satisfying from my standpoint: easy, no expectations.

1-13-15 (45, set timer for 30min, easy going):

"What's new and exciting?" My Father typically asks.

Nothing is ever new or exciting. Perhaps, I should put some effort into having something to say... but what?

I realized I should put more effort into dinner... the presentation aspect, so more candlelit dining.

*Star Wars* was the last movie that the old man saw in a movie theater. That was back in 1976, ages ago. It's sort of bizarre in a way.

We talked of the light-rail super-train that's slated to go from SF to LA to Las Vegas, but not much else of interest. There's a drought and shootings in France. But I tire of even writing the summary.

Actually, I tire of a lot.

It's time to meditate and see what my mind alights on... not what I should be doing, but what I would be doing.

Or in the words of that *Star Trek* captain, "Make it so."

1-21-15 (45, set timer for 30min, good): I called from the hospital. <name> was having an ultrasound <with more specifics> to rule out <diagnosis>. It came back negative.

We talked about Obama's State of the Union Address, which was last night. We did not talk about Obama so much or the speech; but rather, the topics he covered.

Global Warming! Yeah, I don't think there's anything to be done. Nobody is going to give up their standard of living. So, nothing will happen. I pretty much didn't let Pops get a word in edgewise on this.

Minimum Wage Increase! Once again, I am an opinionated person. Higher wages means automation will take over more, so I predict an increase in vending machines and a decrease in fast food, which is perhaps what one already sees in Japan. In fact, a survey of Japan and Europe might do wonders for predicting the future of US labor in many ways.

Beyond that, the list could get boring.

One thing I observed after the fact, I do not much value his opinion. I don't think it's enlightened. I should perhaps look into giving him better resources. So in turn, he is a better resource for me. Just saying.

1-28-15 (35min, nice and easy):

'So, that's my time. Anything else you want to say? Get off your chest?'

'No? OK, talk next week. Love you, bye.'

It was a nice easy talk. He mentioned <name's> visit to hospital and talked of <names>, perhaps instigated by some <person> scheduled to go off into space soon. I was treated as a twin by strangers, often enough, back in the day. But I'm not a twin... and the other was not like me, just looked sort of close. Of course, when on vacation, the clothes we wore were often the same for ease of parental identification in the crowd.

Dad gave me a history lesson about The Battle of Hastings... or sort of, but not really. That's just the current book he is reading. He, also, talked of the drought in California. And I talked of my current quest to understand *Tree Structures* in computer programming.

Until next week.

Oh, and I was pretty laid back and let him do most of the talking. Sometimes the reason for the call (when and where) is

that I don't feel like thinking or working on something else, so I get the call out of the way then.

2-5-15 (45 min, very good):

Pops talked most of the time about the news of the day, the end of the drought, and about over and under-inflated balls in football.

I asked about *<name>*. We share gossip. I hear things and share them with him; and then, share the things he says with others. So, it may have been time for him to check-in, so to speak. I speak with *<name>* more often. In my last conversation with *<name>*, I got to talk about programming, which I hardly ever do with Dad.

I would say he felt like talking.

Perhaps I should make an effort to call him slightly more often.

Perhaps, next week I shall.

2-15-15 (43min, good):

Once again, Dad would probably been happy to continue talking longer, so perhaps I should move up the call schedule {and call more often}. Less is more... or something like that.

And on that thought, I shall say, the most important insight of the call was that *<person>* and *<person>* both had a place in the country. {It goes deeper than that. But what do you want.} It was a small conversational topic before we drifted off into the drought, the welfare state, and how minorities will soon outnumber whites... but the real news was Chinese New Years in Hawaii and an elevator replacement in California.

So, now it's time to make sure we have something interesting to talk about next week. Better get cracking.

2-21-15 (43 min, quite excellent):

Dad talked (for the most part) for the first thirty minutes or so. The conversation was a repeat of last week: a new elevator is

to be installed for his condo and there's lots of snow on the East Coast. He handed the conversation over to me towards the last half, asking me about a job search, if I was and how it was going. I'm not searching for a job, so things are going great... which led into a short aside about programming, my wants and desires.

We talked about nothing major. Overall, it was simple, easy, with *<person>* listening in the background, wanting in. I ignored *<person>* for the most, probably for the best, though I can see how group conversations might be conducive to a wider social net, say if I was also on the line while *<person>* talked to *<person>* or *<person>* and became one with the other.

Dad answered the phone originally, more or less knowing, expecting, or just hoping it was me, thinking it was Sunday. Once again, I should call more often. It was a good conversation... even if I need to be able to better answer the question, "So what's new and exciting?"

2-26-15 (33min, who knows):

It was a good conversation... sort of. I can't remember much of lasting value, just news of the day, which I can't be bothered to reiterate: the bridge, the drought, whatever was on the radio I imagine.

His elevator is out. It takes him a half hour to climb the stairs... or so. He exaggerated. He gets to meet a few people. And there was some equipment in his way when he went to get his mail. So, there you are... something to talk about.

The conversation was interesting enough, he talked most of the time, but the content was of no lasting value.

We talked. What? You want something more?

3-3-15 (31min, saved by the bell):

Dad's fire alarm went off at the end, so it was good place to end the call. Wouldn't it be ironic, weird, and/or surreal if I never talked to him again: that was that... but likely not. Living in apartments myself, an alarm going off is a near monthly thing, so

many false alarms, every little kitchen fire, burnt toast, or overcooked stew sets the thing off.

I can't say anything much else about the conversation. We talked of cats, <person> coming over tomorrow to do his taxes, filling out the forms for <yet another person>: my Dad overpays. There was near constant talk of the drought {or we talked week after week about this}, the nut farmers, and drilling ever deeper for water. It hardly matters.

He sounds like he's in good health. The elevator isn't working, so he walks up and down the stairs every other day getting his mail.

3-10-15 (30min on the dime, nice and easy):

'So, what's new and exciting?'

His elevator is still being repaired/replaced, so he's got a long walk up and down the stairs. {He lived on the 5th Floor.} There was no mail today, but he's meeting lots of folks on the way.

We talked of my retirement (that's what I'm calling it) and how it compares to his, my coming blindness (hopefully not like his and not at all), and what a person does with their life (and how I went swimming today). Of the last, he was singularly unimpressed (not even in the ocean), but what do you want?

Short, sweet, will talk again sooner rather than later.

3-22-15(30min on timer, smooth):

I guess I didn't call for a while. I should call sooner next time. We talked of the drought, the elevator, <person's> cataract surgery, which prompted a bunch of discussion, and lastly a car that needs getting rid of (mine), which <person> chimed in saying <person> wanted to use it for a trip (to Montana from California), which should be interesting (to say the least), since <person> doesn't really like my car.

Anyway, it was a nice chat with my father. And there is almost nothing meaningful to write about, which (I am using that

word -- which -- a lot, right now, which) means maybe I've said enough.

My Father's birthday is April 4<sup>th</sup>, so it's coming up.

California's Water Reserves are at, what, 12% of normal, I think he said. Gad, that's low.

3-25-15 (35min, timer went off, got disconnected, called back to say, 'Bye'):

After talking briefly about Prince Kuhio Day (3-26) and the elevator saga (a new button was installed and <person> brought some food over Monday, so he's good to go), Dad pretty much went down the Radio News Stories of the day. No commentary was required, so I won't include any here, but it did take me awhile to realize that was the case, what he was doing. Still, I enjoyed the call. And the policy of calling more often and talking less is working out for me just fine and dandy.

4-6-15 (38min, timer went off, let it ride, just OK):

Listening to My Father is like listening to News Radio. He's just going down the stories. Dad talked about Iran. And then, after a few other topics, he was back on Iran again. All in all, it made me question his nimbleness of mind.

He turned 82 a few days ago (4-4-33). I forgot, like, completely. Oh, well. Not that anyone else did much better.

He talked to <person> Saturday, <person> Sunday, and I think <person> and <others> called and left a happy birthday message sing-song on his answering machine at some point, as well. Actually, one of the reasons I called today was so I'd be after everyone else and be in a position to get the news. But there was no news.

The conversation was interesting enough.

Not bad.

But in the end, I guess I'm sort of depressed about the entire thing: news, news, and more news -- not really anything I care about... and with a few of the stories repeated, to boot.

4-24-15 (45:timer, stopwatch, enjoyable):

I called. Something was wrong with the phone {not sure if it was his end or mine at this point}. So, I called back a few minutes later.

Then, I tried having a three-way conversation, including *<person>*. But that didn't work out, as Dad simply withdrew and stopped paying attention, just letting the randomness flow over him. So, I went into another room, so we could have a one on one.

The elevator is fixed. But he wondered if he shouldn't keep walking up and down the stairs for exercise. California's drought is as bad as ever (and not looking to get any better). And I'll be in town next week, so there was no need to have a long conversation.

I'd done a test drive of a Tesla a few days ago, so we talked about that (awesome acceleration) and the self-driving cars of the future.

I have no plans to see *<person>* or *<others>* while in town. I, quite literally, have not talked to either *<person>* or *<person>* since *<going on a year ago>*. *<person>* and *<person>* were in some sort of race the other day.

And that's that.

Until next time...

### **Interlude...**

*Written: 8-18-15*

I spent the last three months traveling around the country: DC, Florida, Montana, Oregon, and California... mostly California. During that time, this project was in stasis. However, I was always planning on doing a recap at the end of the my in-person visiting time, so:

I saw my Dad maybe five or six times in between trips. He's as blind as ever and having a harder time standing on his own, leaning on counters for balance and support. I suppose I don't really care enough to do anything... or, you know, it's his life and he's the one who has to fix it... or live with the consequences. He

(quite clearly) doesn't get enough exercise. <person> is about the same age and wears it much better. But even <person> is failing. Perhaps even faster in the years to come.

During the first visit, I thought Dad might be going deaf. But for the most, it was a temporary thing: wax in the ears or something. I enjoyed our time, pizza and hamburgers and expect he'll be around to hug again on either side of the trip to Germany. His mind is as clear as ever; and the conversation made more sense {was clearer, easier to follow} whenever I looked in his direction and attended to his reaction. I need to attend to other people's reactions more: perhaps half the conversation being how others react to what I say, if you know what I mean.

8-21-15 (20, laundry, of questionable quality)

I forgot I had to do laundry in a few minutes, so I called; and then, had to explain how it would be short. It ended suddenly. Not really a good call from my perspective, in that very few of my leads were taken. It was all about news and current events, to the point I wonder how much he heard anything I said... or cares about anything else but what he hears on the radio. After all, isolated, as he is, perhaps the news is far more important to him than I have any idea: like a constant companion or best friend.

There's a story hook in that last somewhere. But I am off to try and install Linux, instead.

8-26-15 (31:42, set timer, need to finesse)

Probably the best observation I have is that the conversation got better after we'd gone down the news items. 'So, what's new?' Obviously, the news. But once the news has run its course, perhaps we can be free to talk about more interesting things. {I do not care about Current Events. It is not an important part of my life.} Certainly, at the start, if I'd say something, for the most it was ignored. Not so much like he hadn't heard, as he didn't have anything to say to whatever I'd just said. But I felt better towards the end, like we were connecting, actually having a conversation.

So, maybe, I should just let the news run its course. Who knows? Maybe he saves it up (like my rants). And I'm the first person he can drain it out on (unleash, or whatever). And he's going to concentrate on that until he gets it out of the way.

I will call again in a few days: sooner rather than later.  
{Even though I say this, the dates will confirm that I almost never do.}

9-3-15 (30:25, on top of it)

I thought I'd call back in a few days, but it's been a week.

I said hello a little differently than I usually do and we had a different sort of conversation. I think I said something along the lines of, 'Want to chat for a half hour or so?' And he was, 'That sounds good.' And we bypassed a lot of the usual nothingness.

The Water Drought is still a big story in the news.

We talked about his books: World War II stuff.

Nothing was really new; nothing ever is.

It was a good talk, though.

A half hour is about right.

9-11-15 (28:30, food was the focus)

The state of the current political election was the focus at the start, but I shall not recount the ins and outs of that here.

A few minutes in, I asked him what he had for lunch, which was a good gambit. The answer was tomatoes, bratwurst, and hash browns. We talked of food for a bit. And he claimed to only spend \$100 every two weeks on groceries. It's not an important factoid, but I know from looking at the credit card statements and from <store's> pricing policy that \$150/order is the magic number, so that's actually what he spends bi-weekly. It's an interesting observation, a curious miss-calculation, of no lasting importance. And then, of course, we were back on more familiar grounds, tackling the problem of food production for an ever increasing population. But it was nice to be off on a novel topic for a change, just to prove we could do it. And then, it was equally nice to be

back on familiar ground; perhaps, where we both are, in fact, more comfortable.

I spent a minute or two debriefing (and deconstructing) the conversation immediately afterwards with *<person>*, which I shall endeavor to do from now on. *<person>* likes doing that; and seeing as how *<person's>* insight is as valuable as anything I can come up with on my own, it has as much lasting value. So, I'll try to remember to do that: talk to *<person>* first, then write.

The phone disconnected in the middle. I don't think Dad noticed until I called back. There are little snags, snafus like that here and there, but nothing major. This is one of the reasons to deconstruct the call with *<person>*, as I have my worries {about My Father's mental capacities}. But in truth, any major worries about him not being with it have dropped by the wayside. If he's losing it, he knows how to compensate better than I know how to detect the crumbling, ragged edge.

{When visiting in person, I would often open mail and go over bills or other financial statements. I would not be surprised to learn he did this with others, as well, as it would be a way to keep everyone honest. So, anyway, the point is, I was privy to his credit card expenditures, bank accounts, mortgage statements, and all the rest. Often enough, I would write out a check for him to sign or address an envelope. Many a Birthday Card was selected by me from an assortment of choices. And back in the day, I used to be the one who took him shopping. At which point, I would select any card... with his blessing, but of course.

The editing is taking a while, so if I repeat myself, my apologies. When living nearby, instead of calling on the phone, I would visit weekly, the first part of the visit consisting of going food shopping, then the preparation of a meal (hamburgers being the best), at which point we would settle in for a long conversation. Some days, that's where my afternoon went. And sometimes, I'd cut out fairly soon after eating. I think he liked those in-person visits a lot more. I think he felt it more keenly when they were at

an end for the day. I have no idea how he felt emotionally when I left for Hawaii. He never gave me any grief about it.}

{It is here that I think that I may wish to write a bunch of short entries. For instance (in the past), I was working on a Partial Autobiography Project, in which I related a scene or remembrance from my youth in a paragraph or two. I could do the same thing for Father Memories.

I mention this because hamburgers with him were the best... or they were for a while. It took a lot of time and effort, so it sort of fell off. But the very best burgers consisted of frying up a package of bacon, getting it nice and crispy, cooking up a pound of meat in four thin patties, adding a quarter pound (or so) of mild cheddar to each, putting on the bacon; and then, slathering the lot with barbecue sauce. Sweet Baby Ray's was my favorite barbecue sauce back then. Those burgers were pure decadence.}

{Also, in deconstructing the entry that has elicited all of this side-commentary, I wish to mention that both My Father and I were (and/or are) abstract thinkers, we are focused on the abstract, not the particular or instantiation... or at least, I am. So, like, the conversations were not of here and now, which I could care less about. But rather, they tended to focus on underlying cause and effect. We'd argue philosophy and underlying human motivation. I mean, I really never cared about The Drought. The Drought is like The Weather. It is of no lasting importance. What is of interest is the effect The Drought has, along with the why's and wherefore's of the saga that is human folly.}

9-19-15 (38:54, stopwatch in lieu of timer)

It was a good conversation: not too static or predictable. I'll be in town next week, so I'm calling (despite my best efforts) to get the call off my to-do list (rather than keeping in touch every 3-4 days as intended). Anyway, it was a good call, quite lively. I'm going to Germany shortly' and so, we talked of that, the republican

debate (Trump is looking good), and self-driving cars. Dad always wonders at that last {or at least, I believe this was Dad's reaction, the pre-edited statement was a bit vague}, along with drones (what does 'drone' mean exactly) delivering packages. These are the big Future-Tech Topics that are hitting the mainstream. We even talked about personal robots for a bit: the Cuisinart of the future.

Meh, that's how I felt before the call... and how I feel, now, after. But the forty minutes went by fast. I had a good time. We were just touching base. We're both still alive, talking over the same topics as always: fires in the south, heat wave passing through, I might just have to pack a pair of shorts for the trip back to California.

And that's all he wrote, until I find myself in Hawaii, again...

### Germany Trip

I visited Dad (in person at his apartment) both before and after the trip. He had a hard time standing before, more after. And his appetite dropped off in-between. It was an obvious decline in only a few weeks.

10-31-15(few minutes): Called <person> to get an update: First, <person> has a doctor's appointment scheduled for Nov 9<sup>th</sup> with a geriatric specialist that Dad helped select (pick one of three), so that's good. The doctor is located in Rossmoor (the Walnut Creek, CA area), which is reasonably close to his apartment.

Second, although (and it's a big although) Dad is welcome to stay at <person's> place (details unclear and presumably to be worked as they emerge), once he becomes immobile, he'll need to find another solution, which in my opinion decreases the long-term utility of his staying at <person's>... even if, in the short term, it's probably for the best.

I'm going to mull all of this over prior to calling Dad.

11-3-15(26min): Dad is with it (mentally), so we had a good conversation. Highlights included his future visit to a primary care physician, the drought in California, and my recent trip to Germany.

I really could have ended the call within minutes of making it. Often I call because I need to, I feel that I should, or it's on my list of things to do, rather than because I have an irresistible urge to talk things over with my father. So in that, it's a lot like writing or coding: starting can be difficult, but I usually get into the flow after a few minutes. But, eh. Maybe not so much in the flow this time. Not a hardship, just at every pause, I was gauging whether now would be a good time to say goodbye or not... rather than loading up the next thing to say... or already having one in place.

After 26 minutes, Dad hung up the phone by accident or design, and I called back and said so long.

As per my previous thoughts, calling twice a week (or every week and a half) is, perhaps, a better goal than the logistically easier, once a week.

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11-9-15: No Call

Dad has fallen and he can't get up.

<person> called and left a message, saying Dad had fallen down in his apartment sometime back and was on his way to the hospital. He may be down for days. Who knows? At <person's> request, the police did a welfare check and found him on the ground.

Not looking good for the old man.

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11-21-15 (15min or so: with <person>): All Business (<person> talked, I took notes):

**Phone call with <person>, notes about Dad.**

- Dad is still in hospital, stabilizing.
- He has a long way to go just to get out of the hospital.
- He has blood in his stool, which indicates bleeding in the GI {Gastrointestinal Track}. But he's stabilized.
- He's sleeping lots, has a weak throat, and is not eating or drinking. It's hard for him just to swallow.
- His sodium was high and he was delirious. Sodium is still high and his electrolytes are off.
- He has a feeding tube in his nose; getting 1600 calories of liquid a day.
- He's been in bed straight (non-stop) since he checked in. He can't walk or stand, even with help.
- Dad has diabetes, so probably his insulin is off.
- He's taking a calcium channel blocker for his heart.
- He's got a 'good' cough going, so no pneumonia. And he's taking Robitussin.
- Magnesium, phosphorous, potassium, and calcium are all low.
- He got an abdominal ultrasound. His liver is normal for his age and drinking {very heavy}.
- His kidney's are settling down; keratin (or something) was 5.9 at check in. But now is at 1.7. The target is 1. So, he does not have renal failure.
- He's tired and sick of the hospital. He got mean last night (exasperated) and refused to answer the orientation questions. 'Where are you?' 'How many children do you have?' He told nurse to 'Shut up.' {Way to go dad!}
- He's restless and has nothing to do but sleep and lay in bed.
- He has a mild staph infection in his blood. Four weeks of antibiotics ends Dec 8th.
- He has a pick line in both arms (one for medicine in, the other for blood out). But they still prick his finger

every couple of hours. {This sort of thing makes me laugh. I mean, it is so god-awful. 'Please, prick for blood in the most sensitive part of my body. Or, I know, jab me in the dick, instead.' Doctors, nurses, and all of humanity sucks. So awful, it's funny. Yeah, believe I'm insensitive to your heart's content. I'm not the one jabbing other in the finger to blood. Anywhere is better than that.}

- His White Blood Count is in the normal range (10+ odd, now).
- His Red Blood Count was 14-15 at check in. It's 7.3 now. At 7.0 they start thinking about a blood transfusion, so it's close.
- Dad blames *<person>* & *<person>* for his pain, {as well he should.} So, yeah. Life sucks. {Outside of personal inconvenience, this is one of the reasons I never saw him again. I didn't feel like watching him die. And if I were the one dying, I would have had no need for him to watch me.}
- In other news, *<person>* didn't visit today as *<person>* is in hospital for Severe Hemorrhoids. Note to self: never tell *<this other person>* anything.

So, life sucks for the old man. I don't feel sorry for him. I don't feel bad. In my heart, I'd say, I'm waiting for him to die. I certainly will be better off if he goes fast monetarily wise. But then, that's why it's best for *<person>* to be running the show and calling the shots. Half of me wants to yank that fucking feeding tube.

I don't hate My Father. I think this journal will vindicate me on that charge. So, I don't hate him. And I don't want him to suffer. As such, this isn't vengeance talking. He still wants to be revived if possible. But a few more weeks in the hospital might cure him of that notion. {P.S. It did.}

Eh, the truth is, it seems like Game Over. It's worse than a life sentence in jail. It's a life sentence in bed, growing older, weaker, and frailer with absolutely no control over one's surroundings, while the pain and discomfort is sure to grow over time.

Could he have stopped this? Foreseen it? Headed it off at the pass? Would advanced planning have helped?

Maybe?

Seriously, we'll see if he's around in five years... or even two. But if he only stays alive for another six months... well, if not he, then at least I, in his situation, probably would have rather just lay there on the floor until it was all over. But now, it's not over. And in fact, the fun has just begun, as it's time for the doctors to have their go.

Yes, the thought of it all {as I have been privy to more than a few tales of medical woe over the years} sort of makes me sick.

They prick his finger every few hours. The idea of having my finger pricked just once causes a near nausea like reaction to flow through my body. And this is my reaction to a single prick. And this is happening to him every few hours.

Life sucks old man. Life sucks.

And even if you haven't let go, old man, I must admit, I have.

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12-9-15: I have been dragging my feet about calling my father. I have very little desire to do so (even still), but I figured I must. Unfortunately, when I turned my phone on this morning (I keep it off for days at a time) with the intent of finally calling him, I had a text message waiting for me from <person>, advising that Dad had been moved; so, I don't have his number and couldn't call him even if I wanted, which I don't, but I must, so maybe I do...

12-14-15: Dad got moved. I got his new number, called, and I guess he was sleeping, as no one picked up, so maybe some other day...

12-17-15: I have called a few times in the last couple of days. Finally, I called and spoke to the nurses {at the front desk} to confirm the phone was ringing. She said it was, but that he was sleeping. I guess he sleeps a lot. He's probably super heavily medicated {as this is standard practice, as I understand it} going down for the long nap. Yes, it would be one giant fight against the system to get him in a better place, somewhere where he wasn't just keeping a bed warm and seen as a daily fee ticket item for which one does as little as possible for as long as possible. But I guess, such is the fate that awaits almost all of us... almost.

12-25-15: I called <person>, mostly about Dad. OK. Dad was the only reason I called. But <person> said they would call when visiting Dad and they'd call me together. So, maybe that will be the re-start of some sort of communication with Dad and I'll get more than just endless ringing when I try to reach him.

12-25-15 (8+ minutes with <person's> assistance):

Dad probably doesn't hear the phone ringing on his own nor can he locate it, so he'll need assistance. I'll need to work something out with the staff. {I never did.} I have a text into <person>. Perhaps <person> will be able to help. <person> has been most helpful thus far. Or if not through <person>, I'm sure, I'll be able to work something out with the staff. Or even better yet, <person> just texted and the plan looks like they will call when they're with Dad. So, that could work out well on multiple fronts.

For his part, Dad sounded weak, very weak, slurry, and hard to understand, but not gone, just not there, as much. It was a little depressing to hear his voice. But I'm going to say he sounded worlds better than I was fearing. His life has to suck, no books, no

reading or listening. <person> keeps on saying (as I write this) how Dad seemed to perk up when talking to me, so that's good. There was little substance to the conversation, but what do you want?

Another day... and <person> willing, we'll talk again...

12-28-15 (6:15 might as well be dead)

<person> texted, then I called Dad. It was a nothing sort of conversation. He has little willpower. Talking for a few moments was all he cared for. He's not reading and not doing anything. I perceive him lying in bed all day, doing nothing.

I was about to ask him what he spends his time thinking about these days; but by then, he'd had enough.

<person> will call/text whenever. And as time goes by, I'm sure I'll be available less and less...

1-5-16 (9:00, meh)

The conversation was not really so bad with Dad. We just had nothing to talk about. Nothing is new with him and I question whether he has any conversational topics loaded. I went into narrative mode, but I wasn't that interesting. And he didn't care that much. Still, he's able to answer questions, though.

It might be as beneficial for <person>, as much as anything: a break in the middle.

All in all, the standards are so low that it was a good day {conversation wise, I believe is what I intended by that remark}.

{Note: I can be very negative. I laughed out loud reading this in regards to the medical torture (both the orienting 'Where are you?' questions and the constant finger pricks), so I am not the most empathetic person in the world (but then, I am empathetic enough to know the average person likes to lie to themselves about their own level of empathy).

During the forgoing phone conversation, the only real topic at hand was My Father's imminent demise. And neither one of us

broached that subject. I did not feel like I was in a position to be honest. I did not want to poison him with my negativity.}

1-14-16 (9:00, very promising)

Dad sounded really good out of the chute. Maybe my expectations are extremely low at this point, but he beat my expectations, so that's good. He sounded with it, like he could hold up his end of a conversation. Of course, a few minutes in and he started slurring his words and became hard to understand. But that's also partially the phone interface, so who knows?

Still, very promising.

On the other hand, we had precious little to say: there was a country western concert there {at the facility, I presume} and when <person> showed up, his feeding tube was making a mess...

1-19-16 (8:19, onward and upward)

We had a pleasant enough chat. We didn't have a lot to say. Dad is exercising twice a day, can make it thirty steps, and sleeps a lot. He continues to be with it, aware. It seems as though Dad moving in with <person> (and is looking forward to that), so that should work out swell for the both of them.

2-7-16 (6:47, returned <person's> call)

Talked with <person>. It's been so long, I half (almost all of me) expected Dad to be dead. The only reason to believe he wasn't dead was that there was no warning. Wouldn't <person> have said something before?

Well, this is the when and the where that <person> called to say that something before. Dad is dying. There is no hope. They are taking him out of the hospital to die... tomorrow? He'll be out of the hospital in a few hours and dead in a few days. The prognosis for Dad being alive until next weekend (when <another person> is expected to arrive) is not good.

For my part, I shall make no effort to call. I will not get on a plane to be there. I said my goodbyes way back before I left this

final time, 'Should we not meet again,' and all that. As he takes his dying breath, I don't think he will notice my absence. I don't think he will care. It writes (or should that be reads) a lot like an apology. So, let me be more definitive. I have no need to see My Father again and would prefer not to see his decrepit form; the only reason to see him again would be to satisfy his request, honor his dying wish and all that... or to be in attendance at the direct request of another family member. {No one ever made this request, so I did not come. But let us be honest, I was not accepting hints. It had to be a direct request. I knew what I wanted. And that was to not be there.} I wish to remember My Father how he was... and not in these last weeks or months, but as he was way before, when the conversations were meaningful and real. Honestly, I can't see how viewing him in a hospital bed will make honoring his memory any easier. If there is no afterlife, in a week, what was at one time My Father will no longer care; and if there is, I will assume, he's already there, reading over my shoulder, with a front row seat to my soul, and understands how I feel, the wherefores and whys of my actions. This no doubt reads as another apology. And perhaps it is. But I sincerely doubt I will regret this decision not to view his dying breath, as I don't feel like I am running from something (I don't have that pit in my stomach), but rather that I am clinging onto and holding fast to the better part of what this world has to offer.

Whatever, there will be one, two, or three more entries, at most; and then, this project will be done. I'm sort of happy about that {I do like bringing projects to a conclusion} and am wondering what the next step will be; and if I have grief, how I will work that out. But in truth, I'm already planning the projects, writing exercises, and what to do with these words. It's only 28 pages long {so, a fair bit has been added post-production}. It's not much longer than a chapter in a book: a chapter that is now coming to a close.

2-8-16 (briefly): I talked to <person>, briefly. I had a message on my phone. I thought <person> had called. But no, it was mixed signals. <person> is flying in tonight. Dad is at the hospital tonight: one last night. He is on morphine. If <person> cares that I'm not coming, <person> is hiding it well. I've told <person> I'm not coming. But said that I would if <person> needed the help. I've had no indication that my coming would help in any way... which it won't. It may be weird to others how accepting I am of his death, but I think I've said it time and time again (and it was one of the reasons I started this project), I've been coming to grips with my father's imminent demise for a long-long time now, a real long time. Not to be cold, but I'm sort of sick of waiting. That does sound cold, doesn't. Oh, well. It's what I want to write. I'm pretty sure, it's how I feel.

{I am aware of my own mortality. I have been living Death Focused for a long-long time. Yes, I try to enjoy this moment. But much of what I do is focused on the hereafter. These words being a rather weak for instance.}

Dad died at 12:36am the morning of February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2016  
I talked to <person> at about 11am in the morning, my time, the same day (for 5:14 minutes). <person> had sent a simple text, perhaps at the time, 'Dad is gone.'  
So, the story, as I got from <person>, went something along the lines of, he was on morphine, he breathing was slowing down, and he was stopping {to breath altogether} for longer and longer periods of time... long enough that at one point, <person> put their ear next to his mouth, and jumped when Dad flinched and started to breath again. Funny stuff that. It's a funny moment in time and was very likely a good bonding event for <everyone present>. I was told the room was full. I have no idea who all was there. I asked if there were any last words. There were not. I believe my asking about this, prompted the aforementioned story.

<person> said he died *'peacefully'*. <person> repeated this word several times; so, the word of the day is *'peaceful'*. The phrase of the day was a bit more colorful, perhaps a bit more thought out, who knows what conversations went into the creation of this phrase, but it fit him, fit his mother who collected the same, for at the end, he was *'like a music box winding down.'*

Of course, the bit I'll probably remember fondest is how the old man received a final sponge bath the night before. Probably too many people in the room to have much fun, but... well, maybe that's one of the reasons I've always imagined I'd prefer dying alone.

I felt sad for about an hour, maybe less, when I spoke with <person> last Monday, when <person> said his time was short. I haven't felt sad since. Not during our call. Not even now. I'm sure I'll miss him. But there's not much sense in hanging on to what is already gone. And My Father has been gone for a while now... or at least, that part of him, that association with him, that I cared about... the talks, some of which have been chronicled, ever so briefly, here, for the known, coming, eventuality.

It was no surprise.

And he had outlived his time in this world by a few months.

Goodbye Dad.

I say it once again here for literary effect but without any emotion, as I'd already said it in the real. I'm glad that I did {say goodbye to him in The Real}.

{I ended up grieved much harder than I thought I would. For the first week or so (or days) there wasn't much of anything. But I was advised that anger is a common symptom. And boy, was I angry. And the realization that the anger was linked to mourning sort of opened with works. I cried convulsively (off and on for a week or two) often as a way of processing a bit of information. If

some concept about his passing rang true, it tended to be linked with an emotional explosion... call it an avalanche.

I do not regret missing his death.

I never cried over that... not one single tear.

I didn't want to go. I didn't go. I don't think My Father cared.

And now, three (going on four) odd years later, I don't miss him in any meaningful way.

I was there when he was alive.

I've been able to let go now that he's dead.}