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Tues; July 1985

Dearest Son :

I have never had anything as wonderful  
as " 73 memories of me and my Dad."

I will treasure it all my life ! Of  
course it made me cry. I have not read it all  
yet , but I will read it over & over & over , you  
can be sure. I do love you so much ; my Son.

What memories !

Your Dad

I love you !



73 memories of me and my dad

july, 1985

what follows is a look at some of the things i can recall about you and me in the early years. they're not in any particular order, having been written as they came to mind. what these little glimpses into the past show is a very loving father giving much of himself to his son. somehow all of these episodes are connected to who i am now, and to what's possible for me as an adult. i only hope that i can be as good a friend and father to my children as you have been to me. perhaps that is the most meaningful way a son can tell his father, "i love you."

Marty

eating ice cream in the tv room

at least a pint per night. you liked  
neopolitan. we'd both sit together  
on the chair and devour the carton. we  
watched shows like bilko and ed  
sullivan.

driving with murray

apparently we went downtown to pick up  
murray. to this day i'm not sure  
why we were picking him up, but i'd guess  
that he had just been let out  
of jail after having been put in there by  
dora. any guesses?

## trips to dora

dora's house leaves me with no real memories of love, but i have lots of memories. remember the little shed in the back? how about the folding bed that was in dora's livingroom wall? the smell of turkey is familiar to me when i think of dora's boarding house. do you remember the park, which i think is near the alvarado exit, where you'd take me boating on those little electric boats? that was the best part of going to dora's as far as i was concerned. remember the time we walked, probably en route to the park, though the downtown district? i can remember all the stores we went into, how big and sterile they were.

## trips to petie

was it every two weeks or so that we  
visited? i remember lots of trips,  
many of them before 101 was a freeway. i  
remember the accidents, and i  
can remember my lungs frequently feeling  
congested, or perhaps con-  
stricted is a better word, in the los  
angeles air. pancakes for break-  
fast. neckrubs, snap ears, silver dollars,  
pipe smoke, al's wheezing,  
petie's cookies (the ones with  
confectioner's sugar sprinkled on them)  
and the hours we spent in the livingroom.  
i can remember lots of love  
in that house.

trimming the hedge & other yardwork

this was your forte. you were always doing  
some sort of yardwork. do you  
remember the hedge clippers, the electric  
ones? i can remember that you  
really felt good when you got them. do you  
remember where you got them?  
i have some recollection that they came  
from dora or petie and al.



freeze-out basketball games

this was a game you showed me. all i can recall is that it starts at the freethrow line and is done one player at a time. however it went, we sure played a lot of it. i don't recall the actual installation of the basketball hoop, do you?

gas airplanes

we never could get the damn things  
started. they were called thimble-  
drones and we must have tried hundreds of  
times to get one started. do  
you remember all the dry-cell batteries we  
went through trying?

## pony rides

i can recall the smell of the ponies, the  
ring there near the beach. do  
you remember the time the saddle slipped  
and i was more or less dragged  
around the ring? this was excellent  
foreshadowing of my lifelong  
difficulty in appreciation of horses. i  
also have a vague recollection  
of a picture of me seated on horseback,  
yet i don't believe this setting  
is the same as i recall being in at the  
pony rides. do you recall?

playing golf on al's little course

al was so proud of his little course. as  
you recall, he started out with  
only a hole or two and gradually had all  
nine holes. i can still recall  
the barber shop aromas coming from the  
shed. remember losing our golf  
balls in the ivy surrounding the course?



poker parties

do you remember the deep blue tablecloth?  
i can remember the sound of  
the plastic poker chips, the deck of cards  
with photos of naked women on  
the facings, the dining table all set up  
with peanuts, and lots of stuff  
left over for me in the morning. these  
occasions were a big deal to me.

sbhs football games

this recollection comes from a period of  
time well before being old  
enough to attend sbhs. i can remember that  
you had some sort of duty  
in ticket collection or something which  
required you to attend the games  
from time to time. i really thought it was  
important stuff, and i can  
recall some sort of badge or button you  
wore. do you remember what it  
was?

room 110

when i was at sbhs i was always proud that  
you were a teacher. i'm sure  
that this pride was attached to your being  
so well liked at school. i  
can remember stopping by your room every  
so often in between classes to  
chat. i can also remember hearing your  
classroom singing songs on  
fridays from across the hallway where i  
was in al ordaz's class.

golf

this was really our game, wasn't it?  
although we never got very good  
at it, the environment and circumstances  
seemed to meet our situation  
of wanting to get together whenever we  
could. remember when we started  
playing "big" golf it was at the  
invitation of the man who operated the  
miniature golf course near the beach? it  
seems he had just built the new  
pitch and putt course in goleta, and so we  
went to check it out. i'm  
sorry that they closed it down. very  
pleasant memories there, including  
the time we entered the tournament, only  
to miss the cut by one stroke  
on the first round. remember all our  
"mulligans"?



chess, cribbage

i never understood why you let me win so  
often, particularly at chess.

officers' club

remember the night i won us a toaster? i  
can recall dancing with all the  
gals, which was quite something for a  
little guy.

playing ukelele

five foot two, if i had the wings of an  
angel. you taught me how to  
play and somehow supplied me with a  
ukelele. i can still remember the  
chords.

swimming at tonnars

why was ojai always so hot? i can remember  
the oil portraits of wiley  
and marie and the pool, where we spent  
most of our time in ojai.



balboa

it seems as though every year you'd take  
us to balboa. among other  
things i recall the game arcade beside the  
beach and you taking me  
to a particular exhibit where we could  
shoot .22 caliber rifles at  
moving targets. remember the chocolate  
bananas?

fishing

we never were very good fishermen. i have  
lots of memories of fishing,  
mostly on stearn's wharf, but very few  
memories of us ever catching any  
fish.

watching tv when the kennedy assasination  
occurred

i guesss we were all in shock about it. we  
huddled around the set, the  
old admiral, and watched. i can remember  
being somewhat anxious about  
school, not knowing which day or days we  
would stay home.

## bass lake

this was a very vivid memory for me. i can recall the special aspect of the vacation, as a way for us to be together. we played pool when we weren't fishing. we heard the news over the radio announcing that china was intervening in the vietnam war. remember the planting of the trout at mansanita lake? even just inches from where we knew they had just planted thousands of fish, we still couldn't catch a thing. i also remember the burned hillside on the way to the lake.



driving me & my science fair exhibit to  
the YMCA

you borrowed an old junky truck with stick  
shift. i think the truck was  
green and had wooden fences around the  
rear portion of it. i was very  
impressed that you could drive it,  
especially with stick shift.

## swimming in vonnie's pool

wade had made a solar heating system by mounting a maze of black hoses on top of the rear portion of their home. the pool always seemed welcome in light of the heat during the summer. i can recall diving masks and a little changing room downstairs. i can also remember a birthday celebration for petie. i had apparently not understood that it was her birthday and so didn't come prepared with a present for her. i was so devastated that i went downstairs and tried to become invisible. eventually she sensed that i was upset and she came down to hold my hand and tell me that just being with her was the best present. somehow i did not buy that argument, but i was reassured that petie's love was larger than my forgetfulness.

## gaslighter in fireplace

of course, this is one of our favorite stories. apparently without much in the way of planning but with great expectations, we set out to install a gaslighter for the fireplace at 1033, no doubt in large part to help vicky, who would regularly study by the fire and who was at the time attending ucsb and studying a lot. we drilled the hole through the right side of the fireplace, then without shutting off the gas supply, we unscrewed the valve from the pipe protruding through the wooden floor. as soon as the valve was off, the gas began escaping wildly. someone had told you that the pressure was such that one could simply cup his hands over the end of the pipe to cap the gas. the rub was that the application of such pressure promptly pushed the unsupported pipe through the floor to the crawlspace. we ran downstairs, filled with fear of fire or explosion, and i cupped the pipe with my hands until we could poke the pipe back through the floor. all the time this was going on i

can remember mom sitting in her rocking  
chair next to the lighted  
furnace, reading a book and drying her  
newly-permed hair with one of  
those ugly plastic bonnets. she was  
oblivious to the danger we subjected  
her to. somehow we finished the project,  
and to this day i'm deathly  
afraid of fire in general, but natural gas  
in particular.

jtr 786

the old '55 plymouth. green on green with  
ugly plastic seat covers, if  
i recall properly. you called it "geeter,"  
as a tool for remembering  
the license number.

## miniature golf

the place was really nice. i've never seen  
a nicer miniature golf  
course than the one you took me to so  
often down near the beach. i can  
still remember most of the holes. hole one  
was a windmill. hole two had  
camel humps. hole four was an uphill shot  
at an opening and closing  
door to a little house. one of the holes  
was called "the volcano," and  
properly so. we almost never got a  
hole-in-one on that one. all in all  
it was a very great place to go.  
eventually we became so professional  
that we took our own clubs. i can also  
recall with great clarity the  
amusement room we'd go through after the  
game was over. and then there  
was also the taste of delaware punch,  
which was available there and  
almost nowhere else in those days.

picking birds and butterflies off the  
grill of the train

i can remember the smell of the train  
engines, being fearful that the train  
would start before we could get out of its  
way

hunting

remember us both crying when we shot our  
first little bird on the  
hill behind 1033? as i recall the whole  
bird hunting episode started  
with several mockingbirds waking you up in  
the morning. remember the  
woodpecker i shot and wounded and which we  
tried (unsuccessfully) to  
nurse back to health?



going through the flea market nextdoor to  
the little goleta golf course

the upstairs always had interesting stuff.  
there was a shed or some kind  
of addition built on to the rear of the  
main building in which all their  
junk was located. i don't know why, but  
the junk always interested me  
the most.

going to the pawn shop

the pawn shops on lower state street were interesting. there were always wierd things in them, such as tubas, hifis, old cameras, and (your favorite) jewelery. i remember you getting a ring for vicky, then taking it to another jeweler to get it cleaned up and fitted properly. i still enjoy going to pawn shops.

going to the estate sale home in montecito  
or the riviera and buying the two  
little goose down chairs

i can remember fitting so well in those  
little chairs. they were floral  
in design and were at some old estate  
where you'd seen them at an  
auction or estate sale. i was very excited  
going to get them, but i  
can't remember just how it was that we  
transported them back to 1033.

putting modern legs on the round oaken  
coffee table

the legs were the skinny, tapering  
cylindrical kind. we took off the  
heavy oak legs that elevated the tabletop  
to about 36 inches. we must  
have refinished the tabletop, too. this  
project worked out rather well,  
and i recall it being a source of pride  
for many years.

refinishing a rocking chair for mom

you had found an antique rocking chair  
somewhere downtown and we picked  
it up. after sanding for what seems like  
months we varnished it and gave  
it to mom. this must have been around  
1960, as this sort of thing was  
all the craze with jfk's appearance in the  
headlines.

fire on the ivy next to the holworth  
property, burning mouse

it must have been the first barbeque of  
the season, and things got out  
of control. somehow a mouse caught on  
fire, which was quite a deal for  
us at the time. you extinguished the blaze  
with the garden hose and some  
help from pete holworth next door.

star spangled banner

i had learned in school that the notes in  
the word "banner" were not  
to be slurred. to display my superiority  
in this field, i made you sing  
the entire song through to the end to  
point out the error of your ways.  
aren't kids obnoxious?

blackie

such a loving dog. remember when he got  
drunk on scotch the first day  
we had him? he must have gone through  
several doors before we figured  
out his territorial needs. he was a very  
important part of the family  
for as long as he lived.



going to hendry's beach, finding then  
dragging a porpoise corpse around

all the people at the beach screamed at me  
to get out of the area with  
that corpse, but i thought they were  
overreacting, until the wind  
changed and i got a whiff of what the dead  
porpoise smelled like. can  
you remember polio water in the lagoon  
there?

shooting an arrow through the hilman

you had been on naval reserve training,  
and when you returned you found  
a gaping hole through the back of the  
hilman. i was shooting my new and  
powerful bow and arrow when one shot went  
through the target, through  
the hay bale, through the garage door and  
ended up in the hilman's  
trunk. i tried without success to cover up  
the damage, but you found it  
right away. you never really punished me.

painting the house white, all the time

remember how chalky the paint was? and how  
it always peeled? how about  
the time you borrowed a drill with a  
sanding pad attachment, i think  
from al, to sand the stucco surface before  
painting? all i can remember  
was lots of dust and toil, and the paint  
peeled the next year anyway.

avocado tree raking

the avocado tree between us and the  
browns' property was a constant  
source of mess. i can remember you raking  
the leaves constantly.

growing a pumpkin

it was one summer vacation when we left a  
pumpkin plant growing on the  
south side of 1033, next to the allens'  
home. when we came home, the  
pumpkin plant had produced a  
basketball-sized pumpkin. it was spotty  
and green, but it was most impressive. you  
helped me plant it.

short-handled shovel chopping out weeds  
and trimming the lawn

how could i ever forget your funny short  
pants and the short handled  
shovel you used to do the lawn trimming?  
and how about your old wwII  
boots? occasionally they would "smile" at  
you, but they certainly  
were distinctive.

writing on the walls of the bathroom  
before they were tiled

you had taken on a giant project. although  
i can't quite pinpoint in my  
mind exactly which colors of tile you had  
chosen, i can recall that the  
colors were quite wild. before applying  
the new tiles, you presented me  
with the opportunity of a lifetime:  
scribbling on the walls. you held me  
up to the wall above the wainscoating of  
the bathtub and i penciled in  
lots of neat stuff.

me skuffing your nicely-polished shoes

do you remember this occasion? you were on  
your way to an inspection,  
the purpose of which as i recall was  
connected with the promotion you  
wanted to become a commander. you came in  
an presented yourself to me  
in my room at 1033. you were proud of your  
ship-shape appearance. in  
a childish move i still regret i skuffed  
the top of your highly polished  
black shoes. boy, were you angry. and i  
was immediately impressed with  
just how foolish my behavior had been. for  
what it's worth, i haven't  
skuffed anyone's shoes since then.



naval reserve meetings on tuesdays

i remember you as being your chubbiest  
through this period. i can't  
recall if it was every tuesday or just  
what, but i recall that i could  
expect to see you in your lieutenant  
commander outfit without fail.

spanking me with a holster, ending up  
laughing

there was one day when i didn't go  
directly home after school. i ended  
up down on micheltorena street in about  
the 500 block with some friend,  
where you found me. you drove up in the  
hilman and jerked me by the arm  
into the car, whereupon you made it clear  
to me that i had been a bad  
boy for not reporting home. apparently i  
didn't pay attention to the  
rule too well. once home you attempted to  
spank me, i think for about  
the only time. that hurt you too much, so  
you picked up a nearby toy  
gun holster and proceeded to spank me. the  
holster beating simply did  
not hurt, and eventually we both ended up  
laughing about the whole  
episode. i don't have any real  
recollection of any discipline in our  
relationship. if there was any, it must  
have been intellectual and not  
physical.

eico hifi

ed hogan's cabinet with a bamboo drape  
covering the componets and the  
rather high volume level you enjoyed  
hearing your new stereo records  
played at i can recall vividly. remember  
the "introduction to stereo"  
album with the sound effects and the song  
"a good man is hard to find"?  
i honestly believe that this is where i  
first was exposed to loud music  
and the dynamics of electronics in  
relation to music.

glass bricks

these were the big decorating item of the  
day, and it seems to me that  
we had our share of them. didn't we have  
them in the area near where  
vicky's room was built on?

pouring cement for club viotoria

what a loud sound the truck made! this was  
a big project for you to take  
on. when you got some of the lie from the  
cement in your eye, i was just  
sure we'd end up with a big cement rock  
where club victoria was to be.  
i can remember your frustration with your  
eyes and with the fact that  
you couldn't level the cement properly.

## nojoqui falls

we would often picnic there. i have this  
place connected with that split pea  
soup place. i still hate split pea soup.  
the falls at nojoqui were,  
especially by california standards, quite  
spectacular. years later i took  
some of my girlfriends there to show them  
what a neat place i knew about.

## christmas light sightseeing trips

we would all pack into the car and drive  
around the hillsides in search of  
pretty lights. then would start the oohs  
and aaahs. i never really appreciated  
this part of christmas. it must have been  
adult stuff.

## the aluminium christmas tree

one year you brought home this aluminum christmas tree. i always enjoyed assembling it. there was also a spotlight which revolved a colored wheel in front of the lens to illuminate the tree. not quite the same as the real thing, but we enjoyed it anyway.



the smell of amberlion

every now and again you'd give yourself a  
"treatment" with amberlion. al  
got you the stuff at some barber supply  
shop. not until many years later did  
i come to understand that the scent in  
amberlion was lilac.

buying the '62 plymouth was a big deal

i can recall us going to a white, two-story wooden structure somewhere off the street that runs parallel with state street and one or two blocks to the west of state street. you went inside the building all prepared to sign the papers for the car. i guess the building housed the teachers' credit union. when you came out, you were visibly shaken at the revelation that you were signing up for so much debt. but you didn't have much time to think about it, as we were leaving in a couple of days for our big summer vacation to montana. remember?

## the old pontiac

i have only the haziest recollection of  
the pontiac, other than a general  
sense of its being big and heavy. it  
seemed so tall to me and it smelled  
like a closet to me.

playing billiards

we went quite often to the little  
commercial plaza off milpas street to play  
pool. we never got very good at this game,  
and it was rather costly. but i  
sure enjoyed it. remember rotation and  
8-ball?

being jealous of vonnie because concern  
for her took your time & attention away  
from me

i never told you about this. after you and  
mom split up, my time with you  
took on what i can only describe as an  
aspect of desperation. i felt as  
though your time with me was at such a  
premium (to me) that i didn't want  
to share it. as vonnie's health  
deteriorated you would report on her con-  
dition. often the reporting was  
time-consuming, and i was jealous that the  
precious time i had with you was spent  
largely in medical reports on vonnie.  
i'm still ashamed of myself for feeling  
this was, but, in truth, that is the  
way i felt.

## 1,000 steps

this was a neat place. do you remember the crumbling rocks surrounding the staircase to the beach? i always was fearful that that last section, the one that was more or less a tunnel, would come crashing down on us. it never did, but i was sure it would whenever we went there. i also remember you telling me a story about some people who were caught there at high tide and were unable to make it back along the shoreline to the staircase.

## feeding the ducks

you would take me to the duck area, the  
one between child's estate land  
and the cemetery. there we'd feed crumbs  
of bread to the ducks. although you  
got me off to a terrific start with ducks,  
in later years i've developed a  
mortal fear of ducks.

trimming your oho

i don't know what the techincal name for  
your oho was, but i can sure  
remember you trimming it with a razor  
blade. it always amazed me that you  
could cut into yourself and not hurt. this  
confirmed my belief that adults  
had a high threshold of pain.



hitting the channel selection knob on the  
admiral tv

i can still see it hanging on with a  
thread. every now and again you'd  
call a technician who'd come out and spray  
something on it. never did  
any good, though. we got pretty proficient  
at tapping the knob over the  
years.

ketchup on scrambled eggs

strange eating habits we have. first you'd  
carefully overcook the eggs,  
then drown them in ketchup. and then there  
was your curious fascination  
with one of the world's wierdest foods,  
rhubarb. still don't touch the  
stuff myself. i figured that when the  
pressure cooker blew up that time  
and the rhubarb that was blasted to the  
kitchen ceiling stuck there for  
over a year, the best thing for me was to  
stay away from that nasty  
stuff.

max & rose diner

there must have been thousands of oldtime  
photographs on the wall. the  
food was particularly grim, so we must  
have gone there for other  
reasons. one time i can remember getting a  
hot dog that still had the  
cellophane covering on it. rose must have  
been slipping. i think max  
died before i was old enough to know him.

## louver installation

this was a big project, especially the first time or two. they may not have been perfect, but they sure beat the grim older style they were replacing. we got clear glass for some windows and opaque glass for the bathroom and service porch. why do they call them service porches, anyway?

bath street apartment

this was a depressing time for us all.  
remember the smell of natural  
gas there? the furnishings were old and  
ugly. it seems to me that there  
was a long driveway back to where your  
unit was. once or twice i rode  
my bicycle from 1033 to visit you there.  
we'd usually play chess.

mustang from via parva to the golf course

you're such a cautious driver that i never  
worried about getting killed  
while you were driving. we'd usually talk  
about vonnie's deteriorating  
health.

## veronica springs

this was a neat place. i wonder if some of  
the original structures re-  
main today. we went there to shoot the .22  
caliber rifle. you had done  
research to determine that it was just  
outside the city limits so we  
could shoot legally. we usually came back  
with several of those gamey  
wild doves, too. there were times when we  
were quite the hunters.

polio water

how i ended up calling stagnant water  
polio water i don't know. i can  
remember there being polio water at  
hendry's beach, in the lagoon next  
to the parking lot.



## fishing on percy's boat

it seems as though we did this from time to time. the occasion i recall most vividly was the time you caught the baracuda. the drag wasn't operating properly, so you unthinkingly pushed your thumb down upon the furiously spinning bale of the reel. the line cut a deep gash into your thumb. as far as i was concerned, the main thing was landing the fish, which you did. i was very proud of our catch.

## rowing the rowboat

this started out as a pretty good idea.  
you were rowing us around the  
harbor in a rented wooden boat. all of a  
sudden, and at about the time  
your arms were tiring, the afternoon wind  
came up and pushed us toward  
stearn's wharf. i apparently was too  
little to help, and it was about  
all you could do to get us back to the  
rental place. but we learn from  
our mistakes: i can't recall renting  
another rowboat.

## electric trains

at about the time i was in mrs.  
o'sullivan's mariposa garden school,  
you'd pick me up after school and present  
me with a gift of a piece  
for my lionel electric train outfit. you  
always seemed to be so very  
generous to me. i always thought we were  
rich. you certainly made me  
feel like we were rich.

## parakeet excape

what a tragic recollection! we had gone on  
a long summer vacation.  
before we left i had taken my pet  
parakeet, pretty boy, to danny  
bennett's home on mountain avenue. when i  
went there to pick up the  
parakeet, i took my bike (you remember,  
the nice schwinn you surprised  
me with) and had a spill, pretty boy and  
all, on the way home. pretty  
boy never came back. i was beside myself,  
and i can remember you telling  
me that it was unlikely he'd make it for  
long, as he was a domesticated  
animal not capable of surviving in the  
wild. that was the first time  
i can remember learning about domesticated  
and wild animals.

ikd 765, 766 & 767

when california changed license plates,  
you went down to the dmv and  
picked them up for the '62 plymouth, the  
hilman and vicky's mercury.

765 was for the merc, 766 was for the  
hilman, and 767 was for the  
white plymouth. you kidded with us that  
the way you would remember  
the license number was by recalling that  
you "kicked" at paying \$20  
for the new licenses. if you were kicking  
at \$20, i hate to think just  
what you're doing at the current license  
fees!