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Learning, Knowing, Being

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Home

For Jack, he didn’t really know where he was from. Starting college this year meant making new friends and beginning an almost new life. When people asked him where he was from, because that was asked a lot, he was unsure what to say. Would he say where he has lived for most of his life? Were those talking to him going to be close enough to him for his entire life story? He was asked this every year in the school years leading up to this point, but now because there are so many new people from so many places he knew the question would pop up much more. Jack Davis was unsure of where he was from. He knew where he was born, but where was his “home?” What is “home?”

Born in a suburb of Denver Colorado Jack never really found a home. He moved around a lot. It was almost as if every year he had a new home. His parents were fighting and getting back together almost every night. Which Jack didn’t really understand but since the age of 5 from what he can even remember he lived in a small suburban home in the ghetto of Denver. A nice 3 bedroom house for a set of parents with 2 children and a third on the way. Not to mention Jack’s dad had 4 other kids he had with his first wife, all close in age, which lived with them off and on. A crowded home which featured a small back yard with two Labrador Retrievers to roam, a small open kitchen which could be seen from the front door along with the living room which is what the house opened to. There were two smaller bedrooms with one converted into an office or game room and the other was for jack and his younger brother to share even though they both shared the third bedroom, the master bedroom with their parents. One of his favorite memories from this home was getting his first puppy and wanting to name it Power Ranger because that was his favorite TV show, which his dad compromised and named him Ranger. Or standing in front of the TV on September 11 2001, his fifth birthday and trying to understand the terror that just happened. Jack only thought that this place was his home.

Weeks later Jack was on the move for the first time. His parents had separated and he was moving in with his grandparents which is where he started kindergarten. He remembers laying on a waterbed with his little brother and sister sleeping and waiting for their mother to return from working an overnight job and laying horizontal along the base of the bed near their feet, and not understanding how exhausted she actually was, decided to jump on her and scream “MOMMY!” This only lasted about a few months or so because his dad was back in their lives and Jack’s father was never his grandma or grandpas favorite person. Jack had started school though so they couldn’t go far, but his grandparents insisted on finding their own place because of their opinion on Jacks father. So there they were, on the move again.

This time was a little different for Jack and his family. Not only did they leave most of everything they had but their so called roof over their head was the tin roof of their car and the fabric of a camping tent near a public lake. They were homeless and jack was still too young to understand that. He thought that they were just on a camping trip and having fun and spending a few weeks at the lake. It wasn’t a long stay which is why jack felt like it was more of a vacation and he had a lot of fun. He and his dad threw the football and barbecued every day. It wasn’t until years later when Jack realized what had really happened.

After the few weeks were up at the camp grown and sleeping in a car, Jacks grandparents gave in and allowed Jack and his family back into their house and that is where they stayed for another few months. There Sarah, Jacks mom, continued working overnight at a local cable provider. And Jacks dad worked for his grandfather with his construction business. Still at the age of 5 moving already four or five time. That was not the end of it. Jack finished his kindergarten year only to move again to another city, and to retake kindergarten because his mother didn’t feel that he was ready, and his birthday was on the deadline and ended up beginning kindergarten early. After the year going to the elementary school near his grandparents, Jack and his family moved to Castle Rock Colorado, which is about 45 minutes from where they were living before with their grandparents.

Jack finally seemed to be finding his home when he moved into this apartment. He lived here for four years and continued from kindergarten to the end of third grade. He made many friends and met a friend that would be his closest friends for years to come. Getting his first bed which was a bunk bed to share with his little brother and having their own room. This apartment brought him his first bike, his first game console and eventually his two little sisters, to make four direct siblings. Along with four other half siblings still living inside the two bedroom apartment off and on during the four years. After about a year or two Jacks parents were fully separated and divorced. His home in Castle Rock began feeling less like home and in no time they left again and were on the move again. A house across town, that was larger and a dream come true for Jacks mother. She wanted to live comfortable and happy with her kids and do the best for them and to make them have the best and happiest life. One thing that this meant though, was losing his best friend and the other close friends around him and what he thought would be his home.

As Jack and his siblings started school again they started over. Again. Their mother got a new job that paid a little better to pay for a small, green, 4 bedroom duplex. Something much bigger then what they had before and something that was their very own that was being worked for every single month. Jack began making friends again and started over another time transferring to another elementary school in Castle Rock. One great surprise was when Levi, his best friend from the other school only weeks later moved near him and transferred elementary schools with Jack.

The next move that Jack made was because he was a trouble student. He got himself into a lot of trouble and didn’t do very well in school and his mother just was demanding a change. When she didn’t get his change, she had to do what was best for him and send him to live with his grandparents for a year at least. His grandparents moved from their home in Colorado to Laramie Wyoming which is where Jack made his next stop. He was very excited to live with his grandparents because in his eyes he was spoiled and got good food cooked for him. In all reality, Jacks grandparents were strict and did not allow any slack. Jack was forced to do chores, he had to listen or be punished, and homework came before any games or fun. It turned out to be much more stressful than and not nearly as fun as he had predicted.

One year became two, two became four. Four eventually became ten and things started looking up for Jack. He wanted to stay. Wanted to excel and be the best that he could be and begged his mom and his grandparents to stay in Laramie. He ended his senior year with the best grades that he has had in his life and scholarships to enter college in the same town of Laramie where he has chosen to stay. Ten long years of moving around and ups and downs in the state of Colorado and then moving up to Wyoming for ten more years of his life that wouldn’t slow down and went by too fast. Jack was home.

It took years of struggle and moving from home to home and even being homeless for a few weeks to finally realize it isn’t a physical building of a house that is home. Home is where the heart is of a person. Where a person belongs and is happier than they would ever be anywhere else. No matter if it is rain or shine in this place, this is a town that he know, and is in love with. Now when those new friends from college or college professors ask where he is from, Jack with proudly look up with a grin and say, “I’m from Laramie Wyoming.”