

Chapter 8

When The Light at the End of the Tunnel goes out

After graduation Steve continued to hang out with several of his druggie friends. His parents complained but it was fatal attraction. They accepted Steve unconditionally, Tom and Diane did not. They constantly worried about his poor judgment. When they tried to protect Steve by imposing rules and curfews, he complained that he was being treated differently than his brothers. Steve's parents eventually decided that the best course was to treat him as if he had no disabilities. While they were in Hawaii for Grandpa Stokoe's funeral in February, 1994, some of Steve's friends came to his house and simply took over. A few arrived to hang out while he was at work and only Dave and Neil were at home.

Evidently this also happened at the homes of other kids in the Sandy area. Jared's mother told her a story about a party at their home when she and her husband were out of the country. She said her neighbors told her that it was bigger than any wedding reception or open house that had ever been held in the neighborhood. Even her own children were frightened when they finally called the bishop to intervene. He arrived and sent everyone home. There was some damage to the house and some items stolen.

Steve finally began to get tired of his druggie friends. When he arrived at the airport to pick up his parents after they returned from Grandpa Stokoe's funeral in early March, Steve was furious. He said that he was on his way up to the shower when he noticed Brad hiding under the living room table ***"What are you doing in our house? How can you just walk in and take over?"***

He ordered Brad out of the house and went on upstairs to shower. When Steve returned to his bedroom, he discovered that Brad had stolen the clean clothes he had laid out to wear that day. Steve and Diane drove to Brad's sister's house. They did not find the clothes that Brad had taken that morning but looking through his things they found many other items that he had stolen from the Stokoes. ***"Brad uses me,"*** Steve complained. ***"I've known it for a long time."***

The biggest problem with friends occurred the following summer while Tom and Diane were in Europe. Both parents had strong impressions that they should not leave home. However, they felt obligated to Diane's sisters and their husbands as the trip had been planned for some time. Corinne was confined to a wheel chair and needed help. Diane felt there was more work to be done in England on the Stokoe genealogy. She reasoned that it would be best to leave early to complete the research before joining her sisters in Edinburgh..

Steven and David were both working days. As a married nephew and his wife, were staying with Laraine's family only a block away and Matt had agreed to stay with his younger brothers it appeared that all bases were covered. The only reason to stay home seemed to be to monitor an empty house. Tom thought that in light of what happened in February, perhaps the house needed to be monitored. Both parents had an uneasy feeling about leaving home. They strongly considered canceling the trip. Finally, Diane suggested that she take Steve and that Tom remain at home with Neil and David. However, Steve did not have a passport and it was too late to apply for one.

After Tom and Diane left for Europe, Matt's work schedule changed. He was assigned to the 4:00 to 11:00 p.m. shift. Two parties were held at the Stokoe home while Steve's parents were gone. On these occasions Stephen and David's friends began to assemble as soon as Matt left for work. During the first party an automobile accident happened across the street at the end on Aspen Way. Some neighbor assumed that the driver of the car was part of the party scene. Steve claimed that he did not know who knocked down the small sapling on the hill and then sped off. He said his friends became suspect when they went out on the porch to check out the accident. The police arrived. Steve was eighteen, there were no other adults present, so he was cited for contributing to the delinquency of minors.

In another incident, Stephen had been ticketed for stealing a two liter bottle of coke from Seven Eleven. He argued that he was going back to the truck to get his wallet to pay for the drink when the clerk called the police. Steve and the clerk saw the incident differently and began to argue when he returned to pay for the drink. The police arrived. Steve was cited for stealing the \$1.20 item, disorderly conduct and abusive language. His fines amounted to well over one thousand dollars. The Stokoes learned about these problem when they met Diane's sister in London. They were worried and regretted not following prompting to stay home.

The day after they returned from Europe, a delegation of neighbors arrived on their doorstep. They wanted to talk about the parties. One family feared teens could have fallen into the hole they had dug for their new swimming pool. They had taken the fence down, separating the properties, to accommodate construction and were concerned about liability. Others complained about the bad influences Steve brought into the neighborhood. Steve was not home to deal with the complaints. He had been invited to Lake Powell with friends and had left the day before his parents returned from Europe. Diane cried throughout the meeting. "Steve is not a bad person. He is not rotten," She kept repeating.

At least one neighbor, went home feeling a lot of discomfort because he personally had not observed any problems during the time the Stokoes were away. He had attended the meeting simply because he had been invited. After Steve died, Diane confronted the organizer and asked why he had handled things the way he did. "Because," he explained, "the neighbors who had been the most vocal had refused to

come. “

This incident embarrassed Tom and wounded Diane deeply. Diane in particular, felt betrayed. Most ward members had no idea what the Stokoe family was going through as they tried to help Steve. She had confided completely in only one couple-- the couple who organized the meeting.¹

Steve's parents confronted him when he returned from Lake Powell. He simply did not perceive the parties as being *that* disruptive. Nevertheless, Steve accepted full responsibility for all of the problems. Consequently, Tom and Diane refused to help with any of his legal difficulties. They withdrew driving privileges and became much more exacting in dealing with his inappropriate behavior. When Steve told his mother he was in trouble and might even go to jail, Diane responded by saying, "It might be a good place for you to be. You wanted to move out. You have no money and no job. This might be your best opportunity."

Then, while making Steve's bed, Diane found a pistol between his mattress and box springs. She told Tom. Diane felt that anyone who struggled with evil spirits and depression should not be allowed to keep a gun. She pointed this out to Tom. Tom talked with Steve who said he intended to use the gun for target practice. In the end Tom decided to allow Steve to keep the weapon because he had taken the boys shooting when they were younger and Steve knew about gun safety.

Actually, the gun looked harmless. David brought it into the house when he and Trentman, found the old pistol in a box in Trentman's mother's basement. It was so old that the handle was held together with electric tape. The pistol had not been fired in years. Whether or not Steve could even get the gun to work was a big question mark.

Steve told his mother about being on probation. He had been in the wrong place at the wrong time. He was stopped by police while driving his friend Brad to a party. Brad was arrested for stealing beer from a supermarket. As Steve was driving "the get-a-way car," he was charged with the same offense. The judge had warned Steve that another charge would result in a jail sentence. When Steve appeared before the Judge at the end of September to answer charges related to the August parties, the old record was pulled. Steve was sentenced to forty-five days at Oxbow jail. Steve got into a fight at Oxbow with another inmate who attacked him. He was placed in solitary confinement for ten days.

¹Some time after Steve died Tom had a dream. He dreamed he saw this neighbor, a youth leader, almost bent double with the weight of the load he carried on his back. The man was accompanied by one young man who was trying to assist him. In his dream Tom made a "U" turn and returned to offer his assistance but he could not find the two. Diane interpreted Tom's dream. She believed the dream meant that her family should feel no animosity toward the neighbor as he carried responsibilities for the youth of the ward that were greater than he could bear.

Steve and his Mother shared the same birthday. Steve spent his nineteenth birthday in a cell too small to lay down in. His dinner was mashed together in a glob like mashed potatoes and he couldn't eat it. It was the saddest birthday either of them ever had. However, doing time at Oxbow seemed to have helped Steve realize where his choices were taking him.. He lost 20 pounds. He looked really bad but by the time he was released, Steve had ²made a firm resolution to turn his life around.

Steve returned from Oxbow determined change. He dyed his hair brown, bought blue contacts and started lifting weights and working out at Lifestyles 2000. He talked about making new friends and expected to use a small scholarship he had earned by finishing high school early to attend Community College. Some of his Youth Development friends were already attending Utah Valley Community College in Orem. Steve also wanted to move to Provo to get away from the neighborhood drug buddies. However, he still owed a lot of money in fines. His mother told him he needed to pay his fines before he could consider anything else, otherwise he would be back in jail.

In December, Steve began training as a telemarketer of Matrixx Marketing. He constantly worried about whether or not he could succeed at Matrixx. He brought material home to memorize every night . After he died, his supervisor wrote this letter to Steve's parents:

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Stokoe,

I feel that this letter may help you to know a little more of your son Steve's time with us here at Matrixx. I met your son this past December in my training class. I guess I should explain to you that I was his trainer. When he first arrived in the department he was pretty quiet which was at times a bit difficult to understand. Fortunately as time passed the class really took him under their wing. There were times that he struggled but there were many who were willing to go the extra mile and keep him going.

As he progressed through the training he really began to open up. He gained more confidence and started actively participating in class. The thing that really impressed me was his desire to begin growing spiritually. I remember a class member asking me if it was alright for her to discuss scriptures with him. I was thrilled to hear him come to me and ask me questions. I think it was then when I realized how much he wanted to change some things in his life. The class became even more supportive. They care deeply for

your son.

Throughout training, I made note of my students progress and reviewed it upon the arrival of their “graduation.” The growth of each is remarkable and at times some are more impressive than others. Please know that the growth I saw in your son was tremendous. I’m not sure just how much he really told you about work but I honestly feel he enjoyed it.

As I close I want to share with you the theme of the class. I hope that whether it was here or wherever else your son is now he will always remember our love, concern and support. May you be comforted at this time and know that your son touched our lives in his own way and will always leave a lasting impression in our lives.

Sincerely,
Bryan Alvarez,
DSV TRAINING

Class Theme

***Let me have the courage to believe in myself.
Not only on the days when I’m going great and nothing
seems impossible,
But on the days when the world looks lonely and I’m
losing and the road ahead seems too hard
When I wonder if I’m brave enough, small enough,
strong enough, and I must be crazy to try.
Don’t let me quit, let me have courage in myself
No matter how many people discourage me, doubt me,
laugh at me, warn me, think me a fool. Don’t let
me listen.
Let me hear another voice saying, “You can do it, and
“you will.”
If no one else in the world cares or believes in me
Let me have the courage to believe in myself.***

Just before Christmas Steve was tardy for the third time. He thought that meant that he was automatically dropped from the program. He came home and told his mother he was going to have to find another job after Christmas.

Steve often lifted weights and worked out with Jared Groberg. He liked Jared a lot. They had spent many years playing on little league football teams together. When Jared was in tenth grade he was in a mountain bike accident and sustained head injuries which changed his personality. Steve said that before the accident Jared was quite popular. However, the damage to his head had resulted in psychological damage. Jared was bi-polar and his popular friends had dropped him. ***"I like Jared."*** Steve said ***"he can hang with me."***

Jared was a good natured kid from a strong L.D.S. family. He hoped to overcome some bad habits so he could serve an L.D.S. mission. Steve had been free of nicotine for forty-five days. He had tried to quit smoking almost from the time he took up the habit the previous year. Steve had used patches, gum and other methods but nothing seemed to work for him. His parents hoped that by being away from cigarettes for over a month Steve would be able to quit. His father gave him a blessing. However, a few days after his return he and Jared were out in the back yard smoking.

Steve still carried a torch for Michelle. There were other girls who liked him but she was the one he really cared about. On Christmas night, Steve took a box of gifts to her house. He had only dated Michelle once but they often talked on the phone. He drove to her house with Neil but was too shy to take the gifts up to her front door. Neil delivered the box containing a teddy bear, a neckless and a lava lava to Michelle's cousin, Jessica, who answered the door. Steve had written only his initials on the card. S.A.S. Michelle simply did not know who the gifts were from. She had no idea Steve's middle initial was A. Michelle's mother was worried. SAS is a gang sign meaning "Sons of Samoa." As Steve never mentioned the gifts, Michelle had no idea who had sent them.

The next day Steve got a very bad shock. His good friend, Mike Payne, died in an automobile accident in Wyoming on his way to Maryland. Mike left behind his girlfriend Heather, who had just discovered she was expecting his baby. Steve did not mention this to his mother until a couple of days after the accident when she reprimanded him for staying out so late. It was then that he told her that he and several friends had sat up late into the night talking about Mike. Because of problems in the past, many of Steve's friends were not welcome at his home. Consequently, the only way his parents knew much about what was going on in his life was when he shared something with them.

Brad gave Steve Mike's job at Prompt Car Wash. But Steve became angry when he received his first check in January. Brad had not paid him as agreed. Later, Brad explained to Steve's mother that he had not done a good job at Prompt so he had docked him. A few days after leaving Prompt, Bryon Alvares contacted Steve wondering why he had not completed his training at Matrixx. Steve had not been dropped from training because of tardies.

Steve returned to Matrixx and successfully completed the program. On February

10th he wrote in his journal:

I BELIEVE IN CHRIST

HOW GREAT THOU ART

SLCC night classes

Matrixx during the day

Weight lift

Then read scriptures daily as much as possible.

Will attend church when I can get someone to go with me

Then I will go alone, if possible!

These are my goals

I must quit matab, doce, alcohol, smoking and marijuana and any other such mind altering and mind destroying drugs. You have to quit and you want to quit. I have faith in you. God has not forgotten you. You will make new friends. I can feel it. You will learn love again and charity and kindness. Lawfulness and wisdom shall return to your mind after your reading has been completed.

Your mission still stands. You were foreordained to go. You told him you would go and do the things he commanded. He loved you. He still does. You will marry. You will have [spiritually strong] children. They will surpass both you and your spouse in righteousness. You volunteered. No one dares talk dirt to your face. You are Ok. You will not die soon and you know love, peace, serenity, humbleness will take over. Good Luck.

You must quit, you want to. So why don't you read starting tomorrow. Your physical body will become strong once more [as you attend Lifestyles 2000.] You are going to end up going every day. The Second Coming will come in your lifetime and you know it. You will pass [your test at Matrixx] tomorrow. Don't let others influence you. Do what you want to do not what they do or what they want you to do.

See you soon and remember this time on earth is nothing compared to that of eternal time. You said it yourself and you know it is true. You follow only yourself and God. Do his will and that of your parents. Remember all of this. Good Luck. You must quit. You want to. Why don't you read starting tomorrow? So do it! God loves you. Many others need to forget. I no longer live a bogus reputation. I can hang with anyone. I just can't talk to them.

About mid -February, Stephen's second oldest brother returned home. Dean had the flu and was having problems at work. He lost his job over the issue of not notifying his boss that he was sick. Diane invited Dean to stay at home rather than go

back to his apartment until he could find another job and buy a car. This complicated Stephen's life. Now he had to share his car with Dean.

Diane felt Steve was finally beginning to mature. He appeared to be in control of his temper. He was more compliant and willing to take direction from his parents. Diane was delighted with Steve's resolve to give up all his bad habits. Dean drove Steve to work so he could use the car to find a job. This arrangement worked well until Dean was involved in an accident and the Hyundai was badly damaged. A rental car was provided by the insurance company of the other driver at fault but the contract stipulated that no one under twenty one could drive the rental car.

Not having a car was hard on Steve's ego and he continued to worry about his performance at Matrixx. He feared he just could not do the job. "Steve both your father and I were average students in college," his mom told him. "We both struggled. You too will succeed if you just keep trying," This letter from Steve's Matrixx supervisor describes just how well Steve was doing:

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Tom Stokoe,

We are deeply saddened by the loss of your son, Steven. . . While at Matrixx, he was under the supervision of Jan Horsley. Jan has expressed to me that your son was an excellent Customer Service Representative. He was very dependable and responsible, and displayed his concern for our customers' well being by treating each with the utmost respect. Steve expressed his desire to improve in any area he felt necessary. We greatly appreciated his wonderful attitude and his dedication. . .

Tony D. Norton,
Senior Supervisor

About the middle of February, Steve admitted that he was still having problems with evil spirits: **"Mom remember when I borrowed your car to take Michelle out?"**

"Yes," she answered.

"Well I lied to you about that. I didn't take her out."

"Why did you lie to me, Steven?"

"Do you remember when I told you what happened on Maui? Well, it's true Mom. It's really true. There are two evil spirits that are trying to destroy me. But

there is a good one who is trying to help me. The evil spirits make me do bad things. I just can't shake them."

Both Brad and Jared told Diane that Steve still struggled with evil spirits. Jared told Diane Steve saw them at his window at night. Brad said Steve told him that he had seen things no living person should see. Brad believed Steve saw spirits because of his Marazine poisoning two years earlier. To Steve, the spirits were real. He wrote this poem about them:

***What would you do
If the shadows came to you?
If you couldn't run and you couldn't yell?
Man it's just the depths of hell..***

***The shadows seep into your skin
Throwing you into sin.
Satan's followers making you hollow
As you try to holler.***

***The Dragon drains
Is this done in vain?
Who's got my vile?
Is thin my trial?***

***Remember Satan's sign on the wall
Try not to fall.
What would you do
If they came after you?³***

³An archeologist named Harner had an experience during a drug induced altered state. "From the deep recesses of his lower brain he had a dim perception of large reptilian creatures showing him the primordial earth. In this scene, black dragon-like being fell from the sky exhausted. They had flown to earth to escape their enemy. . . These creatures claimed to have orchestrated the proliferation of life forms on the planet in order to produce bodies in which to hide and otherwise disguised their presence. They also claimed to be the true masters of humanity and the entire planet and that humans were but their receptacles and servants.

Harner shared this tale with two young missionaries who worked in a nearby area. In turn they read him a passage from the book of Revelations, Chapter 12: 7-12, which described how Archangel Michael cast Lucifer, the serpent, the dragon into the earth and his angels with him. This parallel information was met with surprise and wonder by the self-avowed atheist anthropologist.

Later, Harner sought out an old retired shaman, a veteran of many such drug-induced journeys into the astral planes. When the shaman heard the claim of the black creatures who said they were masters of the world, he replied with a grin, "they're always saying that. But they are only the Masters of Outer Darkness." This so piqued Harner's interest that it was his first step toward becoming a master shaman. Spirit Releasement Therapy,

On Thursday, March 2nd Steve had the day off. Brad came by and they wanted to go off somewhere. Dean refused to give them the keys to the rental car so Brad wrote gang signs all over the car in mud. Steve's father really nailed him when he saw the graffiti. He gave Steve a serious tongue lashing, recounting every thing that Steve had done wrong over the past two years:.

"Stephen, don't you dare bring any gang friends over to this house. I don't want you to associate with any gang members or anyone who would write gang graffiti on any car of mine parked on my property. I don't want any of your drug buddies to ever come here. After last summer and all the problems you caused in the neighborhood having parties here while we were in Europe, I don't want to see one single drug buddy on this property. You have caused more problems for us than your five brothers put together. When that group of parents came over to our house and complained about the parties going on here and all the problems that were caused in the neighborhood it made the Stokoe family look bad.

You don't have one good friend in the whole world. All your friends are druggies. They smoke, drink and cause problems. I told you that you can use the Hyundai on the condition that you and anyone who rides with you, doesn't smoke in that car. I go out there and find the car a pig sty. Beer cans on the floor, over forty cigarette butts, marijuana pipes, marijuana seeds, the car stinks, you just don't listen.

I've even gone to pick up the missionaries to take them to their appointments and the van smells of smoke because you have smoked in it. Members of the Bishopric come over here while we are in Europe to see what's going on and they find kegs of beer in the house and kids smoking marijuana in the back yard. We told you absolutely no parties while we are gone and within twenty-four hours of our departure, there is a party going on here and seventy-two hours before we arrive home there is another party, this time with close to one hundred kids. The police arrive, arrests are made, there are law abiding families in the neighborhood who are alarmed.

You just cause us no end of problems. We are still making payments on the money we had to borrow to pay that \$5,000 hospital bill when you overdosed the first time. You ask to borrow a car for fifteen minutes and you are gone for several hours. We have to fight to get you up in the morning so you can get to work on time. Stephen, you just make things so difficult for us."

Steve finally admitted to his father that Brad had written the graffiti. When Diane talked to Brad a week later, he admitted that he had drawn gang signs in mud on the rental car. At the time he did not think it was a big deal, after all, he managed a car wash. Tom felt that this severe reprimand played a significant role in triggering

Steves' death.⁴

On Friday, March 3rd, things calmed down. Steve and his parents went out to dinner together. It was a pleasant experience and would be the last evening they would ever spend with Steve. He seemed relaxed and comfortable but did not have much to say. After dinner he asked to borrow his Dad's car. Tom said, "No." Then he asked to borrow his mother's car. She also refused, because she had just discovered a big cigarette burn in the upholstery of the Hyundai. Steve tried to explain that Brad had dropped ashes in the front seat. Diane told Steve that it would be some *time* before he would have driving privileges again. "***Then I might as well not ever go to work again,***" Steve replied.

His mother pointed out that he had to work to pay his fines or he would be back in jail. She promised that he would always have a ride to work. "Would he really considered suicide?" She wondered. "He had a gun," she admitted to herself. No, she thought, Steve was just not the kind of person who would do that. He seemed to be making such good progress. She seldom noticed him smoking any more. He looked better than he had in some time. Diane decided that this "tough love" approach was really helping Steve get his life together. A book given to Steve's family at his viewing a few days later revealed just how well he was doing. This note was penned in the end pages:

For the Mother, Father & family of Steve,

Steve was a very kind quiet guy. I had the chance to get to know him at Direct-TV. He wanted so much to continue to make his life better. He even mentioned about going on a mission for the church. He said he started reading the Book of Mormon at night and that no one knew. I mentioned I had it all on cassette tape. I never got the chance to give those tapes to him. I'm sure he is learning more of what he desired to know of himself and of what his life meant. He stated that something was missing and he was going to search for what was making him feel empty. He missed his friend that died at Christmas in a car accident, and he spoke often of him.

I know he cared a great deal for others and it showed through his peaceful quiet voice. Steve is a good person

⁴Shortly after Steve's funeral, Diane had a dream. She dreamed that Steve came back to life. Tom talked to him for a long time and then she talked to him. Then Steve shot himself again. The dream really bothered Tom until Diane explained it's meaning: It did not matter what Tom or Diane said to Steve just before he died. Steve did this for his own reasons.

with a big heart, he will be missed. . . He has made me take a look at my life. . . because of his example and love for people.

Sincerely, Rebeka H.V.

Sergeant Saddler interviewed Brad twice after Steve's death. Brad and Steve were together sometime during the day or night each of the five days just before Steve died. Diane talked to Brad after the funeral. Brad reported that Steve was doing marijuana with his friend Travis, at Matrixx and acid with Jared. Steve told his mother that he needed a car to get away from Brad. Diane felt very uncomfortable about Steve's relationship with Brad T. Somehow, it always meant trouble. Heather visited Diane two days after Steve died. Brad asked her to relay this message. A few days before he died Steve asked Brad: ***"Did you ever think of killing yourself for all the bad things you've done?"***

Brad was at the door several times on the day before the Steve's death. Heather had just returned from a trip to visit Mike's parents. Steve's mother kept telling him that Steve was at work and would be home late. Finally, Heather, Brad and Maggie arrived together to pick up Steve about 9:00 p.m. Heather told Diane that the four of them spent the evening watching videos and talking about Mike. Heather said Steve was very quiet.

Later however, when she drove him home, Steve finally opened up. They sat in the car in front of his house and talked for over an hour. Heather said Steve wanted to talk about Michelle. He told her Michelle had encouraged him to apply for the job at Matrixx. He told her that he had taken gifts to her at Christmas but had received no reply. Steve really loved Michelle and felt bad about the way things had gone between them.

The next morning, March 6th, Diane woke Steve at the usual time. He was late going up to the shower. His father mentioned that he needed to hurry as he went through the kitchen. David would be late for school. ***"I'll be fast,"*** he promised. It was the last thing Steve ever said to his parents and the last time they saw him alive.

That afternoon Diane returned home with the worst headache she had ever experienced. It began about the time Steve died and was so bad she found it difficult to drive. Diane went directly to bed. Tom had driven a neighbor home who had been substituting at Skyline and so arrived home early that afternoon. Normally, he never got home before seven or eight p.m. Tom came in shortly after David who had noticed the the strong smell of sulphur when he went down to his room in the basement. David opened the windows in the game room. Tom and Diane visited and then Tom went to the kitchen to begin dinner. A little later Diane got up to take Neil to the orthodontist. Tom went down stairs to make arrangements with David to pick up the car from the repair shop. As he past Steve's room he noticed the door ajar and the light on. He

went in to turn off the light and discovered Steve lying in a defensive posture with his hands up in front of his face. One bullet had gone through the left palm. He had a gaping wound in the head. Tom called 911.

When Diane returned home she was alarmed to see four police cars in the driveway. She parked the car and walked up the sidewalk where an officer was standing,

"Is it Steve?" she asked.

"Is he the nineteen year old?" the officer wondered.

"Yes, I am his mother and I need to know."

"Yes, it's him," the officer replied.

"Is he dead?" She asked. "Yes," was the reply.

Chapter 9

Reactions at Steve's Viewing and Funeral

Michelle had no idea how Steve really felt about her until she attended his viewing at Memorial Estates on Friday night with her cousin Jessica. It became obvious when she realized that all Steve's brothers knew who she was. Both she and Jessica, Michelle's cousin, placed red roses in Steve's casket. Jessica also left a note:

Steve,

You were my brother at one time. I bet I could have told you anything and you would have laughed. I had my first bad spiritual experience with you. Steve, you made me wake up and think about my life and how it was going to end up. I remember when we went to that rock park and just talked. I thought me and you were on the same level. (I was just trying to fit in and my goodness was trying to prevail.)

I wanted you to quit everything like I did. But I guess you were too far gone. Remember me taking you to shoot pool? I had different intentions than you did. I had a crush on you. Why do you think I asked you to go with me?

But you were just another one of those guys that liked Michelle more than myself. Well I really hope you are in a happier place than myself. I love you and I hope I see you again in the next life.

Love Jessica

Jessica's mother and Michelle's mom were twins and the two cousins had always been close. Steve met Jessica when he was hanging out with Michelle and her friends. She had a crush on Steve but he only thought of her as a good friend. After the funeral, Steve's mom asked Jessica what she meant by her "first bad spiritual experience."

She told Diane that Steve brought her home one evening and played the video tape Diane had made when Steve was coming down from his acid overdose and was staying at Western Institute. Diane made the tape because she was sure Steve would never believe how he acted. Steve played the tape for Jessica explaining that he had been possessed at the time. As he talked about the experience, there was a cool

feeling in the room and it seemed to grow dark. Jessica said she could actually feel an evil influence. It bothered her so much Steve changed the subject and turned on the radio. There was a lot of static on the radio and Steve could not get the station to come in clearly. Finally he yelled, "Stop messing with my radio!" Immediately the static stopped and the station came in clearly.

Jessica recalled the first time she met Steve. She said he watched her for a few minutes before she came over to sit beside him. He said "Hello": and began to tell her some things about herself that know body else knew. She said he seemed to have a knack for finding the good in everyone. He often saw things others missed.

When Michelle finally came to realize how Steve felt about her, she became very upset. She cried all Thursday night after the viewing. She finally understood who had sent the Christmas gifts and why. She cried at the church the next day and at the funeral. During David's talk she recalled feeling "a bolt of electricity," go through her. Suddenly she stopped crying. At that moment Michelle felt a great deal of peace and knew Steve was all right.

Jared's family were completely shocked by Steve's death. Jared's mom had driven Steve and Jared, to Lifestyles 2000 to work out in January and February. She thought Steve looked better than he had in months. His eyes were clear, he was beginning to gain back the weight he had lost in jail. Sharon thought Steve looked "very handsome." Jared was sure Brad had something to do with Steve's death.

Brad attended the funeral with Maggie and caused a small stir when he refused to remove his baseball cap when asked to do so. Brads appeared ill at ease. Later, his employer told Diane that Brad was actually frightened during the investigation. The police had interviewed him twice, asking many questions about his relationship with Steve. Sussie B., a neighborhood friend, walked right up to Brad just before the funeral, looked him in the eye and said: "You killed him didn't you?"

However, it was unlikely that Brad killed Steve even though both were off work that day and Steve was last seen alive walking toward Brad's house. As Steve's brother Matt pointed out, "If you really planned to murder someone you would would bring your own gun."

"Brad may not have pulled the trigger but he played with Steve's mind," Diane had told Dective Sadler. On the day of the funeral, Steve's family still did not know if they were dealing with a murder or a suicide. Steve died on Monday afternoon around three p.m. Matt had been by the house around noon. The house was empty. The funeral was delayed until Saturday to allow time for relatives in Hawaii to book flights to Salt Lake. Steve had friends from Brighton, friends from Skyline and friends from Granite High Schools. There were also relatives from Provo, fellow teachers and friends of Steve's parents from all over the district. It was one of the biggest funerals the community had ever seen. One girl came from Phoenix, Arizona to pay her last

respects. Throughout all of this no one had a clue as to what had really happened to Stephen.

Chapter 10

"MEMORIES"

David's talk at Steve's Funeral Service

I think this is going to be a lot tougher than I thought it would be. First off, I would just like to tell all of you how happy I am to see so many people here today. Steve had a lot of friends and I think he has always known how to pack the house. It's tough to tell where to begin. Steve's done so much. He has been through a lot. He's been through everything. When I look at Steve's life I just think he's had the roughest life and I guess that's what made him such a tough kid. I've seen my mom going around our house patching up holes in our walls because Steve would get mad and put his fist through them.

Steve had a hard hit. He was tough. I remember one night during an argument. He got me so mad that I just hit him as hard as I could in the face. He looked at me and his eyes turned so mad. His eyes were the last thing I saw before he knocked me out. After I woke up he picked me up. He said he was sorry. We made up just like we always did.

As a child Steve was my best friend. We were always together. We did everything together. We were like best friends. We would go out and play in the yard, build castles, play in the dirt and burn toys. We were just always together. I loved it. I loved it when his friends would come over to play. I just liked to be around he and his friends more than I liked being with mine when I was younger. They would come over and they would be going places and I would say, "Can I come with you guys?" Most of the time they would let me. We would go up to Big Rock and we just had a good time together. I remember how Steve was always trying to keep me in line. I'd swear at him and his friends and they would get soap and wash my mouth out.

Steve had a great love for animals. We always had hamsters, dogs or cats. We were always having pets at our house. Steve loved them and he always showed a lot of love for his pets. I remember we would look in the newspaper on Sundays and look under the pets. We would call up people that had a litter of puppies and we would go and look at them, my Dad, Steve and I and Neil. We would play with the puppies and I remember how gentle Steve was with animals. We were always taking trips together and I loved those times. These were the times that I was closest to him. We would hang out the whole time and were like best friends.

The last vacation that Steve and I took together was last summer when our family went to Laguna Beach, California. I remember before this trip Steve and I had kind of grown apart. As you get older you are not as close. We would talk and everything but we weren't the good friends that we had been before. On this trip I really

got to know him again. We talked a lot and were always together. We toured all the towns together and I remember walking on the beach with him. He told me a lot. We talked about his life. He told me about all his different experiences. About his being possessed. He told me about the other side. He told me never to get involved with the Devil. He told me what it was like. I really got a feeling for the other side. It made me want to stay away from those kinds of things..

On the way home from California we stopped in Las Vegas. Steve and I spent the whole day walking up and down the strip. We went in every casino. We went and played games. Steve would go and play the slot machines. I remember we were in the Excaliber, Steve was playing slot machines and I was kind of watching him to see how he was doing. All of a sudden the light goes off and these quarters just started pouring down. He was looking around making sure he didn't get busted. Making sure no one was looking at him. He filled up his cup and had all these quarters. He came over and got me and we took off. Then he poured half the quarters in my hands and said, **"Let's go play some video games."** So Steve and I went and played video games. I think that was just the kind of person Steve was. He was always thinking of the other person and he wanted the people around him to be happy.

Steve was a good friend and such a giving person. That's why he had so many friends. He was easy to get along with and he was someone you could always count on. I remember in Hawaii, kids would be picking on me. I would walk outside and I'd say, "Steve, you got my back?"

"Yes, I've got your back," he would say.

I knew he was always there. No matter what happened I knew he was always going to be there for me. Steve, Neil and I really used to like bikes and we would race them down at Twin Peaks. This was something that brought Steve, Neil and I close together. It was like a common hobby we had and we all really enjoyed it. I remember that me and Steve and Dave Trentman would just bike all over the place. Our bikes were like our cars. We would go down town, we would bike down to the mall, we would go up to the University of Utah. We would do tricks and we were really good on our bikes. It was something he was really good at.

A few years ago our family was given a pool table by some family in the newspaper that said they did not want it any more. So Dean took charge and got that working down stairs. From the time we got it we started practicing and playing and getting real good. We would just sit up for hours and shoot pool all night. It was fun. I loved playing pool and I loved playing him. I loved the challenge of playing against Steve. I remember one night we were playing and we both had some money and we decided to bet and we decided to play for five bucks a game. I was feeling pretty good that night, I was shooting real well, won the first game, won the second. I just sharked him all night. Steve wasn't the type of person to give up. He kept saying **"Double or**

nothing! Double or nothing." By the end of the night he owed me \$50 bucks. But he was leaving for Hawaii soon so he said I could have his bike. I would much rather have that than \$50 bucks so I appreciated him giving that to me.

The last few years Steve and I were going apart. We were not as close as we had been before. I guess that is just what happens when you are older. I guess it was hard for you to talk to your brother. We would still talk and everything but it was hard to get inside his head and know what he was thinking. But he did talk to me and he did tell me a lot.

We grew up tough. Like we were the two toughest brothers. We couldn't show our emotions. We always had to keep up a shield in front of us and not let anyone in. If you let someone in they could hurt you. I think that was mine and Steve's problem. He wouldn't let people in, that was one of his real problems. It was hard for him to talk to people and let them see his real emotions.

He had a hard time showing his true emotions to his family. I'm sure he showed them to his friends but it was hard for him. I think if Steve had shown his true emotions more often, he would have been a much different person, his true kindness would have been so much easier to see. There was a time, a little while ago when Steve put down his shield and showed me his true feelings. I am sure you all remember the time when he ate mass doses and went kind of loony for a week. He was up at Western Institute and they were just watching over him until he kind of came out of it.

My parents were real sad and they went up to see him every day. They would go up there and see him and every time they went up he'd say, "**Where's David? When's David going to come and see me?**" He really wanted to see me. He wanted to see me real bad. My mom told me this and said, "Are you going to come up next time? Don't you want to see Steve?" I said, "Well, I don't know if I want to see him like this in this alternate state."

But in a way, I guess this was just kind of an excuse. I guess I had better things to do, I had my friends to go hang out with. I had stuff to do and I didn't have time for my brother. Can you believe that? I didn't have the time or the love to go see my brother who was dying to see me. But I knew he wanted to see me so next time my parents went up Neil and I went up there with them. They put us in this little room with Steve. We sat down to talk to him and I remember Steve was telling my Dad how his shoe size gave him the Polynesian strength. That Steve and my Dad had the same shoe size so together they had the Hawaiian strength. He was real proud of being a Polynesian.

After I heard them talking for a little while, I said I thought I wanted to talk to Steve alone for a minute by myself to see if I could get through to him. So I asked, "Dad, can I talk to Steve alone for a few minutes?" He said "Yes" so everyone left the room and it was just Steve and I. We were just sitting there and I told him what was

going on, I said, "Steve you are in Western Institute and you are not yourself, man and you've got to come out of it."

He kind of realized what I was saying and I talked to him for a while and found out where he had left our car and stuff. Then I told Steve that what he had done made my parents very sad. That they were worried and that they were unhappy. Right after I said this it was like a complete change came over him. His eyes, they just changed from looking like he was just hallucinating to just pure sorrow. He was just so sad that he had made my parents sad. He felt really bad. I looked at him and he looked at me and he started to cry. This was the toughest kid in the world sitting in front of me crying. I probably hadn't seen him cry in like two years.

Anyhow, he just wrapped his arms around me. He hugged me tight. I started to cry. I am a big tough kid and I never cry. But we just sat there in each other's arms and hugged each other and cried. I could just feel the closeness that I hadn't felt in a long time. We just sat there bawling for at least five minutes. He was just hugging me so tight and at that time I just loved him so much.

Then he looked me straight in the eyes and he said, **"I love you Dave."** It was just a shock to hear that word. It was so hard for him to show his emotions and how he felt inside.

"I love you Dave." He said it three times,

"I love you. You're like my right half, the right half of my body. I can't live without you."

I told him I loved him.

Then he said, **"I love you Dave and I'd die for you. You are my Polynesian brother and I'd die for you."**

And now he has. He died for me and for every other teen age kid in this room who is having troubles in their lives. I think Steve died to teach us a lesson to not let our problems build up and get too big. When they do sometimes you can't handle them. He died to show us that the ways of the teenager, I know what it's all about, are not always the best ways. You can have your fun and have a good time but there is a point when the partying stops and you just have to think about what this life's all about.

I know how hard it is to be a teenager. We are faced with problems every day. There are so many different paths you can take. But never let your problems get too deep. Don't let them get over your head. Cause when they do sometimes you have just got to give up. I guess that's what happened. I hope all you teenagers here go home and think about what is going on in your life. Think about what you are doing now

and where it is leading you. I know after this experience it has made me think a lot about my life and where I am going.

I hope you can use Steve's example to try and live a better life and don't let your problems destroy you. I haven't had a chance since that time to tell Steve that I loved him. I guess I am just too tough for that. But now that he is gone I guess I can say it. I love you Steve, I hope you can hear me now. I love you and you are going to be missed by everyone--by me and all your friends.

I'd like to tell my Mom and Dad that I love them. I'll bet they think that I am not capable of saying those words because it's been so long. I have loved them this whole time and I'm sure Steve has too. I hope that our family can grow stronger from this experience. I am sure it will. Our family has been through so much together. I am sure the small little problems that come up now won't even phase us after this.

I know that I might not be the best kid, as you guys found out after this experience, but my life is in order and you don't have to worry about me. I've got things under control. I do have some problems but I love you and I will try and be the best kid I can be for you. I am sure we can all get through this together. We are all going to miss Steve a whole lot. I would just like to say these things in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.