

AUNT INEZ

Written by

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*My own true story ...really.*

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"A child miseducated is a child lost." - John Fitzgerald Kennedy at his 1963 State of the Union Address

FADE IN:

**INT. RETIREMENT HOME APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Assisted-living unit having a mechanical bed, kitchenette, an open bathroom with soaking tub, and old couch with easy chair in front of a vintage portable T.V. on a metal rolling stand.

**CAPTION:** *All Descriptions, Depictions, and Dialogue are true*

**FADE CAPTION:** *unfortunately*

Door opens. AUNT INEZ, 95, white hair glued into a 50's perm by industrial-strength hair spray, looks like *Mrs. Doubtfire* with only top button of her sweater buttoned around her neck. She shuffles in severely stooped from arthritis on a cane and slowly sits in a deep worn spot on her faded plaid couch.

LAWRENCE, 50s, small paunch, short red hair and mustache, in a shirt and tie, closes the door then rushes to help her.

LAWRENCE

Let me help you, Aunt Inez.

Too late, gravity took over. She has a thick N.C. accent.

AUNT INEZ

Thank you for the surprise visit.

LAWRENCE

I've been meaning to come down for years. Rented a car today because I didn't think you'd want to ride on the back of my touring motorcycle.

AUNT INEZ

Land sakes, no.

She has such a sweet *laugh*.

LAWRENCE

Did you enjoy dinner?

AUNT INEZ

Oh my, yes, haven't been out in years.

LAWRENCE

You were always so kind to me as a boy, my way of saying "thank you."

AUNT INEZ

You t'weren't no bother, always a pleasure havin' you around.

Lawrence sits down relaxed. He always is around her.

LAWRENCE

I can't believe I'm going to tell you this but, I always wished you were my real aunt.

AUNT INEZ

Excuse me?

LAWRENCE

It's okay. I know we're not supposed to speak of it since it was the family shame and all, but I just wanted you to know how I feel.

AUNT INEZ

What are you blathering about?

LAWRENCE

That my dad was a homeless orphan and no one would take him in until your family did out of charity. So,  
(*whispers "The Secret"*)  
*I know you're not his real sister.*

AUNT INEZ

I'm his only sister?

Time stands still for Lawrence then he *chortles* nervous.

LAWRENCE

Yeah, sure, right. I even confirmed it with my brother before he died.

AUNT INEZ

Who told him?

LAWRENCE

Same person that told me, Mom?

AUNT INEZ

Lord have mercy, why would she say such a thing?

LAWRENCE

Wait? Uh, Dad's father was the town drunk and drove into a telephone pole killing himself, right?

AUNT INEZ

Wrong. Our father was the town minister. He was killed by a drunk driver while we were walking home after his usual Sunday Sermon.

Lawrence is having a hard time wrapping his head around this.

LAWRENCE

Hold on, I don't --? My sister said Mom told her the exact same story also swearing her to secrecy.

Lawrence and Inez stare. Lawrence tilts his head confirming.

LAWRENCE

So, everyone I ever met down here, throughout my childhood, who said they were my relatives --are?

AUNT INEZ

Why wouldn't they be? Your dad really was my favorite brother.

Lawrence has to stand and walk this out pacing like *Columbo*.

LAWRENCE

Ahh, just one more thing. So all my Dad's "Uncles" --really are?

Aunt Inez nods. Lawrence has to sit back down.

AUNT INEZ

Why didn't you just ask me?

LAWRENCE

Because I was told not to!

AUNT INEZ

By who?

LAWRENCE

Whom! The one person that is never supposed to lie to their children.  
(balls fists angry)  
*Mother.*

Aunt Inez fake-smiles not really understanding any of this.

LAWRENCE

Why would she tell her children lies? What kind of a person ...?

Lawrence jumps up *clapping* his hands in realization.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

Split personality! That's why she could be so nice to strangers while terrorizing me everyday. It was about being in control of her past.

AUNT INEZ

Whose past?

LAWRENCE

Hers! Her way of dealing with abuse.

AUNT INEZ

Whose abuse?

FLASHBACK TO:

**INT. LAWRENCE'S CHILDHOOD BASEMENT - 40 YEARS AGO**

LITTLE LARRY, 8 years old, crew-cut, no shirt, is obese with multiple rolls of fat. His face is flushed from stress. He sits cross-legged on the floor in front of a metal-box television set drinking from a vintage glass cola bottle.

MOTHER, 30s, short and trim, red hair primped *I Love Lucy* style, wearing capri slacks, runs down the stairs, grabs the bottle from Little Larry, and begins beating him with it.

MOTHER

I said --don't sit --so close --to the T.V.! It'll ruin your eyes!

LITTLE LARRY

(still a stutterer)

P-p-please s-s-stop, m-m-mommy!

Mother throws the empty bottle at Little Larry hitting him in the head then *stomps* back up the stairs angry.

MOTHER

Stop stuttering! It's embarrassing.

Little Larry scoots away from the T.V. to ball up into fetal position sucking on a thumb as he watches his favorite show.

RETURN TO.

**INT. AUNT INEZ'S RETIREMENT HOME - PRESENT NIGHT**

Lawrence realizes his thumb is near his mouth and drops it.

LAWRENCE

Hers! And mine, both of us. I mean, I always knew she hated men, especially me, but never knew why until I visited her three brothers yesterday.

FLASHBACK TO:

**EXT. LAWRENCE'S ROOTS RIDE - YESTERDAY**

Lawrence rides a *Honda Goldwing* around a narrow mountain road with a sheer drop-off. He is wearing padded safety motorcycle gear so looks like a futuristic football player.

LAWRENCE

This is my "Roots" ride. I'm on a two-part fact-finding tour to find out why my mom treated me so bad.  
(shakes helmeted-head)  
I had to wait until she died to finally be free enough from her lies to seek out my own truth.

FLASHBACK TO:

**INT. MOTHER'S LOG CABIN - A LIFETIME AGO**

Built with his father's insurance money, it is a custom one-bedroom log cabin with an outhouse in the middle of nowhere.

Mother, 60s, greying hair, severely wrinkled, small paunch, sits in a shawl wearing granny-glasses knitting by a fire in a huge stone fireplace. An antique pendulum wall clock *ticks*.

Lawrence, 25, just released from a psychiatric hospital, is anorexic-thin and pale. He sits *crying* and hugging himself.

MOTHER

(knits without looking up)  
I'm sorry you believe I said and did any of those things to you but,

Lawrence looks up with hope. Finally, any kind of apology.

MOTHER

I really don't know what you're talking about.

Lawrence's head actually vibrates. Did he make it all up?

FLASHBACK TO:

**INT. LAWRENCE'S TEEN HOME - 30 YEARS AGO**

His Parent's Master Bedroom has a king-size bed and bureau.

Mother, 50s, now showing age, in nightgown, hair a mess from sex, sits up cowering with covers pulled to her chin *crying*.

FATHER, 50s, obese, half-way under her same bed covers, is unconscious on his back from a heart attack.

TEEN LAWRENCE, 18, a muscled bodybuilder, short hair, wearing only boxers, straddles his Father's big belly trying to do CPR compressions. He does not know how. He stops exhausted.

Father gives a *death-exhale* then all color leaves his face.

MOTHER

You killed him!

Teen Lawrence jumps off the bed in horror.

MOTHER

I wish you were never born!

Teen Lawrence runs out of the room *crying*.

RETURN TO.

**EXT. ADULT LAWRENCE'S MOUNTAIN RIDE - PRESENT DAY**

Lawrence spits to one side and *revs* his motorcycle's engine.

LAWRENCE

How did she die you wonder?  
(speeds away leaning)  
Alone!

**EXT. WEST VIRGINIA MOUNTAINTOP HOME - THAT NIGHT**

Small in-need-of-repairs rambler off an unmarked state road.

Lawrence pulls up, puts his side-stand down, and gets off.

LAWRENCE

Welcome to bum-fuck. What the fuck,  
is this bum doing?

Lawrence hangs his helmet over a handle-bar mirror then tilts head looking for something around the side of the house. He sees it and points grinning.

LAWRENCE

They still have the out-house!  
Always scared me to go into it at  
night, afraid some monster would  
pull me down inside.

(kicks at dirt)

*People always think I'm kidding.*

Lawrence opens the screen door. Its hinges *squeak* bad. He opens and closes the door listening, *sighs*, then *knocks*.

**EXT. MOUNTAINTOP HOME'S BACK PORCH - LATER THAT NIGHT**

SEVEN ADULTS sit in cheap web chairs. Someone said something inappropriate and all are *guffawing*, except Lawrence.

UNCLES JOE, JIMMY, and JACK, all in their 70s, have three young Redneck TROPHY WIVES who make *Tammy Baker* look like she's not wearing enough silicon foundation. His Three Uncles are plastered. Their Three Kabuki-Wives are not.

Lawrence sits between his cousins JANE ANNE and BUTCH, both his age and overweight, who are drunk. Lawrence is not.

LAWRENCE

*Remember, these are your mom's  
three younger brothers. You have no  
idea how they are going to react to  
your questions. Stay focused. Here  
goes everything --literally.*

(clears throat)

Why did your sister hate me?

His Three Uncles slur their answers in thick W.Va. accents.

UNCLE JIMMY

Don't know --?

UNCLE JOE

But she sure as hell did!

His Three Uncles high-five. Lawrence's mouth falls open.

UNCLE JACK

Remember when Mammy would come back  
cryin' after visitin' them?

UNCLE JIMMY

Sayin, "It breaks my heart in two,  
to see her mistreat them two."

LAWRENCE

Who "two?"

BUTCH

You two, dummy.

LAWRENCE

My dad and me? Wait. You all knew?

BUTCH

Didn't you?

LAWRENCE

(Breaks The Fourth Wall)

Now you need to remember, it was a different time back then. Folks didn't get involved in how others raised their kids, or their own.

(turns to Three Wives)

Excuse me ladies, would any of you care for a drink?

UNCLE JIMMY

Oh, they don't drink.

UNCLE JOE

Someone has to drive us home!

Three Uncles *pop* new beer cans and hold them up for a toast.

Lawrence decides his Three Uncles are three-sheets-to-the-wind enough, *clears* throat again, then leaps without faith.

LAWRENCE

Was your sister abused?

Oops, may have crossed the line as ALL fall silent, then ...

UNCLE JOE

Bein' so much older, she had to leave school and work to help support us after Daddy run oft.

LAWRENCE

He "run oft" --uh, left? Why?

UNCLE JIMMY

Momma never said outright, other than she threw him out that night.

UNCLE JACK

Sis, your mom, took it real hard.

UNCLE JOE

Wouldn't come out of her room for days greavin' so.



LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

Their mother would visit us and  
come back upset, too!

Lawrence spins clasping hands up to Heaven.

LAWRENCE

Thank You!

AUNT INEZ

For?

Lawrence stops spinning and so does his world finally.

LAWRENCE

"For" closure. She did have two  
personalities. I was, am not crazy.  
(holds out a hand )  
Pleasure to finally make your real  
acquaintance, my real Aunt Inez.

Inez hesitates then shakes his hand not knowing why.

Lawrence sits *sighing* relieved then nods resolved.

LAWRENCE

I'll be coming down to visit on a  
regular basis. We have a lot of  
catching up to do so I can fill in  
the potholes of my life's highway.  
(turns to her smiling)  
May I ask a question?

AUNT INEZ

*Don't know?*

LAWRENCE

Why didn't you have children? I  
mean, you're such a loving person?

AUNT INEZ

(looks away sad)  
James didn't want 'em.

LAWRENCE

But you did.

No response. Lawrence snuggles putting an arm around her.

LAWRENCE

You are the mother, I should have  
had.

SHE SMILES.