

## Chapter 22

### My Brothers Suicide

I had seven messages waiting for me when I got home they were all from Colorado. Before hearing what they said I started crying I knew it was about Steven.

Robert: Hello, Christine.

Me: What happened?

Robert: It's Steven ... He's had a terrible accident.

Me: What happened?

Robert: Here. Talk to Mom.

Mother: Hi, Christine. ... Steven had an overdose, and they don't think he's going to make it through the weekend.

Me: What? What are you talking about? Make it through the weekend?

Mother: He's on life support, and he hasn't woken up. The part of Steven that used to be Steven is no longer there.

Me: This can't be happening. Mother: I know, I know. I just cried and heard her cry on the other end of the receiver. I couldn't believe what I was hearing.

How could this be? I loved Steven more than anyone in the world. I was actually waiting for my Mother to die before going to Colorado to get him. And helping him with his life. How is it possible that my Mother out lived her son. Now he's lying in a coma, and I can't get the message to him. "I love you."

Me: I'm coming NOW.

Mother: You are?

She and I hadn't spoken in years. I took the first flight I could which was for the following morning. I cried all the way there. While still in the air in the plane. I kept whispering.

Me: Steven wait for me, just let me touch you again.

I wept and wept, trying to maintain my composure surrounded by all of these strangers. What I found once reaching Colorado was Steven in ICU. He was in a coma, never to wake again.

Me: What happened?

Mother: He was at a party, and he took an accidental overdose.

**STEVEN R. MAUSER**

Mr. Mauser, 30, a Divide resident, died May 14, 2001, at a local hospital. He had worked for Creeker's and Colorado Grande in Cripple Creek. He graduated from Woodland Park High School in 1989.



**Mr. Mauser**

Mr. Mauser was born April 16, 1971, in Long Beach, Calif.

He is survived by his mother, Adrienne (Wand) Mauser of Divide; his father, Raymond of Centerville, Pa.; a brother, Robert of Colorado Springs; a sister, C. Michelle of Miami, Fla.; a half-sister, Tracy Klein of California; and his maternal grandmother, Ethel Wand of Indiana.

Services will be at 3 p.m. Saturday at Little Chapel of the Hills, 69 County Road 5, Divide. Burial will be at Divide Cemetery, County Road 5, north of Divide.

Mountain Memorial Services, 51 County Road 5, Divide, 687-0333, is handling arrangements.

Memorial contributions may be made to Building Fund for the Community Fellowship of Christians, P.O. Box 143, Lake George 80827.

**Me: Is he going to be okay?**

**Mother: They don't think he's going to make it. And if he does, it will be with the help of a machine.**

**He was pale. He looked so tired. He looked like he had been worn out. This wasn't the Steven I knew, the Steven I last saw. This was a person who had gone through hell. It was written all over him, from the expression on his face to the texture of his skin. I took his hand into my hand it looked rough, and so did his feet like they had never been tailored.**

**I just wanted to take him into my arms and clean him up. wake him up, and take him with me back to Miami.**

**Mother: Kids, I need to discuss something with you.**

**We walked into the lobby and sat down. She leaned into us.**

**Mother: We need to decide whether or not we are going to take him off of life support.**

**Me: What? We don't even know how much of his brain is functional. Let's see what the doctor has to say before we do something like that.**

**Mother: What you see is pretty much the way he is going to stay. You are going to go back to Miami; Robert has to get on with his life; and I would be left taking care of Steven. He didn't have much of a life anyway. He was looking at being homeless.**

**When we returned to the room, Mother's pastor was there. They had started**



**making funeral arrangements. I couldn't believe it. I said, "He isn't dead yet!" but they continued. I was livid. How could she bury her son while he was still alive? Was he such a burden that she couldn't wait to see him go? Here lay someone I loved. How could this be happening? I put my hand over Steven's heart. I could feel the strain. It was beating so hard. I watched as the ventilator pushed the oxygen into his lungs. That has to be hurting him, I thought, as I saw it rise and fall. I ached looking down at him. They had put some kind of**

**ointment into his eyes in order to keep them moist. Then they taped them shut. I looked up at the monitor. His temperature was 106 degrees. I knew that alone was Fatal. His body was boiling. All of these things were going through my mind: How is he going to pull out of this? Oh my God, there's nothing I can do. ... I pulled out a rosary and started to pray. Mother interrupted:**

**Mother: What do you think you're doing?**

**Me: I am praying.**

**Mother: Steven's is not Catholic. Christine walk into the hallway and ask the guy who keeps peaking into the room to leave.**

**She wasn't going to leave me alone to pray, so I walked into the hall way. I told the guy that Mother wanted him to leave.**

**He said he was a neighbor of Steven's. He told Robert and I that Steven said goodbye to everybody before he drank himself to death.**

**Guy: He took the bottle into his hands said good bye too all of us and then drank and kept drinking, after a moment we realized that he wasn't kidding. He kept drinking till he passed out.**

**I was shocked.**

**Me: Who was he with at the time?**

**Neighbor: There were a few of us in the room when it happened. They tried to give him CPR, but it was no use; he was gone. We called 911, then the paramedics came to take him away. Something didn't sound right to me. Where was he living at the time? Why did he look so tired?**

**Me: Robert, why does Steven look like that? Where was he living?**

**Robert: He was homeless, but he stayed with me sometimes. Mother used to tell me to kick him out because he couldn't pay his half of the rent. He would sleep in the laundry room. He got pneumonia.**

**Me: And he was made to sleep out side? Where is the tent that mother said he slept in?**

**Robert: That was a tarp. He slept under a tarp.**

**Me: Mother said he was happy.**

**Robert: He wasn't happy. He hated it. Mom was going to her friend's house for Mother's Day for two weeks. She was going out of town. And Mom said that he couldn't stay in the house while she was gone. So he killed himself. We went back to the room. The nurse said that visiting hours would resume in one hour, at 9 a.m. I felt Steven tense up when the nurse put his hands on him, even though Steven was motionless. Was it my imagination, or did I feel Steve from across the room? Is he still in there? I needed to go for a walk. I felt like I could barely catch my breath.**

**I told Robert to walk with me around the hospital, and we did. We kept walking and walking and talking about how we were feeling. Robert told me a time when Steven pawned his CDs so Robert would have gas money. He kept saying how strong Steven was. I told Robert of times when Steven and I were children, how beautiful Steven was, and how much I adored him. While walking back I told Robert a little about my life and a little about me. While entering the hospital there stood Mother.**

**Mother: Where were you? What took you so long?**

**Me: We needed air.**

**Mother: Steven passed away at 8:15**

**She had the doctor pull the plug when we went for our walk.**

**May 14th 2001, on Mothers day what a statement. I was shocked. Robert went right into the room. I stayed in the hallway for a moment. I didn't want to see, but I knew I had to for my mind to know that this was real.**



There stood the pastor and Mother. Sitting down by the bedside was Robert, holding Steven's hand, crying. I stood at the foot of the bed looking at the brother I loved so much. The pastor offered a prayer. This was the same man who was making the funeral arrangements while Steven was still alive. My skin crawled while I heard both him and Mother speak, then they asked me to. I said, "There are no words to describe how I feel," I put my hand on Steven's chest. Then they asked Robert, and he just shook his head no and continued to cry.

~O~

After we said our goodbyes we went to my mother's house. I not knowing what to do with my emotions, wandered outside to look at what remained of Steven's car. It was broken down and filthy. All of the tires were flat. So how did he get around? I asked myself.

All of what looked like Steven's clothes were in the car and his personal belongings. Why, are his things in the car? There was used toilet paper next to the car door. Even down to his cigarette roller. He obviously was living outside of this car. How could this be, My mother lived in the middle of no where practically. I started crying and ran back into the house.

Me: Mother, why are all of Steven's things in the car? How did he get around? Where did he live? Mother avoided the questions, but I was relentless. I had to know.

Mother: He hitchhiked back and forth.

Me: Where did he live?

Mother: He stayed with Robert.

Me: Then why are all his things outside in his car that doesn't make sense.

Mother: I was leaving on vacation for Mother's Day.

Me: So why couldn't he stay here?

Mother: I was showing tough love.

Me: Tough love? He's dead!!!!

This was a term I heard her say often. Where in the hell did she get this idea from? I don't think the tough-love people had this in mind. Making someone sleep outside in the mountains under a tarp. Steven was slow, not retarded, just slow. He needed help, and it was so obvious. He had grown up with an alcoholic father and a dominating mother. Steven was special with special needs. Why didn't they take the time to help him? This was their son. Her responsibility. How could she put him outside? It wasn't his choice to be placed right in the middle of the mountains. He was special and needed to be around people who could help him.

~O~

We all went out to look for caskets, and then the gravesite. Robert and I decided on a modest looking casket, because that's who Steven was, and then the gravesite where he would be buried. On coming back to the house, Mother said that we could stop at Good will to find something to wear for the funeral.

Me: This is my brother's death. I will be wearing new clothes.

Once we got to the house the arguments were intolerable, and I was filled with comments about how she did nothing to help him, and how I had told her to get him therapy years ago. She did nothing for the brother I loved.

**Robert and I grabbed my bags and I left.**

**Robert took me to his apartment. I cried and cried. There was nothing else I could do. I was filled with anxiety and hate. Lying on the floor when I entered the apartment was the T-shirt that the paramedics cut off of my brother's body.**

**Me: Mother said that he lived with you.**

**Robert: She would drive Colorado Springs to tell me to kick him out because he couldn't come up with his half of the rent. He was sick with pneumonia from sleeping outside and having to hitchhike everywhere.**

**Me: Whose apartment is it? Who lives here?**

**Robert: Me and a few of my friends.**

**Me: Whose name is on the lease?**

**Robert: Steven and I.**

**Me: Then why couldn't he live here?**

**He really didn't come up with any explanation.**

**~O~**

**They said that there was a big party, that everyone had been drinking and that Steven had too much to drink. Before they knew it, Steven had stopped breathing. They tried to give him CPR, but to no avail, so they called 911, and the rest was history.**

**Me: Was it an accident? How could somebody want to live like this? He**



**looked so tired to me in the hospital, and this was why.**

**Now everything made sense to me. I cried all the more, knowing that he suffered the way he did. He was a better person than I could ever be. He gave everything without reservation. He wasn't materialistic, and though he was hurting, he didn't hurt anyone.**

**Robert took me to the mall, where I bought a black suit to wear to the funeral. I never had**

**the opportunity to dress up for Steven. He always told me that I was beautiful. Robert gave me Steven's glasses, which I fixed and fitted to my face with my own reading prescription. I had always loved to wear things he wore. It was the closest I could get to him. The next day I went to the funeral with Robert's friends, and Robert went with the family. At the funeral, I sat with Robert's friends at the very back of the church. There I couldn't contain myself. I cried like I had never cried before. I had never lost someone I loved, and surely not the one I loved more than anyone alive. This was inconceivable, though here I was outside of myself living a nightmare. When everyone left, I stayed with the casket. ... I didn't want to let him go. I cried on the casket, wiping my tears, hoping he could feel them and the love I have for him. People recognized me, and they gave words of comfort, which I knew they meant. I waited for everyone to leave the burial site to say my goodbyes. I was in pain, and I was afraid that they would cover the casket before I could see it one last time. I stood there, just**

crying. Mother insisted that a photographer take my picture with Robert. I didn't want my picture taken. This wasn't about that. They were motioning to me, but I kept looking down at the one I loved. I waited with all I had for the others to leave to say how much I loved him and that I didn't want to see him go. I threw the napkin I was using to wipe the tears from my face on top of Stevens casket. I crawled on the ground I couldn't walk the grief took hold of my body, which over shadowed my mind. Maybe Steven can feel the love I have for him through my tears it seems to be the only part of him that is still alive.

~O~

Once in Miami I called 911 and told them of my feelings and what happened. The dispatcher suggested a suicide survivors meeting. I was given a number and I went. There sat a few people who like me didn't know where to go to get help with this terrible catastrophe, the survivors of someone who they lost due to suicide and then having to sift through all of those terrible scary emotions, I sat there and heard story after story of people who have lost their children to suicide. A mother that lost her son after he went on a rampage killing a few people then turning the gun on himself. Wow, I heard a father so angry he could barely speak because he had to watch his wife and marriage fall apart because their son chose to take his own life. I was



amazed all the more that a woman named Pat decided to start a group because her brother chose to kill himself and to cope with that pain turned it into something to support others she inspired me to want to help others. I had so much pain surrounding Stevens death and most of all the resentment I had towards my mother was choking me. But that little group got me through, thank you Pat for caring for others through your own pain. ~O~

All I could think about was drinking. I just wanted to go out and say, the hell with everything. What am I trying so hard for? What good does it do me, and what good did life do for Steven? I called an AA member and told her how I was feeling.

AA Member: This too shall pass If you just ride it out.

Me: I am thinking about suicide.

AA Member: Suicide is always an option, but I suggest you wait, postpone it. Go to a meeting Christine. You are an alcoholic. Drinking will not bring him back, it will only make matters worse.

I went to the meeting even though I didn't want to, I knew that it was either get help or throw my life away.

The pain of Steven's death still hits me, the realization of what all has happened, that I am never going to be able to talk to him again, and that I can not fix this. I love him and I always will.