

D**** A***** awoke around 6:30am on the 8th of November, 2018 and went outside for his morning exercise. The A***** home was situated on nearly 7 acres of lushly flowing mountainous terrain providing picturesque morning runs along the variously winding footpaths, deer trails and dirt roads traversing their land. The beloved morning ritual provided D**** with what would turn out to be a pivotal glimpse of a funny looking cloud a few ridges over, a distance of about 7 or 8 miles. As he staid his jog to catch a better focus on the strangely dark apparition in the sky he realized it was a black plume of smoke, causing him to cut his run short and head straightway back to the house to check for any news on the apparent situation, especially when considering the strong winds coming from the east, the direction of the smoke.

After getting no news or reports of the fire he decided to check in with the workplace. It was 7:00am when he called the hospital and was told they had not heard any news or reports either. The smoke kept his watchful attention until he realized he was going to be late for his day's first appointment, set for 8am, so he went inside and took a shower. As he walked out of his bathroom he noted that the light outside had grown eerily dark. He noted the time as 7:50am and was about to call the hospital to tell them he would be a little late as he looked out his back window to see the whole canyon on fire, with spot fires sprouting up and dotting his property a mere ¼ mile from where he stood inside his house. He knew at this point that the house was lost.

As if on cue his wife S**** arrived back home from her morning duties as seminary supervisor for their local LDS faith congregation. Husband and wife had a short and surreal

discussion about needing to evacuate, immediately, and they both frantically set about the home grabbing what their panic stricken minds could think to save. They got into their respective vehicles and fled their home as spot fires burned all around their yard, flying ash and ember igniting the ground at their feet. The morning had turned nearly pitch-black, the light choked by thick layers of smoke and ash and soot, as the flames nipped at their heels while they sped down the dirt road away from the deadly blaze.

They made a plan to shelter at the hangar where they had a small plane located at the Paradise Airport since it was on the opposite side of town from the flames and had a large area of cleared defensible space around it. Several other groups of evacuees had found their safe space amongst the hangars as well and for a short respite from active evacuation they fixedly gazed upon the sky, glowing surreal in the vaporizing degrees of the massive fire then currently consuming Paradise.

Their attempt at respite was cut short as people started to recognize their position at the airport quickly becoming dangerous. D**** thought about possible routes and realized that with the fire approaching as it was the only evacuation route would be cut off by the flames if they didn't act quickly. They once again piled into their vehicles and drove off, escaping once again with the fire breathing down their necks.

For over 2 hours they made the trek to nearby Oroville that would normally have taken only minutes, traffic and chaos being the order of the morning, the entire ridgeline population being caught off-guard and all trying to get away from the incineration engulfing their neighborhoods and towns.

With the areas surrounding the locations affected by the fire bursting under the strain of sheltering and absorbing the impact of a massive evacuation the A*****s decided their best bet was to head for Oregon where their son had an open guest home they could occupy while assessing and deciding what to do next. As they finally nosed into a diner for breakfast around 11am that morning they couldn't believe what had happened in the last few hours. Their home and everything in it, their neighbor's homes as well as the community they had not only existed in but intrinsically helped flourish and prosper for the last 40 years, all of it surely gone in a flash and blur of quick decisions and quicker escapes. Around this initial period of reflection the recently installed alarm system company called, informing D**** that according to the alarm system his home was on fire and that they had reached out to the fire department who had stated they could not respond. D**** laughs somewhat tepidly as he reflects, "At least I knew the system worked!"

The A*****s personally lost over \$2,000,000.00 in personal property along with irreplaceable journals, photos, documents and degrees and all the personal trimmings that come with a home that saw the raising of children and the spoiling of grandchildren. As a musician D***** was able to save some of his beloved guitars, but sadly had to let many of his cherished vintage instrument collection succumb to the fate so harshly dealt that flame-filled morning in 2018. He did attempt a search for his treasured Omega Sea Master watch purchased in the 60's on his LDS mission in Denmark, an endeavor that resulted only in hours of sifting through ash and soot, the fire reducing their once serene family estate to a barren arid zone of destruction and smolder, releasing no treasures from the heap of carbon.

The A*****s arrived in Paradise over 40 years prior, D***** responding to the need of a medical doctor in the area. He had scouted the area before making the move, a native to the Bay Area a few hours away he was overcome with the notion of such a forested mountainous locale within his home state of California, something new to him but immediately intoxicating, “It was like driving into some massive campground, almost couldn’t believe it,” he recalls of his initial impressions of Paradise. One of the local doctors serving as tour guide they serendipitously hiked the ridge that would eventually become D*****’s property line. “I saw the dream right away, I was sold.” He began serving the community of Paradise and surrounding towns on the ridge, eventually establishing his specialty in cardiology. He served the needs of the very hearts of his friends and neighbors faithfully for 40 years until being forced into semi-retirement as a result of the destruction from the Camp Fire.

D***** and a few other doctors in the area had invested in and established a bank of medical buildings strategically located across the street from the hospital. From this complex D***** conducted his own office, the offices of the other invested doctors and leased remaining space to visiting specialists and the hospital itself. This complex alone a substantial revenue stream with expected longevity and growth built into the model, complete with adjacent vacant lots acquired for future growth and development.

The hospital was burned beyond repair and will not be reestablished, immediately depleting the worth of D*****’s and his fellow investor’s building complex, of which only a single building still defiantly stands, alone upright amongst the rubble of its lost cohort. Aside from losing the substantial monthly rental income the investment itself lost immense value as a

direct result of the fire. D**** would want nothing more than to rebuild but it wouldn't make sense anymore, the burned-out land being worthless for its former concept, making decisions moving forward all the more burdensome.

Aside from this devastating financial loss D**** lost his regular income as a Cardiologist, seeing an average of 75 patients each week on top of lab tests and procedures, forcing him into semi-retirement while he continues to try and refashion pieces of his former life, all while battling insurance companies over settlement and regulatory agencies about his burdensome lingering property. The struggle persists to this day, his wife S**** still in therapy for PTSD from the events of the Camp Fire, the decisions on a plan for moving forward still slowly churning.

The stability that the A*****'s had worked so hard to establish for themselves was abruptly and violently taken from under their very feet as they had to think fast to avoid being killed by the explosive firestorm of 11-8-2018. It took decades to build their dreams into what they envisioned their lives to be, achieved by serving the needs of their community, and only a smoky tear-filled blink to have it all taken away.