



Big Brother Luke

I agreed to coach wrestling at the most diverse school near where I lived. I needed more money for materials to renovate a shy-800 square foot fixer. My Mom gifted me with teaching a blueprint of the American Dream. She worked three jobs and we shared a 1-bathroom house with another family so she could afford mortgage on a small fixer. When I see the masses of all continents of heritages in our nation living in cycles of poverty, the hope is that we remember to see the symbiosis that those who have put on our nation's uniform have modeled within their unit. An elite healing community I joined forces with taught me that we honor those who came before by carrying their teachings to those who come next. My father, a Veteran of the Vietnam War and my grandfathers, each Veterans of World War 2 and the Korean war, taught me about the symbiotic brotherhood within their unit as optimal for survival.

I understand that not all of America's sons and daughters have grown up or are growing up today with a blueprint for how to achieve the American Dream. *Big Brother Luke* taught me to stop looking at not being able to serve my country when I got medically DQ'd from my enlistment attempt as a Whiskey 81, as nothing on earth was able to stop him from figuring out a way to serve his country. My struggles are tiny compared to what he overcame. I have tremendous fear and uncertainty with the best steps to serve my country, but when I look for the teachings of where I come from, I find a voice that speaks in the dialect of the Red, White and Blue, a Veteran who co-wrote the book on Extreme Ownership, and heard his message when he said my responsibility for our nations sustainability of our rights is to "just step", in spite of my fear and uncertainty.

When Luke came into the mat room as a freshman, I didn't have any problem enjoying smearing him into the mat, just like any other high school wrestler. Then, I heard his story. I heard that his parents had been lost in the Liberian Civil War. I heard that he'd been in a refugee camp in the Ivory Coast without his parents. I heard that he followed the mining cart to pick up what fell out and ran it back to the cart when kids his age in our country were sitting on carpet squares in Kindergarten. I heard that, when he got his very own mat to put

on the dirt floor when he was eleven, the gift was like Christmas and his birthday had come at the same time.

I enjoyed using my physical size advantage to toss him around, as he found me on the daily and asked me to not take it easy on him..... until I heard his story. After that, he had to carry me. He had to hold me accountable, on the daily. He would get so frustrated with me that I was letting up on him. He would be laying flat on the mat, exhausted and limp, and say “Coach, why are you stopping?” Because he had gripped my heart. He was squeezing my aorta and not letting it go. Finally, after him working to teach me how to hold him accountable, we came up with the “talon of pain”. When he was exhausted and limp on the mat, I would make a *keeee-eeee-arr* noise, like a circling bird of prey, followed by a talon striking a pressure point for a mixture of pain, tickle and general zinging sensation.

Luke was my assistant wrestling coach at the Muckleshoot Tribal School, taking two busses there, as he was working to earn money for his first car. Before that, Rainier Christian had given him a full scholarship so he could push me in the weight room to chase his ridiculous athleticism, with a clean of 285 as a junior and I could coach him through 20 extra hours of English study per week. The English dialect in the US was different than Liberia, and he was looking at both football and wrestling college offers and wanted to work hard to upgrade his English skills.

Years later, he was a guest speaker at the school where I now work, a community of homes with a median sales price just shy of 700k, with a quality education district I was very fortunate to understand how to start saving for at 16, double-dipping by earning that money remodeling homes. After he shared his story with those students, and how he now his non-profit had a farm in Liberia where he was teaching his people advanced farming technology, a factory there to financially support that farming and a freight business stateside where he drove truck in Liberia’s rainy season, our amazing students felt his ripple-effect of hope so strongly that they couldn’t help but reflect it, organizing among themselves to give him money for an additional acre of his farm.

My oldest was just a knee-bouncer when I started coaching Luke, and I was bouncing him on my knee when I was coaching Luke’s matches, as I wanted he

and my unborn youngest to grow up learning a human model of strength and perseverance beyond what I could show. It was Luke's strength, and the teachings from the Muckleshoot Tribe



that *we honor those who come before by carrying their teachings to those who come next* that the decision to be in year 9 of a 2 year remodel on a hobby farm was made. If I didn't teach my children the lessons that those who came before me in my family line had passed down, I'd need to hire Luke's family line while my grandchildren were consumed keeping up on their Snap-streak while waiting for their Uber-eats, because they had no understanding of what the word work mean. That dog don't hunt. I'm the most blessed father in the world to have been able to share the farm I live on with Luke.

After his day job, he was next to my barn, with his headlamp on. His friends, brothers, sisters, son, nieces and nephews were often with him, as he was building his prototype. My children got to be in there, too, in the greenhouse he was building, with hydroponics and aquaponics technology. After he donated his first harvest of fresh greens to the local foodbank, he no longer had a need for the prototype, as his non-profit open land, aquaponics and hydroponics food foundation was ready to spread hope to his people in Liberia.



My children thought of who they refer to as *Big Brother Luke*, when they were learning the process of creating garden starts in the greenhouse no longer being used, and when they were hauling wood, soil and fencing when we were building a garden. They remember *Big Brother Luke* when we plant every Spring, as their strengthening their successful habits of responsibility planting and harvesting with their hands and being creative coming up with new body-nourishing concoctions. My daughter loves to make fruits and jams with what she harvests. My son is fascinated that our Highlander clan of

lineage is a salmon people, just like the Muckleshoot Tribe they also got to grow up knowing, as his favorite creation, which is absolutely amazing by the way, is salmon burgers from the Coho he harvested with his hands. My children continued the gift of remembering the teachings of those that came before, with their hands on impact drivers, fencing tools and shovels as we disassembled the greenhouse and repurposed what we could. We no longer had use for it, as the teachings of *Big Brother Luke* had become permanently infused in our hearts and in our minds, and the greatest blessing..... as we consider him part of our family, and he considers us part of his. As he keeps his wife, children and his faith at the highest priority while also juggling a farm in Liberia, a factory in Liberia and a stateside freight business, I appreciate the answer I'll give my children as they enter adulthood and learn to juggle priorities. I'm going to suggest that they reach out to an expert. I'll need to be honest and refer them to someone who does it way better than me. I'll reply "call Big Brother Luke".

AN ALLIED ASCENSION APPRECIATION STORY