**If you could have dinner with anyone—living or dead—who would it be?**

If I could have dinner with anyone, living or dead, I would choose a dinner with my father. I would have a lot of questions for this man who died when I was 14. Despite having him around for 14 years, the man remains an enigma to me. I would like one, final dinner with Angelo Terranella.

We would have his favorite London Broil with potatoes washed down by a bottle of Pabst Blue Ribbon beer. Nat King Cole records would be playing in the background.

I would start out asking about his youth. What was his earliest memory? Did he enjoy school? Did he want to go to college? If so, why didn’t he go like his younger brother did? What was his relationship like with his brother? With his father? If they were distant, why was that?

Then I would ask him what he wanted to be when he grew up when he was a child. Did he want to be an athlete, a musician, a social worker, a mailman? What was his dream, and how did serving in World War II change it?

Next I would ask him about his military service. Was he drafted? How did he end up being a hospital orderly? What was that like? Was it so horrible that it changed him? How did it change him?

My next questions would be about how he met my mother and when he knew that he wanted to marry her. Where did they meet? What was his proposal like? Where did he propose? How did my mother react?

By this time, we would be ready for dessert. He would have a piece of apple pie and coffee and I would join him. As he swallowed the first taste, I would ask him about his job at the velvet mill. What did he do? Did he enjoy it at all? If not, why didn’t he look for another job? What would have been his ideal job at that point?

Finally, I would ask him when (if ever) he realized that he was dying. What was that like? And if he never thought his illness would be fatal, what would he have liked to have told me and my brother before he died.

And then, just to extend the night a little, I would turn on the Yankees game, and just sit there alongside him like I did when I was seven. He would say very little except to point out an exceptional play by the third baseman, or a miraculous clutch hit down the first base line. And I would be satisfied that I had finally had my questions answered, and be satisfied that this kind, sweet man who raised me was a little better known to me.

A close up of a person

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