

HIDALGO HOUSE OF GIGGLES

SUNDAY, MARCH 20, 2011

Daren



I still wake up in the morning thinking this has all been a bad dream. I will never forget the phone call that we got on the evening of Sunday February 20th. We were at our friend's house for dinner. Just as we were sitting down at the table to eat, Jared's phone rang. He looked at his phone and said "oh...it's my Dad." My heart was immediately in my throat because I knew he has just spoken to his Dad. My Father-In-Law usually doesn't call on Sunday nights either, so why would he be calling? The look on Jared's face when he answered the phone made me sick. I knew something was wrong. Jorge asked Jared if we were together and since we were at our friend's house, could go to a private place. We listened and followed his direction. We both we shaking like a leaf and as we stood on Angie and Rob's landing Jorge told us the horrible news. Daren had been killed. I went numb. I felt immense sadness for my husband, Mother and Father-In-Law, and for Jared's siblings.

I was in such disbelief. For days I waited for the phone to ring, for Daren to be on the other end of the line telling us it had all been a huge mistake and that he was just fine. I think I just didn't want to believe that we would never see him again.

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We waited on February 27th at General Mitchell airport in a cold hanger. Our family stood silent, with tears in our eyes, and our arms wrapped around one another. The Patriot Guard Riders were single file, each one holding the American Flag. We waited in that ice cold hanger. Time stood still as we waited. Then the enormous doors finally opened and there was the plane. Then it suddenly all became very real. I will never forget Miles getting off of the plane. He had brought his little brother home.

This blog was created to share, with our family and friends what is happening in our lives. It is our virtual baby book. So with that said, what brings me even more sadness is that Carson will never know his Uncle Daren. Daren was the goofy and fun loving Uncle that every niece and nephew loves to be with. And even though Carson will never remember meeting his Uncle we will make sure he knows him through pictures and our memories.



I will tell him about the summer of 2010 when we saw Daren in Wisconsin. Carson was only 11 months old and he was sitting on the floor playing so contently when Daren walked over to his sweet little nephew and ripped a fart in his face! As Daren walked away he laughed and smiled, he really thought it was funny. He saw no harm in what he

had just done. Then he looked at Jared and me waiting for a laugh. Jared and I were stunned.

Daren said “What?”

Jared replied, “Ah, not cool!”

Daren said very surprised “Really?!”

Jared and I, “NO!”

It wasn't funny that Daren had ripped a huge fart inches from our innocent baby's face. What was funny, was that he really thought it was hilarious and the puzzlement he felt when Jared and I couldn't bring ourselves to laugh at his joke.



Daren never called me “Jenny” he always called me “Yenny.” I don't even know how that nick name started but I think it was on our trip in 2006 to the Dominican Republic. I had a nickname for him too and it was “Dairy.” Don't know how that started either but when I wanted to get under his skin I would call him “Dairy the Fairy.” He hated that so much!



Anyone that knows me knows that I love cloths and I love to shop. So, Daren always had to have his outfits “approved” by me. If I was around he would ask me to pick out his shirt for him. When he crashed his buddy’s motorcycle I think he was more upset about not being able to get the blood stains out of his favorite pair of jeans. I can’t say I blame him either.



After Daren’s funeral, one of his best friends Mothers, who I had never met before came up to me to tell me how much Daren talked about me. I was very surprised to hear that he talked about me at all let alone, that he even had nice things to say. I don’t think she knew how happy it made me to hear that. We always had a joking relationship and

usually gave each other a hard time. The last time I saw Daren we had a big family dinner at Kurt's Steakhouse. I had just had my wisdom teeth out and I ordered pasta for dinner since I could not chew steak. Daren sat next to me and laughed as I cut my pasta into a million little pieces while he raved about his steak. I don't remember what we talked about at the table that night but dinner conversation with 2 or more of the Hidalgo boys at the table can get rather raunchy. Although we don't get the chance to have Hidalgo family dinners very often, the inappropriate dinner conversation will be lacking Daren's smutty input.



I will never get the chance to be with Daren again in this life but he is always with me in my memories. He will always be with Carson too. I know without a single doubt that Daren loved his whole family very much. He loved Carson and I will tell him so. Over the past month a lot of people have shared memories they had with Daren. It is amazing how many lives he touched in 24 years. He wore his heart on his sleeve and always stood for what he believed in, even if it wasn't the popular choice. He was a social butterfly but he truly cared about everyone.

Daren was only able to call from Afghanistan once. I answered when he called. We only spoke for a few minutes but I will always remember that he sounded happy. Happy because he was doing something he felt good about. I am so honored to be his sister-in-law. He was a brave man and a hero. We will NEVER forget you, Daren, you will live forever in our hearts.



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“Death leaves a heartache no one can heal, love leaves a memory no one can steal.”

Jenny