

It seems like just yesterday that I met an energetic young red head in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade named Jake Beck. Times would never be quite the same after that.

For a time there you would have thought that Jake and I were more like brothers than friends because we hung out so much. I'm sure we confused people to as who our parent's were because we were always with each other. As younger guys there were the good times of trying to convince each other as to why we should make this trade for this football card or why Jake needed to give me one more Penny Hardaway card to get this Limited Addition Michael Jordan card. Jake and I were always playing some type of game in Rita and Doug's back yard whether it was that we were sailors on the open sea fighting off pirates or pretending to be navy seals. And you can't have a good game of navy seals without having an enemy and of course our favorite person for that would be Kyle. Then about five minutes after us doing anything we would have good old Rita come out onto the porch and ask us why Kyle is crying. That's when I would just sit back and let the master debater do his work and see if he could get us out of another jam. Then the stress I put on Rita trying to figure out what she could make for food that both of us would eat because back in the day I was a tad bit of a picky eater. And the sleepover's, how fun they were from staying up real late and telling each other who we thought were cute girls, to Doug coming home late at night and us trying to act fast like we were asleep before Doug checked in on us.

Then as time went by and we got older and the activities changed to hunting, fishing, sports, and why the Cowboys were going to beat the dreaded Eagles. I can remember the first time Jake and I were going to go hunting together and the choice of prey was pheasants. So at the start of the day both of our spirits and pride were up and each of us saying to each other how hard can it be to hit these pheasants. Not that tough right, but oh how we were both

so very wrong. About after 3 hours into the hunting trip and both of us having gone through 2 boxes of shells and each of us still not having hit a darn thing I believe something dawned on both of us that these pheasants were a little more allusive then what somebody would think. After a full day's work of hunting, no birds, 6 empty boxes of shells, and how crappy we both were at shooting our pride was a little hurt but we still managed to have one incredible time.

There is many other great times and stories that Jake and I had shared together too many for me to remember. But I would like to say to Doug and Rita you guys have always treated me so well, always like family never nothing less and I thank you so much for that. And lastly to my best friend Jake you'll always be with me, I know you are watching over all of us now and I can't wait for the day we meet again.