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A-ALL PEST TERMITE EXTERMINATORS, INC.
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The Party Animal News

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The Osage Elegy

My cousin recently sent photos to my mom that were taken several years ago when she visited Pawhuska, OK with some of her siblings. The picture on the other side of this newsletter is of my mom, her sister and brother in front of one of their many childhood homes. The truth is my mom's family was poor. I've read *Hillbilly Elegy* by J.D. Vance, and the hardships he describes of the Appalachian inhabitants and those of the Okies, written of in Steinbecks renowned *Grapes of Wrath*, don't seem that far apart.

A lot of Vance's book struck home. It is clear my grandfather had issues. He was always moving his family so he could find work as a car mechanic. His self medication (drinking) and smoking seemed his only way to deal with his problems (mom told me he had bad arthritis). He died in his 60s. My moms youngest brother (Bill) died early in his 70s, and I know he had a drinking problem, too.

My uncle Bill came to work for A-All in the 70s. They rented a house across the alley from us. I thought it was great to have three cousins so close. Most of the other extended family was in Arizona and Oklahoma. My uncle Bill believed in fun. His kids had go-carts. My dad only believed in work. Unfortunately, my dad is not easy to work with, and Uncle Bill sized the situation up soon. He stopped doing pest control and worked as a security guard until he moved his family back to Arizona. I missed them. He then worked for a moving company in Yuma most of his remaining life.

My dad is like Mamaw, J.D.Vance's grandmother. Mamaw would be 94 if she were alive and my dad is 84. Close to the same generation. My dad basically says what is on his mind. There is no filter. Mamaw would use profanities but I think my mother's stricter German up-bringing would not allow this in our home. But that did not mean there was no fighting between my mom and dad.

J.D.s mom lived in this explosive environment. His mom is one year younger than me. She ended up with relationship and drug problems all her life. Something J.D. Vance had to live with during his formative years. J.D. wrote the book to try to understand the problems in the hillbilly culture. He still believed in the family. You could have all this going on but believe in the family.

Economically, J.D.s grandparents were better off than my parents. My dad worked as a Teamster loading trucks at night and had his pest control company during the day until 1972, when he decided to do pest control full time. We operated the company out of our home and all calls were important, so many times, as early as 12 years old, I answered the phone. At 15 and 16 my brother and I were going out and treating houses for bug problems. In the winter my dad bought firewood and we delivered it. When it rained, we did not have to work. I loved it when it rained.

Yes, I grew up with problems in the family and J.D. Vance grew up with problems. Many of us do. If you come out of it, maybe, at least, you have a better understanding and empathy for others. It seems I use that skill daily. Many people have called Vance weird. In his book, the first mentioning of weird was a family he knew that did not fight. They were weird. I guess we all could be considered weird. – David

Please note that we will be closed Dec 23rd thru Jan 1st. Enjoy your Holidays!

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My Mom's Grapes of Wrath

This was one of fifteen plus homes my mother lived in growing up. The picture was taken several years ago when they could still travel. Today, my uncle is 95, my aunt is 88 and my mom is 84. My mom lived in Pawhuska, OK, Yuma, AZ, Casa Grande AZ, Compton, CA and Portland, OR to name a few cities and there were many moves in each city. It's interesting that once each married, they lived in their homes for decades. They had moved enough.



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