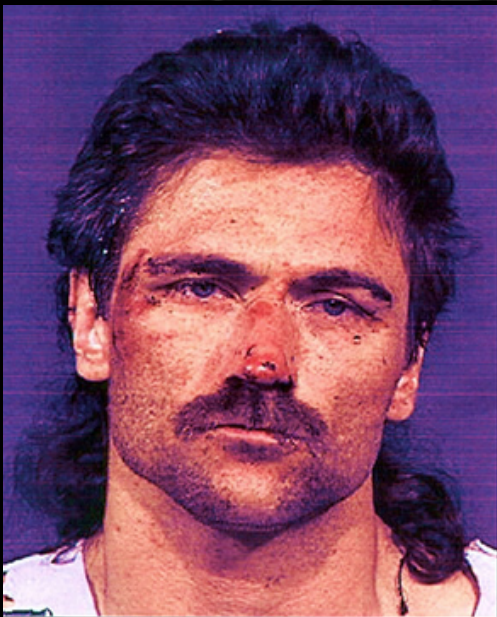


GOOD SEED

the Dave's Killer Bread story



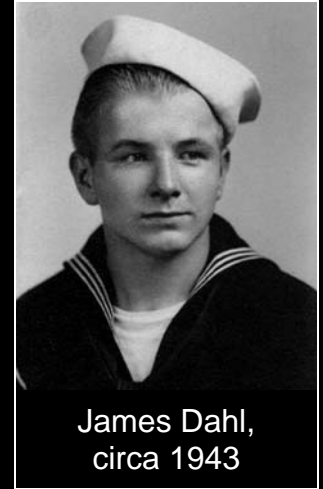
*Written By
Dave Dahl
2008*

Computer View Version

Printable Version at: www.daveskillerbread.com/story

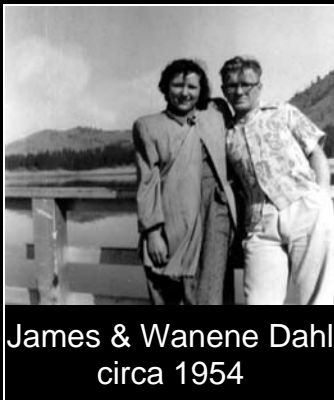
BORN TO BE A BAKER

I really don't remember too much of my early years - I'm pretty sure it's because I don't want to. I do remember attending a private school and that I didn't care much for that or anything else, for that matter. I also remember making a lot of bread, working with my brothers Glenn and Al, my sister Linda, my mother Wanene, and particularly, my father, James Dahl. He was the early force behind a bakery that was really ahead of its time, a bakery which came to be known as Nature Bake. He had been a doughboy as a youngster while at Columbia Adventist Academy. My grandmother Dahl told acquaintances that she was worried that his "wild ways" would land him in jail. But she was relieved when he enlisted in the Navy, where he served as a ship's baker for most of WWII. He married my mom after graduating with a business degree from Walla Walla College. By the mid 1950's, Jim and Wanene had taken over a neighborhood bakery at about 122nd and SE Division in Portland called Midway Bakery. I don't know if it was my dad's 7th-Day Adventist upbringing or what. But he was always trying to change the world with his ideas about natural and healthy foods. He was one of the early pioneers in sprouted wheat breads, and his signature variety Surviva Bread is still quite popular.



James Dahl,
circa 1943

Not that I cared much about any of that, either.



James & Wanene Dahl
circa 1954

I did work hard for my dad, and later, my brother Glenn, as they taught me our unique style of baking. I gave about 15 of my early years to the business. I know a lot of what I learned has returned to me today, when it matters. But back then, I didn't have the passion for it that I do now, and I didn't see a future for me there. I often used to think that depression and misery were normal, at least for me. I had acne worse than anybody I knew, and I couldn't seem to do a thing about it, except spend lots of time in the sun. I felt completely alone, which is pretty much what I was. I now know that depression is an illness and can be treated effectively. But back then, I just felt that I was born to lose.

I had two saving graces. One was the guitar that had I begged my mom for to fulfill my dream of being serenading cowboy on the open range (What happened to that guy?). I took a few lessons from a guy who new his stuff, but preferred to leave me in a room by myself, watching old plane-crash movies. I loved those movies, but if my mom had known about it, I probably would've ended up with a real guitar teacher. Most of what I have learned on the guitar over the years, I learned on my own. (Prison provided ample opportunity for that.)

The other saving grace was my interest in physical fitness, although I wasn't a jock. I learned a few things about nutrition and natural foods along the way, and to this day I still appreciate simple, nutritious foods, without frills (which is not to say I eat right, but I'm working on it).

But no matter how hard I tried back then, I was still stuck with myself. The strongest memories I have from my childhood are those of contemplating suicide.

So what was a depressed, disillusioned, angry kid to do? Alcohol seemed pretty cool, releasing my inhibitions and deadening the pain as I bounced my head off of sidewalks and fists.

Smoking weed made me paranoid, and hallucinogens were almost always a scary trip for me. But that didn't stop me from partaking on a regular basis. I was searching, and these things were going to help me find.



My first weight set

Hey, and while you're being a fool, why not get married? Yeah, I was 19 when I got hitched to a pretty Filipino woman named Maria. In 1985, we had a beautiful daughter, Davene Michelle Dahl, who later changed her name and now lives in Sweden. Who could blame her for adopting a different name? I didn't like my dad either, and he was a much better father than I was.



With Davene Michelle Dahl, circa 1986

News Flash: the marriage didn't work out. I found myself utterly alone again, and a drag to be around. Suicidal thoughts ruled my days. I was unbearably depressed, although I hadn't even begun to see hard times yet.

KNUCKLEHEAD

A transformation of sorts came when I met a girl who introduced me to a guy who had a big bag of methamphetamine, a brand-spanking new syringe and a steady hand. That first marvelous injection of poison (they called it "crank" in those days, although most of us referred to it affectionately as "dope"—I called it "God") jettisoned me into an exciting, depression-free nirvana. For the first time in my life, I had no inhibitions, no worries, and I could see outside the little prison cell that was my mind.

My brother (and boss) Glenn was fortunate enough not to have the tendency toward depression that I had been gifted with. He knew I needed help, but like everyone else, he couldn't help me. Anti-depressants weren't part of the picture back in the 70's and 80's and I'm not sure I would've given them a chance if they were. I believed I was depressed...well, because life was depressing.

Glenn had watched me suffer through my unhappy adolescence, and probably felt compassion for the pain that I endured. But I think he got over it when I grew into a slimy drug fiend. I had never felt like I belonged at Nature Bake, even before I started getting high, and I think the feeling was mutual. In fact, I really didn't belong anywhere.



My Brother (and co-creator of Dave's Killer Bread) Glenn Dahl

A FOUR-TIME LOSER



One of my
early mugshots

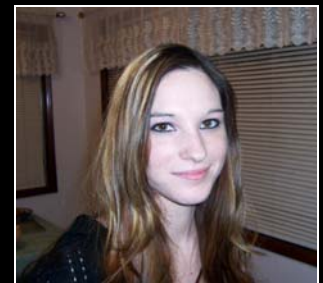
So now, I was still alone in the world, but I had power that didn't require a social life. I would put a needle in my arm and within seconds there was no pain, no concerns. Every day and night was a party, and I discovered my calling: crime. Yeah, I didn't owe anybody anything—in fact they owed me, and I was going to take it from them. I knew I was on the road to hell, and I didn't care.

First, it was car stereos and trinkets—jockey boxing, we called it. Then it was burglary. I broke into dozens of houses, violating the privacy of the (usually) absent inhabitants with ease, savoring the rush of it. But I was a careless burglar; I would blast through doors and break windows brutally and without finesse. I often did scores where I made less than \$20 and left hundreds or thousands of dollars in damage. Then came an occasional big score, and those would be the ones I glorified when I told war stories later in the joint.

And it didn't take me long at all to get there. It was less than a year before I got my first bit: 7 years for 1st Degree burglary, which translated to less than a year for a first-timer in those days. I gave up burglary after that, for the most part, and tried going back to work for my brother again. But I never even thought about quitting dope. I would turn the basement of the bakery (then located on 79th and Stark) into a shooting gallery when nobody else was around. I supplemented my baker's income with drug sales. I had girlfriends. And I was still only a one-time loser.

My second daughter, Jessica, was born during this period. If I was qualified to succeed at anything in those days, fatherhood wasn't it. Shooting dope, doing crime, doing time and raising a little girl? Somehow, she grew into a fine young lady, but I get none of the credit.

At some point I lost control, quit the bakery, and absconded from parole—in no particular order. I started out in a stolen van toward New Bedford, Massachusetts, where I had been promised a job doing construction with a dope buddy who had moved back there. I think that van got about 6 miles to the gallon on the highway. Gas was cheap then, especially for me, because I would just pull off the road, fill the tank, and split. I don't know how many times I did that before I tried it in the wrong town—Sheridan, Wyoming. Not only was that van a gas guzzler, but it wasn't very fast either (I think the owners were happy to see it go). I was easily captured by vigilante cowboys and taken to Sheridan County Jail. I got lucky that time. I had about a pound of low-grade weed that I had scored from a burglary in the stolen van. They gave me 45 days for misdemeanor possession and another 45 for petty larceny. The van never came up in court. The only thing I really remember from the 90 days I spent in there was that if I ate every scrap on my plate (and I always did—even the nasty spinach), my already-skinny ass only lost about a pound a week from borderline starvation. (But I was still only a “one-time loser”. These charges were not felonies, and 90 days was nothing more than a slap on the wrist.)



Jessica Lynn Dahl,
Dave's Killer
Daughter



Nothing like a bad hair day behind bars

When I got out, it was winter, and I was just crazy enough to hitchhike the rest of the way to the East Coast. I got stuck thumbing in two blizzards, first in Illinois and again in Pennsylvania. I had one thing keeping me going forward, and that was the fact that there was nowhere else to go.

But I did make it to New Bedford, only to discover that my friend had just quit his construction business and had become dedicated to a new pastime: speedballs--heroin and cocaine cocktails--the joy of which he generously introduced me to. We used his last paycheck in a couple of days, and then started a spree of armed robberies from Tiberton, Rhode Island to Fall River, Ma. Each netted between \$200 and \$1000, except for the last one in Raynham, Ma. which provided 12 (that's right, twelve) dollars. When I bolted from the store, I found that my ride was gone. By the time I found my driver and was in the truck, lights were flashing behind us. Then we led them on a chase down a dead end street. I jumped out and ditched the knife in the bushes, but they found it, and tackled me a quarter-mile away in a shopping mall (I was never very good at hiding, either.). I had to cough up the \$12, which was my payment for a 54 month stay in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' prison system.

But not before enjoying an eventful scuffle with Taunton's finest following two quite demoralizing nights in Hell Hotel (I had been moved to Taunton for arraignment). I was a little put-off that I had to sleep without a blanket on a filth-encrusted bench for both nights without a meal. I was still naïve enough to think I had some sort of rights—like food, for instance.

On the morning that we were to be arraigned at the nearby courthouse, I demanded that we be given something to eat. "We don't feed thieves" they countered, to which I replied "you pigs gotta feed me." (Another testament to my level of refinement and sophistication in those days.) Well, it turns out that cops, even really mean ones, don't like to be called names of that nature. So as the door to my cell opened and I walked out, still thinking I'm going to have my first food in two days, I was tripped.

As I did my best to cover up, four cops beat me all over my body with clubs for a while. Then a particularly steroid-enhanced member of the group got me in a nice choke hold and squeezed until what would be best described as a geyser of blood erupted from my throat, leaving an impressive puddle on the floor a few feet in front of me. When my co-defendant was escorted out, he was clearly very afraid. But they left him alone (he knew how to keep his mouth shut). Minutes later, I was in court, still just as hungry but sporting a sore throat that stayed with me for months. That was 1989.

This time I got a little taste of prolonged adversity, but I wasn't ready to cry uncle yet. I found a way to run from myself again. I was like a chameleon, finding it fairly easy to stay quiet (the perpetual sore throat didn't hurt) and slowly learning how to act, speak, and stay out of even-worse situations.



An 80's Mugshot



A 90's Mugshot

It's hard to imagine being any more lonely and miserable than I was. For a guy with a death wish anyway, the years I spent in there were sheer hell. It was fine to be unloved and forgotten as long as I knew where my next fix was coming from. I'm not sure how I faked being tough for so long, when underneath I was a quivering jelly-like mass of anxiety and despair. Those were some damn dark days. But the nights were much worse—when I would lie sleepless for hours and wonder what the hell the point was to it all—to any of it—and again fantasize about suicide.

After serving four and one-half years in the Massachusetts prison system for armed robbery, I figured it was time for a change. So I moved back to hometown Portland to study advanced courses in drug distribution.

Man, was it nice to be back in the Meth Mecca that I knew Portland to be. And I became one of its most passionate ambassadors. I had figured out that there were better ways to be a player than burglary and robbery. All I had to do was get my hands on a quarter-ounce of “crystal”, turn it for a profit and personal stash, upgrade to a half, full, and so on.

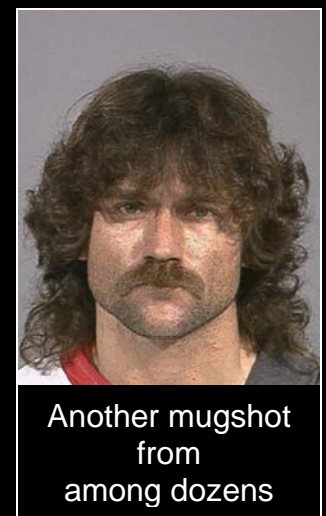
I was now a prestigious seasoned veteran. I had my game plan mapped out. This was 1994, in the early days of cell phones, when Motorola made these big, heavy monster phones that worked very well but screamed “drug dealer” to the cops. Then again, the black-leather trench coat (occasionally concealing a sawed-off twelve-gauge) and the long mane didn't help, either.

It's no secret that I enjoyed the notoriety. All I had to do was keep a legal license and insurance, and keep my dope and guns in a safe place—usually under the hood of my car in a specially-designed compartment. I'd get a call on my pager (about as useful as an 8-track tape these days), return it on the cell, and meet the customer for a deal. I came up fast and lived large.

I had it all figured out, but it was only a matter of time before my arrogance brought me down again. I needed a power supply for my phone that I could use at home, so I went to Radio Shack and found the makings of a “Frankenstein” that I could splice together for this purpose. As I was walking out of there, I looked across the street at GI Joe's and thought “what the hell.” I dropped in there and found the accessory I needed—no splicing necessary.

It was \$13, and as I got up toward the check stands, the lines were a mile long because it was the day after Thanksgiving. I wasn't about waiting, and I just kept walking—right out the front door. I had a little habit of stealing a little something just about every day—like a pack of Marlboros (back then, they were often an easy grab), a king-size snickers, or a Slurpee—and just walk out with it in my hand.

This time, security wasn't having any of that. Two security guards and a large checker brought me down after a little scuffle. To make a long story short, I got 18 months for 2nd degree Robbery and 4th degree Assault.



Another mugshot from among dozens

As was always the case, I lost everything as my “friends” swooped on my cash and prizes the moment they knew I was out of the picture for a while. I was back in school—this time Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution (my 2nd visit there) in Pendleton, Oregon. In between the characteristic bouts of serious depression, I made some great contacts that would serve to insure my success as a kingpin on the streets.



I guess I didn't feel like saying "cheese"

When I got out (after a little more than 18 months) I had a concrete plan: carry my big bag of dope in my established “safe spots”, keep a license and insurance, and dammit, *don't steal anything!*

I made it a whole 6 months before my fool-proof plan snagged. I had failed to register my car, due to several days' Christmas closure at DMV, and somebody had stolen some tags from another vehicle to put on mine. On my way to a customer's place at 1am on January 2, 1997, a Clackamas County deputy pulled me over. No big deal, I thought. I had my dope stashed in a safe spot—I would go to jail for a few weeks for misdemeanors and a parole violation.

But the rookie officer found \$3500 on me and figured I was up to no-good, so he ordered a k-9 search of my vehicle. Under the hood, they found a half pound of meth, a half pound of weed, and a .380 semi-automatic pistol. I served 90 days for a parole violation and then was released pending charges. It turned out to be an illegal search on my vehicle, a technicality that would eventually get me out of that one. But for all I knew, I was facing four years and my system was flawed. I decided to lay low. I had a lot of money owed to me and set about collecting that. I had been out of jail for about 10 hours and was riding shotgun while my girlfriend (it's debatable who's girlfriend she actually was at this time, but that's not part of this story) was driving us to Bend when she got pulled over for driving recklessly. When they searched the car, they found about 3 ounces of meth and about \$6,000.



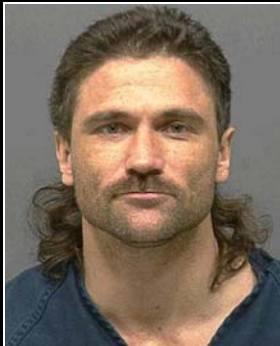
Starting to wake up from the last one

Two very serious busts in two counties in two days on the street (with that 90-day parole sanction in between). I was in a lot of trouble. We were able to bail out in Deschutes County before they realized I was a parole violator—I still had some “luck” on my side (the kind of luck that eventually bit me in the ass). But now, I was really feeling desperate. I was marked and decided to go on the run.

About a week later, my girlfriend picks me up on the street in NE Portland and I'm thinking I'm finally going to get me some of that good stuff after months without and then snuggle up and get some much-needed sleep. About 2 blocks later, police lights are flashing behind us. I remember telling her “if you pull over, I'm shooting this guy.” She pulls over, I jump out and run away, and she goes to jail again.

The next time I saw her, we got a motel room and managed to get a night's sleep before the police started pounding on the door. The officer had been doing his rounds and became suspicious of the vehicle I had borrowed from a customer (turns out the customer was another “corrections client”, as the officer stated in his report later), had nosed around, opened the unlocked car door and found a loaded, sawed-off shotgun under the driver's

seat. But as he was standing outside the motel-room door, he was just telling me that the car's window was partially rolled down and that I should close it since it was raining. I informed him that I had no idea who the car belonged to.



Teflon Dave - 1997

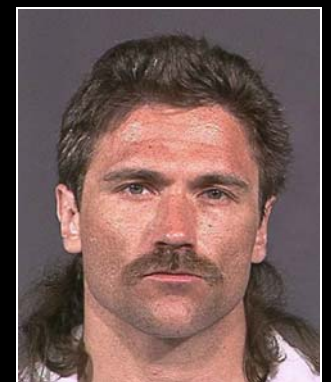
He left, but I knew he'd be back—with friends. I decided to make a run for it. The result was a 2-on-one, 90-second wrestling event, an empty can of pepper spray, and some unfavorable (to me, of course) publicity in The Oregonian's Metro section the next day with the headline: "Officer Hurt by Drug Case Suspect."

(The original charges in this case were felony firearm possession and resisting arrest. That second charge—a misdemeanor—was eventually upgraded to Assault 2, which is a Measure 11 offense carrying a mandatory minimum of 70 months.)

Ok, so I am sitting in the can with a serious felony in each of 3 counties. That ought to keep me there, right? But as another 90-day parole sanction timed out, it began to look like \$2,700 would get me out. I still had money owed to me, and I pulled it off.

A few weeks later, I traded my car for the day for a friend's pickup and was driving down 82nd Avenue. The police just happened to be looking for a truck like the one I was driving, and pulled me over. The officer accused me of stealing the truck and charged me with other offenses I knew nothing about, and had a handcuff on me before I decided I wasn't going without a fight. This was one big cop, and after a pretty good scuffle, he landed on top of my head, and my blood covered the street. It must have been quite a spectacle, as they loaded my blood-soaked carcass into the cruiser and took me first to the hospital for stitches and then downtown.

Sitting in the Justice Center that evening with a stack of charges I hadn't committed and much more serious ones (like assault on police) which I had, I was informed by a deputy that I could bail out with the \$3700 check I had on me when I got arrested (the only reason I got to keep the check was that it was from the Gresham Police Department to reimburse me for cash they had taken from me during the last arrest). By some "miracle"—more of the "luck" I'd been having for months--I got out in the wee hours of the morning, before my parole officer knew what was happening.



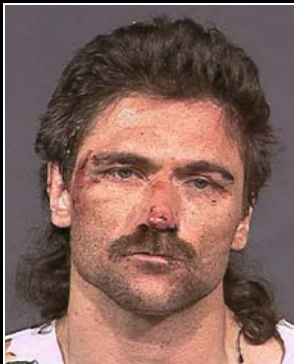
Teflon Dave 2

Now I was really in trouble. It was no more than a week later and I was in the Cameo motel on 82nd and Sandy with several pounds of 2nd rate weed to sell but none of the stuff I needed to get the job done. So I sent a guy to get me a small amount of crystal to keep me going. He didn't get back quick enough, so I called someone else and she got there before he did. But I was too tired to fix and I fell asleep, only to be awakened by an emergency medical team when I didn't respond to the checkout order. When they came in, they saw the dope on the scale and a big bag of weed I had intended to weigh into smaller packages.

I was duly scared out of my wits, and decided I had to leave everything in the room and make a run for it. And not a moment too soon, as the police were just pulling in as I was

“nonchalantly” strolling out the door, down the steps, and around the corner before the clerk had a chance to give me up.

Now, not only was I running from 5 serious felony cases in three counties, I had to hide from my connections as my horrific string of “bad luck” had transformed me from a high roller to a man on a precipice. It soon became clear that I had nowhere to run, and nowhere to hide for long. I disconnected from my once-comfortable circle of criminals, found a pretty little exotic dancer to make my final nights bearable, and tried to stay off the streets. After this, I had several close calls, but managed to make it 2 months before they got me one last time, in a high speed chase down Northeast Prescott Street. I wrecked my car into a pole trying to turn onto a side street with too much speed and got out and ran, injured and weak from hard living. I jumped a fence, another fence, and was headed off by a perimeter of police with more of that pesky pepper spray.



After my scuffle with the police

And don't let me forget to tell you: I had another quarter-pound of meth and a stolen .40 Glock in the car I had left behind.

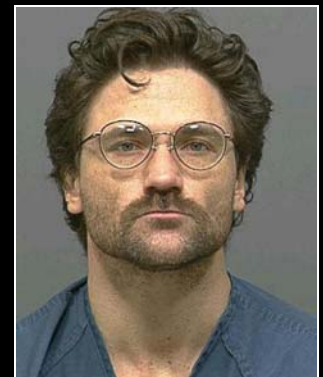
All in all, I had probably spent 3 years on the streets from the time I started doing meth until I got out for good in late 2004. I used to think that with all of the excitement and pleasure I got during those years (having nothing but unhappiness to compare it to), any price I ended up paying would be worth it. But that was the dope and the adrenaline talking. It is amazing to look back and remember the horrible feeling I had, sitting in that jail cell facing a multitude of serious charges, and to realize things couldn't get much worse. And that this time, there was no way in hell I was getting out of this. I had to face it.

That moment was the beginning of a very painful and difficult transformation that is thankfully still going on today.

THE TRANSFORMATION

I hadn't had friends on the street. I had had customers. Some of them even dropped me a line or two. Having seen me pull a Houdini so many times before, and since they all owed me money, they figured they should keep tabs on me. I had a reputation for collecting my debts (any one of those collections could have gotten me a lot of joint time). But as soon as they knew I wasn't going to be around for a decade, they stopped wasting their time on me.

Here was my situation: If I fought the charges. I would lose. The Feds were going to indict me under the Armed Career Criminal statute, and I would certainly do 20 years (after a 5 year gun minimum was added to the 15 year ACC minimum) if I didn't plead guilty to the assault on police officers (originally “resisting arrest”) in Multnomah County, plus commercial delivery of methamphetamine for a net total of 120 months. With the arrogance I was stubbornly trying to hang onto, I fought it until my lawyer informed me that the feds were preparing to indict me for the ACC that day, after which it would be too late. My choice was to get out of prison before I turned 45, or fight it and re-enter society as a “senior citizen.” Not such a hard choice: really, really bad, or whole helluva lot worse.



My last mugshot

The final plea agreement was for 115 months stateside after my 3 month parole sanction was up, which added up to 118 months. All of my other charges in Multnomah County would be dropped and the other counties' either dropped or run concurrently, and I could get settled in stateside.

The first few years of my bit were pretty tough, to say the least. I fell in with guys I had known on the streets or in my other prison sets. I hooked up with a supply of drugs for a minute, but it dried up and I was facing myself once again. My depression and hopelessness were just about unbearable. I withdrew as much as possible, wishing I didn't have to leave my cell for chow, dreading seeing, much less talking to anyone.

I slipped in and out of this state for months, then years. I had heard of antidepressants, but somehow, I told myself I was tougher than that. Sure, and that's why I "self-medicated" all of those years, right?

I don't know when I finally found the humility to see a professional, but it turned out to be just the tool I needed to start seeing things as they really are. And the more I started seeing the truth, the more humble I became. And the more humble I got, the more I began to see.

I had been playing my guitar during these painful years, and writing some pretty dark songs. But when I started taking the medication—about 3 or 4 years into the bit, I began to make real progress as a musician. I also went to school for computer-aided drafting and machining (CAD-CAM), and found that I seemed to excel at everything I did. Suddenly I was incredibly hungry for knowledge. Life had not suddenly become easy; it had just become something worth living.

For about 2 years, I worked 8am to 4 pm as a drafter and CAD tutor. It was absolute bliss. I was certain that this was my future, and when the unlikely opportunity to transfer to Powder River (a minimum-security drug prison in Baker City with a time-reducing drug-treatment program), I honestly didn't want to go! I had found the answer to all of my unhappiness, and was free, even if I had a cold, razor-wired, electric fence and guard towers surrounding me.

But I really didn't have a choice. This was a program meant more to alleviate the lack of prison beds available than to give somebody choices. As the day approached that I had to leave the computers and projects behind, I actually started having dreams about returning to the family business. I knew that over a year in an intense brainwashing environment would make my drafting skills very rusty, but if I could maintain the passion and excitement I had discovered for creating things, I could apply those principles and attitudes to developing food products. A lot of years had passed since I worked in the family bakery, and I hadn't even considered it an option, but suddenly it all seemed to make perfect sense. I belonged back with my brother, Glenn, and his bakery more than I ever had. I had something to contribute this time: a clear-headed conviction that I could make some cool things happen.

Glenn and I remember different stories about this period, but I do remember that we began to establish some sort of communication. Essentially, it was decided that NatureBake could use a guy like me around. This understanding eventually resulted in what is now Dave's Killer Bread.

TRANSFORMED

From the moment I stepped off the bus, I haven't stopped busting my ass. So much time to make up and not a minute to lose.

I can't count how many times I've been released from jail or prison, but this time was much, much different. I had experienced a rebirth. I hadn't found Jesus, but I had found a way of living that gave me the strength to leave the needle behind.

It was December 27, 2004 and I was back in Portland after completing 88 months (this time) for Delivery of a Controlled Substance (methamphetamine) and Assault II (on arresting police officers). I did most of that time at Snake River Correctional Institution (The Snake Pit) in Ontario, Oregon. The story of my life so far: mental illness treated with drugs, funded by crime. I know what you're thinking: mental illness! who talks about recovering from mental illness? But that's exactly what it was. And finding the humility to acknowledge it and get help has been a significant factor contributing to my success in turning my life around.



This time, my mindset wasn't about getting high, getting laid, hooking up and getting paid. Or as they used to say, "Out the gate at 8, in the spoon by noon". Dope and dope money were the monsters, and I must never forget their power over me or my love for them. I'm not that well, and never will be.

Nope, this time around, my plan was tempered with the hard-won humility borne of prolonged adversity. That humility gave me the courage to accept my "lowly" position in life, even embrace it, accepting responsibility for my past, present, and future. I had the freedom to be myself, and admitting my failures and shortcomings was a key to finding solutions for the future.

There were (and are) still some very real debts to pay. Not long after I got out, I was served notice that I would be paying one-quarter of my "disposable income" to the Oregon Dept of Revenue until I paid about \$37,000 for all those times I defaulted on bail (remember that part of the story—all that "luck" I had?) Not only did I give up a chunk of my life, but I would now be giving up a chunk of money. I just hope it's gone to a good cause.

One of the other debts I'm still paying is that my status as a violent felon makes it very difficult to find a good place to live. I have managed to find decent places to live, but it hasn't been easy.

So, here it was the beginning of 2005, with 15 years of prison behind me, and a new outlook on life.

I didn't spend a minute looking for love or friends. And for the first time, the desire to self-medicate didn't even exist. People tell me I need balance--social situations, love, friendships. If there is one thing I learned doing time, it's that all I really need and desire is the opportunity to freely create.

I had to pay the bills and get some fresh bakery experience after 20 years of cooling off. So I started by filling in for absent bakers, de-panning thousands of loaves of Nature Bake bread, mixing batches, etc. Everything felt fresh. I was learning to bake all over again.

Soon I was working full time as a mixer, and day lighting as a product developer, reformulating Nature Bake's packaged cookie line to contain neither trans fats nor animal products. I also added a new cranberry-oatmeal variety (these cookies are still sold at Trader Joe's under their brands).

This was in my first few months out. I was on a mission and had several more new varieties of cookies in mind to develop. But Glenn wanted me to focus elsewhere. He felt we didn't need more cookies at the time. He wanted bread.

Of course, Glenn knew the bread had to be really special, but I think he was hoping I wouldn't come up with anything that cost a lot to make. That wasn't to be the case. One of the reasons my bread is so good is that I didn't formulate with cost in mind. My first bread, Blues, was the costliest sandwich bread ever produced at Nature Bake.

It was also Glenn's idea to call it Dave's bread. I never would have thought of putting my own name on a loaf of bread. Names I had in mind? Blues Bread and Killer Bread. I wasn't so sure about using the name "killer", especially with my history (although it makes great rumor material), but one day I sketched a loaf of "Killer Bread" and then I started calling my 2nd bread creation "Killer Bread" and the name began to gather momentum. It really did seem to describe the bread to a tee, in one word.

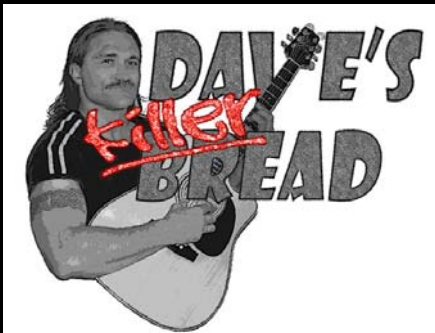
At some point it became obvious: it all had to be Dave's Killer Bread.

IT'S A FAMILY VENTURE

A few months after I graduated from the "insert whatever here", my nephew Shobi (Glenn's son) also graduated from an institution, although his attendance was voluntary. Shobi had spent the previous three years at Willamette University studying Economics and was eager to join the family business of making bread.

Shobi's knowledge, skills, creativity and work ethic have played a huge part in everything that we have done so far. If you were around in the early days of Dave's Killer Bread, you might have seen the original logos that Shobi made on his computer with Photoshop. He is also the one who finds our ingredients (no easy task), designs packaging and signage, analyzes and interprets complex business data (so that I can understand it, for one), and he has created each of the many manifestations of the Dave's Killer Bread website we have had over the years.

Looking back over the past few years, it is surprising and uplifting to realize what we have accomplished even though we — Glenn, Shobi, and myself — butted heads very indelicately for the first couple of years of DKB. We have learned to move past our differences and focus on the challenges and rewards that are and will be ours.



The first Dave's Killer Bread logo

KILLER BREAD IS BORN

It's interesting to note that I hadn't had good bread in years when I got back in town. I had often longed for good, whole-grain bread like I had grown up making and eating while eating a Skippy-copy peanut butter and jelly sandwich on white prison bread. All of a sudden, great bread was all around me--and I was under the gun to create something even better.

How, you say? I would come up with a name, and then design a bread to live up to the name. In a sense, begin with the end in mind.

As I mentioned, first came Blues, named for its crunchy blue corn crust, and an important element in my life: the blues. When I pulled my first 4-loaf pan from the oven, I knew I had something. It was just beautiful! I didn't even want to slice it as sandwich bread--like defiling freshly-fallen snow by stepping in it. But as good as it looked, it tasted better. It was perfectly sweet and its thick, grainy texture made it linger in the mouth.

After "Blues" came "Nuts and Grains" (originally called "Killer Bread"), "Good Seed", and "Rockin' Rye", and when a unique marketing opportunity came up—Portland Farmers' Market's Summer Loaf—we jumped on it.



Our debut at Summer Loaf, August 2005



Early DKB Crew:
Sandy, Shobi,
Dave and Joe

The first day of the Portland Farmers Market on Thursday, August 4th, 2005 was a typical hot Oregon August day. Shobi and I set up our tent near the Ecotrust building in the Pearl District and soon the market bell rang and customers began walking by. We would call out to people as they walked by, "Come try Dave's Killer Bread", and by the time we had our first few customer reactions, I knew that Dave's Killer Bread was going to be a success. People would rave about the bread and call their friends and relatives over to try it. We sold a lot of bread that day. Two days later at the second Summer Loaf at the farmers market near PSU, the reaction to Dave's Killer Bread was so amazing that we knew we needed to continue to be there every week.

For the next couple of months, we sold more and more bread at the farmers markets while customers pleaded for us to get it into grocery stores. By fall, we were in stores like New Seasons,

Peoples' Co-op, Food Front and Alberta St. Co-op. Shortly thereafter came Whole Foods and Fred Meyer.

We introduced 21 Whole Grains and Cracked Whole Wheat late in 2005 at the farmers market, again to raves. I recall how we fought for shelf space for these two new varieties, but popular demand once again won the day. In 2006, we started a route to Eugene, and again we were accepted with open arms. 2007 saw us pick up lots of customers in the Puget Sound, as far north as Bellingham, Washington, and as far east as Spokane. We also started filling gaps in our home state, and just recently added a store in northern Cali called “Mother Truckers!”



Store shelves empty of Dave's Killer Bread became a common sight.

The varieties of bread we've introduced since '05 include: Good Seed Spelt, Power Seed, Good Seed Sprouted Wheat, and the Peace Bomb. Varieties available at Portland and Beaverton Farmers' Markets are: Robust Raisin, Sin Dawg (100% whole grain, organic, cinnamon-sugar treat), and Blues Buns.

THE MAN BEHIND THE LOGOS



Ryan's Comic

The original logos that Shobi created on the computer were great for getting us going back in 2005, but I knew that hand drawn artwork was really what Dave's Killer Bread needed. I met Ryan Alexander-Tanner when Willamette Week asked him to write this little strip(at left) about me and DKB in early '06. About the only thing he got wrong was the nose. After his WW gig ended, we asked him to take a stab at drawing the dkb logo.

It was not an easy process for any of us, but it was fun, and I think we came up with something that most people like. After he finished that logo, he began work on our individual variety logos. I think the kid did a killer job.

WHAT'S ON THE WAY?



The (in)famous “Sin Dawg”

I enjoy finding opportunities to create new and exciting products. If I could design a truly “killer” gluten-free bread, I would be an instant hero to millions of bread-starved folks. Unfortunately, gluten is not something I know how to do without at this time. I have gotten literally hundreds of requests via email and at farmers' markets and events for gluten-free bread. I hope that, if I can't do it, somebody else can. I really want to see it happen for these people.

As of this writing, I am developing a sourdough starter that I hope will result in some great new killer bread varieties. I intend to make bagels that will rock your socks, as well as low-carb, diabetic, and low sodium breads. I was on the road to making “killer kookies” when I took the fork

to making bread in '05 and I will certainly find that trail again. I think I can make some really amazing tasting and nutritious muffins as well.

I'm always open to new ideas, and I enjoy getting "outside the box." To make something special happen. There's enough to keep me busy-and out of trouble—for the rest of my lifetime.

More Pictures and Videos



(Above) Food Fight Jam with MDC Unplugged '05



List of DKB Videos

- **Watch Randy White's (of KPOJ) video**
Welcome to Killer Breadquarters. ([Watch Here](#))
- **Amy Troy from Channel 8 News**
Our first TV appearance. ([Watch Here](#))
- **Emiko Badillo and Michelle Majeski's video**
Student documentary. ([Watch Here](#))
- **AM Northwest (#1)**
Portland's liberal paper, Willamette Week, did a "Best of Portland" feature in '07 in which they dubbed me the "Best Bada-Bing Baker." Writer Byron Beck went on KATU's AM Northwest and fed the rumor that I was a "killer." Pretty funny stuff. ([Watch Here](#))
- **AM Northwest (#2)**
A couple of weeks later, I got my chance to set the record straight: ([Watch Here](#))
- **Oregonian Video**
In the very first week in our new Milwaukie, Or. location, The Oregonian published a great article about us on the front page of their Business section, accompanied by the following video: ([Watch Here](#))
- **Amy Frazier of Koin 6 News**
KOIN 6 story in 2008. ([Watch Here](#))
- **CW's Portland Now**
Another nice story on the CW's Portland Now ([Watch Here](#))
- **Everyday Dish TV**
I show how to make a Sin Dawg in Julie and Jay's Kitchen ([Watch Here](#))
- **Everyday Dish TV**

(Above) Ryan's first attempts at capturing my essence for the DKB logo. I told him to make me prettier, and quick like.

So he made me prettier, but a little lop-sided (at least he got my arms right-hah!) (Below)



(Above) Next, Ryan attempted to make me look like Luigi or something.

Somehow, some way, we got here. (Below)

Another appearance on Everyday Dish TV. ([Watch Here](#))

Family Business Snapshot

David James Dahl

Born: January 12, 1963

Glenn Dahl (Dave's brother)

Born: May 29, 1954

Shobi Dahl (Glenn's son)

Born: November 16, 1983

Dave's Other Family:

Parents

James Dahl (deceased)

Wanene Dahl

Brothers and Sisters

Al Dahl (works for Bob's Red Mill)

Linda Tereau

Children

Davene Michelle Dahl (Dave's Daughter)

Jessica Lynn Dahl (Dave's Daughter)

Pets

Monkey (Dave's Siamese Cat)

Dave's Schools:

- Portland Adventist Elementary
 - Hood View Adventist Junior Academy
 - Milo Adventist Academy
 - Gresham High School—dropped out in '80
 - Computer Aided Drafting (in prison)
 - Hard Knox
-

Drugs Dave Used:

Used most drugs at one time or another, including



heroin, cocaine, and methamphetamine—all intravenously. Meth was my drug of choice.

Lock-up History

- Burglary I, Theft I, and Unauthorized Use of a Motorized Vehicle (Oregon) 1987...Sentence: 7 years, released on parole after 9 months
- Possession, Petty Larceny (Wyoming) 1989...served 90 days
- Armed Robbery (Massachusetts) 1989 5-7 years (Walpole)...served 54 months
- Robbery II (Oregon) 1994...Sentence: 24 months...served 18
- Assault II, Delivery of a Controlled Substance II, and Felon in Possession of a Firearm (Oregon) 1997...Sentence: 115 months + 3 month parole sanction...served 88 months (early release due to drug program)
- Along the way, I served several parole sanctions.

*Pictures of the current
DKB crew (Below)*



Bread History

8/05 — Debut at Portland Farmers' Market's Summer Loaf with Blues, Nuts and Grains, Rockin' Rye, and Good Seed

Fall/Winter '05 — In Food Front, Peoples', Food Fight, New Seasons...introduced 21 Whole Grains and Cracked Whole Wheat

Early '06 — Fred Meyer, Whole Foods in Portland...introduced Good Seed Spelt and Power Seed

Mid-'06 — Eugene Stores: Market of Choice (4 Stores). Capella, Kiva, Friendly St. Market...First Alternative Co-op in Corvallis. Introduced Good Seed Sprouted Wheat

Late '06 — Introduced Peace Bomb



2007 — Metropolitan Market in Seattle. Introduced Raisin Bread, Sin Dawgs, and Blues Buns at Portland and Beaverton Farmers' Markets

2008 — Secured foothold in Puget Sound with 4 Whole Foods Stores, 9 PCC's, 6 Central Markets, Fred Meyer, Bellingham Co-op, Skagit Valley Co-op, Sno-Isle Co-op and more.

