



I would like to tell you a story of my little boy. He is 5 yrs old and the beat of my heart. He is a rambunctious, happy child, full of energy and smiles. He goes to a daycare where he plays with other boys and girls, and seems to most people like any other 5 yr old. And he is. But my happy, energetic little boy has an unthinkable secret buried inside his beautiful little head. He hasn't been able to tell his story yet, so as his mom, I will do so for him.

His story starts back in March 2003, when he spent the weekend in the hospital surrounded by myself, his father, many friends and family, doctors and nurses, IV's , CAT scans, X-rays, everything a little boy his age has no business knowing about. Let me tell you what happened.

I was having a lifelong friend babysit for me while I worked a second shift job. On March 15<sup>th</sup> a Friday like any other, I was horrified when I picked him up. I let myself in the back door of the sitter's house, like always. I found one of the sitter's children age 6 sitting on the couch, still awake. I thought that was strange, even more so when she said "He got in to really big trouble tonight". Usually he was very good. When he heard me enter the room, he looked up and in the most heart stopping, whimpering voice, said, "Mommmyyyyyy!!!" That's when I noticed something about his face. His left eye was red and beginning to swell. When I asked the sitter what had happened to him, she suggested that he had been bitten by a bug. Knowing that no bug could do that, I rushed him to the ER, and found that he had 3 fractures in his head. By the next morning, his eye was so swollen; the doctor couldn't examine it for the severity of his injury. The sitter denied knowing what had happened, and eventually the judge dropped the 2<sup>nd</sup> degree child abuse charges on her.

I left my 2 yr old baby with someone I knew and trusted. Is someone you trust watching your kids? I hope this is a wakeup call for some of you. Many people hear the words "child abuse" and assume it's always the mommies and daddies who hurt the kids. But I found out the hard way, that's not true. Pay close attention to your kids, watch for little signs, and pray to God that your child never feels that sort of pain. If you even think something might happen, don't brush it off as being paranoid. Kids shouldn't have to hurt.