Harry Richardson

April 10, 2015

Lindenwold, New Jersey
Diagnosed in 1995

In 1978, my dentist said that I had thrush (which is a common complication of HIV). The previous year, I had started using IV drugs on 153rd Street and Broadway in Manhattan. I had served as a combat medic in the U.S. Army from 1971 to 1972, and that's where I learn how to administer IV injections. By 1981 I had quit using IV drugs, but I waited until 1995 to be tested for HIV.

My CD count was 180. I had bacterial pneumonia in 1995, which was my first hospital stay. I received my treatment from the Department of Veterans Affairs. I have also been treated for hepatitis C.

I am now 66 years old and feel that HIV wasting is my biggest enemy. That is what will kill me. I have always been noncompliant with my medication and have still been able to remain undetectable in my viral load. Longevity runs in my family and I expect to live into my 80s. I live by myself in South Jersey across from Philadelphia.

I started receiving this magazine when it first came out and still receive it today. I suffer from depression and attention deficit disorder; I am very compliant with those medications. Most of my medical problems are due to my age. I came to this site because I wanted to join POZ Personals. If I found a female companion, it might improve my mental health and physical health and I could live even longer than 80 years old.

I appreciate the opportunity to tell my story.

What adjective best describes you?
Sense of humor

What is your greatest achievement?
Being accepted to a prestigious college

What is your greatest regret?
IV drug use and not becoming a father

What keeps you up at night?
Not having a female companion

If you could change one thing about living with HIV, what would it be?
Having to take medication

What is the best advice you ever received?
Be compliant with my HIV medication and get drug-free. Use medical marijuana. Become a member of the Ryan White Planning Council.

What person in the HIV/AIDS community do you most admire?
People I've met as a member of the Ryan White Planning Council

What drives you to do what you do?
Realizing that I can live a very long time

What is your motto?
Power to the people. You reap what you sow.

If you had to evacuate your house immediately, what is the one thing you would grab on the way out?
My psychiatric medication and my HIV medication

If you could be any animal, what would you be? And why?
I would be a hummingbird because they are able to fly backwards and they eat the sweet nectar from flowers. They have brilliant colors. And because they are found all over the world.

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