Back From Vacation

March 11, 2011 By Shawn Decker

I'd mentioned a few blog posts ago that I was feeling under the weather. So what do you do when you are feeling under the weather? You leave the weather for a better climate. And that's just what I did when I ditched the blah weather of Charlottesville, Virginia for the warm beach weather of Anguilla in the Caribbean.

I'm not shitting you, that is a picture I took. That's Gwenn and our goddaughter, Evie, walking by the beach. Now, before you hate me for posting about this trip, remember that in 1987 at the tender age of 11 I was given two years to live by the medical establishment. If you need a more recent example of pity, I'd spent the entire week before the flights to get there feeling like ass.

Not enough? I understand. You can hate.

The weather did help me bounce back faster, healthwise. Gwenn and I went to Anguilla with our friend, Lauren, and her daughter, Evie. We went along to help look after Evie, who enjoys traveling with us and who was getting her first taste of the ocean life. Even though she preferred the hotel pool, which was equipped with a pirate ship and a water slide, which I went down about 15 times myself.

The beaches of Anguilla have been called the most beautiful in the world, and a trip to the Caribbean has always been on my to-do list. So needless to say, I was thrilled to have the opportunity to go. But reality did creep into the fun-under-the-sun umbrella environment. A rooster on the premises of the hotel cackled every morning around 4 a.m.. Gwenn got food poisoning and was scarily-ill one night- it took her a day to recover...

But reality also came in the form of a tour we were taking of the island with a nice man named Darvin. He had a big white Hummer, and seemed to know everyone on the 17-mile long island. He drove us to some of the fancier hotels, "Paul Simon is staying there right now," Darvin said. I got excited because he's the guy that's married to Edie Brickell of Edie Brickell and the New Bohemians. I wondered if they were still married and whether or not I'd see her milling around the island.

But that thought was interrupted when we passed a place I really wanted to take a look at: an HIV clinic. It was a lime green, one-story building that must have had 3 rooms in it, tops. Much quainter than the digs of Mr. Brickell, for sure. On the side of the building there was a painting of a large red ribbon. I wanted to ask Darvin if he had any friends who were positive- I wanted to know what their reality of living with HIV was on an island where the wealthiest of the wealthy get away from it all.

But I didn't ask. Because I didn't want to ruin the tour with a dose of reality. I regret not asking, because now I'm back home wondering what Darvin would have said- it would have been a unique insight into how the virus is viewed by someone who is obviously a popular guy in the community.

People travel far and wide, from many walks of life, to step foot on these islands to get away from it all. I'm deeply thankful that part of the appeal of this vacation wasn't getting away from HIV- for I'm fully at peace with the virus that rides my blood like surfers ride a wave. Because what I am is what I am are you what you are or what? (Music video below will make sense of that.) My hope is that the folks who live on the island and share my status feel the same way.

Positively Yours,
Shawn

Watch, Friend and Follow me on:
YouTube, Facebook and Twitter
Website: ShawnandGwenn.com
Also check out the lovely Gwenn's Fashion/Coffee Blog
My CD, Synthetic Division, A Symptom of Life, is on iTunes!

SHARE THE BLOG. NOT THE VIRUS.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.