(b)Lab Results and Killer Books

November 20, 2009 By Shawn Decker

A couple of weeks ago I went in for my every-four month labs to see what's cookin' with my pet virus. Good news: my t-cells are 511 (28%) and the viral load was less than 48 copies, which is near nothing. That's pretty much the same as they were in June, and have been in the ballpark for the last couple of years.

As has been chronicled, I do a week on HIV meds, followed by a week off. These labs were taken after 6 days off meds. With the success I've had keeping my numbers stable, I broached the topic of trying one week on, two weeks off meds.. but Dr. Greg wasn't too keen on it, thinking that two weeks would be too much time for the virus to cause trouble. He said he wasn't too worried about the short-term effects, but was thinking that down the line it could present other problems in my body.

I relented quickly, because I respect my doctor for going along with the plan that has worked like a charm. And he's the one who reads every boring article that comes out about the intricacies of this virus.

My reason for wanting a longer break has been absent-mindedness and lethargy. Recent articles on how HIV can affect the brain and memory haven't set me at ease, either. I don't write much about my worries about living with HIV, but I can say that losing my wits is right up there at the top. And it's especially frustrating on the days when things just aren't clicking in the old nugget; like when I wake up feeling exhausted instead of rested or, in the middle of a shower, I wonder if I've already washed my hair or not.

This tends to happen after a couple of days on meds. But I do wonder whether I pin everything on the medications, because laying blame on the virus is too damn scary a thought.

If I haven't been blogging much, it's because because my terd brain is liking the Twitter format: in and out, done in less than 140 characters. I've been working on my second book. Printing it out and realizing it wasn't quite up to par has made me doubt myself and my ability to focus and tell a story that's 70,000 words as well, another reason why the two weeks off fantasy materialized. Also, 70,000 words is a substantial amount of characters... way more than Twitter allows. If I don't get the book where I want it, maybe I'll just release the damn thing for free on Twitter as a 500-part series?

The inner battle to continue my writing career has been fueled by the literary (sales) success of Carrie Prejean and Sarah Palin, both of whom outsold my cult classic memoir, *My Pet Virus*, in a matter of minutes. Palin's book even offed Rachel Maddow, one of my favorite TV politicos.

See, I plan to outsell both Prejean and Palin together, but it's going to take a lot of books to do it... and that's why I'm sticking with one week on, one week off meds schedule that has worked for me. Writing isn't fruitful at the moment, so I'm setting the book aside until the new year. There's World AIDS Day/Week to focus on, which is taking me and Gwenn to five different states in five days. And then there's the holidays soon after.. but when the dust settles, I will write again.

In the meantime, I will sleep with one eye open, looking out for that damn Going Rogue book of Palin's. If you want to live to see 2010, I'd suggest that you do the same.

Positively Yours,
Shawn

Shawn on: Shawn's book Decker's Daily Coffee

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