Charlie Sheen Bit Me: An HIV Love Story #ValentinesDay

February 11, 2016 By Shawn Decker

"Charlie bit me... and that really hurt!"

The infamous "Charlie bit me" YouTube video has been viewed over 800 million times since it was posted in 2007. It's a pretty adorable video, featuring two brothers and a trust exercise gone horribly wrong. But recently, the video took on a new meaning for me when I equated it with Charlie Sheen's announcement last fall that he is living with HIV.

The love story between the HIV/AIDS community and Charlie Sheen started off quite well. Sure, Charlie had enjoyed his share of nibbles before with his strange behavior and indefensible activities- domestic abuse chief among them. But we in the HIV community are a pretty forgiving bunch and are quick to rally around the newly diagnosed. For a lot of us, HIV has provided levity and a new appreciation for life.

Even though Charlie tested positive in 2011, "coming out" with his status was a big hurdle to overcome and a judgmental and ill-informed public backlash was all but guaranteed. That's why HIV/AIDS activists took to television shows, Facebook and Twitter in an attempt to provide cover for Charlie and anyone else who is HIV positive, really. I wrote a piece for ET Tonight's website entitled, Charlie Sheen Doesn't Deserve HIV Any More Than I Did As at Age 11.

And Charlie's revelation on the Today Show in November warranted such support. He and his doctor opened up a conversation about viral load and how HIV cannot be transmitted if your HIV medications are effectively suppressing the virus. Per usual, Matt Lauer approached the interview the way that most in the media do- as the prosecutor with Charlie standing trial for not only contracting HIV, but for living with it as well.

At the turn of the new year, the Dr. Oz Show revealed that Charlie Sheen was going to be a guest. Mark King blogged about it, I Watched Charlie Sheen on The Dr. Oz Show So You Don't Have Toand, after reading Peter Staley's take on it, Charlie Sheen Shits On 30 Years of AIDS Activism, I decided to take Mark up on his kind offer so I decided not to watch the episode.

Basically, Charlie bit us.

An the reason why it hurt so much is because that episode of Dr. Oz explored Charlie's desire to be cured of HIV, which led him to a guy I'll refer to as What's Up Doc. After getting exposure on Dr. Oz, What's Up Doc was invited to be a guest on Real Time With Bill Maher a few weeks later, and Maher basically gave him an open mic to discuss how awesome his goat milk AIDS cure is...

This week, Charlie Sheen re-appeared on Dr. Oz to do some damage control. The beginning of the episode was well-done, as Dr. Oz, Charlie and Charlie's doctor effectively discredited What's Up Doc and Bill Maher for lending credence to the man's flawed science and questionable tactics. But then midway through there was a segment filmed at Charlie's home, with him on the computer doing some research. He was visited by a young man who has made a complimentary documentary about a phony HIV cure salesman in Africa, who was born with the God-given gift to find natural herbs to cure whatever else ails ya.

After watching the trailer of this guy's documentary, Charlie pretty much said that it was interesting and gives him some more things to think about...

Now, this is where I find The Dr. Oz Show to be in contempt. Why on Earth would you include that in an edited segment of the show? An episode in which you expel the virtues of Charlie returning to his treatment while also explaining why people like What's Up Doc are so dangerous? For the big finale, the Dr. Oz Show announced that Charlie is entering a legitimate drug trial in an effort to make his life on HIV meds easier- at no point do they have a real discussion on the side effects of his current regimen, which is most certainly the catalyst for his desire to try something new.

It looks like Charlie's search for a cure is going to be a regular feature on Dr. Oz, which means there will certainly be more finger-biting to come.

Positively Yours,
Shawn

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