Greg Louganis in a Hot Tub

March 4, 2012 By Shawn Decker

On Friday night I was pleasantly surprised to see a cameo on one of my favorite new shows by world famous positoid and Olympic athlete Greg Louganis. On Portlandia, he explains the Olympic games to the doubtful co-stars of the show whilst sitting in a hot tub. When they meet by chance in the hotel, Greg proves he is indeed *the* Greg Louganis by showing them the scar on top of his head from the infamous diving board incident at the 1988 Games.

Remember what an uproar that caused when Louganis revealed his HIV status? I'm not quite sure that if someone accidentally bled into a swimming pool today that the reaction from the general public would be any different. People just don't understand how the virus is transmitted. Just last week, I spoke to a high school English class. I was trying to get across how hard it would be to transmit my virus if I suddenly bled on the podium. I explained that the virus dies within a few seconds once it is exposed to the air. I said that someone would have to rush up, throw me out of the way and snort up the blood as it dripped down the podium... and even then, they probably wouldn't contract the virus.

Science has taught us a lot about this virus in the two-plus decades since Greg Louganis botched a dive and baptized an Olympic swimming pool with positoid blood. As an educator, it would have nice to see Greg's status revealed on Portlandia for laughs and educational value. I can see Fred Armisen now, looking nervous. "You're not going to get out of the hot tub and do any of those flippy dives into here, are you?" "Oh- you're worried about me cracking my head open and bleeding all over the hot tub? Well, no, I'm not going to do a triple back flip, double tuck swan dive into this hot tub, but if I did you wouldn't have to worry. The only person I'd be hurting would be myself."

I know I'm in the AIDS bubble. But it would have been funny to see something along those lines. More people need the facts, and delivering them with a punchline is sometimes the best way. That said, it was really nice to see Greg delivering some laughs on the show. It's so comforting to see long-term survivors on the boob tube.

Positively Yours,
Shawn

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