Heapin’ Helpin’ of Lab Results

February 2, 2009 By Shawn Decker

I know the numbers on everyones’ minds are the points scored at the Super Bowl (I predicted it right!). But I got some good numbers of my own recently: my latest HIV lab results. The viral load is undetectable, and the CD4 (t-cell) count is 523... the third highest I’ve had recorded since the 1980’s!

Sweet!

For those who know about my week on/week off treatment strategy, it’s important to note that the labs were drawn after being two days into a week on the drugs.

Huh?

I take my HIV meds for seven days, then don’t take them for seven days and repeat that cycle. In the March issue of Poz- out next month- there will be a column about why and how I came to the decision to do this back in 2002. I’ll link it when it’s up.

So one of my favorite things aside from high t-cell counts is getting my coffee drink on. After getting my labs done, I left my appointment with Dr. Greg and went to a new coffee shop in town called the Calvino Cafe located at the Market Street Shops. As I am ordering, the nice young woman behind the counter tells me her daughter loved my book.

I smiled, and tried to act humble, but I always get way too excited in these situations. “No way! How cool!”

In a hilarious coincidence for the day, she told me her daughter is dating Dr. Greg’s son, giving the whole moment a very Stars Hallow, Gilmore Girls aftertaste that went down well with my fave drink, the iced mocha.

I frequent a few of the coffee shops in town. My baristo extraordinaire, Jaike, hooks it up real nice at Shenandoah Joe’s. And Toan over at C’ville Coffee offers up such a great environment to write, and is also the only shop in town that has an Adult Zone and a kids/family section. Well, just the other day I was in the adult zone, having coffee with Gwenn and a pal, and the title of a book caught my eye: “A Heaping Helping of True Grizzard”.

There was a goofy looking author, Lewis Grizzard, on the sleeve. We all had a chuckle at his mustache’s expense. Then I read the blurbs on the back of the book, and I felt like me and ol’ Griz might have a lot in common.

“A southern comedic gem!” “Like Andy Rooney- only funny!” “Clever and witty!”

All the adjectives I like to attribute to myself.

I open this 1991 book up to a random page about sex. **“Sex today is just as scrambled as everything else. You can’t even talk about it without getting confused.”** The Griz then presented a glossary of terms to help himself- and presumably us, too- better understand the world we live in.

“LOVER- Somebody you aren’t married to but you’re sleeping with them anyway.” He tackled “cohabitation” and “palimony”, then the next one up was kind of baffling. **“GAY: Formerly ”queer,“ ”fruit,“ or ”fag.“ Means you and your lover can go into the same bathroom together when you stop at service stations during long trips.”** How lame is that, right? I was really discovering that the Griz and I weren’t on the same page in regard to our senses of humor or our views on life. When I got to the *next* word, the fact that I opened the very large book to this page meant that this very blog was inevitable.

“AIDS: You and your lover can share the same hospital room together, too.”

A heaping, helping of Grizzard did not go down too well with the iced mocha.

In writing this, I Wiki’d the Griz, who passed away in 1995. I’m not going to dishonor him any further than he did himself, or the way he dishonored all of those positoids who were laying in hospital beds dying as he chuckled at his typewriter, swirling his glass of alcohol and admiring his handiwork on the word “AIDS”. I won’t comment on the fact that he died from heart failure, or make a joke about the one page of his work that I read, which didn’t show much heart (or humor) at all.

OK, so maybe I’m sticking it to the guy. But hey, he deserves it. And I didn’t know he was dead until I Wiki’d him halfway through this entry. I guess, like him, I am not beyond cracking a joke or two at the epidemic’s expense. But unlike Griz, my jokes are at my own expense.

And the intent is to make my fellow positoids laugh and feel better. Not cringe and feel worse.

Positively Yours,
Shawn

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