Medic Alert Part 3

October 29, 2015 By Jay Squires

I now turned my attention to the first of two problems that have shadowed me from my return to conscious thought. Very early in my recovery my left leg got antsy. Without warming it would shoot up at the knee, usually repeatedly over five minutes or so. I recall my highest kick getting about two feet of air. This was hilarious until I thought about it. WTF?

In my first act of self-diagnosis I determined I had a nerve problem. Who better to see then a neurologist? Banks wrote a referral and off I went.

This was the summer of 2012 and the huge archive of scans and x-rays produced in-patient gave this doctor something to study. He came back to me after a month and told me I had a slipped disc. That made sense. Spinal nerve restriction causes downstream leg antics. He referred me to a neurosurgeon to plan next steps.

This guy was as old a doctor as I had until that time and he didn't mess around. He greeted me and told me to sit while he looked at my stuff. In ten minutes I was in his office when he told me I did not have a slipped disk. He pulled up an MRI scan, pointed at several places and said, "See that?" I nodded. It seemed the polite thing to do.

I asked how could his opinion and the neurologist's be diametrically opposed. He hemmed and hawed a bit but his bottom line was "experience."

I left confused and pissed. Nothing pisses me off more than running into a medical brick wall. It's an attitude I developed years before I got really sick. I've blown through every bladder pill on the market following the recommendations of three urologists without success. That will piss a guy off even if it's his only piss of the day.

Soon the spastic leg added chronic nighttime ankle pain to its bag of tricks. The pain went bilateral, right leg playing off the left. Marching north calves and thighs succumbed, then the worst - hips. Every night I fought to sleep aching hips to toes. The great toe on my left foot would numb and tingle at the same time from the first knuckle to the tip. I was multifaceted.

I discussed this with Banks every time I saw him but he couldn't easily pronounce a cause with the limits of his office technology. He prescribed an MRI and I went into the tube last month.

The results supported the neurologist, mostly. I was found to have a "severely herniated" disc at the L4/L5 position. *"Severely herniated" and two operations to strike a double hernia.* I am

seriously tired of bulging body parts.

Banks hooked me up with a neurosurgeon named Alexander. He's a great guy because he reminds me of me. We share the same snarky, quick humor. We got along great buzzing each other.

He said a cortisone injection was the place to start. Two days ago he did it. I spent an hour with pre-procedure grilling about allergies and African odysseys, ten minutes on the table and less than 60 seconds under the needle. Poke, squirt and out the door.

The next day I felt it even though I was told it might take 10 days to kick in completely. I was free of all pain except diminished hip pain while going to sleep. I regressed though and as I write it's like I'm back to square one. That one good day gives me some hope I've found the cause even though more work is required on the fix.

Barkeep! Another shot!

I am a guy who cannot stand not knowing the cause of a thing. Why is this screwed up? What's at fault? Four years of postgraduate medical studies have taught me that sometimes, seemingly frequently, the answer is "who knows."

Still I've decided not to accept that answer until it's the last one possible. I bugged four premier physicians across two states and all I got was head scratching and back pedaling. It took my humble GP to show me the way to at least a partial answer.

Our story continues with the last installment. That post will describe what I am sure is the largest, "worst" effect of my infection and disease. It is the thing that terrified me during the decades I avoided dealing with HIV's role in my life. I believe it is the reason I found myself in 2012 on the verge of life and death. I collect lifetime tasks. This is another, not AIDS, and it will guide my life for what God gives me.

I'd love to hear from you. Email to squirescomments@gmail.com. Tweet to VA_dem.

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