Uncle Mook, Vail, Poll and My Pet Virus Screenplay

April 3, 2013 By Shawn Decker

The last few weeks have been a real whirlwind...

But first and foremost, I feel a public goodbye to my Uncle Mook (my dad's little brother) is in order. He was truly a great guy, always ready to have a good laugh and always very kind to me. He'd been diagnosed with an illness that gave fair warning of the end, which is a mixed blessing of course... but I'm glad I had the chance to speak with him on the phone about a month ago, when I was being an uncle myself and watching some wrestling with my niece.

Uncle Mook, you will be missed. Thanks for all the lessons on what it means to be a loving uncle.

So, last weekend Gwenn and I went to Vail, thanks to a contest put on by the AIDS Healthcare Foundation in partnership with the Vail Film Festival. It truly is stunning how scenically beautiful Vail is, and a trip out of town certainly hit the spot, too. We met a lot of wonderful folks, from Best Student Film winner, James Cox (for Grey Matter, a Stephen King story) to Tate Taylor, director of The Help. We also got to see the screening of Keep the Promise, a documentary about the March on Washington last year, directed by Jorg Fockele and Marc Smolowitz, both incredibly talented and amiable allies in raising awareness about HIV.

At the Closing Awards Ceremony, Allison Janney and Tate Taylor did a Q&A, and every film screened at the Festival was up for an award. My contest-winning, 60-second video (below) was shown to an audience of very talented filmmakers... it was quite a thrill! Especially since it got a great response. Allison said, "I loved your film!" afterwards. She and Tate were both so kind as to record PSAs for AIDS Healthcare Foundation about why HIV funding, awareness and prevention are still needed.

Allison Janney!

Gwenn with Jorg, Marc and Terri Ford of the AIDS Healthcare Foundation

Dwarfed by the mountains of Vail.

A project that has been in the works for a few years now, a screenplay for My Pet Virus, got into a few hands at the film festival via my team... ah, okay, via me. But I'm proud of the work I've put into it over

the last year or so, building on the original screenplay written by Mitch Larson. With all of the 1980s-era HIV/AIDS themed movies and shows in production (The Normal Heart, The Dallas Buyer's Club, and How to Survive a Plague heading to network television as a mini-series), it seems like the time might be right for something that humorously explores entering puberty with HIV in small-town America.

Either way, I'm busy doing what I can to make that happen.

My good friends at the MTV Staying Alive Foundation have teamed up with the UN in creating a poll that will have very real consequences on which issues will get the most attention when it comes to policy-making on a global scale. I logged my Vote for "Better Healthcare", because without decent healthcare I most certainly would not be here today.

Let your voice be heard here: http://bit.ly/15UNvFW

And lastly... I was hoping to have the next set of weekly Shawn & Gwenn videos start up on Tuesday, but a writing assignment has just come up. So hopefully in two weeks Gwenn and I will be back on track for our weekly vids!

Hope this message finds you all well.

Positively Yours,
Shawn

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