Rising Action

July 16, 2014 By Rick Nash

In any movie, book, or anything with a plot really, there is this literary device.

It's called the rising action, it's that build up, that excitement that keeps drawing on the previous point getting higher and higher until a beautiful climax.

It was 2:46PM, July 15th, 2014.

I was sitting on my couch in my apartment talking with a friend. The phone had been ringing constantly, calls from friends back in town mostly. This call came from a number I didn't recognize, It was 2:46PM, July 15th, 2014. Our conversation had been interrupted a handful of times, I normally would have let the call go to voicemail. But Something was different. I told my friend that I needed to take this call, that it was probably the doc. I hadn't scheduled my next MRI and they'd been calling with some frequency to get it done, so it wouldn't have been out of the ordinary.

It was my nurse, she called to tell me the results of the latest blood panel. They'd been making sure my vittles were on the level, since I somehow managed to keep forgetting to take my magnesium. Since my last blood draw was a few days ago, I was hopeful this would be a call I'd been waiting for. She began, "The results are in from your last blood test, and your magnesium levels are low" a low sigh conveyed my plight of perpetual hold she continued to remind me about how I needed to watch them, and then she said something I'd been waiting fifteen years to hear.

"... your viral load is undetectable."

I was beyond elated, my ears perked up, in disbelief I asked her to repeat what she'd said.

With a look of near shock, we ended the call, and I informed my friend of the news. And for the next ten hours I would tell more friends and family. My mom lost it, in tears, it was hard to get out of her hugs. My dad, as my friend put it, "genuinely smiled and was happy." Which for reference, my friends never see my dad smile, except at his own jokes. Each person I told I saw their face light up bright, high fives, fist bumps, hugs. I reminded each of them of what this means.

In all of my treatments, I've never been able to reach this point. This point had always been just out of my grasp. What being undetectable, or zeroing out, means in terms of viral load is that I no longer have the virus active in my system.

It does not mean I'm cured...yet. So what the heck does it mean? It means is that there is like a 97% chance I'll zero at the end of treatment in five weeks, and like a 96% chance I'll stay zero by SVR12 (SVR12 is 12 weeks post treatment). Which is generally considered cured. So while it doesn't mean I'm cured, exactly, it's damn close to it.

To celebrate freedom, and being out of the danger zone, we’re going to Kansas City BBQ, and watching Top Gun.

Because we’re too close for missiles, so I’m switchin’ to guns.

So welcome to the rising action, where I’ve just been taken off hold. The person on the other end hasn’t started talking yet, but when you wait 15 years to hear the voice of freedom, a few weeks is nothing.

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