

Dizzy Dan's Hologram: Part II – Cardiology

Dan Newth is a Street Roots vendor and periodic writer. This is the second of three columns, told through his perception of events surrounding his recent attempted suicide and recovery.

BY DAN NEWTH
CONTRIBUTING COLUMNIST

I was gliding down a hospital corridor on a gurney with an IV drip rolling next to me. It was surreal. The coldness defined this as reality, not a dream. Both the surreal and cold sensations were a result of the 50 to 60 Trazadone I had ingested earlier that night.

The interns rolled me up to two large doors with CARDIOLOGY printed on them. That seemed wrong. A suicide attempt should go to the psych ward, right? The doors opened like magic and I floated through, down a hall, and into a room next to a bed.

"Dan, we need to get you on the bed." I started to roll over toward the bed when the stab of the IV into the inside of my left elbow stopped me. "Whoa, Dan, you're going to tear out your IV." I was pretty much strung up like a marionette with various wires, tubes and the IV tangled together.

"Dan, could you sit up so we can get this straightened out?" I struggled to sit up.

Remember the old cathode ray tube televisions? Do you remember turning them off and seeing the picture quickly shrink to a dot then blinking off? That was what the hologram in my head did.

Sharp, tearing pain in my arm. Startle response engaged, "Whoop" came out of my mouth with a quick gasp of air and a jerk of my arm. Then more pain from jerking my arm. It was the kind of response to fear that would tell a predator, "Yeah, this is prey."

"Dan, your IV isn't flowing, so I need to

adjust it." I was lying in bed, the gurney was gone, and the nurse was removing the tape securing the IV needle. The tape adhesive adhered to my arm hair extremely well. I silently cursed the effectiveness of the adhesive. "I'm sorry this hurts. I'm trying to be careful," said the nurse.

"I don't blame you. I blame the adhesive," I replied. No laugh, smile or even smirk. Tough room.

A device behind me had an annoying beep. "What's that noise?" I asked the nurse.

"Your oxygen levels are low. Try to breathe deeply," the nurse replied. I had a tube for oxygen on my upper lip, half a dozen wires connected to round, adhesive pads, the IV, a blood pressure monitor wrapped around my upper right arm and an oxygen level detector on a right hand finger. I also had an urgent need to use the bathroom.

The charcoal and syrup concoction I was given to drink in the ER was causing me to expel foul fumes. I owe an apology to the staff in the room with me for what they had to endure. "I need to go to the bathroom," I tell the nurse.

"Number 1 or 2?" she quizzed back.

"Both I think," in answer.

"I need to get some help moving you," and the nurse left. I tried to hold it in as best I could but some came out and the smell nauseated me.

An intern came in and said, "If you need to pee, you can use the hand held urinal."

"I need to do both," I said with a bit of desperation in my voice.

He wrinkled his nose and said, "I'll go ask what to do," while exiting the room. I just didn't have much control of my bowels, and in the time he was gone, more liquid seeped out. The nurses' station was near, and they spoke loud enough that I could hear them discussing how bad the smell was and who would be the unlucky individuals to enter my room and deal with the mess that was me.

Three people came into my room with a plastic chair that had a bucket in the seat. The staff started disconnecting various apparatuses, the head of the bed was raised, they helped me swing my legs over the side of the bed then let me get ready to stand. I thought I was going to black out again; I was shaking and felt weak as a newborn lamb. Standing seemed impossible. Two of the staff picked up this fat, old man and set me on the seat. I then released enough methane to impact global warming. The apology while doing this again seemed inadequate.

I spent almost 18 hours in cardiology, most of it napping between being startled by people entering the room, being cross-examined by doctors and listening to the nurses gossip about patients they had Googled.

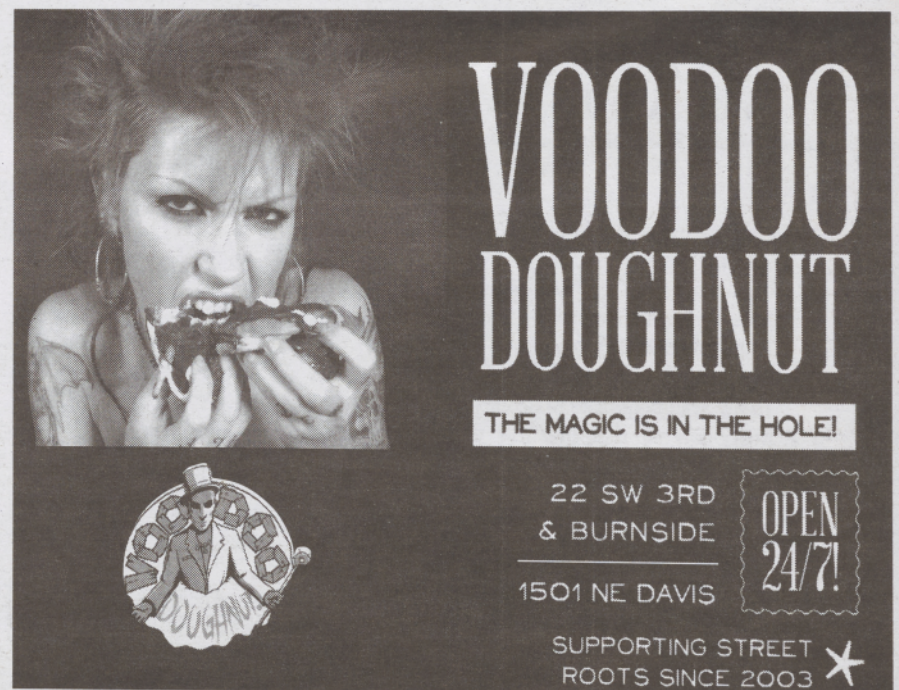
It seemed to me the less status a person had, the nicer they seemed to behave. I guess I should be happy I didn't meet any hospital administrators. The biggest positive moment spent in cardiology was the chicken soup. It tasted amazing.



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