

# The Asian Reporter

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**MY TURN**

■ **Wayne Chan**



## A case of curious stares

**H**as anyone ever written a humor column about having seizures during COVID? Well, it looks like I'm about to try.

On top of the shared experience all of us have felt during this pandemic, I dealt with a personal health scare of my own. During one of the worst waves of the coronavirus, I suffered a few seizures. Thankfully, it had nothing to do with COVID-19.

I'm doing fine now and am taking medication for the seizures. At the time, I decided to just get back in shape since many of us were already quarantined.

Before I go any further, I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge that the person who suffered the most during my scare wasn't me, but my wife Maya. She was the one who witnessed what I went through, and she was the one who made snap judgements on my behalf. Seizures can be very serious, and perhaps the only benefit of having one was that I really wasn't present to experience it.

After a few weeks of recovery, when I felt things were getting back to normal, I had a telephone appointment with my neurologist. Maya insists on being on these calls because, well, that's just the nature of our relationship.

After discussing how the medication was working (which was all good), we finished up with the one question I had. Below is a summary of that discussion with the doctor:

*Me:* Doctor, I'm a pretty regular tennis player and I haven't played since this thing happened. Do you think I can start playing again?

*Doctor:* Yes! I don't have any problem with you playing tennis again.

*Maya (in a very stern voice):* Doctor, you don't understand. The way he plays tennis is ridiculous. He absolutely hates to lose and he'll kill himself out there.

*Me:* Doctor, I think she's editorializing a little here ...

*Doctor:* (Sounds of laughter.)

*Maya:* He's just crazy out there. He really hates to lose and he'll do anything when he's out there. Are you sure he should be playing? He thinks he's Rambo when he's out there!!

To be honest, Maya didn't actually mention Rambo in the conversation, but it felt like she did. At the time, I was thinking, "Well, who likes to lose?"

Let me add that I love my wife. She is my hero. My only concern was that she wouldn't let me be involved in the next telephone appointment with

my doctor.

So I get the green light from the doctor to play tennis again. And most importantly, I get the green light from Maya as well.

As things began to return to normal for me, I gradually noticed that my friends were asking how I was doing. That's normal enough, but there were a lot of questions (and curious stares), so I wondered if there was something else going on. I soon found out that Maya had been updating our friends on my condition.

Here's the thing. Maya is from Taiwan, and as a matter of fact, while English is her second language, her English is really, really good. Her

conversational English is amazing also. The bottom line is that her English is terrific.

Still, there are some nuances to English that even the best of us might miss, especially if it isn't one's first language.

When I had the seizures, the neurologist explained to Maya and the family what was going on. Seizures can be very serious, even life threatening.

When Maya told me about some of her conversations with friends, she said she told them that because of the seizures, "Wayne has brain damage."

At that point, I said to Maya, "I don't think you should be telling our friends that I have brain damage!" She replied, "Well, sometimes you get in a bad mood and you've been forgetting things."

I said, "Sometimes I get in a bad mood because we're stuck at home and we can't go anywhere because of COVID. And while it's true that I sometimes forget people's names (which I do), I was doing that before the seizures! That is not the same as having brain damage!"

I have no idea how many people Maya told that I have brain damage, but I thought I should put out a blanket statement that:

- 1) I am doing fine and getting in good shape, and
- 2) As far as I can tell, I don't have brain damage.

Thanks for your attention. (By the way, I double-checked all the grammar and spelling in this column twice just so I don't inadvertently confirm anyone's suspicions that Maya might be on to something.)

Upon seeing that I took umbrage to Maya's characterization of my situation, she decided we needed to talk. She asked, "Well, what should I call it if it's not 'brain damage?' 'Brain trauma?'"

I said, "Why do we have to call it anything?"

*Humor writer Wayne Chan lives in the San Diego area; cartoonist Wayne Chan is based in the Bay Area.*