

Hello, Everyone, and welcome back to an old guy who knows shit. Stluhdog here with another Story from Life. This is

## **Episode 14**

### **An Existential Crisis Of The Utmost Urgency**

**Copyright © 2020 by LR Hults**

I want to share with you a journal entry from my first bout with cancer. This is the day after the first 7 hour infusion of the strongest chemotherapy they give, with a special new drug added for my special cancer. I think it is best, rather than try to work from memory, to just get inside my head in the moment it was happening, so think of me as speaking on July 2, 2015, one day after my first all day infusion. I start off talking about when I first knew what was going down.

It was that weekend of June 18, 19, 20. Saturday afternoon. Driving back from a family gathering. Feeling this THING exploding into my forehead.

I'm driving through rolling hills of open farmland. Nothing to do but listen to what's going on in my eye socket and forehead. I watch the waves of sensation emanating from the cancer. This low-level, buzzing pain keeps moving out into my eyesocket, into my brow, up my forehead, swirling back into a center point right where my eye socket meets my sinus, and then sending more waves out from there. Not intense. But enough. They come in sets of 4-6. I realize I never felt anything like this before. As I listen and watch, each set is a little more intense than the set before, and each is led, I kid you not, in my inner vision of what I am listening to and watching, each wave is led by a demonic cowboy riding some kind of horse-like monster, and he's whooping and hollering and he's swinging his lasso high and then around and every time it swings around it gathers up more of me and obliterates it. Then the next wave is more painful even as I watch it roll in, another even more demonic cowboy at its point.

And then I realize that it's familiar, and a cosmic memory rises up from the depth – this is a moment I have felt before, the moment when you know you are going to die. That moment of knowing, oh shit, whatever this is, it's gonna kill me, and it's probably gonna hurt a lot. I realized that I had been stung by a very nasty cosmic wasp, and not only could I feel it growing, it was talking to me. It was whooping and hollering and riding wild and wreaking massive destruction. Without intervention, at that rate of growth and degree of pain acceleration, I would be dying in screaming agony in a matter of weeks. I could suddenly see it, laid out quite clearly before me. This was going to happen. And there was nothing I alone could do about it.

I recognized that at some core level. Those waves of sensation that aren't *real* pain yet, but can do nothing else but become worse and worse agony until they kill you. I felt this profound knowledge that at this rate, without intervention, I was gone in weeks and it WAS going to hurt a lot. It rang that bell of familiarity,

something that has happened many times. It rang with my dreams story, and brought back all those deaths, and I *remembered* this moment, this was the moment in *this* life when I knew I was going to die. Except that THIS time around, I DON'T HAVE TO. It's like, in my deeper memory, that includes all of my existence, there are probably thousands of lives, all of which we remember, and know, and every one of those lives has a death we remember and know, and there is ALWAYS a moment when you realize, oh, shit, this is it. I'm going down. And for probably ALL of those thousands of lives - well, 99.9% of them - there was nothing we could do about it, we had that moment of realization and then had no choice but to ride it out to its inevitable end and hope it wouldn't hurt too much. But then it almost always did. And that was part of the challenge we had created for ourselves in this world to try to get better the next time around. Or something like that.

I'm looking at it from the very edge. Still on the physical side, but on the precipice. Can't see what's over the edge yet, but that flash, that realization, with absolute certainty, that this was happening and without intervention I was going down, that came out of those foggy depths. But THIS TIME, this ONE time out of how many behind? This time I get a reprieve: We have a weapon to stop the monster.

THEN it suddenly becomes an epic battle for my own life, being fought on a cellular level inside my body. Inside my eye socket and forehead, in my case. This drug, see, this drug specifically kills dividing cells. My tissue pathology revealed that 80% of my cells were dividing at any given point in time. 80%. And that was when science confirmed my inner knowledge driving back from that family gathering. If 80% of the cells are dividing at the same time, and of *those* another 80% generationally, that is some freakin' *fast* growth. I HAD felt it. It would have killed me. Quickly. It would have hurt a lot but would not have lasted long, because it was already only a few centimeters from my brain. Just like that. ZAP. A cosmic wasp sting and I'm gone. And that is really what it seems like. Almost like there's a cosmic wasp, that is deeply powerful destructive energy, and it is scattered everywhere in the form of pollutants, chemicals, pesticides, herbicides, radon. Radon isn't the robber barons' fault, it's where the wasp lives in nature. Their pollutants and careless treatment of the earth have allowed the wasp to multiply a hundredfold. And when it reaches across the barrier from energy to form it always brings death. But the compassion, love and beauty team has weapons. And science is one of them. And with Science, for possibly the first time in thousands of lives, I heard that voice that said This is it, chum, you are going down – I could say fuck YOU not fucking YET.

So now the battle commences. What is happening inside my head does not even remotely qualify as a headache, because it is no headache, it is a fucking epic war movie. The seething energy is moving all around, it's like I can feel the battle happening, swirling around my forehead. Imagining the drug seeking out the cells that are dividing and then killing them, it's very dramatic, a fucking comic book

super-hero movie, only its real and its going on in my forehead. The drug is the superhero. I see it as a big powerful dog. Sniff. Sniff. SNAP. Sniff. Sniff. SNAP. Sniff. Sniff. SNAP. Ruthlessly sniffing out every dividing cell. Thousands of times a second, and it's like a roar going on that I just can't quite actually *hear* but is *actually* ROARING. And I feel the battle moving around. And these waves. I just felt one. Emanating from that center point that was riding FREE that drive back, only now its waves are stopping, they aren't flowing free, it's like they're hitting a rubber wall that flexes but doesn't give. The demonic cowboy isn't hootin' and hollerin' nor is he swinging his lasso. In fact he looks like he's trying to escape the dogs of war, but he doesn't get past my eye socket. That drive back he was galloping right up my forehead and just running rampant.

Last night, my first night sleeping on the strongest chemo you can get, a storm of exploding energy woke me at 2am, filled my whole head, swirling and seething; by 5am it had broken up into maybe two centers of pressure, by noon it had broken up into three or four focal points, then the rest of the day they just kept moving around. Like the battlefield kept moving, the dogs were sniffing 'em out over here, SNAP SNAP SNAP, then over there, sniff sniff SNAP SNAP, then a cluster over there, sniff sniff SNAP, it's so weird but suddenly it's fun, killing cancer cells. Like I would have looked at it when I was 10. Now I'm marginally a grownup (OK OK, I'm an old guy), and thank god I can still see through those 10 year old eyes, and can still watch the movie in my head of the battle for my life going on in my eye socket and forehead. Cheer and holler for the good guys. BOO HISS the dividing cancer cells.

So it's a real battle for my actual life. That doesn't mean it can't be fun.

Two days later, another journal entry simply reads:

Today the battlefield just feels like a scorched wasteland. Like this big splotch of my sinus and eye socket has been acid-burned or something. ... There's nothing but carnage, rotting....

There is another part of the story that I should add, however, because it is particularly pertinent to the Radar story, and also to our overall purpose in this podcast.

When I first discovered this half-inch finger sized mass emerging from my eye socket, the first doctor to look at it was a senior teaching fellow at a large university hospital. He felt it with his finger and declared it benign, then had me put in the normal surgery schedule. My surgery was scheduled for five weeks away.

Now in the normal course of things, with the average patient, you would think that that would be the end of it, right? Right. Well, if that had been the case, I would not be here telling you this story. Somehow, on some level, that **THING** had already been talking to me, and I knew, in my heart of hearts, that it was serious. The demonic cowboy had not appeared yet, I believe he was still two weeks away at first diagnosis, but I had been

watching double vision grow for a couple of weeks. There was other evidence, I had an MRI to look at my inner ear a couple of months before, and what if it was there, smaller, so one could actually compare them? The doctor claimed to have done the comparison and deemed the rate of growth at 1mm per week which was "not alarming." Really? I thought. What if it was YOUR eye socket that had a finger growing out of at the rate of 1mm per week? But I didn't say that. I said OK, like a good patient. But when the scheduler called me to say your surgery is in five weeks, I tried to tell her this was an emergency and she said the doctor decides that and I said do I have any recourse and she said no and I said no appeal no second opinion and she said something to the effect that he was the best in the country seeming to suggest no second opinion was necessary so I asked again if I had any recourse and she emphatically said No.

Well thanks to our magnificent health care system, there is no way I could afford to be treated for cancer without insurance, so I have to stay in a system I have just been informed that I have no recourse in. The "Best doctor in the country" just declared me NOT an emergency, and I, an ignorant, non-medical, untrained patient, felt in my heart of hearts that he was wrong and that if we waited five weeks I would die. My belief was enhanced by the doctor's resident, a young medical student, who, bless her heart, made a couple of newbie mistakes in her wrap-up. First, she had somebody else's assessment, which said the rate was higher, then said to forget that, that was wrong, go with the first doctor's, then she confused her millimeters and her centimeters, which she tried to correct, but the end result was that what I got clearly was that there was disagreement and that somebody ELSE had assessed a MUCH faster rate of growth, and he was not going to test it, he was going on his finger-read. And he was a senior teaching fellow. A person no-one EVER contradicts.

So, without any recourse, I got my handy-dandy letter-writer out and I wrote a letter that I addressed to each of the two doctors, the scheduler, my primary care doctor and let's just say a coupla people in the top hospital administration, in which I stated my case as clearly as I could - got this finger growing out of my eye, they don't agree on how fast it is growing, but if the fast guess is right I will be toast way before we get to five weeks - was the essence of my argument..

Well, turned out I did have recourse My primary care doctor came riding in with the cavalry to my rescue. She had no hesitation about believing my gut feeling regardless of the disagreement on the rate of growth. She apparently performed what many said was a literal miracle by getting me in to see two ENT oncologists inside the system and one outside the system all in one day ON one day's notice. The guys inside the system did not want to contradict the senior fellow, surprise surprise, but the outside guy made no bones about his belief that it was not only malignant but dangerously so, possibly an emergency. So with that evidence to support a possible case for contradiction of senior fellow-god, one of the in house ENTs gave me a drug that would eliminate cancer as a consideration if none was there. It would not prove the existence of cancer, but would THEN justify a biopsy. Long story short, a week later that doctor stuck a needle into the finger growing out of my eye, and in the single most painful experience of my life, withdrew the incriminating fluids containing not only cancer, but a form of cancer in

which 80% of the cells are dividing at any given moment in time. As opposed, he said, to breast cancer or lung cancer, where you would expect 5% of cells to be dividing. 80%. So, as I pointed out before, I was not crazy. My inner knowledge that without intervention this thing would kill me in weeks was confirmed by science.

\*\*\*\*

That night that I drove back from the family gathering, after I had spent hours while I drove watching the demonic cowboy wreak such havoc, I sent a message to the doctor's secretary. It was two lines: "I can feel that this is an existential crisis of the utmost urgency. ...I hope we can get started on Monday ... "

An existential crisis of the utmost urgency.

How did I know that, before, when the senior teaching fellow told me and the world otherwise?

Well, I think I knew that because I started paying attention to the world, and to what it had to tell me, and to my inner voices, and what they had to tell me, when I was roughly 14. Over the years, I have learned what deserves attention. Fifty years later, it saved my life.

Is that supernatural? Well, it is on the scientific level where you see only anecdotal evidence of a phenomenon that cannot be replicated in the laboratory, nor do we even have a scientific category it might fit in. Scientifically, this is all definitely supernatural.

On the other hand, folks, I would argue that, yes, in this physical world, it is supernatural, but it is not outside of the order of the natural world we inhabit, which includes a non-physical world. These things defy science and the senses, but are part of a natural order of things that we are only a tiny piece of. Extraordinary as these things are to us, they are part of a much bigger whole, just like we are a part of that bigger whole; the non-physical world and the physical world are flip sides of the same whole, all of it part of a natural order where energy interacts with biology and where the matter of thought is a whole other level of nature. One of many levels of nature, all interacting with each other, all part of a greater Oneness that continually cycles through destruction and then construction throughout the universe, from star formations to spiderwebs.

But on the physical earth, you and me here in our homes and yards and parks, we can tap into our inner, non-physical, spiritual level if you want to call it that, that level where we listen to our worlds and our bodies with our entire being, honestly and sincerely, without an outsider telling us what to think, and not just with our senses. On that level we do have the ability to hear what is not loud, to see what is not shown, to feel what is not clearly evident. To sense truth, and to act on that truth with compassion.

\*\*\*\*

This old guy who knows shit is taking a break right now to make some music. Maybe you'll hear some it. But I wanted to make these supernatural stories all of a piece, and I find myself wrapping that piece up. thank you for listening, and do something to support the Compassion Love and Beauty team every day. This is an old guy who knows shit signing off till next time.