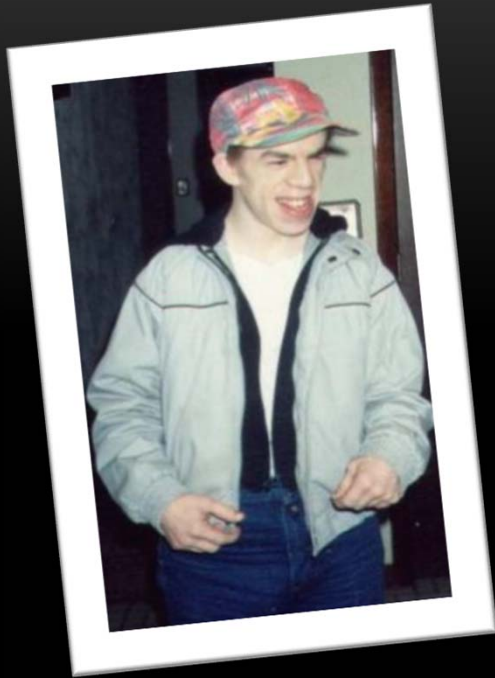


GOD MUST CRY A LOT

The Johnny Series

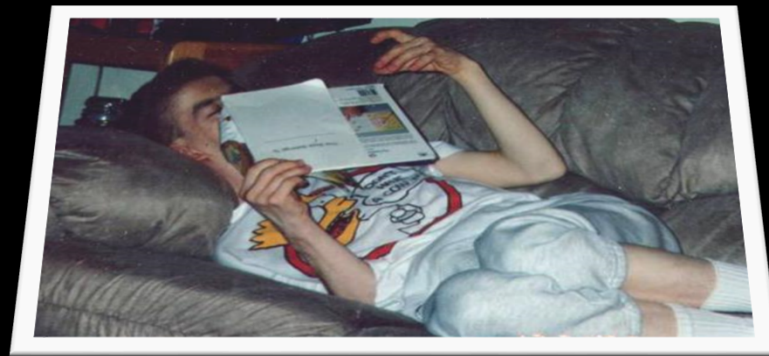
By ThinkJP.Consulting

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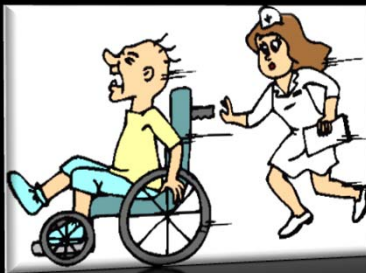
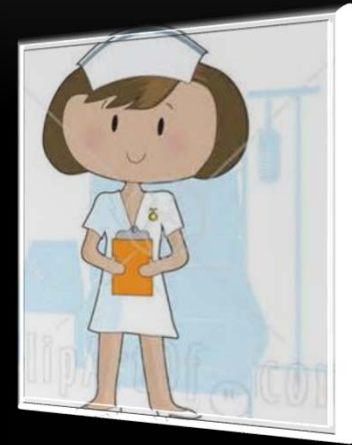
The WORST day of my life was when Johnny died. Johnny was the "baby" we never had.

We had invested so many years and so much of ourselves into him that we couldn't have loved him more if he had been conceived by us personally.



That's why when we walked into the hospital room and saw him locked in a metal cage, banging his head against the poles, we couldn't bear the sight. I had never seen a human being treated this way before, and I was not about to stand by and let it happen to Johnny.

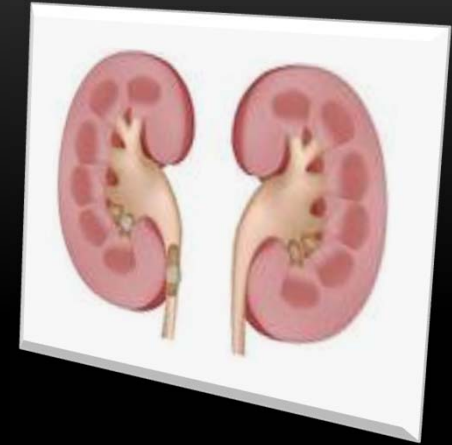
We put our complaint in to the nurse in charge but she felt justified in keeping him in the cage because he would not stay in his room.



While we agreed that Johnny was a little "Houdini" that managed to escape all the restraints they tried, there had to be a better solution than caging him in like an animal!

Johnny had a severe kidney malfunction. In fact, we were told that one of his kidneys was entirely calcified, and the other was not good.

He was in a LOT of pain, and they were giving him high doses of morphine to make him comfortable. I wondered if the morphine was even working because he was agitated constantly.



After more complaining, the Head Nurse still was not interested in satisfying our attempts to have Johnny more humanely treated. We finally called one of Johnny's doctors who also happened to be a personal friend.

Our doctor friend spoke with Johnny's team of caregivers and they decided to discharge Johnny into our care and allow us to give him the morphine at home.

This is *not* what we were asking, but at that time it seemed the only solution. We couldn't bear the pleading eyes that looked at us from behind that metal cage, so we agreed to give it a try. After all, how could we stand by while they treated our beloved Johnny this way?



Johnny was awaiting a lithotripsy treatment that would break up some of the calcification in his "better" kidney. This treatment would hopefully give him some relief from the intense pain, but the machine they used only came to our area every two weeks.



The kidney specialist refused to send Johnny to another location for treatment because of his severe "retardation". Also, there was more expense involved to send Johnny to another location, and since these expenses were covered solely by Medicaid the specialist would not reconsider.

I would never accept such a lame explanation today, but at that time I was very vulnerable and naive and put all of my trust in his managing team.

Had Jack been able to be more involved, he would have fought harder on behalf of Johnny's care, but he was busy picking up the slack of running the foster home while I was investing several hours a day at the hospital tending to Johnny.

The hospital staff didn't seem to have the time to care for him as we thought they should, so I was there every day to make sure he was bathed, fed, loved, etc.

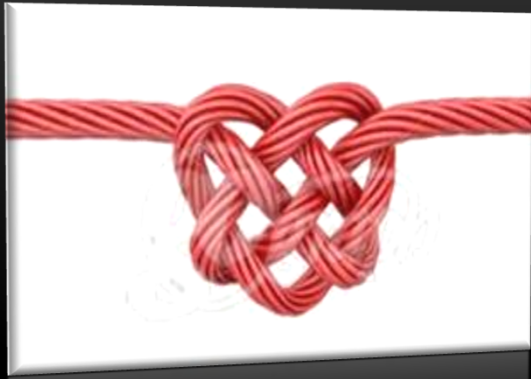




Finally, we brought Johnny home from the hospital. We were all happy to have him back with us. He still had bruises from his "caged" experience which made bringing him home worth the extra attention.

Johnny was in severe pain most of the time and it was very hard for him to focus on all the things we had taught him. He began to revert back to a lot of "old habits".





To keep him from hurting himself, either Jack or I would tie a sheet around us that was also attached to Johnny. That way we were able to work around the house and still give Johnny the freedom to move around some without causing any harm to himself.

This time when he wouldn't/couldn't stay in bed, Jack and I would sleep with him between us on the living room floor. We would take turns rubbing his head and his back, trying so hard to comfort him and let him know how much we loved him.

Johnny had been home with us from that hospital trip just a few days and I thought he was doing better. He had eaten some, and I put him to bed on the couch by me so I could keep an eye on him like always.



As we were sitting there, we heard a very strange breath come from Johnny and knew instantly that something was wrong. We tried to wake him, but he did not respond.

Jack picked Johnny up into his arms, still trying to wake him. Johnny responded for a few seconds by looking at Jack who was telling him how much we loved him.

Johnny then breathed one long, last, scary-sounding breath and then he was out again. I thought my heart would beat out of my chest as I very shakily dialed 911 as I watched our Johnny die in my husband's arms. Jack immediately began administering CPR.



Like my husband, I too was a CPR instructor, but when he yelled for me to help with the breaths, I FROZE. I will never forget the way Jack looked at me then, nor the tone of his voice which left no room for misunderstanding when he said, "NOW". I stood there crying, while feeling like my world was coming to an end. Through my tears I answered, "I can't do this".

Frustrated, Jack instinctively began administering the breaths himself, and by then I pulled myself together enough to help with the compressions. As often happens during CPR, Johnny vomited while Jack was administering breaths.



I can hardly bear the thought, but whenever Jack is questioned about it he just says, "I would have done anything for him."

The emergency rescue team arrived and started Johnny on all the life support equipment and I watched helplessly as they carried him from our home on a stretcher.



I finally lost all control of my emotions as I fell onto the couch where Johnny had been resting peacefully just a short time ago.

I hugged his pillow tightly to my face and took comfort from the familiar smell that belonged to our precious Johnny. What was he feeling now I wondered? Was he frightened, or was he even aware of what was happening around him.



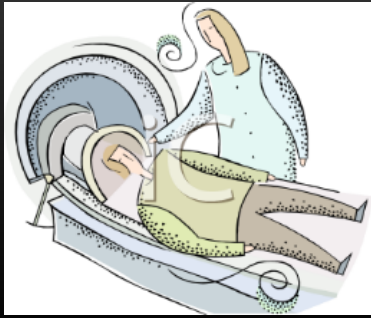
Jack called my parents to come and stay with the rest of the folks while we went to the hospital to be with Johnny. During the drive to the hospital, we couldn't help but wonder what we would find. Were they able to successfully revive Johnny? If so, would he know us? Would they understand his own little special sign language if he tried to communicate with them? Were they keeping him warm enough? It seemed that he was always cold.



As soon as we arrived at the hospital, we were rushed into the emergency room where Johnny was hooked up to the life support equipment. One look told me that was not *my* Johnny. I took a deep breath, then told him goodbye and that I loved him before leaving the room. Jack stayed with him for a while and prayed.

I'm not sure how Pastor Byron found out what had happened, but when I came out of Johnny's room he was there to offer much comfort and support. Just a few weeks before this, he had come to sit with me while Johnny was in surgery. I will always love him for being there when I needed him. In many ways, he was the best Pastor I have ever known.





Johnny was taken to another hospital that was better equipped for handling his condition. Numerous tests were run to verify brain activity before making the final decision to discontinue life support.

I prayed as hard as I ever had in my entire life that God would not allow Johnny to live in a vegetative state. I worried that he would not receive the proper care, or that he would perhaps be mistreated.

We were sent home to "rest" while awaiting test results.



Though neither of us could BEGIN to rest, we were able to get a shower and change our clothes before the phone rang informing us that there was no brain activity and they would disconnect the life support equipment as soon as we arrived.



Our good friend, and one of the doctors who was part of Johnny's managing team, met us at the hospital along with our Pastor and one of the ladies from church. We formed a semi-circle around Johnny while our Pastor Byron offered prayer. Jack and I were holding Johnny's hands when they pulled the plug. We hugged him and kissed him goodbye one last time and wondered if the hurt would ever go away.



Watching Johnny's life, and his suffering and death, has given me the smallest insight into how God must have felt as he watched His own son's, suffering and death. When I think of that time, I am reminded of a song I like to sing about tears falling like rain the day our Savior died.

Our tears fell like rain the day Johnny died.
For some reason I found comfort in knowing
that God had been through this with His own
son, and that He shared in *our* suffering that
day, as we watched our Johnny die



THE END

