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The Beginning

Working as a rigger for Dillingham Ship Repair, for July 7, 1983 was my worst day of my life. I had been working twelve to fourteen hours a day, for two weeks, repairing a ship when a battered Greek Ship arrived at Dry Dock Four.

The supervisor called me on the radio and I met him at the Greek Ship. The supervisor ordered me to remove the break away pins of the anchor chains. These pins hold the anchor chains securely to the ship, if the chains tangle or attach to the bottom of the ocean, the pin's break in to. The Greek Ship has two, pins, one pin was on the port side of the ship and the other on the starboard side. Protesting orders from my supervisor, to unseal the chain lockers and enter, since the Greek Ship had not gone through the OSHA's safety requirements, requiring twenty-four hours decontamination period. This is where all tanks and compartments are opened. Fresh air is pumped into each tank to rid the tank of fumes and other harmful vapors. "This important safety rule which allowed air to ventilate through the tanks before workers enter, was ignored, to speed up the work."

The anchor chain takes much abuse in and out of their storage lockers every time the ship is out at sea. The chains and storage lockers are painted, with very toxic paint and sprayed with fish oil to protect the chains from rust. When the paint flakes off, it falls to the bottom of the chain lockers, there, joined by the fish oil and a variety of other liquids, the fumes are very foul and extremely toxic.

Unsealing the access plates for the chain lockers, as ordered, crawling inside the starboard chain lockers access, I knocked the break away pin out. I was in the chain locker for about five minutes. The pin came right out. Unfortunately, I still had the port side to do! Unsealing the port access plates, crawling inside the chain locker, struggling to reach the break away pin. The pin was stuck from the paint and rust that had formed around it. I was beating on the pin when, the supervisor, peeked in the chain locker and handed me a blow torch, he said, heat the break away pin, it will loosen. I proceeded to heat the pin up, as ordered. The pin was getting hot, and the paint was burning and falling to the bottom of the chain locker, burning slowly in the fish oil.

Heating and beating on the pin until I was out of breath and red in the face, the pin did not budge. The supervisor ordered me to heat the pin up again and squirt WD-40, solvent on it. So again, I heated the pin red hot and then squirted the WD-40 solvent on it, as ordered. I got these bizarre feelings, sick to my stomach and dizzy. Lifting my face shield, I gasped for oxygen!

Wow, standing in this odd white gas mist from my head to my waist, I managed to crawl out of the chain locker on my own. Unable to stand, dizzily, I sat on manila roping coiled on the deck of the ship. After a few minutes of fresh air, I felt better. The supervisor heard about me, came over and wanted to know how I was doing? The supervisor left to eat lunch. Lightheaded, I left to eat lunch too.

Meeting my friend Jerry, we went to his pickup truck to drive to a restaurant too, eat lunch. It was a short ride to the restaurant. I started getting sicker and sicker to my stomach, feeling unusual. My body reacted differently than I have ever experienced.

Jerry, turned around and drove back to work. Back at work, I told Jerry, I would walk down the crane way, walking along, my right leg started to get numb, next, I fell to the ground. The supervisor and the shop steward, saw me go down, rushing over to see what was wrong. I could not get back up, thinking to myself. What's going on? The supervisor or the shop steward did not take emergency precautions or provide first aid.

The supervisor and shop steward put me in a pickup and took me to Emanuel Hospital, instead of calling an ambulance! The supervisor and shop steward had no idea what was wrong with me, nor did they use any safety measures for my protection. Arriving at Emanuel Hospital, dragging me into an emergency room, a nurse saw them and stopped them, calling for a medical team. Laying in the emergency room, terrified, I was lying in bed, slowly losing control of my body, including the coordination in my arms.

The medical team got in touch with my mother and father, who were on vacation at the coast. My father called long distance. Deteriorating to the point, I lost my speech and could not talk anymore, not able to tell anyone what had happened to me.

Jerry yelling in a panicked cry to the medical team, who does nothing, "Do something!" The staff defeated, they did not know what to do. The medical team again got in touch with my family and said, if you want to see Stan alive, better do it now! It was extremely hopeless. The staff thought, I would not make it.

Dillingham Ship Repair had a worker's compensation doctor, who prepared my family for the end. My family crying, people shouting and the end approaching!

That evening of admission, I lost movement of my right upper extremities. The right side of my face drooped. I could not open my mouth or move my tongue. Virtually mute, and sweating only on the left side of my face, completely paralyzed on the right side.

That night was the most critical night, dwindling to near death. I was so close to death, pleading with God. My family prayed and prayed that I would live. The doctor had given up all hope, saying I would not make it through the night.

Days and nights past, I could not move any part of my body or feel anything. Now on full

life support and the end looked as if it would come soon, with total brain death. That night, I came so close to death. I had occurrences like dreams only more vivid, a near death experience. My father came into the room, standing next to my bed, he gazed at me, and said give up. I said, no, that I was going to fight, my father vanished.

Again, another vision, I imagined the hospital staff zipping me into a body bag. I was saying, no, no, no, to everyone, repeatedly. The hospital staff zipped up the body bag. Hallucinating again later that night, I could feel myself sinking down and down. Part of myself told me that the hospital was built on a swamp. That was the reason I was sinking down, because the whole hospital was going down with me in it.

I was so afraid of dying, I tried everything I could think of but, no part of my body worked. I battled for hours and days, struggling to survive. Coming out of a coma four days later. Where am I?

Time itself, felt like a flicker. There I was, looking up at the lights on the ceiling of the hospital. I could see and hear noises, but I could not move.

Family members were coming in to see me. I could not get my mouth to move, nor any sound to come out. I tried repeatedly, speechless, I could not talk anymore.

The worker's compensation doctor for Dillingham Ship Repair came back to examine me after he heard I survived. The worker's compensation doctor scratched and poked with pins to check for feelings. There was none! After a complete examination, the outcome was extremely bleak. A vegetable, 99% percent dead, paralyzed, mute, could not move my mouth, tongue, or even swallow, and with no feeling left. Only to blink my eyes, one blink for yes, and two blinks for a no, had lost all memory of what had happened . . . or who I was!

Injured on the job, collapsed at Dillingham Ship Repair, covered by The Longshoremen's and Harbor Worker's Compensation Act. Dillingham Ship Repair never paid employee benefits of compensation, medical and rehabilitation. Dillingham simply did not pay employee benefits for my injury, including their self insurer Sedgwick of Oregon, Inc. Dillingham Ship Repair's secret plan, along with Sedgwick of Oregon, Inc. was to leave this accident covered up, so no one would find out. In the long term, Dillingham Ship Repair and Sedgwick of Oregon, Inc. wouldn't have to pay back the 29 years of employee benefits, punitive damages and other fines caused by their negligence.

Meanwhile, back in the hospital, I lapse into uncontrollable laughter. Someone would come by to say hello. I would start to laugh and laugh, out of control, unable to stop, no matter what the visitor would say. All I would do is crack up with laughter.

The doctors at Emanuel Hospital, put me on life support machines to keep me alive since my body could not defend for itself, in intensive care, fed through the nose. I would wake up, only to find that I had unnatural body functions, drooling. I could not swallow. The saliva would form

in my mouth with no way to get rid of it. The saliva just flowed out of my mouth onto me making a big mess, the gowns I wore were constantly wet from drooling.

My only thoughts were, "Please, Lord, let the pain end." Suffering in pain, desolated and stripped of life, lying for days with no improvements. All muscles drew in. My right hand drew in like a fist. My right arm drew in so tight. It was like saluting the flag. It laid across my chest to my left shoulder and there it stayed, stiff and lifeless. My right ankle curled in so far it could not turn in any further.

The left side of my body was three quarters paralyzed with four fifths of my strength left. On my left hand I could move my index finger from the first joint down and to some degree bend my elbow. My left leg, moved only with intense reflexes, no control like a paper doll, twisted up, laying helpless in bed.

The life I once had, was over, to get married, to enjoy life, and to prepare for the future. Destroying all plans I had and in one flicker, it ended, "In the blink of an Eye."

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