

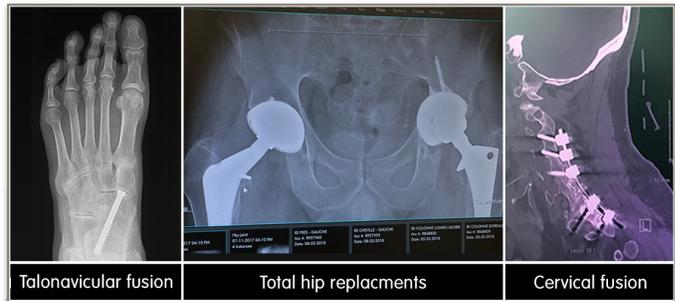
## Being Invisible - Meet your new neighbour, the Bionic Man

Have you ever felt invisible because you had gone unnoticed, were neglected, ignored, or unwanted? We all have experienced these kinds of emotions at one time or another. However, in this new "**Being Invisible**" column, I will discuss a different type of "invisible." Allow me to explain.

Dear residents, my name is Patrick Franc, I'm 51 years old, and I moved into Condo 154 in October of 2021 following a marital separation after almost 20 years with my wife. It has been the most trying and painful time of my life. **Le Sélection** has become a haven for me. Some of you have seen me - I'm the guy who looks like he doesn't belong here. I look *too* young to have moved into what is essentially a retirement residence. I don't know if I am the youngest resident in the complex, but I have turned heads many times when walking through the dining room, especially when sporting just my swim attire! I've also participated in the "sit-n'-fit" classes, where again, I stick out like a sore thumb and look like I could perhaps even teach the class. I appear young and healthy; however, as the old saying goes, "*appearances can be deceiving.*" I've had a chance to meet some kind folks, and some of you know a little about my story. But there is so much more to tell, as you will soon find out.

I was recently asked to join the writing team of the Village News, which was a lovely surprise, and as such, I have been given a chance to share **My Story** on an ongoing monthly basis with all of you, something I am very grateful for. So, here is a brief introduction.

In 2018, I decided to start a blog called: [www.beinginvisible.ca](http://www.beinginvisible.ca). Although I appear to be relatively healthy and normal when you see me in person, I'm actually quite ill and suffer from a list of **20 or so illnesses, disorders, and comorbidities**, with the top three being **Psoriatic Arthritis, Ankylosing Spondylitis, and Sjögren's Syndrome**. I've also undergone several surgeries: I have bi-lateral hip replacements, fused cervical vertebrae, and a fused joint in in my left foot. After almost 30 years of living with these diseases, I have become **compromised and partially disabled**. However, one would never know this just by looking at me.



My BLOG concept is unique - it incorporates MUSIC into every chapter. **Music has been my salvation**. Without it, I would not be here today - seriously. Each chapter is *themed* around a chosen piece of music, sometimes more than one. I created it as a way for me to share my story and to educate those around me about what it's like to live with chronic "invisible diseases."

One song can change the world. It can change your mind. It can break your heart or heal it. It can make you fall to your knees or motivate you to stand up and fight. **It can make you fall in love at a U2 concert** (that happened to me!) A song can take you on a journey, letting you escape life's troubles and burdens. Music captures the *essence* of what it means to be human. **It can change your life.**

Over the years, I've had to gradually let go of the old me and embrace the new me, but that has not been easy. Moving into Le Sélection is helping me with this metamorphosis. I can still walk, talk, eat, see, and hear. Some people can't do any of those things. I think about that daily, and it keeps me going. That's not to say that I don't have dark days where courage is hard to muster, I do. So, no matter how bad things get, they could always be worse, and I'm well aware of that.



### SONG OF THE MONTH

"Third of June - By Corey Hart"

[https://bit.ly/song\\_third\\_of\\_june](https://bit.ly/song_third_of_june)

This was the song playing on the bus that carried me to rehab after my first hip replacement. And, my wife and I used to slow dance to it every 3rd of June.

For the full version of My Story, visit [www.beinginvisible.ca/my-story](http://www.beinginvisible.ca/my-story). I look forward to meeting and speaking with you! Or, email me at: [bionicman@beinginvisible.ca](mailto:bionicman@beinginvisible.ca).