

As It Was

Remembering what once was

In my lifetime, I've traveled over 20 times to the Dominican Republic. It was and remains my favorite place on earth. Although I've not been back in over 10 years, in my heart, it remains a symbol of what once was and what will likely never be again. My physical and mental deterioration has occurred slowly and progressively over many years. There has not been one specific defining moment where I suddenly went from "able" to "unable." This is what most would consider the natural evolution of the aging process. Alas, it is. However, in my case, I've been stuck in fast-forward for years. At 52, I feel like 92. And today, I ask the questions, "How did I get here? How did this happen? How did I suddenly find myself on the other side, unable to get back?" It has been tormenting me for a long time.

Playa "Where dreams are made of!"

So why am I writing about this today? It's January 2023, and I'm currently convalescing after having had hip revision surgery, the 4th hip surgery in 20 years. I'm staying at my ex-wife house with her husband, and their twin boys until I am strong and able enough to manage on my own. Yes, that's correct; I'm living at my 1st wife's house as a guest and being cared for. With absolute certainty, I can confirm that the cliché "never say never" is real, and I have lived it more than once in what has turned into quite an unbelievable life story. This morning, fighting through depression, wondering how I'm going to get through the next few days, weeks, months, and even years,

given my current state of health, I stumbled upon a channel on T.V. broadcasting a fixed webcam-style video of a beautiful beach, Playa Madama in the D.R. I immediately recognized



it as the D.R., despite never having been to that particular beach. As with all my writing episodes, there is always a song that comes on the radio and either sparks the idea to write or matches what I'm writing about. This just happened. A song called "Tres Hermanos" just began to play. I've heard it once before. It transports me to the Latin land of beauty that I am in love with and comforts me. I look at the image of the beach, hear the waves lapping, see the fishing boat anchored in the sand, the mountains and palm trees completing the scene, and am filled with melancholy.

Television; The illusion of life

Traveling has become nearly impossible for me for many reasons. Will I ever be able to get back there? To the land of beauty, freedom, voodoo, and magic? To the land where anything seems possible and impossible at the same time. I don't know. All I have in its place right now is a 4K reincarnation on a huge flat-screen wall-mounted television in a luxury home in Beaconsfield that is counterbalanced by snow lining the basement window wells as a reminder that I am not there. Just pixels arranged in such a fashion as to allow me to view but not touch, feel, smell, or taste the world that I cannot get to. As I shuffle along the smooth exotic hardwood floors that were used to build this home, I can't help but ask myself, how did I get here? How did this happen? I never

imagined, when I was last in the D.R. that it might be my last time ever being there. I had plans to move down there as a retiree, something I realize now will never happen. I'm 52 years old and have been forced into early retirement because of my health, despite being nowhere near having the financial security I would need to truly retire.

Inside and Out, I wait

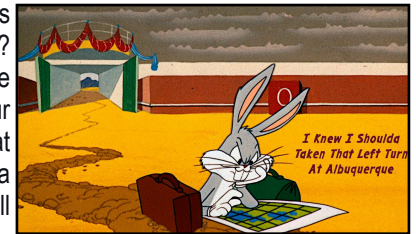
Now that the ticking time Cobalt poison bomb hip implant has been removed from my body, I wait some more. I'm told I have to wait 3 to 6 months to see a decline in the levels of Cobalt and Chromium present in



my blood. Everything, it seems, when it comes to health, takes 3 to 6 months. I've lost count of how many times I have waited 3 to 6 months for some change or improvement to occur or not occur in my life. 3 to 6 months is the time it takes to recover from hip surgery. I was able to hold on to the parts that were removed from my hip, both as a souvenir and for legal purposes. As you will see, the two pieces (ball and socket) appear to have never been used. They look brand new. This is because the implant itself was designed to be extremely durable and last a lifetime versus wear down as the plastic ones do. However, in this case, we are talking about microns of metal being worn away over years which are imperceptible to the eye. And as such, they are microscopic, which means they easily enter the bloodstream and wreak the havoc that I describe in my article "The Cobalt Blues." It's a shame that the material had to be toxic because otherwise, I'd still have that hip inside me doing its job - keeping me walking.

Nothing is as it was

In the early nineties, my uncle Marc who had made the DR his new home presented me and my girlfriend Lana with a tempting offer; move down to the Dominican Republic and work for him in his fruits and vegetables/juice bar business. I remember the temptation to just "leave it all behind" was so alluring. In the end, we chose to stay here in the land of snow and ice, Montreal, Qc. Was it a mistake? Did I make a left instead of a right at Albuquerque, as Bugs Bunny would have said? Would Lana and I have stayed together and had our child Sascha? Or would that have been removed as a possibility in our destiny? I'll never know.



Harry Styles holds the record in 2022 for the most listened-to song on Spotify with the song "As It Was." Those were the words that came to my mind when I saw the D.R. video this morning. Specifically, "You know it's not the same as it was." I see myself being eclipsed by the new generation; they are younger, fitter, stronger, and faster in all areas of life. So much has happened in the last 10 years of my life, so much has been taken away, it prompts me to ask, "should I have turned RIGHT instead of LEFT at Albuquerque?"

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