

BEYOND COLOR

A TRUE STORY

WILL THIS DAY BE MY LAST

By Douglas "DJ" Jordan

One day, while getting ready for work, I was looking in the mirror and things didn't look quite the same. It looked as though I had put on some weight. I climbed on the scale and I had indeed picked up a few pounds. At first, I thought this was great. I had weighed the same amount for over 15 years, one hundred and forty-three pounds, and I had always wanted to put on a few extra pounds.

I thought nothing of it until my weight gain became visible to my friends and co-workers. I stepped on the scale once again and I had put on more weight. My eating habits hadn't changed. Nor did my lifestyle. But, as I looked in the mirror, my face was puffy and I had started looking as if I were tired. I knew something wasn't right.

It was time that I addressed the matter. I visited the Bolling Air Force Base Clinic, in Washington DC, to have it checked out. This was the base where I was assigned prior to my retirement from the Air Force in 2002. I was assigned there in 1995.

After an examination, the doctor sent me to the lab to have blood work and to run some tests. She said she would call me in a week with the results of the tests.

A week passed and after not hearing anything from her, I thought everything was ok since I didn't get a call. No news is good news was my thought.

After a week and a half passed, I noticed I had put on a little more weight. I called the clinic to inquire about the test results. I asked to speak to the doctor who requested them. She came to the phone. The first thing she asked me was if I had been contacted by anyone from the clinic or the Malcolm Grow Medical Center at Andrews Air Force Base with the results. I told her that I hadn't and that I was waiting to hear from her. She then asked me if I could come into the clinic. My heart skipped two, maybe even three beats, my stomach felt as though it had dropped an inch, and there was an empty feeling all over my body. I knew something was wrong. I immediately left for the clinic.

Upon arriving, I went to the front desk to sign-in. The front desk staff said the doctor was waiting for me and she asked them to bring me right back. I was placed in an examination room, where I waited. The door to the room was left slightly ajar and I could hear the voice of a woman who sound like my doctor saying, “I can’t believe no one has contacted him concerning this”.

Then, what seemed like fifteen minutes, but was only about 45 seconds later, the doctor came into the room. She started out by asking me how I was feeling. I told her that I didn’t know. I was very nervous at that moment. She asked me once again if I had been contacted by or even heard from anyone concerning the results of the tests. Once again, I told her “No, I hadn’t”.

She sat down on one of those rolling stools, rolled right up to center me, put her hands on both of my knees and said, “MSgt Jordan, you shouldn’t be hearing this from me. This should actually come from a doctor in one of our speciality clinics at Malcolm Grow Medical

Center. I'm sorry to be the one to tell you this, but "you have cirrhosis of the liver". You are going to need a liver transplant and if you don't have a liver transplant in time, you will die".

Here's the story of the events leading up to that fateful day.