

## C A N C E R   B E C O M E S   C O N T A G I O U S

by Shawn Fisher

Jonathan Morin, the oldest of four, grew up in Brunswick, Maine. After graduating high school he enlisted in the U.S. Navy and in 2001, earned an honorable discharge as a combat medic. He went on to serve in the reserves and as part of the GI Bill attended San Diego College of Oceanering where he majored in hyperbaric medicine. After graduating with honors; the college offered him a teaching position which he accepted. He eventually moved on where he became a staff paramedic and a director of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in Texas.

In 2006, the field of medicine; which he loved so dearly, would now seriously test his resolve. After suffering a seizure doctors discovered a tumor on his right frontal lobe. It was later diagnosed as grade 2 Oligoendoglioma: a cancer that attaches to the Myelin Sheath around nerve fibers in the brain causing serious neurological disorders and limited life expectancy. However, Jonathan completed his treatment, recovered and moved to Massachusetts to be closer to his mother as well as take a higher paying job.

In 2010, he discovered his then girlfriend was cheating on him. While highly intoxicated, Jonathan held her and her new boyfriend against their will in an effort to question her and expose the affair. Although no one was physically touched or harmed during the ordeal it could have easily ended in tragedy. Thankfully it didn't.

The next day they got back together. It was not until three months later that the crime was reported and Jonathan arrested and charged with 19 indictments ranging from home invasion to kidnapping. Jonathan takes full responsibility for his actions and understands the severity of his crime. A factor which led to his pleading guilty to a lengthy prison sentence of 20-25 years in prison. A harsh penalty considering he has never been arrested or been in trouble with the law in his entire life.

Six years into his incarceration, Jonathan has completed several programs and conducted himself as a model inmate. However, his cancer has not been so cooperative. Since 2013, he has completed six weeks of radiation and undergone five surgeries. His chemo therapy is on going and his cancer is now in what doctors have termed its "miracle stage". :

Jonathan is cognizant of the fact that his cancer will eventually prevail. A fact that has prompted him to seek a transfer to a prison in Maine so that he can be closer to receive visits from his children and mother who suffers from Multiple Sclerosis.

In documentation from an "Early Classification Board Request" it shows three Department of Correction (DOC) staff at Old Colony Correctional Center reviewed his request and all recommended a "compassionate transfer. consideration to Maine".

However, in typical DOC fashion Central Classification at DOC Headquarteres in Milford, denied the transfer stating simply, "Denied".

It is difficult for me to process why the DOC denied his transfer. He is simply requesting a move to another prison where he can receive visits from loved ones before his cancer gets the best of him. It seems simple enough. But nothing is simple in the DOC, just simplemindedness.

For years, I have witnessed the DOC conduct itself as an agency designed to punish prisoners for the sake of punishing prisoners. Apparently the concept of being sent to prison AS punishment and not FOR punishment has been lost both in terms of our criminal justice system and by those in society.

Jonathans story is a perfect example of a system dedicated toward maintaining the status quo then they are in rehabilitation. By denying a terminally ill prisoner the simple request to be closer to his family, they have effectively metastasized a tumor that has reverberated off cold concrete walls for decades—a cancerous tumor of hopelessness. A feeling every prisoner is burdened with since entering the prison system. And a burden every prisoner must also try and fight in order to rehabilitate: on their own, what is left of their life. With the single stroke of a pen the DOC has not only condemned one man to die alone but has also sent a messeage to the rest of us—you're not worthy.

Thus it begs the question. How can the DOC rehabilitate the prisoners in their care (as they claim), when they view those same prisoners as unworthy? They CAN'T! Instead, the DOC allows prisoners to leave the prison system worse off then when they entered and make no apologies to the innocent citizens who are victimized as a result.

Don't become a victim of the DOC's innept proceedures. Contact Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker, and tell him to put more emphasis on rehabilitation and not punishment. Ask him to step in and transfer Jonathan Morin to Maine and allow him and his family to be reunited before it's to late. Before his cancer becomes a contagious cancer that infects the whole prison system.

#### About Jonathan Morin

As of October 2016, Jonathan continues to seek a transfer to the Maine prison system. He can be reached at Jonathan Morin W102585, 1 Administration Rd. Bridgewater, MA. 02324