

I Have Just Gone All to Hell



After I left my practice in Evanston, Illinois I opened my second practice in Ludington, Michigan. I put my practice in a medical art's building across the hall from a pharmacy and next door to a medical clinic.

The first naprapath to establish a practice in Michigan was given a choice by the state attorney general, stop practicing or be arrested and put on trial, possibly to be convicted and imprisoned. He chose to become a hearing aid salesman. If I was going to be arrested I wanted to make it easy for the authorities to find me.

My appearance in Ludington and setting up shop there served as a local scandal. At the time I was not yet a chiropractor and as a naprapath no one quite knew what I was or what I did. The local chiropractors considered me a threat to their practices and income and filed complaints against me with the state of Michigan hoping to have me arrested and shutdown.

One local chiropractor was waging a war against the medical profession and had polarized the medical and chiropractic professions against each other. This was the small-town environment that I had determined to build my families future in.

I had arrived in Ludington with an unemployed wife, one year old and two-year-old daughters, a 16-year-old rust bucket car, and almost no money. To set up my office I bought used furniture from a JC Penney's store that was going out of business and I built my own treatment table. Once I opened my office I sat inside daily for almost two weeks before the phone even rang. It was a wrong number.

The second phone call I received was an invitation to speak at an Elk's Club luncheon. I accepted the invitation to a wonderful lunch of roast beef, mashed potatoes and gravy, with green beans and apple pie for desert (*I was a vegetarian*). I left that meeting with two new patients.

After treating my two new patients their wives scheduled appointments with me, followed by their bridge club, and then soon followed by most of the church they belonged to, I had succeeded in establishing my practice in Ludington in less than 90 days. From these humble beginnings word spread about my practice and it was not long before patients were driving from as far away as Muskegon, Grand Rapids, Ann Arbor and Traverse City to consult with me.

I was in my office treating a patient one afternoon when I could hear someone come into my waiting room. This was unusual because I was not expecting another patient until later in the afternoon. Excusing myself I stepped out of the treatment room to see who had come into my office.

It was an older man who was standing rather unsteadily leaning heavily on a walker. I greeted him and asked him how I might be of assistance. He said, "*Well, I have just gone all to hell.*", "*I can't even get around without this damn thing.*" That was my introduction to Walt.

When I was attending classes at the naprapathic college in Chicago one of my instructors taught that if you listen to a patient carefully they will tell you what is wrong with them. I listened to Walt as he explained that he had been being treated for well over a year for back pain and weakness in his lower extremities by a local chiropractor. It was the same chiropractor that was causing the animosity between the local chiropractors and medical doctors.

Standing in my waiting room talking with Walt I asked him about what was going on with him, he explained that within the last two weeks his legs and arms had gotten much weaker and that he went out and bought a walker, so he could get around.

I now knew several important things about Walt's condition. It was chronic, he had been receiving chiropractic adjustments for over a year and getting progressively worse, he had not seen a medical doctor because his chiropractor advised against it, it involved both his upper and lower extremities, and within the last two weeks his condition had gotten significantly worse.

My next and immediate act was to take Walt from my waiting room, into the waiting room of the medical doctor who practiced next to me. As soon as the doctor's receptionist saw me enter their office she rushed to confront me, and she yelled out, "*How dare you come into this office!*" This behavior was entertaining for all the doctor's patients and no doubt within minutes everyone in town was talking about what happened.

After I was able to calm her down, I politely explained that poor Walt had come into the wrong office and he had intended to come into their office because his situation was a medical emergency.

Walt was seen that day by my neighbor the medical doctor and was immediately hospitalized. I heard that he was at the University of Michigan within the week, but sadly he died within 30 days.

Walt was diagnosed with glioblastoma, the most common and lethal form of brain cancer.

My relationship with the chiropractors never did improve, but from that day on the local medical doctors and I worked together for the benefit of our mutual patients.

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