

## The Butcher by Peter

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*“The cancer was completely contained within what was removed.”*

It took some time for the words to sink in. Success. Brilliant. Fantastic. And then I thought back of how I got here...

My story starts about two years ago when I went to my local doctor to discuss two issues: having to get up to pee during the night and my peeing rate. Trickle comes to mind. Nothing like when I could write my name in snow. I suspect my GP plays cricket as he certainly has wicket keeper hands, with fingers the size cucumbers. Anyway he gave me the delightfully named "digital examination". He wasn't happy with what he felt: nor was I.

That led to PSA blood tests and various other tests including a couple of biopsies, one slightly unpleasant and the other piece of cake under a full anaesthetic.

There was no doubt: I had prostate cancer. And it was growing too quickly. And it appeared to be the wrong type of cancer. Tiger rather than pussy cat.

So, after about a year of tests, someone said it was time to do something. Although some medical trails can produce amazing outcomes, I ended up being offered the classic Top Three:

- a) Nuke me with internal or external radiation
- b) Poison me with chemotherapy and hormone therapy
- c) Butcher me with an electric carving knife

Having lost at the medical version of Paper/Rock/Scissors, I found myself being booked into the local National Health Service (NHS) morgue waiting room where I had my prostate removed by a drunk, blind, immature butcher pretending to be a surgeon. Actually that isn't fair: I think he might have been on a work experience course.

(Perhaps I should mention I chose the knife as I wanted a quick fix, so I wouldn't need to visit hospital for numerous follow-ups.)

Having the mental age of a five year old, the butcher likes playing with his toy, an ultra modern Da Vinci Surgical Robot, which is apparently perfect for such operations. But no fun for him without a patient.

It isn't really a robot: more like a remote control for a science fiction film with half a dozen tentacles. The butcher sits at his X-Box / Play Station and, when not searching for porn on the web, uses the various tentacles to fiddle with my insides

Afterwards it looked like I had just done 15 rounds in the ring with a heavy weight boxer. He won. I had the bruises to prove it.

It appears the butcher is also a member of a local gun club and used me for target practice. This is the only way I can account for the half a dozen bullet holes in my tummy. And talking of my tummy...

My tummy was a gargantuan size as the butcher thought it would be funny to connect me to a petrol station tyre pump. Having turned it on, he went off for a coffee break and forgot about me. As expected, I drifted up to the ceiling. Now I know the reason why drug users talk about getting "as high as a kite". I only came down having been popped by contestants in the UK National Needle Jabbing championships. Unfortunately the contestants were also drunk, which accounts for various puncture holes randomly scattered all over my body.

Then there was, for the first couple of days, the sensation of a broken shoulder: apparently a by-product of the drugs used to keep me under. Nobody ever says under what.

Worse of all... the butcher called in at a home improvement superstore on his way to work and bought the plumbing bits needed to install a fire hydrant in the hospital car park, to allow him to have his fleet of Bentley's washed. He then had a better idea and spent the morning shoving these various bits and pieces up my willy, leaving me with an shrunk appendage that terminates with a 63mm (two inches) on/off valve and a pair of bags that allows me to travel the 500 miles from London to Glasgow without de-fuelling. Not that I wanted to travel to Glasgow.

And when I say my willy was "shrunk", I can quantify that: my magnificent banana is now a miserable baby carrot.

Another aspect of the modern day NHS is their training for would-be junkies. Every evening, for 28 consecutive nights, I had to inject myself with a syringe the size of a large, industrial knitting needle. This goes into my tummy. A new hole every night. Yet more bruising. They tell me this is to stop my blood coagulating. This is, of course, nonsense as increasing my consumption of wine would be a more agreeable way of

solving that problem.

And, talking of wine, I was on a strict diet: a dozen Ibuprofen every hour, washed down with three bottles of Sainsbury's best white wine keeps the blood out of my alcohol veins. This conforms to NHS instructions to drink at least two litres a day. I assume they meant wine...

During the first week I was very surprised to discover my weight went up. The good news is nothing rattled when I jumped up and down. This means they can only have left one item, perhaps a pickaxe, behind inside my tummy.

My wife Jane tells me... (a) I am now a seriously grumpy old man, (b) I move very slowly, (c) I am forbidden to sign any legal documents and (d) I know there is a (d) but the drugs have fried my brain and so I can't remember what (d) is.

On the other hand, the new puppy, named Simba by one of the hospital car washers, is now six months old and I think he is sweet. Unfortunately he loves Jane's shoes, Jane's handbags, Jane's trousers and Jane's fingers. I suspect my decision to get the puppy before the op was a mistake. I mean a Mistake with a capital "M".

So there you are: my first experience of the pain of childbirth. No. Bad example. This is much worse than childbirth.

On re-reading the above, I realise I have failed to tell you the good news... I discovered Instillagel, an anaesthetic gel that I smear all over my willy and this reduces the horrendous misery of having a fire hydrant poking out to just-bearable discomfort.

Thirteen days after the op, the ten yards (or so it seemed) of garden hose and the hydrant were removed. My "relief" was short lived as I am now told to wear a life jacket. This is to cope with the mathematical probability I will be leaking small rivers. For months. Charming. Something to look forward to...

Of course, all this is on top of having deeply embarrassing conversations with the butcher and his car washers aka the nurses: the questions are all about quality, quantity and frequency of erections and the ratio of intercourse Vs masturbation. There is one gem and I promise you this isn't a wind-up, nor a clever bit of editing. This is from the UK Prostate Cancer Members Club magazine:

*The Conference was opened by Mr Julian Shah, consultant urological surgeon at UCLH*

*"If you don't use it you lose it"*

*He went on to recommend 21 orgasms a month to keep things in good working order.*

I repeat: I promise you the above is exactly as published!

I have to confess this will, of course, require my wife and I to reduce our monthly target.

So... that's it. I am probably the world's worst patient. And I'm told things will get better. But the people who tell me this have not recently had most of their internal organs removed by a child while strapped to a Black and Decker Workmate in a hospital car park.

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It is now ten weeks after the op and I am feeling pretty good, so perhaps they were right. Things have already got better.

Mind you, on balance, I can't think of a single good reason for subjecting my crown jewels to such an ordeal. Apart from not dying of prostate cancer. Actually, come to think about it, that's a fairly good reason.

Consider the maths: over 11,000 men get recycled ("earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust" etc) each year in the UK due to prostate cancer. But not me...

Oh shoot. I got this all wrong. Fewer than two weeks of minor discomfort in exchange for another fourteen years, according to the government life expectancy tables, of quality life.

And I've just realised something else: the butcher didn't actually kill me. Yet. He may do when he reads this. I've just started to fully appreciate he must have been exceptionally good at his job and I've just had the benefit of his twenty years experience. Oh dear... I'm going to eat some humble pie pills and say "thank you" to him. And the wicket keeper doctor who identified the problem in the first place.

In all this excitement I forgot to mention I have had two consultations with a private Pelvic Muscle Consultant. She is very happy with me! Mind you, it is a bit weird standing in front of her naked from the waste down,

doing exercises. To avoid any misunderstandings, I am naked from the waist down, not her...

A few weeks ago there was the best news ever: the biopsy confirms the cancer was an evil bastard and it was completely contained within the prostate that was removed by the butcher, I mean my brilliant world class surgeon, and so I am now in the clear. Forever. Success. Brilliant. Fantastic. Yippee.

In fact I now realise I have just benefitted from some amazing stars within the NHS. Doctor, surgeon, nurses. They all put up with me without complaining. And that can't have been easy.

It is now three months after the op ... and I'm dry. No more life jackets / panty pads. Another brilliant tick in the box. Now just the ED, the medical world word for a limp willy, issue to resolve...

A year has now passed since my prostate was removed and ED is still an issue. The problem is there is a very strong link between erectile dysfunction and heart disease. No erection = heart attack. Not what you might have thought. So while I am feeling smug about not being one of the 11,000 men who die of prostate cancer, I now risk being one of the 160,000 who die from Coronary Heart / Circulatory Disease. Both figures are per annum. Frying pans and fire comes to mind.

In order to avoid this depressing future, I'm now trying various solutions to solve the ED problem:

Viagra didn't work as you need the basis of an erection and then it makes things firmer. But I don't have the basis.

MUSE is weird stuff you squirt up your willy and it should create an erection. It didn't.

Using a penis vacuum pump, only £10 on e-bay, is great fun but doesn't seem to be doing any good. There are professional medical pumps with better vacuums but I haven't yet tried one.

I am waiting for the next step... injecting my willy with Caverjet, which apparently isn't as painful as it sounds. Or so they say. I don't think I'll bother with the final solution: installing a miniature hydraulic pump that with a flick of a switch or an app on a smart phone produces a great tent pole.

The only remaining bad news is the bullet holes have almost disappeared, leaving me without any scars, so nobody will ever believe my story...

Actually the NHS as in National Health Service is wrongly named: it should be HNS as in Health National Service as that would fit THANKS.

Finally I've saved the best news till last: I've just remembered the (d) I couldn't remember before.

(d) Beware: cocktail of drugs may result in a risk of slight un-intentional exaggeration of events that took place in hospital. Oops...

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