



Women rides bike across the US to become whole again after brain aneurysm

Xavier Zaragoza/The Daily Dispatch

She was a Playboy Bunny, an actress, a screenwriter and the owner of a successful Bed and Breakfast in Hollywood.

At 56 she completed a 10,000 mile solo bike ride in Europe and in the Middle East.

At 60 Megan Timothy's life turned upside down when she had a brain aneurysm that left her unable to speak, read or write. Only two months before her brain aneurysm, her mother had died. She had nursed her mother until her death, leaving Timothy in financial ruin.

"I remember sitting at the edge of the bed, wondering how I got there," Timothy said, now 62, of the day of her aneurysm or the "Day Her Brain Exploded" as she calls it.

On September 2, 2003 her friends called her on the phone and when she answered she thought she was speaking fine. Her friends, however, could not understand a word she was saying. Timothy at first didn't notice anything wrong with her.

Her friends, Jaki and Sue, immediately put her in the hospital, where they told her about her condition: AVM or arterial venous malformation, a congenital defect that caused bleeding in the brain.

"You are imprisoned to the solitary confinement of the mind," she said.

From there it got worse. Since she had no money she became a ward of the state and was placed in a state-run rehabilitation center that was more like a scene from the movie "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest."

Because she was brain damaged, the only words she could say was yes, no, and chicken. And often the word chicken was accompanied with a loud F-word in front of it, she said.

"They thought I'd be brain damaged forever," she said. She was able to understand everything clearly; she was unable to read, speak or write.

The center was a place where no one was getting rehab, she recalls. There, she was told she would never write again, an activity that was a major part of her life.

And that was true. She was physically unable to write.

"But I could still write things in my head," Timothy said with accent that at first sounds British but is really Rhodesian.

As a result, Timothy wrote a 190 page book, "Let Me Die Laughing! Waking From the Nightmare of a Brain Explosion," which chronicles her experience with the aneurysm, the rehab center, going back home, and learning to read and write again.

With the book out in bookstores, Timothy has launched another solo bike ride that will take her from her home in Hemet, Calif., through Arizona, New Mexico and then on to Washington D.C. From there she will head back home to Hemet.

"This journey is meant to make me whole again," she said.

She had stopped in Douglas for a few hours before heading off to Lordsburg, NM. She had spent the night in Bisbee.

Timothy was born in Rhodesia, now known as Zimbabwe, and came to the United States when she was 21.

For more information a about the Timothy's book, log on to www.cronehousepublishing.com.

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