Stronger than my circumstances

By Brooke D Lanfair

"When I couldn't, I wanted to. Now that I can, I try until I can't."

Let Me Tell My Story

In December 2021, I had moved back home to Memphis from Chicago and started working as a TSA officer, having transferred from ORD. I was excited to be completing my certification in Homeland Security. Not sure when I contracted COVID per se, but working with the traveling public, I could only imagine.

Initially, my supervisors were concerned about the diagnosis and granted me the time off required for quarantine. When I was diagnosed a second time with COVID, another 10 days were granted. As I prepared to get cleared to return, I was asked to come back early regardless of the result of another test.

I did as I was advised — only to get sick, suffering from shortness of breath and dizziness. I was sent home… never to return.

Stronger Than My Circumstances (Continued)

I was slick happy for the vacation — finally able to live without pressure. My family and I decided to make the most of the time together, traveling and exploring new things.

But then… my body started to betray me.

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First, I began to fall out of the blue. No tripping, no warning — I'd just collapse.

The first time scared me to death. I was walking into the bathroom, and it was like I blinked and suddenly I was on the floor. I had urinated and fallen at the same time. I was confused, but I carried on as if nothing happened.

Then it happened again.

Fatigue hit me like a wave I couldn't fight. My energy was nonexistent. My son and I had plans to fly back to Chicago to bring in the New Year with friends — but our flight got canceled.

I was somewhat relieved, needing the extra rest.

But the next morning, my body said "no more."

I could barely stand. The paramedics were called.

I was taken to the hospital, confused as ever. Left on a gurney in a cold hallway for hours, poked and prodded, hungry, and sleepy — doctors ran tests, thinking I had a blood infection.

But they found nothing.

I stayed in the hospital for several days, barely able to walk. I returned home with a walker and was assigned physical and occupational therapy.

Soon after, the pain and tingling in my hands began — unbearable.

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Then one morning, while getting ready for therapy, my nurse helped me from bed… and my legs gave out.

From that moment, I was partially paralyzed.

"***What Is Wrong With Me?*** "

At this point, I felt like I was going in circles. No one — not even the doctors — seemed to have a clue what was really going on with me.

I couldn't walk, so I had to be carried down the steps. The medications had me hallucinating. I was miserable, lying in that bed day after day.

And as if that wasn't enough, I was going through a divorce.

It was a long battle but luckily somewhat drama-free — which was a blessing, because anything more would have broken me.

I had seen neurologists who found nothing. Meanwhile, my vision was becoming so blurry that I thought I was losing my sight completely.

They referred me to an eye specialist. I spent hours getting my eyes tested — and they found nothing. No explanation for my declining vision.

They did sleep studies. Checked my breathing. Monitored my heart. Watched my blood pressure. Every theory came and went.

The leading theory? "Long COVID."

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That was their answer for everything. It felt like a diagnosis of dismissal.

Eventually, I was moved downstairs. It made things easier for my mother to care for me. She could get to me quickly when I needed her.

That time was a blur… dark, disorienting, and deeply humbling.

But finally, in February 2022, **I got the appointment that changed everything**.

I met with a specialist — Dr. Lance Wright at Semmes Murphy Medical Center.

When he ran the nerve tests on my feet, legs, arms, and hands… it was as if he could see what no one else had seen.

He recognized my symptoms immediately.

He explained my diagnosis — *Chronic Inflammatory Demyelinating Polyneuropathy*.

And to be honest? I was just relieved that what I had… finally had a name.

I immediately began immunoglobulin treatments. Weekly.

The nurses rotated — some were amazing, warm, full of love. A few even became like family and still check on me to this day.

Others… not so much.

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Some had no bedside manner. Some couldn’t even find a vein. I’d be left with bruises all up and down my arms. After all that? They’d say they’d have to come back later and try again.

It was frustrating. Draining. Dehumanizing.

But the good nurses and the therapists — they were different.

They showed up for me like angels. They didn’t just treat my body — they nurtured my spirit.

We prayed. We talked. We shared stories. They reminded me that healing wasn’t just medical — it was emotional.

One Step at a Time

I had gotten so tired of not being in control of my life that one day, I just decided — I’m moving back upstairs…

READ THE FULL STORY ON MY BOOK

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