The Friday Four: Doctors Save Hand By Attaching It To Man's Calf

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The Friday Four seeks to highlight some of the people behind some of the interesting stories I stumble upon during my daily search for relevant content. Consider this my (early) Christmas present to you, dear reader. You're welcome.

1. Donald Jones -- For much of his NFL career, Buffalo Bills wide receiver Donald Jones was a mildly productive player [1] who conducted his work in relative obscurity. He was most certainly not a star, and he suited up for a Buffalo Bills squad short on both proven NFL talent and long-term prospects. I watch NFL football every Sunday, and I (vaguely) remember Jones. He scored four touchdowns during the 2012 campaign, but totaled just 82 receptions and six scores in three seasons with the team. That’s probably why I failed to notice when, at just 25 years of age, Jones retired from football this past August [2]. According to a recent Associated Press article [3], he was having difficulty dealing with the symptoms of IgA nephropathy (an auto-immune disease affecting the kidneys) and needed a transplant or dialysis. Thankfully, Jones's father emerged as a viable donor. The surgery was deemed a success, and now it looks like Jones will be able to live a normal life.

I never paid much attention to Jones when he was suiting up for the Bills. Sure, he was an undrafted free agent who worked hard to overcome his long odds of being an NFL regular. That should be commended. However, the circumstances that led to the premature end of what should have been the defining period of his life – a career as a wide receiver in the NFL – have catapulted Jones to greater prominence and allowed him to become known for more than being an ex-NFL player. I can only hope he will leverage his situation to inform and inspire individuals dealing with serious injuries and illnesses or facing serious surgical procedures.

2. Jahi McMath -- McMath, a 13-year-old California girl, started experiencing problems shortly after undergoing a routine tonsillectomy to address her sleep apnea. According to reports [4], she started coughing up blood approximately 30 minutes after the procedure was finished. She then suffered a cardiac arrest and was declared “brain dead” on Dec. 12. McMath is on life support for the time being.

It’s difficult for me to even mention this story, mostly because my mind floods with questions as I type these words. I want to read as many news articles as I can until I find what caused this young girl’s death. I want to know who or what to blame. I want to make sense of a senseless situation. That’s just not possible at this time.

3. Xie Wei -- Some online articles I skim. Then there are the ones in which I read every single word. The latter describes how I approached Xie’s story. A Chinese workshop employee, Xie nearly lost his hand when he cut it off while operating a machine on the job. However, a doctor was able to save it thanks to some quick thinking and an unconventional procedure. According to a CBS/Associated Press article [5], the doctor, Tang Juyu, relied on his background as a specialist in tissue and wound repair cases to determine the best course of action involved attaching it to Xie's calf for access to a good supply of blood. The article also mentioned Xie thought the whole situation was “unbelievable” and “weird.” Upon seeing an image of his hand attached to his lower leg, I tend to agree with Xie’s assessment.

However, perhaps the most interesting detail of Xie’s story is that it took him almost seven hours to locate a doctor willing and able to help him try to save his hand. And yet, he has recovered without complications and is now resting at home after undergoing a second procedure to reattach his hand about a month after the injury

occurred.

While he doesn’t have full movement of his fingers just yet, Xie expects to make a full recovery. That’s truly amazing given the gruesome and serious nature of his injury.

4. Alan Oliver Frazier -- The initial news reports [6] regarding a hospital shooting in Reno, Nevada earlier this week did not offer much information about the gunman, his motive behind the attack, or the circumstances surrounding the incident. Thanks to the continued efforts of the media, however, we now have a better understanding of the shooter and how events from his past may have led to Tuesday's tragic incident. The shooting resulted in the death of both the gunman and a doctor at the urology clinic and left two others injured. A recent Associated Press article [7] provided several notable details:

"*Inside, we located a typed letter indicating the suspect's intention to commit this horrific act,*" *said Reno police Lt. William Rulla. "We also located other firearms within the residence, as well as notes indicating the suspect's actions during this incident were to be his final actions.*"

Police said Frazier had a surgery in 2010 and claimed to have adverse symptoms because of it.

But it was not immediately clear if the unspecified procedure was performed at Urology Nevada, the site of the shooting on Tuesday, or if either of the two doctors who were shot had been involved in the operation.

However, police said Frazier made statements at the time of the attack that he was looking for physicians from the office, not patients, police said, citing witness statements.

It's unsettling to think post-surgical complications could have played a role in causing a man (who, according to the story, had no significant run-ins with the law during the 20 or so years he lived in the Reno area) to commit a pre-medicated act of violence against unsuspecting people. And while this story offers a viable explanation for why the incident may have occurred, we're left to wonder what kind of support and treatment Frazier could have received in the months and years

following his surgery.

Have any nominees for The Friday Four? Email me

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