



# One Fateful Night

Six years after an attack, Tommy Bullard found out he was HIV positive.

August 16, 2023 By Tommy Bullard

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One night, I wanted to go to the club. When I got there I was having a wonderful night, dancing and enjoying time with my friends. I wasn't really paying much attention to what was going on around me, which was a big mistake. This guy came out of nowhere, broke his beer bottle over a counter edge, slit his arm wide open and then stabbed me in the back. The bartender of the club grabbed me and started to stuff rags around the glass in my back and tried to keep me calm. Someone called 911, and I was taken to the hospital, where they asked me if I knew the guy who did it. I said that I didn't and didn't know why he would do it. I was told later that he passed away and had AIDS.

Six years later, I was diagnosed with HIV. About seven years later, I moved to Georgia, and when I went to get medical services, they refused to prescribe me Atripla. I moved from Georgia to Tucson, where I would later find out that I had AIDS. I fought for some time to get my CD4 count under control. Once I did, I was somewhat back to normal because the virus was undetectable.

Now, I live day to day trying to stay as healthy as possible for my husband and my friends. I want to be able to live a very long life.

What three adjectives best describe you?

Charismatic, ardent, easygoing.

What is your greatest achievement?

I was told I would not amount to anything, but I proved my parents wrong by getting four different degrees. I've worked as a commercial artist, cosmetologist, male model and medical assistant.

What is your greatest regret?

Letting people use me when I was younger and not really paying much attention to what was really going on.

What keeps you up at night?

The fear of never waking up. Thinking that I may leave my loving husband behind and hurt my friends and family.

If you could change one thing about living with HIV, what would it be?

Never getting it in the first place. I'd watch out for myself and not let someone hurt me.

What is the best advice you ever received?

Live life to the fullest because you never know when your time will come.

What person in the HIV community do you most admire?

I would have to say an old friend who passed. He gave me more than anyone today could. He was there every step of the way and showed me that there are still kind people in this world.

What drives you to do what you do?

I wish I could help more people. Kids really need to watch what they are doing and learn to protect themselves.

What is your motto?

"If it is to be, it is up to me."

If you had to evacuate your house immediately, what would you grab on the way out?

My laptop and my husband.

If you could be any animal, what would you be? And why?

I would be a wolf. I would be able to travel all over and see things. I'd try and help teach love and respect and trust in the animal world.