

Paul Aroniyo - Moving too fast

Doctor says the effects of the drugs will soon fade, as my brain reconfigures itself and adjusts to accommodating; I quote “Higher levels of cognitive thinking.” But I’m sure weeks have passed and yet these headaches and the nausea still persist; I’m not getting any better and I think the Doc knows it.

He’ll be coming to see me in a few minutes; I think its best that I state my case so that he knows the full extent of my pain.

Maybe the drug trials can be altered so the side effects aren’t so severe on my body? But would they really be willing to change things for me? Their complicit guinea pig? It’s hard to say...

Here he comes.

“Hello Michael. How are you feeling today?” he asked.

“Doc, I’m not feeling too good,” I stressed. “The pain isn’t subsiding like you promised it would”.

A confused look quickly engulfed his face, as if he had no recollection of the conversation between us.

“Michael, you are aware the drug therapy will take time to adjust in your body and I can’t stress how important it is that you don’t try to fight its effects”.

“I understand that but you were adamant the pain would be gone by now. So tell me, why I am still suffering like this?”.

He didn't have an immediate answer for me but slyly jotted something down on his clipboard before he spoke to me again.

“At this moment in time it's hard to say what is exactly going on, but we are doing our best to make this experience as easy going for you as we can. Now get some rest. We'll be starting the next round of drug therapy soon”.

He smiled and nodded at me as if we were of the same understanding - I don't know how that could be, when only one of us was getting what we needed from this interaction but I nodded back just for the sake of it anyway. He then left.

I drifted off to sleep soon after, to be awoken by the nurse. She informed me that I had an unscheduled appointment with the therapist.

Surprised, I didn't protest – Therapy is the only time I really get to speak my mind and feel like I'm being listened to rather than pacified for the sake of tests.

I was soon greeted by two attendants, who ushered me to Dr Burrell's office like a high speed train with no stops and only a destination.

Once I was in Dr Burrell's office, the attendants quickly departed leaving me to take my seat opposite Dr Burrell.

We talked for a bit, going over my reasons for joining the research programme -- covering old ground really about how I want to make something of myself having failed at school, never holding down a

job and struggling to provide for my daughter Lily; The real reason I'm here. She's my world and I need the money from this programme so I can give her the life she deserves before she's old enough to start hating me for being a 'no-good dad'.

But interestingly, this time Dr Burrell seemed curious about my stay in the facility; emphasising questions about my interaction with staff. I told her about the promises that Dr Kisch had made to me in extensive detail and that I thought he was wrong to make such guaranteed promises, only to later treat me as if nothing of the sort was said.

Wait, could I be here because Dr Kisch has concerns about my mental wellbeing? If so, how could this change things' for me?

I thought about it on my way out of her office but my foot buckled from under me and I fell to the ground. As I tended to my injured foot, I caught a glimpse of Dr Kisch walking determinedly towards Dr Burrell's office. The attendee to my left tracked my line of sight and quickly got me up and pushed me forward, taking me back to my room.

What I saw, made me think; *If I hadn't had injured my foot, I wouldn't have seen Dr Kisch arriving at Dr Burrell's office straight after my session had finished.* It couldn't be a coincidence that I have an unscheduled appointment and he arrives as soon as it's finished - They must be talking about me!

Either way, whatever was discussed during that meeting of the two Doctors, didn't affect the next day of drug therapy, as that went ahead as scheduled, as did my test to see if the drugs were working.

The test involved me using a plastic hammer to hit the fast moving red dots that would appear on the board - I guess they are testing my reaction and attention speed. I found it relatively easy as with every hit of the hammer, I was able to note what was going on around me: The tester with his clipboard writing 'Subjects speed has improved but only marginally – Hit rate 0.7 seconds', the other test regulator out of audible range but watching her lips I could make out "We've seen marked improvement in the subjects reaction speed," then a pause as I presume the other person on the line spoke.

Then with another hit of the hammer I extinguished another red light on the board.

Between hits I carefully watched the hand movement of the tester writing on his clipboard, 'Subject is not the prime candidate. Other recruits needed if drug trials are to be successful', he wrote.

Then a beeping sound went off – A sign that I had missed the next target that appeared.

I took the opportunity to look away from the board as if I was disappointed in myself, really checking on the test regulator on her phone.

“I understand but what we are doing here is about more than money-“. She paused. Then spoke again, “Fine, I’ll inform the others that subject zero will be terminated”. I gasped as the word left her mouth, ‘*Terminated*’. *Does this mean they are getting rid of me? Starting again with someone else? This can’t be. **What about my money!***

The test soon concluded and I was taken back to my room, where I sat wondering how I could remain in the programme and guarantee the money that I needed. *What could I do to make myself more valuable?* Then it came to me. I quickly called for the Doctor, who I assume had been informed by the woman on the phone about the decision that had been made from above, as he was late coming to see me; as if he knew checking on me was of no consequence anymore.

Dr Kisch entered my room, trying to refrain from looking not bothered with me, as I exuberantly belted out.

“You should up my dosage. I’ll forgo my rights so you can test unregulated levels of the drugs on me”.

This seemed to perk up his interest in me, as his eyes lit up with the prospect of hope.

He looked over his shoulder to see if any of the nurses were around, in case they overheard me. There was no one else present but me and him.

“I will have to confer with my associates but if we do decide to go ahead, I promise that we will not take any undue risks to achieve results”.

When he finished he nodded and for the first time put his hand on my shoulder to comfort me; I wasn't sure that was a sign that he was happy with me or that it was the last time he'd get the chance to do that...

As days passed, all I could think about was how proud I was going to make Lily.

Sometime late in the afternoon I was collected from my room by the nurse and taken to the drug therapy room. I was placed in the chair and the conductor took his position next to me; as always making sweet talk with me, trying to comfort me with the occasional smile of 'It's going to be okay'.

Adjacent to me through a glass window, stood Doctor Kisch and the testers as I was strapped in.

Looking ahead I noticed one of them; a woman, wasn't happy and was seemingly engaged in *words* with Dr Kisch, which resulted in him muttering, "This must be done" followed by "I'm doing as he asked" - I assumed they were talking about me but what has got this woman so riled up?

Not to be silenced she moved closer to the glass window and pointed out at me and said, “Would he really ask to die?”

I was shocked but before I could react, the machine started to initiate, chemically inducing the drugs into my system.

I pleaded with the conductor to stop, but he didn't respond to me and instead looked to the glass window for further instructions - The Doctor gave him an assuring nod to proceed despite my protests.

I never would have agreed to this if I knew my fate was sealed before I got in this chair. How could they do this to me?

I screamed some more, desperate to halt the drug trail but nobody appeared to be listening to me. Once I realised I wasn't getting anywhere, I simply stopped, as the apparentness of my situation began to sink in – I was going to die.

I looked up to the glass window gloomily where all the researchers stood watching me. I saw the woman who had been fighting my corner now being consoled by one of the other testers, as he said to her, “the results will be significant for making progress with the next patient”.

I couldn't believe they were already thinking about life after me as I sit alive before them.

I could feel the drugs coursing through me, intoxicating my body, as my heart began to beat faster. My mind racing with thoughts and images but not ones that were known to me; I could see my daughter -

but she was an adult, a standing view of a building named 'Brain Solution Inc' and a bleak looking room full of people hooked up to machines, with tubes coming out their heads. Then I felt it all fade as my body gave way to the drugs, my heart collapsing with its last beat. My body went into cardiac arrest and i saw myself die in that chair, as my consciousness departed from my body...

I'm currently a Creative Writing student and I'm from London. I'm an avid sci-fi and comic book enthusiast (Yes, which means I love that characters but don't read the actual comics!).