



Sometimes every other **Friday Night** [under the] **Lights**
2014

Happy Friday.

Hard to believe that yesterday marked the 13th anniversary of the horrendous terror attacks of September 11th. I flew yesterday and it's always a weird day that causes me some pause.

Not because I have a significant worry about a repeat aviation event (a friend of mine used to be the Public Health Authority for the City of Austin and he would always tell me that the safest time ever to eat at a restaurant was the day after they received a bad grade on their Health Department inspection). I find myself dealing with my own complex set of emotions every September 11th.

- I'm still mad that there are people in our world that feel so passionately about making statements by destroying other's lives. I can't wrap my arms around that level of hate.
- I'm sad for the families of those who were killed, injured or live now in permanent disability. I can't imagine what it must feel like every day to have lost someone so dear because of something so evil.
- I feel bad for future generations of rescuers and healthcare workers who will forever have to focus on the preparation, management and possibilities for future events. It's a pathologic state that's here to stay.

But with all that, I also feel pride (hence the complexity of emotion). I remember September 11, 2001 vividly, as any one of you do who tried to get your arms around what was happening, figure out what may be next and feel that "calling" to kick into high gear on that day.

I remember the meetings and collaboration that stemmed from the events – Public Safety agencies, regardless of whether you were Fire, Law Enforcement, EMS, Public, Non-Governmental, career or volunteer, had frank, open focused discussions and planned together maximizing the potential of each player based on the better good. While none of us liked the *reason* we were there, we worked together to create training, plans, strategy and relationships. Everyone instantly had every one of our colleague's cell phone contacts. We also figured out that it was critical that we stay connected, even if informally. For us, every Thursday was the half-price lunch buffet at the Holiday Inn. Cops, firefighters, medics, admin and even an occasional city administrator (who always seemed to ask about the appropriateness of all those uniforms at a half-price buffet...).

I remember taking advantage of those lunches to talk to my colleagues about "other" stuff. It was a weekly informal consultation opportunity. I learned a tremendous amount at those lunches.

I remember all the hospitals not only playing well together in the big healthcare sandbox, but figuring out ways to share & distribute resources, harmonize credentialing and identify specific expertise not driven by competition (think cardiac care billboards), but on collaboration for the good of the community.

I remember when the Feds developed a unified language for managing large scale events so we would all understand each other and have a common set of terms and approaches. I remember when the ICS courses went on line and anyone, anywhere with access, could take the same course as their colleagues all over the country.

Our hospital partners now clearly understand the importance of knowing bed capacities real-time and capabilities in times of surge.

So, while I wish the events of September 11th, 2001 never, ever happened, in a very odd way, I get some comfort knowing it forced us to grow as a prepared society. We demonstrated the value of working together. We stepped up our game; even though we would rather we didn't have to play at all. We became more aware of our surroundings and we developed new competencies.

And even though I think about September 11th just a little bit every time I walk through a TSA checkpoint at an airport, I thought about it a lot yesterday.

And, based on how uncrowded the airports and planes were yesterday compared to the other 364 days of the year, so did a lot of other people...

But there's more to this story.

My travel yesterday was to Atlanta – I was spending a couple of days with our AMR colleagues in the Coweta Practice (just south of Atlanta). The Practice is under the leadership of Doug Norton [AMR Operations Manager]. We were sitting in the hallway of the Coweta County building waiting to meet with the County leadership. We were just chatting - sharing our observations about September 11th and he told me about his experience on January 17, 1997.

I had no idea.

Doug was a Supervisor in Sandy Springs and was sent on a call for an “explosion”. He described the scene as he drove up and told me his initial impressions (and that of his colleagues) was a gas explosion.

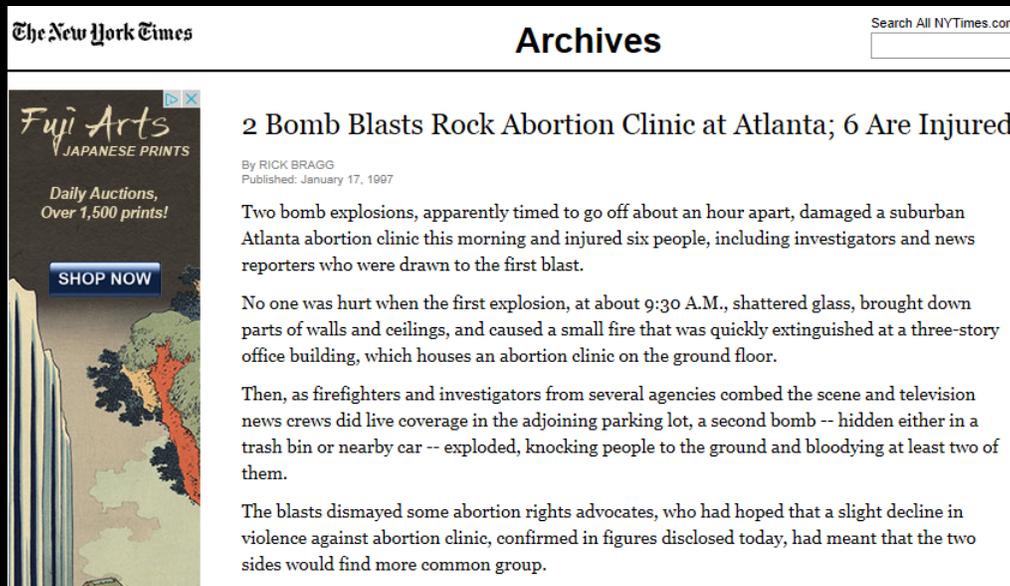
As he was standing with the on-scene Fire Commander, the two were violently knocked to the ground by a second explosion appearing to originate from beside a dumpster structure – remote from the building, but close to where they were. Both he & his fire colleague sustained injuries, but (thankfully) were not life-threatening.

Doug went on to describe how that event changed his professional life forever. His scene awareness and constant vigilance was refined instantly on that day. I was riveted listening to him describe the scene, the response, the chaos and the subsequent professional changes the entire experience created in him.

Just like September 11th did on a large scale, Doug evolved based on his personal event.

Here's the other interesting part of that day. That Atlanta Clinic bombing was the first documented use of a secondary device. That device was specifically targeting responders. It marked a disturbing change that focused directly on rescuers. A new level of hate.

I'm glad Doug and his colleagues ended up OK. And Doug – I appreciate you sharing the story and experience with me and allowing me to share it here (I asked him if it would be OK because it's a powerful reminder of how we change and evolve when bad things happen).



The screenshot shows a New York Times Archives page. On the left is a vertical advertisement for 'Fuji Arts JAPANESE PRINTS' with the text 'Daily Auctions, Over 1,500 prints!' and a 'SHOP NOW' button. The main article is titled '2 Bomb Blasts Rock Abortion Clinic at Atlanta; 6 Are Injured' by Rick Bragg, published on January 17, 1997. The article text reads: 'Two bomb explosions, apparently timed to go off about an hour apart, damaged a suburban Atlanta abortion clinic this morning and injured six people, including investigators and news reporters who were drawn to the first blast. No one was hurt when the first explosion, at about 9:30 A.M., shattered glass, brought down parts of walls and ceilings, and caused a small fire that was quickly extinguished at a three-story office building, which houses an abortion clinic on the ground floor. Then, as firefighters and investigators from several agencies combed the scene and television news crews did live coverage in the adjoining parking lot, a second bomb -- hidden either in a trash bin or nearby car -- exploded, knocking people to the ground and bloodying at least two of them. The blasts dismayed some abortion rights advocates, who had hoped that a slight decline in violence against abortion clinic, confirmed in figures disclosed today, had meant that the two sides would find more common group.'

The World of Street Medicine...

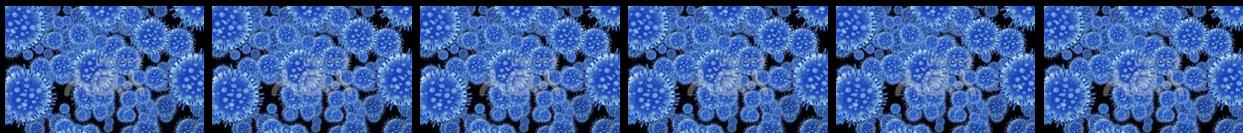
Several things going on that I want to share. First – a quick logistics update.

Several folks have asked to be added to the FNuL. I'm more than happy to include anyone (truth be told, I appreciate the interest). Some emails are parts of distribution lists that change and then my evil distribution plan goes haywire. Please just drop me an email and I'll add you to the list.

Background. A few of you (you know who you are TVH, JM, BS) complain about how hard the black background of FNuL is to read - for the record, it's not uncommon for several of our elderly readers to have that difficulty – It's perfectly normal. THE NEXT THING YOU KNOW YOU'LL HAVE A TOUGH TIME WITH THE FONTS.

And, just be careful you don't laugh too hard after dinner.

So here we go – starting off with (remember this little beauty?):



NoFlu4U...

As fall descends upon us, remember – 'tis the season to start thinking about the Flu.

Why am I making such a big deal about the Flu? Several reasons:

- Depending on the year and the intensity of the virus, anywhere from 3000 to 49,000 people have died in the United States from influenza. That's a lot of deaths from something that is easy to prevent.

The Flu is unpredictable and how severe it is can vary widely from one season to the next depending on several things, including:

- what flu viruses are spreading,
- how much flu vaccine is available
- when vaccine is available
- how many people get vaccinated
- how well the flu vaccine is matched to flu viruses that are causing illness

Note one of the indicators of Flu season severity – *how many people get vaccinated.*

While it seems obvious, the reason this is important is a concept called Herd Immunity. Sometimes called community immunity – the effect is a form of immunity that occurs when the vaccination of a significant portion of a population (or herd) provides a measure of protection for individuals who have not yet developed immunity. Herd immunity theory proposes that, in contagious diseases that are transmitted from individual to individual, chains of infection are likely to be disrupted when large numbers of a population are immune or less susceptible to the disease. The greater the proportion of individuals who are resistant, the smaller the probability that a susceptible individual will come into contact with an infectious individual.

Think of it as a firewall for viruses –the REAL viruses.

In my ongoing quest to encourage everyone to get their Flu Shot, what Herd Immunity means is that YOU become a problem for the rest of the herd if you choose not to get vaccinated.

So if not for yourself, do it for the rest of us (or we're not letting you graze with us)...

More information on Flu Vaccine availability is coming out shortly (so you can be a good member of the herd...).

Ebola.

Unfortunately, the worldwide Ebola outbreak continues to worsen. As I talked about a few weeks ago, there's certainly no reason for anyone in the US to freak out, but there is good reason to keep up with the evolving information on this disease and its spread. This is the worst Ebola outbreak in history and world health officials continue to try and contain the spread, understand the disease and develop effective therapy.

Scott Bourn [AMR VP of Clinical Practices] is the AMR single point of contact for questions and guidance. We have developed the first national guidance document to help keep up with the disease and the appropriate EMS responses as our worldwide understanding evolves.

There are several reasons why keeping up is important:

- The US has received (and will continue to receive) infected patients from other countries
- A recent virological assessment (think of it as a pedigree for a virus) indicates new infections in the Congo are not the same virus as that found in West Africa
- There are an unprecedented number of medical staff that have been infected with the disease

So – Just as I talked about vigilance above, it's time to pay attention to what's happening with Ebola and continue to stay informed regarding evolving approaches.

We're committed to doing that.

(But we might decide to share info with only those who get the Flu shot – Yet ANOTHER reason to get vaccinated).

A fantastic app for odd medical cases (plus - you can gross out your friends)

A friend of mine told me about this. It's an app called Figure 1.



It's a great concept that allows people to anonymously post interesting / extreme medical images without identifying anything that would compromise patient confidentiality. Others can comment. The images are also categorized if you want to take a few minutes just to browse conditions.

As you scroll through, you can view both bizarre and common presentations.

It's a really neat social media app that's great for small snippets of learning...

What does that stand for again?

In the category of awkward moments, I'll share a little conference call discussion we had in Massachusetts week before last. Jeff McCollom, Alan Craig, Josh Rose & I were meeting with a large Hospice group who was interested in learning more about Mobile Integrated Health (by the way, we learned a great deal from them as well about some of their challenges in patient management). We were in a large conference room and there were a few people who had joined via speaker phone from around the state.

As we were introducing ourselves, it was my turn and I said “I’m Ed Racht – The CMO of AMR & Evolution Health”.

A voice on the phone then has the audacity to say “*Does that stand for Comfort Measures Only?*”?

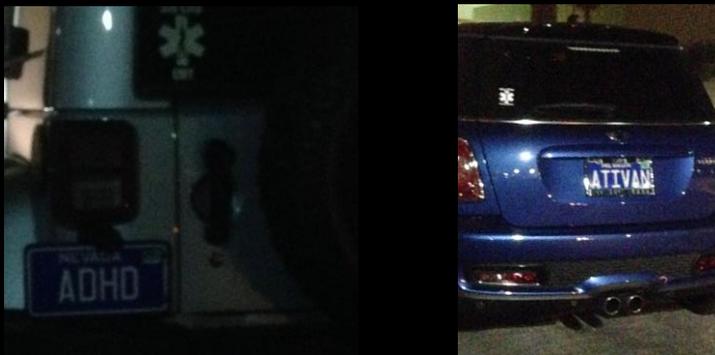
McCollom choked on his spleen.

Epilogue...

Tonight, I decided to end in a slightly different way.

In my travels, I often stumble upon things that capture my eye. For some reason, I’ve recently spotted some interesting license plates.

In AMR parking lots:



(it occurred to me that if this was a husband – wife team, it’s the absolute perfect marriage)

At an intersection in Austin:



(Don’t worry ma’am, the officer won’t even notice...)

That's it from my world. *Happy Friday.* As always, thanks for what you do and how you do it.

With love from a member of the herd...

Ed

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