

ADVERTISEMENT



NEWS

BATTLING THE STEREOTYPES OF THE 'BIG C'

By Eve Glicksman. Eve Glicksman is a writer living in Philadelphia
Chicago Tribune • Mar 27, 1994 at 12:00 am

I've been watching the frenzy unfold since Philadelphia Phillies first baseman John Kruk announced he had testicular cancer.

At first I found it refreshing that Kruk, of World Series fame, was so open about his surgery and plans to undergo radiation therapy. Within days, though, he was throwing a bat at unrelenting news media, and I wished for his sake that he had not been so candid.

The catch is that Kruk is fine. He recently had a testicle removed and has some trying weeks of treatment ahead, but his odds for recovery are well over 90 percent. After radiation he has a much better prognosis than someone with diabetes, someone who smokes or someone with heart disease. Chances are, he'll play later this season.

What rankles is that despite the soaring cure rates of most forms of cancer, the stigma and hysteria surrounding the "Big C" remain. I know. In 1983, at age 28, I was diagnosed with Hodgkin's disease, cancer of the lymph nodes. While this is a highly treatable cancer, I experienced a level of fear and ignorance around me that I couldn't have imagined.

Eleven years later and now cured, not much has changed. Cancer is still synonymous with death despite the fact that more than half (and far more among those under 55) of cancer patients recover. My life expectancy today is as high as the next person's, which will be true for Kruk, too, if he doesn't have a recurrence over the next few years.

Cancer is a label, though, that you never get rid of. No longer will Kruk be the hairy, lovable, gum-chomping ballplayer who can match wits with David Letterman.

Should he tag the runner that leads to a World Series win this year, he will now be

ADVERTISEMENT



ADVERTISEMENT



ADVERTISEMENT

MADNESS SALE

1¢/DAY FOR 6 MONTHS
Get NCAA news & more

SAVE NOW



Well, who wouldn't brave treatment given the alternative?

More annoying than those who marvel how well you're taking all this are people who point out how lucky you are to have a highly curable form of cancer. Neither Kruk nor I was lucky to suffer a serious illness and its after-effects so young, yet others expect us to be more grateful than they are for being healthy.

Another sentimental stereotype is that those who have suffered cancer are nobler and wiser. It sounds ridiculous, but some people seem to like you better after finding out you once lost your hair. Heck, it's just as easy to become bitter and manipulative after cancer as it is to turn saintly.

AIDS has replaced cancer as the scourge of our times, and whatever taboos society harbors about cancer are nothing compared to the fear and misunderstanding surrounding AIDS. Still, one in four cancer survivors say they experience job discrimination, according to the National Cancer Institute. Most employers are unaware of studies that show turnover, absenteeism and work productivity are no different for cancer survivors. And despite every positive report about his health, John Kruk will never play ball again with a coach who won't wonder if he'll go the season.

Inaccurate beliefs about cancer persist because the most visible patients are those who are sickest. With new medications which can relieve many side effects of chemotherapy and radiation, 80 percent of cancer patients return to work after diagnosis, the NCI reports.

On the first day of March, I quietly noted my 10-year remission from Hodgkin's disease. I was going to allow everyone to forget, but when John Kruk hurled that bat, it made me think that maybe the story still needs telling.

Taboola Feed

Het meest verslavende spel van het jaar

Forge of Empires | Sponsored

Nu afspelen

Most Read

Lollapalooza lineup for summer 2022 in Chicago: Metallica, Dua Lipa, J. Cole, Green Day



March 22, 2022

Chicago casino bidders down to three finalists: River West, South Loop and next to Soldier Field



4h

We tried mystery meals from the Too Good To Go app, which sells leftovers from Chicago restaurants for cheap



March 22, 2022

ADVERTISEMENT

You May Like Sponsored Links by Taboola

18 Countries' Breakfasts, Ranked

Thrillist

Zoek naar vakantie Kroatie

Vakantie Kroatie

Nu bekijken

MADNESS SALE

1¢/DAY FOR 6 MONTHS
Get NCAA news & more

SAVE NOW



Dit zijn de beste autoverzekeringen voor senioren (2021)

Goedkoopste Verzekering Auto | Zoek Advertenties | Sponsored

Shortest-Living Dog Breeds

Stacker | Sponsored

Mooie bh- en panty-sets

BHs | Zoek Advertenties

Amsterdam: Onverkochte SUVs van 2020 voor een fractie van hun waarde

Beste Kleine Suv

ADVERTISEMENT

Hoeveel is je auto waard? Ontdek het in minder dan een minuut!

Wikoau.nl | Sponsored

Eindelijk, het beste bouwspel 2021 is gratis.

Forge of Empires | Sponsored

The 5 Most Stubborn Dog Breeds

Cuteness | Sponsored

We zijn op zoek naar huiseigenaren

Verisure | Sponsored

[Klik hier](#)

ADVERTISEMENT

MADNESS SALE

1¢/DAY FOR 6 MONTHS
Get NCAA news & more

SAVE NOW





CONNECT



[Orlando Sentinel](#)

[The Morning Call of Pa.](#)

[Daily Press of Va.](#)

[The Daily Meal](#)

[Sun Sentinel of Fla.](#)

[Hartford Courant](#)

[The Virginian-Pilot](#)

[Studio 1847](#)

[Help Center](#)

[Terms of Service](#)

[Contact us](#)

[Manage Web Notifications](#)

[Media kit](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Archives](#)

[Local print ads](#)

[Chicago Tribune Store](#)

[Do Not Sell My Personal Information](#)

Copyright © 2021, Chicago Tribune



MADNESS SALE

1¢/DAY FOR 6 MONTHS
Get NCAA news & more

SAVE NOW

