

Chemotherapy and The Beatles' "I'm so tired."

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January 13, 2023 By [Robin McGee](#)

I have staggered to a sort of finish line of late. I had my last FOLFOX chemotherapy 8 December. Recovery from it has been longer than expected, but I suspect that is due to the cumulative impact of it all. Due to system delays I had to stay on for 9 infusions, instead of the 6 we had planned. All the side effects from the past I had avoided throughout came down hard after this last treatment: the mouth sores, the nosebleeds, the shivers, the relentless fatigue. Readers of The Cancer Olympics will remember my "Efficiently Vomiting Robin" persona. She has made an appearance several times with this chemotherapy. (She is so present that I have made "EVRobin" my sign-in name whenever I play an online game.) I recently slept for 12 hours two nights in a row – conveying my exhaustion and need for healing.

But as harsh as it was, FOLFOX did a great job. My last PET-CT showed shrinkage of all disease, with them using words like "markedly improved" to describe it. This means that doing FOLFOX was the right choice for that time. It makes me a little sad, though. If I had gotten FOLFOX after my first cancer, it would have been strong enough to get the few remaining cancer cells responsible for my recurrence. I take solace in reflecting that our lobbying for FOLFOX 12 years ago has spared over 1300 Nova Scotians from being undertreated.

My next step is radiation, which will likely start in the new year sometime. I fired my bad radiation oncologist and got a sensible one who has said she will strive to protect the bladder repair I went to Toronto for. I expect I will need to live at the Lodge that Gives again during radiation treatment. Driving back and forth to the Valley in winter is too exhausting and dangerous in winter. I don't know how long I will be there because I will not know the radiation plan for month or more.

What is today's song selection? "[I'm so tired](#)" is from the 1968 double album The Beatles (also known as "the White Album"). It was written and sung by John Lennon, who said of it: "One of my favourite tracks. I just like the sound of it, and I sing it well". During the second verse, Lennon calls Sir Walter Raleigh a stupid git for introducing tobacco to England. John wrote this song while in Rishikesh, India – he was suffering from insomnia, and because he had recently met Yoko Ono, his "mind was set" on her.

At the very end of the song, what seems to be nonsensical mumbling can be heard in the background. The mumbling, if played backwards, can be imagined as something along the lines of "Paul is a dead man. Miss him. Miss him. Miss him." This only adds to the many supposed references to the "Paul is dead" conspiracy theory scattered throughout the White album. The mumbling is actually Lennon muttering, "Monsieur, monsieur, how about another one?"

I choose it today because I am tired. Very tired of chemo, and tired by it. I bet many of you are tired too, with Christmas preparations and events. Tired of COVID and RSV and all the setbacks to healthcare and education. Tired of seeming continuous threats to democracy and world peace. Tired of incivility. Tired of inflation. Tired of being so tired.

Let us all have a good rest soon.

I'm so tired

I haven't slept a wink I'm so tired

My mind is on the blink

I wonder, should I get up and fix myself a drink?

No, no, no

I'm so tired

I don't know what to do

I'm so tired

My mind is set on you

I wonder should I call you

But I know what you would do

You'd say I'm putting you on

But it's no joke

It's doing me harm

You know I can't sleep

I can't stop my brain

You know it's three weeks

I'm going insane

You know I'd give you everything I've got for a little peace of mind

I'm so tired

I'm feeling so upset

Although I'm so tired

I'll have another cigarette

And curse Sir Walter Raleigh

He was such a stupid git

You'd say I'm putting you on

But it's no joke

It's doing me harm
You know I can't sleep
I can't stop my brain
You know it's three weeks
I'm going insane

You know I'd give you everything I've got for a little peace of mind
I'd give you everything I've got for a little peace of mind
I'd give you everything I've got for a little peace of mind

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