# Surgical nerve damage and The Searchers' "Needles and Pins."

Some days, all the pain and work described in *The Cancer Olympics* seems forlornly distant.

April 3, 2019 By Robin McGee

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It is now one month from my 13-hour surgery. I am now living in the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre Lodge. Andrew is with me until next week — but I will stay on until mid-May, to finish my hyperbaric oxygen treatments.

I have recovered in many ways, but in one way I have not. Using nerve conductance tests, Sunnybrook neurology has confirmed that I have damage to my left femoral nerve. This condition is screamingly painful and inhibits my ability to walk. They said the nerve is not totally dead — there was evidence of conductance in it still — which means that I may recover one day. They are planning an MRI to locate the exact place of the damage, to determine if the nerve is frayed, compressed, or entrapped. All doctors tell me that it will be a long, long road. Some days, all the pain and work described in The Cancer Olympics seems forlornly distant.

So now I get along with the aid of a rolling walker. One day I will graduate to a cane. Today a physio taught me some exercises I can do to strengthen the thigh muscles, which can waste with this condition. I have been started on Lyrica, a medication for severe neuropathy, although I am told that I should not experience pain relief on it for another 6 weeks, as one must build slowly to a therapeutic dose. They offered me fentanyl (!) to help with pain in the meantime — I refused adamantly.

They also prescribed CBD oil for the pain. In Ontario, this must be ordered from Shoppers Drug Mart online once the doctor's prescription is sent to them. The rules state that the drug must be mailed. If one lives far away, and is staying at a residential facility, one can only receive it by mail if the manager of the residence you are in agrees to its arrival by signing a form. The Lodge manager refused! They do not want patient medications to arrive by mail — not even insulin. The other option is it can be sent to a Health Care Provider. Toronto General has a policy that no patient medications can be mailed to them either! Shoppers will not allow it to be picked up from a store either! A crazy loophole here in Ontario, all the crazier since Ontario citizens can now buy cannabis products over the counter at brick-and-mortar stores. The solution? Shoppers agreed to mail it to the Lodge anyway — and when they refuse it, it will be sent to the local post office General Delivery, where I can pick it up. How ridiculous is that?

Meanwhile I still have two catheters with which I must contend. Hopefully one of them will be discontinued in three weeks. Other would healing appears to be going well, thanks to HBOT.

Today's song was made famous by The Searchers in 1964, "Needles and Pins." I chose it because it somewhat captures the nature of the sensation in my thigh…if needles and pins were an Iron Maiden, that is. This song went to Number One in the UK, Ireland, and South Africa. It has been covered by many others, including Tom Petty, but this version gives me the better tingles.

I saw her today, I saw her face, it was a face I loved, and I knew
I had to run away, and get down on my knees and pray
that they'd go away
But still they'd begin, needles and pins

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