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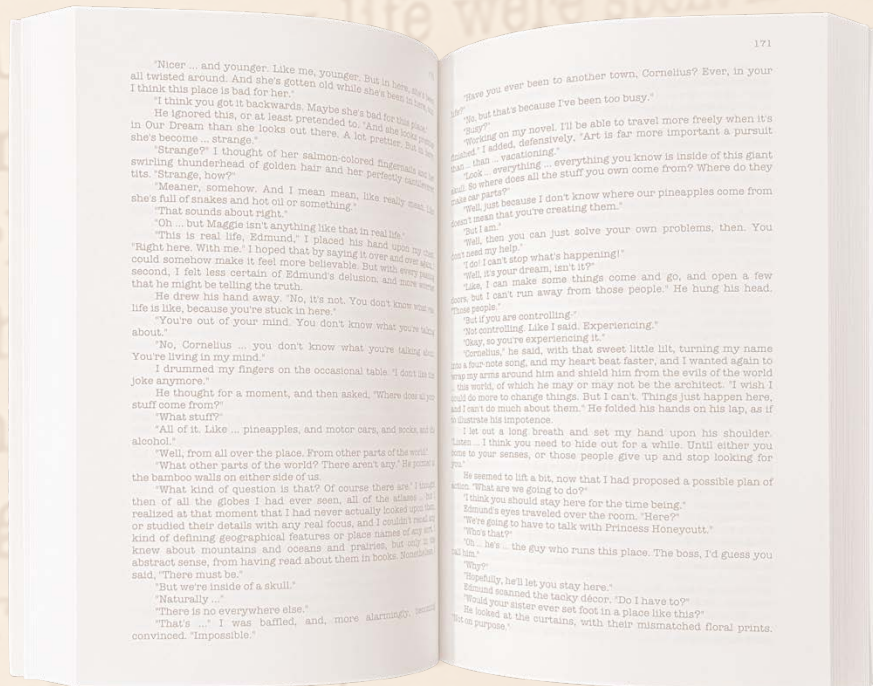
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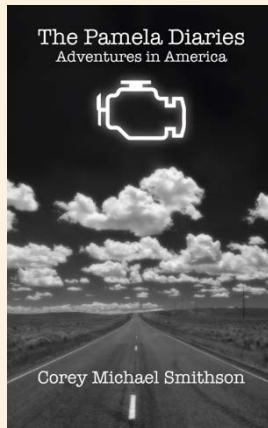
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Essay: "STUFF"



"STUFF"

March, 2018

an excerpt from the memoir
***THE PAMELA DIARIES:
ADVENTURES IN AMERICA***

In my ongoing quest to butch up, make my monthly nut, and take a philosophical chainsaw to the American Dream, I got a temp job in the disaster services field.

"Restoration technicians", to use the industry lingo, are the folks you call when your home catches fire, or your office gets flooded, or a bunch of your possessions get damaged by some kind of accident. We swoop in with our trucks and boxes, cart everything away to our magic workshop, clean and dry and deodorize each item, and then bring it all back in improved (if not quite mint) condition. You never know how much material you've actually accumulated until you have to pack up and move it; you often own far more than you realize, and the business of managing it all can become overwhelming during a time of crisis. A disaster mitigation crew is often more than just a moving company ... it can be a team of lifesavers, a sweaty and sooty resurrection squad.

And I'm here to tell you that professional movers feel very differently about your belongings than you do. In the process of helping you get through this hardship, we'll end up witnessing much more of your lives than you'd probably like. We are, after all, marching into your homes, offices, workplaces, and handling all those things you don't want to deal with yourself: the moldy sofa, the waterlogged books, the charred bureau. We may be the politest of intruders, the most conscientious of interlopers, but at the end of the day we're still a bunch of outlanders stomping through your turf. Sure, we're wearing gloves and putting Tyvek booties on our shoes and saying, "Yes, Sir, absolutely, Sir, right away, Sir," ... but we've pretty much come to take your things away and then bring them back after we've swabbed them all down. We have no contextualizing history or emotion attached to these items; in our eyes, it's all just a bunch of stuff.

It's weird to become so intimately acquainted with the possessions of strangers; it's even weirder to be invited into a home when it's at its very worst. Aside from all the hard shocks of reality I encounter ... fires, floods, sewer breaks, SWAT team raids ... this job has been giving me strange keyhole views into people's

lives. I've seen their habits, their hangups, their regrets. I've seen the widow padding around in her dingy pink-grey bathrobe, pouring bourbon into her coffee at 10:am. I've seen the chain-smoking housewife, also in her bathrobe, shooting murderous glances at her husband as he hems and haws on the placement of things. I've seen the wary-eyed teenager with the creepy sweatpants-sporting dad, the kid whose silence is perhaps being paid for by that fancy new gaming system. I've seen the lonely elderly lady, left surrounded by boxes she can't move, with only a trembling terrier for company.

I've basically been a grunt for hire since I moved back to Washington State. I've worked several different blue-collar gigs, in a wide variety of industries and settings. As a result of all this manual labor, I've witnessed the attitudes that many movers develop towards the materials they move, and by extension, towards their clients. The strain of moving so many things, day in and day out, starts to creep up on an employee. This kind of work is exhausting, dangerous, and if you're not careful, it can do irreversible damage to your body. But there's another hidden, more insidious hazard ... the cumulative antipathy that emerges when you get tired of handling other people's baggage.

Low pay and burning muscles can lead to a strange form of contempt. If you lose sight of the human narrative, which is easy to do when you're tasked with hauling around too many bulky items, and you don't pay attention to the bigger picture, and you forget your reasons for being there, any natural irritability can become outright resentment. It's oftentimes hard to avoid being angry during certain types of labor, especially when dealing with stairs, tight turns, unbearably heavy furniture. One scrupulously tries to avoid marrying physical stress to pique, but it's not always easy. As you're huffing yet another truckload of stuff up the stoop ... the endless, infernal, Sisyphean stoop ... it's all too tempting to get snarky about everything you encounter. The later in the day it gets, the more trivial and problematic each item seems to become.

"Hey, here's your cumbersome and hideous sofa, in that courageous shade of chartreuse ... oh, it goes in the attic, does it? No problem! Here's your bogus chinoiserie ... boy, you can hardly tell that it's a knockoff, even with all the stained plastic laminate! Here is your incomplete set of old encyclopedias ... hope you didn't care too much about chinchillas or Churchill. Here are your ten thousand boxes of Christmas decorations, glad you've saved all those for a rainy day. Oh, hooray, here's all your shitty Walmart china, better keep that ready for when you entertain ambassadors and other dignitaries. Sure, I'll drag your fireproof safe up two more flights. Here are your broken plastic tubs, with your kids' forgotten Lego bricks tumbling out. Here's your stupid ship in its stupid bottle for your stupid mancave. Here's your 'WHO FARTED?' mug, how very droll. Here's your insanely heavy butcher-block table ... thanks for deciding to put it in the upstairs office, along with your treadmill and boxes full of dumbbells. No, really, it's fine, I totally needed the cardio. Here's that copy of 'Finnegan's Wake' that you'll never bother to finish. Here's your solid-core orthopedic mattress that weighs like a zillion pounds and still smells of stale farts even after two days under ozone. Here's your plaid bag overstuffed with golf clubs, finally freed of their cobwebs, even though from the looks of things you haven't teed off in a decade. I'll be sure to stick it next to

your forgotten elliptical and your enormous collection of douchey polo shirts that are all three sizes too small."

At the beginning of the workday, your average mover is probably full of pep and goodwill, wringing his cap in his hands as he says, "Yes, ma'am! We'll be absolutely sure to put blankets down on your hardwood! We certainly wouldn't want to scuff anything, would we? Golly!" By three o'clock or so, he's grunting, "Here's your goddamned vanity, lady, where d'ya want it?"

Fortunately, my experience in disaster services has been very different than many other moving gigs. The company I'm working for has a strong work ethic, a clear mission, and a deep respect for its clientele. I really love my coworkers; our group dynamic is warm, affectionate, and focused. We dance to salsa and pinch each other's cheeks and flirt shamelessly. Some of them are helping me with my Spanish. Most importantly, though, this particular team seems to understand that the items we're handling are truly important to their owners. There's a higher degree of empathy involved in this work ... many of our customers have suffered horrible traumatic events, terrible losses. In some cases, these objects represent all that was left behind. The company I work for is highly cognizant of the emotions involved in disaster mitigation.

Reuniting people with their belongings can sometimes feel very gratifying, even heroic. Our efforts help to restore order, provide closure, heal big wounds. Whenever we bring things back, we get to be the bearers of good news. "Hey, here are your photo albums! Look, we've managed to rescue some stuff: your childhood toys, your heirlooms, your grandmother's quilt, your honeymoon memories, your scrapbooks, your college diploma! We got all the soot off your daughter's copy of 'Make Way For Ducklings'! Winnie the Pooh is missing an eye, but at least he doesn't smell like mildew anymore! This bicycle with the sparkly banana seat and handlebar ribbons is good to go again ... brrrring-brrrring!"

One thing is becoming increasingly clear, though, as I work this job ... none of these items are trivial. None of it is just "stuff".

Everything can be charged with meaning. Just because you don't know the history of a particular object doesn't mean that it lacks significance to someone else. What you might dismiss as mere junk may have a profound importance to its owner. This isn't just any old steamer trunk you're handling; it once carried an immigrant's whole life across the Atlantic. This isn't just any wooden rocking horse; it's the last surviving trace of an old woman's childhood. This isn't just any snowglobe; it's the final souvenir of a fifty-year marriage. It's not just a teddy bear; it's never just a teddy bear.

Still, this can be a brutal job. We recently performed an office move for an architecture firm that had been in place for decades; they had hundreds upon hundreds of file boxes, many of them filled with material samples ... literally, boxes full of bricks, each of which we had to hump down a punishingly steep flight of stairs. Oy vey, it was murder on the knees.

One of my coworkers told me a horrifying story about another gig he did in an old hotel, a run-down Art Deco pile called The Grand. It enjoyed its glory days in the thirties, but later fell on hard times, and had recently been converted into Section-8 housing. An elderly woman burst into flame in one of its dingy little

rooms. She had been on medical oxygen for emphysema, or cancer, or ... something awful and gooey and lung-related. Anyway, despite the repeated warnings from her doctors, and all the screaming red labels on all of her tanks, and the fact that she already couldn't breathe worth a damn, she decided that she REALLY needed a cigarette. Fortunately, the resulting explosion was mostly contained to her room. Her upholstered recliner burned down to the springs, and her body was almost completely incinerated atop it. The guy who worked this job could still recall the smell of her body fat, which had dripped down like an Italian restaurant candle onto the chair's innards. The hotel's sprinkler system did its job, but it ended up soaking three floors of the building and ruining nine of the neighboring apartments. The other tenants, the people most in need of help, were upset about the temporary removal of their belongings. Many of them suffered from dementia, or mental illnesses, or substance abuse issues, and they panicked when this gang of strangers came in to cart everything away. Their fear was understandable, if perhaps a bit misplaced; they would be separated from their belongings, cut from their anchors. Weirdos in masks and gloves would be entering their rooms, poking through all their secrets. For the tenants, this was an unwelcome invasion, one that probably fueled a number of paranoid fantasies.

We get a number of calls to deal with households that have spiraled completely out of control. A certain kind of situational blindness can take hold of a person when their "collections" become too much to handle. Instead of an organized grouping of tools or supplies or mementos, the crew encounters mound after mound of unsorted objects. When a person gathers too many belongings around them, each thing begins to lose its significance. Add neglect, animals, or a physical disability into the mix, and the troubles are compounded. Any potential value is further depreciated by bad storage choices: plastic bags full of stagnant water, flimsy cardboard boxes, leaking cans.

For the worker who comes into a badly overcrowded home, it's hard at first to parse all the towering piles into discrete objects. Sometimes there are only a few narrow pathways through the debris. Rooms get choked off entirely. After a few minutes of scanning, your brain shuts off, because it's struggling too hard to make sense of all that it's seeing. The heaps are no longer made of recognizable items; everything just coalesces into a formless, complicated mass. A hoard.

We worked with one lady whose garage was so completely crammed with bric-a-brac that there was hardly enough room for the crewmembers to stand, much less work. As we tried to penetrate the daunting mess ... plant holders, bed frames, scraps of lumber, broken picture frames, damp cardboard, potshards, garden implements, hoses, shutters, plastic bins ... she rattled on about her "antiques" and her "collections", warning us to be careful with everything as she held a smoldering cigarette butt next to a pile of crumpled newspapers. She barked at one of us about scuffing the top surface of a busted nightstand ... a rickety thing with no back and a chipboard base that had rotted into mush. "I'm going to refinish it," she muttered. "Someday." Our team was perfectly professional, always remaining patient and respectful, but I could see in this woman's eyes that she felt an acute embarrassment about her home, this situation. She resented the silent judgments she perceived in our glances.

Part of the packrat mentality is a misdirected, hypertrophic frugality. Most people hate to toss anything that still holds some kind of possibility ... but a hoarder sees the latent promise in nearly everything. If you live in perpetual fear that you'll eventually require something you've just gotten rid of, you'll cling to things far longer than necessary. You'll hang on to something in the hopes of maintaining its value, protecting the emotional or psychological investment you've already made. And let's face it ... ours is already a culture of terrible waste. Anybody who has ever "gone without", anybody who truly understands need or hunger, anybody who has faced a desperate want of some kind, deeply loathes wastefulness. Hoarding is often a consequence of earlier deprivations.

Believing that there will be always time later to devote to unfinished projects or undernourished interests, we stash away craft supplies, collage materials, bins full of rubber stamps, containers crammed with decorative paper. We convince ourselves that we'll eventually get around to repairing, restoring, finishing, fixing things. We know that we'll use all this material, this tool, this hobby kit we got on sale. Sooner or later, we'll need this thing ... maybe not today, maybe not tomorrow, but someday. But procrastination, or a paralysis of choice, interferes again and again. Interests that seemed so promising at first get tucked away into the cobwebby recesses of the soul. Ask yourself: are you actually going to practice calligraphy with all those fancy sets you purchased? Are you going to learn needlepoint, or quilting, or leatherwork, or woodburning? Will you ever strip any of that painted furniture? When are you going to repair that rusting engine in the front yard, or sell off the antique iron bed, or launder the filthy poodle skirt?

And there are so many other factors that can exacerbate the problem of stuff: an abundance of cheap goods, the ceaseless onslaught of advertisement, catchy commercial jingles, envy, paranoia, engineered obsolescence, "keeping up with the Joneses", the American concept of Christmas.

Sometimes possessions are about building a legacy. You might hold onto the things that you believe your family may want. Worse, if you're an artist, perhaps you have visions of future scholars trying to interpret your life; you can see them celebrating the discovered cache of letters, the albums full of snapshots, the baby shoes and baby teeth. How will your biography ever be complete if your elementary school report cards aren't still around to document your precocity?

Perhaps you've already tried to organize things, to comb through the hoard, but with mixed results. The evidence of your industriousness is everywhere: there are piles on every flat surface. There's a pile of things earmarked "for donation", and it's adjacent to the pile of things "to sort through"... but both will eventually topple over onto the pile of things you set aside "to hold onto for the grandkids". Over time, these piles will proliferate, with bizarre levels of specificity, sub-dividing and sub-dividing again, until your home is a catalogue of useless taxonomies. To you, it's a "system" ... but to your team of movers, the disaster crew, it's a "big fucking mess". All of these piles in your house have merged together, until they've become one giant hazard.

Despite all of its challenges, this gig is a good fit for me at this phase of my life. It's helping me to get stronger, to get tougher, and to let go of my need for earthly possessions. I'm getting some definition in my biceps, for the first time

ever, and my asthma has been noticeably diminished. Besides, I've changed my own address over a dozen times, so I'm already very familiar with the process of sorting, packing, purging. And I know what it's like to hold an object for the very last time; with every move, too many things were left behind, things I cared about. I can relate to our clients, especially the hoarders. Every job provides an incentive to examine the contents of my own household, the evidence of my life choices, the manifestations of my aesthetic and my anxiety. Each of my moves has given me a chance to think about my relationship with the physical world.

I used to collect a lot of stuff: art supplies, antique medical instruments, cigar labels, patent medicines, taxidermy, books, records, X-rays, films, exotic fabrics, crutches, strands of fake pearls, dresses, feather boas, bones, teeth, pinned butterflies, sea shells, Tarot decks, candles, jars of herbs, vintage pornography, postcards, typewriters, dried roses, preserved specimens. I even had a bookshelf dedicated entirely to Judy Garland media. I believed that my tastes were special, that my eclecticism was special, that all my specialness was especially special. But I don't anymore.

I no longer want to own so many things. I no longer want my identity to be defined by all my cool possessions; instead of being the swishy lumberjack with a killer collection of Golden-Age musicals, I'll be the swishy lumberjack who can talk at length on the subject of musicals and then steer you to the public library with a list of recommendations. I find myself craving the opposite of a hoard ... I want an expansive emptiness, a utilitarian and ascetic minimalism, a home full of subtle tonal changes and pensive music and the small quotidian dramas of life. I dream of living inside an Andrew Wyeth painting, some stark old farmhouse in the middle of nowhere ... a leaning and weathered place, full of bare and slightly discolored surfaces, where the only decoration is the play of sunlight across worn wood or cracked plaster. I want to rest my eyes on a naked floor as the day changes. I want to live like a monk in a cell. I want to see walls so vacant that I can look right through them. I don't want stuff anymore ... I want an empty room, an uncluttered desk, a skull full of horizons. I want a Nebraska of the mind.

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FLORIS Oil and Gas Consulting

<https://www.florisenergy.com/>

Copywriting and copy editing for entire website.

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The Perfect Poop Plan

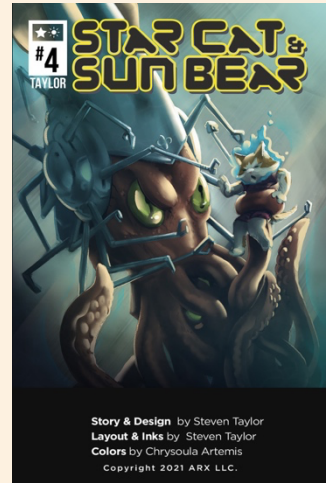
by Dr. Christine M. Bowen, ND, FABNG
with contributions by
Eileen Bowen and Phil Cohen

Coming Soon

My Secret War

by Brandi Taylor

Coming Soon



Ghostwriting



LIFTE Hydrogen

<https://www.lifteh2.com/insights/trusting-zero-trust/>

Trusting “Zero Trust”:

Cybersecurity and Compliance in an Evolving Hydrogen Industry

Ghostwritten article for Jack Valley

Business Development Manager,

Asset Performance Management Services

INTRODUCTION

Hydrogen will soon be a major part of critical infrastructure in most of the world’s developed countries. Such rapid global expansion, however, brings with it many risks. Projects may be jeopardized by both external *and* internal factors ... such as hacking, misuse of credentials, poor gatekeeping, and outdated protocols.

Thus, security cannot be an afterthought. Protecting valuable data from the ongoing threats of sabotage or corporate espionage will always need to be at the forefront of our minds. Security must become a fundamental pillar of any digitalization and consolidation initiatives.

With the rapid number of internet security threats, and the increasing technical acumen of cybercriminals, cybersecurity has evolved from being a departmental IT concern into a standalone industry. Hydrogen projects, with their complexity, costs, and significant safety concerns, present a special opportunity for the meaningful integration of security into every aspect of operations and management. At such an early stage of our industry’s development, we’re still

building standards, bridging gaps, and identifying the weakest points in our systems. Right now, we can work to make sure that our data will always be handled with the utmost diligence. Security can be “baked into” each of our solutions from day zero, not “bolted on”.

REAL THREATS TO ENERGY SYSTEMS

With its complicated network of vendors, operators, technicians, and platforms, the hydrogen supply chain is especially vulnerable to terrorism, activism, or outright theft.

Phishing, or the acquisition of sensitive information through duplicitous means, is the most common form of cybercrime. Carefully mirrored sites, impersonation, fake emails using stolen logos, and other ruses trick unsuspecting users into revealing passwords, PINs, and other private information. Phishing has become an all-too-common occurrence, and the methods used are growing more sophisticated. It's estimated that 91% of all attacks begin with a phishing email, and nine out of ten phishing emails carry some form of ransomware. 32% of all successful breaches involve the use of phishing techniques. So-called “spear-phishing” emails, in which a specific individual or department is targeted using forged but legitimate-seeming communications (based on browsing history or other personal information), have been the vanguard of many large-scale attack events.

On December 23rd, 2015, one year after the annexation of Crimea, Ukraine's power grid was crippled by a Russian cybermilitary group known as Sandworm. Hackers seized control of assets run by three energy distribution companies: Prykarpattyaoblenergo, Chernivtsioblenergo, and Kyivoblenergo. All three organizations utilized outdated and poorly maintained Soviet-era infrastructure. Their customers, some 200,000 - 300,000 Ukrainians, lost power for about six hours, a crisis greatly exacerbated by inadequate staffing during the holiday season. The criminals took 30 substations offline, seized SCADA (supervisory control and data acquisition) systems, deleted files, disabled key infrastructure components, and attacked call-centers to prevent customer reports. The attacks were later found to have originated from IP addresses in Russia. The chief instrument of this villainy was the BlackEnergy malware, which generated swarms of bots to execute distributed denial of service (DoS) attacks. These bots overwhelmed servers to the point of inoperability. The malware may have been distributed using common attachments like Word documents or PowerPoint decks.

On May 7th, 2021, the Colonial Pipeline Company came under attack from DarkSide, a cybercriminal group believed to be based in Eastern Europe. Our nation's largest refined oil pipeline, which runs from Houston to New York, carries three million barrels of fuel per day and provides roughly 45% of all fuel consumed on the East Coast. The hackers targeted the billing system, rather than physical operations, but this still effectively shut down the pipeline for six days. If not quickly resolved, this crime would have had catastrophic effects on industry and

transportation interests across the entire country. After stealing nearly 100 gigabytes of data in less than two hours, the criminals demanded a ransom of 75 bitcoin (worth approximately \$4.4 million) in exchange for a decryption tool. The United States alone has detected 500 different hacking attempts from DarkSide. Their approach of offering Ransomware-as-a-Service (RaaS) allows this nefarious group to share their code as a product. Experts now believe that the attack was made possible by a password reuse, or an exposed password for a VPN account.

Threats do not always come from outside of an organization, however. The more employees a company acquires, the more points of vulnerability get introduced. Human factors play a critical role in security. User habits, operator errors, inadequate supervision, and expanded ease of access often mean that employees themselves may be inadvertently undermining project security. Guest accounts are left open, servers remain operational when they should be shut down, and users may compromise directories by working where they shouldn't. What may look at first glance like an outside "attack" might actually be just a preventable mistake.

Passwords that are used among many accounts pose an especially large risk. If attackers can penetrate one account for an individual, often via a personal application exploit, any other reuse of that same password compromises additional accounts.

The growing use of Internet of Things (IoT) devices for collecting data leads to an increase in "attack surface". IoT devices may not be properly configured, and could possibly transmit their data to the wrong endpoints. The physical security of the devices themselves also needs to be assessed.

The chief question for many project owners remains, "How do we know that malicious actors can't access our data?"

ORGANIZATIONAL OBSTACLES TO CHANGE

Security in any organization is always a tug-of-war between protection and convenience. Employees want as much freedom as they can get, but increased access also means increased risk. Not ensuring proper controls around assets, and failing to keep the segmentation of security layers manageable, increases the potential for exploitation. Simply put ... the more convenient something is to use, the less secure it's likely to be.

The energy sector relies too much on legacy hardware and programs, many of which still utilize outdated architecture, such as monolithic applications hosted on virtual machines. These are prone to misconfigurations that can open ports to the internet, offering a tempting target for hackers. In such outdated systems, horizontal movements between servers and between applications are too easily managed, and penetration of one area allows for access to others.

All too often, information is stored in an insular fashion, kept in separate "silos" with divergent objectives or incompatible systems. "Tribal knowledge" occurs when departments or individuals do not share information. This may happen when partners do not recognize a common goal, become excessively

protective of their methods, rely too heavily on continuity of staffing, use different formats, or do not fully document their processes.

Though attacks with ransomware and denial-of-service (DoS) are increasing, it's hard to quantify in advance the potential costs of an incursion. Companies are racing to stay ahead of potential threats, and trying to invest sufficient resources into developing a sound security strategy ... but spokes within the industry are not always technologically savvy, and there are still too many gaps in how the energy sector evaluates its own security protocols. Even the most diligent efforts often encounter cultural resistance to change. Cybersecurity should be considered a cost center, with its own language and attendant degrees of complexity.

TAKING STEPS TOWARDS PROTECTION

What actions can owners and asset managers take as precautions?

The first step in securing any facility, system, or team is taking a full inventory of its constituent components. Project owners must identify the applications, assets, identities, and network configurations that are being used, and get full visibility on every aspect of them, pinpointing any potential weaknesses. Once a team fully understands and documents its assets, it can establish baselines for configuration and connectivity. Operators can easily detect “drift” on all reporting assets, activate alert mechanisms, and evaluate any deviations from established baselines.

Identities are all-too-easily stolen, and validation must be treated like the foundation of any security strategy. Access to data should be specifically tailored for each job role, with additional identity checks being added at critical points. This means verifying connections using multi-factor authentication, being up to date on certificate management, granting only conditional access, and bringing the security “perimeter” down to individual applications. Application Programming Interface (API) tokens and sensitive data should be encrypted, fully authenticated, and never transmitted as plain text. Furthermore, physical security of the server racks and all IoT devices needs to become a higher priority. WiFi controls for each site should also be examined regularly, to prevent any unwanted entry.

The hydrogen industry must avail itself of every opportunity to build systems through code that can be tightly managed. A top priority for development and security is the notion of consistency, and Infrastructure as Code (IaC) is a fundamental part of a consistent cloud-based strategy. By utilizing IaC, operators can more readily prevent manual misconfigurations. Computing, storage, and networking services can be deployed in exactly the same way across all environments. Customers can make provisions faster, with fewer resources, and ensure high-quality standards with security features built in from the outset. Security teams appreciate this approach because it fits into a DevSecOps (Development/Security/Operations) culture very well. As a set of practices and

principles, DevSecOps places security squarely in the center point of development and operations, moving it to an earlier stage (“shifting left”) in the project lifecycle. IaC provides consistent infrastructure, and is crucial to Application Security (AppSec). By utilizing IaC with SecOps, resource configurations and improvements can be deployed using best practices and rigid organizational standards.

To be successful, hydrogen systems must utilize modern architecture, encrypted traffic, proper data sharing techniques, and working key vaults. Of course, all data collection processes require tweaking and fine-tuning, but the use of IoT devices makes such adjustments much easier. Unique IDs on equipment allow authorized personnel to structure and graph data, and determine which asset each stream is coming from.

HOW LIFTE ACHIEVES CYBERSECURITY EXCELLENCE

LIFTE recognizes the critical importance of managing how data is gathered, organized, sorted, and disseminated. Every component in our infrastructure development pipeline has been designed with the security of our customers’ data in mind. The keystone of LIFTE’s cybersecurity strategy is our Asset Performance Manager (APM), which offers a tightly contained yet intuitive single-pane interface for the monitoring of systems and equipment. By building a culture around the principle of “zero-trust”, utilizing cloud-based databases rather than traditional servers, restricting access through strict authentication protocols, segmenting networks into more manageable pieces, and earning compliance certificates from globally recognized bodies, LIFTE keeps hydrogen projects safe, stable, and secure.

OUR STANCE ON ZERO-TRUST

Traditionally speaking, companies have been viewed as castles, with ramparts or moats surrounding them and firewalls raised inside. Such a security model only works, however, if there are no other insidious threats awaiting within. Companies have often been too quick to automatically trust users and endpoint devices once they were admitted past an established “perimeter”. This puts organizations at risk ... not only from malevolent insiders (such as spies or disgruntled employees) but also trusted users who have had their credentials stolen by outsiders. Within an insufficiently partitioned arena, identity theft allows for too much freedom, allowing an invader to make swift lateral movements between zones.

When evaluating security solutions and applications, LIFTE always uses “defense-in-depth” principles. If one line of defense is breached, redundancies and additional reactive layers of protection must be ready to protect assets and sensitive information.

Perhaps the most effective route to security is when a “zero-trust” perspective is introduced into the company culture. By removing the assumption of trust, we can have a perimeter-less approach to security ... one in which there is no “inside” or “outside” to speak of. Zero-trust means that the company explicitly authenticates every user at several steps. We deny by default, as a means of tightening every point of access. A zero-trust mindset works to the company’s advantage.

Here are three principles of zero-trust:

1. Continuous verification of resource and identities. This means that we always verify access, all the time.

2. Assumption of a breach. We reduce risks by eliminating attack surfaces. We stop horizontal movement by ensuring that users and entities can only connect directly to the apps and resources they need to do their jobs. Users are never given full access to everything on the network.

3. Automated granular context collection. This includes collecting information about user identity, device, location, type of content, and the application being requested. Policies must remain adaptive, so that user access privileges can be continually reassessed as the use context changes.

CHOOSING THE CLOUD

Hydrogen systems generate a tremendous amount of data, coming in from many different sources, including IoT devices and project-specific operation software, resulting in a wide variety of data formats. Traditionally, this material has been represented by handwritten notes, Excel spreadsheets, and pictures. By centralizing data and using a standardized format, information can be more easily collated, shared, analyzed, and secured.

LIFTE H2 does this by implementing a hydrogen-specific extract/transform/load (ETL) process. ETL tools are an essential step in data warehousing. They can help dismantle data silos, improve the distribution of stored information, and quicken the decision-making process. This is a significant improvement over the older methods of moving data through hand-coded pipelines.

Our objective is to move away from a disorderly mix of data silos and tribal information into a centralized, consistent, and rigorously controlled approach to data management. The solution to the problem of information partitioning lies in the use of the cloud to gather and consolidate operational data, rather than keeping it on servers and desktops. In an ideal world, each hydrogen project would begin its operations from the outset with a fully cloud-based data platform, using proper security tools and a consistent method of data collection via IoT devices. The massive amounts of telemetry our assets are yielding, streaming in at 1000hz per second from multiple sensors, would be collected in a secure, consolidated, and organized fashion.

Moving to a serverless architecture drastically reduces the attack surface. Without open ports, each connection point in our environment is explicitly secured. All of our resources are opened only to the exact sources and locations that we specify. We can rest assured that we are not utilizing outdated operating systems (OS) or system libraries. We can extract the underlying OS layer, while Amazon Web Services (AWS) keeps components updated. AWS (along with other cloud providers) dedicates thousands of resources to safeguarding serverless resources, moving our developers away from administrative work and towards action.

AUTHENTICATION: ONLY AUTHORIZED USERS ALLOWED

As a proven SaaS (software-as-a-service) model, Auth0 has hundreds of developers focused specifically on authentication, access management, and security. This allows LIFTE's APM to leverage Auth0's expertise as a provider of secure standards-based identity and access management. By using Auth0, LIFTE is able to focus on application feature enrichment and avoid the cost, time, and risk involved with in-house authentication solutions.

A few of LIFTE's solutions with Auth0 include:

- Multitenancy workflows, wherein each user is granted specific permissions under the terms of their dedicated share
- Single Sign-on (SSO) implementation, allowing the federation of multiple identity sources
- Secure API access
- Bleeding-edge password/one-time code authentication
- Conditional access for user security

One of the most important backend services LIFTE H2 offers is centralized account management. We can create and maintain our Amazon Web Services (AWS) accounts with a consistent structure, based on the highest standards of certification criteria. Networking and security controls are configured effectively on each of our accounts, and for all of our customers' resources. Our security event manager correlates threat detections across all accounts, and includes automated resolution workflows.

Multifactor authentication is a method of validating identity which grants access only after a user has presented two or more types of information. Frequently accepted forms of MFA may include passwords, answers to security questions, software or hardware tokens, fingerprints or other biometrics, and confirmation of an authorized user's location.

MICRO-SEGMENTATION

It's easier to hijack an entire network if everything is accessible to a single user. Traditionally, companies have relied on a single or 'flat' network, where access is permitted to all corporate applications and data. Attacks are harder to mount, however, if there are firm boundaries between its various parts. Micro-

segmentation, or breaking a flat network into smaller, more discrete, and more manageable chunks, allows for the implementation of additional checkpoints, forming further barriers to unwelcome movement. A key advantage of micro-segmentation is that all areas activate appropriate checkpoints as users attempt to cross boundaries. Authentication is continually re-verified as users try to move from zone to zone.

LIFTE H2 ensures proper network and resource segmentation by utilizing zero-trust networking models. We can be certain that resources are explicitly assigned to proper subnets and network zones based on use, and that each Virtual Private Cloud (VPC) or subnet has proper security configurations and routing. LIFTE makes sure that every resource provisioned in the environment contains proper group configurations, including resource-specific firewalls. Each resource is limited to the exact port, protocol, and Classless Inter-Domain Routing (CIDR) range it specifically needs.

LIFTE'S ASSET PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

A well-designed asset performance management system is essential to ensuring that all relevant data coming from an asset is being collected in a consistent and secured manner. One of the chief aims of an APM is the standardization of data intake. The goal is to arrive at a single data format that we can easily read, collate, and do analytics on. This is the only way to manage our systems effectively, and realize the full promise of predictive maintenance. LIFTE addresses each of these concerns in its comprehensive program of project review and implementation.

LIFTE's Asset Performance Manager (APM) is designed to collect large volumes of raw data, arriving from multiple sources and from different platforms. This data can be stored in a single database for fast and reliable access. Analysts then work with this data to sort, format, filter, and merge it. A graphical user interface allows for quick and meaningful reports.

What separates the LIFTE H2 APM is that we're building it specifically for the hydrogen industry. We are an Infrastructure as Code (IaC) environment, in which every piece of infrastructure and security is created via code. This results in a consistent, heavily reviewed process of resource creation, and it means that we can deploy multiple environments swiftly.

With the inclusion of IoT devices for data collection, we are also responsible for improving hardware security. IoT is a key element of our APM, allowing us to connect directly with our assets and monitor their performance in real time. With the automated systems we've built, any compliance deviations get reported, and prompts are immediately fired when misconfigurations are detected. Analysts can quickly aggregate huge amounts of incoming material, and make continuous assessments. Clients have access to their data, and their data only. From an operations perspective, we're already using the best identity and access management (IAM) mechanisms.

Because hydrogen equipment requires very precise data analytics, a digital solution is a requirement for proper infrastructure deployment and operations.

LIFTE is ready with digital solutions that seamlessly incorporate security measures in every phase of design, development, and operations. We recognize that the upfront costs and shifts in methodology will pay off in the realization of CAPEX and OPEX targets.

COMPLIANCE WITH INDUSTRY STANDARDS

Our industry is still developing its standards for hydrogen operations, and adherence to the specifications set by governing bodies will help ensure compatibility between platforms. When there are resources or assets we don't know about, or which are configured in inconsistent or mysterious ways, our ability to control them is reduced. Thus, we must work to remove ad-hoc solutions, or "shadow IT", from projects, and make sure that our solutions are being held to the highest standards of consistency and accountability. Certification by an accredited body lets customers know that our company treats all aspects of security with the utmost diligence. It assures our clients that their security risks are being treated effectively, and that the organization is following best practices.

ISO 27001:2013 is an information security standard published by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), the world's largest developer of voluntary international standards, and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC). System of Organizational Controls (SOC) is a suite of reports generated during an audit; the second tier of examination, SOC 2, attests to the effectiveness of an organization's security processes, oversight, vendor management, and risk mitigation.

LIFTE H2 has been certified as compliant with both ISO and SOC2 standards. Our certifications were issued by A-LIGN, an independent and accredited certification body, based on successful completion of a formal audit process. These certifications are evidence that LIFTE has met rigorous international standards in ensuring the confidentiality and integrity of hydrogen supply chain management. We have acquired these compliance certificates in advance of approaching customers, and we use them as a baseline for our approach to cybersecurity.

LIFTE has implemented several security measures and countermeasures that protect its systems from unauthorized access. Its IT personnel were found to be conscientious and knowledgeable. Ongoing and unwavering compliance with SOC 2 and ISO 27001 standards is a demanding process, but one we believe to be essential to the growth of the industry.

LIFTE: SECURING THE INDUSTRY'S FUTURE

As the hydrogen industry grows, so do the threats against it. Hackers, terrorists, corporate spies, and other malicious actors are using increasingly sophisticated tools to disrupt supply chains and energy infrastructure around the globe. To combat this, LIFTE H2 is working to build reliable, secure, and safe

methodologies, always treating cybersecurity as a top priority. In order to reach the full potential of hydrogen, our network of owners, operators, technicians, and vendors must overcome any cultural resistance to change, and leave behind a number of problematic behaviors. We must instead collectively embrace an attitude of diligence, vigilance, and rigorous adherence to protocols. Placing our trust in a “zero-trust” mindset allows us to better defend ourselves against incursions, theft, ransom, or attacks. Using cutting-edge Internet of Things (IoT) devices allows us to better monitor equipment performance. Employing strict authentication methods, and segmenting large networks into more discrete zones, gives us more exacting control over the movement of users within our data environments. Moving away from outdated server-based systems to the cloud reduces our attack surface, and empowers project security teams to swiftly address any exposed vulnerabilities. By certifying our compliance with standards set by globally recognized parties, we can be certain that we are establishing and maintaining best practices as we move forward. With our proven expertise and dedication to security, LIFTE H₂ is prepared to guide every aspect of hydrogen infrastructure development, and to secure the industry’s future.

Ghostwriting



LIFTE Hydrogen

<https://www.lifteh2.com/insights/breaking-barriers/>

Breaking Barriers to Hydrogen Profitability: Asset Performance Management for Continuous Improvement

Ghostwritten article for Debbie Greenstreet
Business Development Manager,
Asset Performance Management Services

The Hydrogen Challenge

The current hydrogen market can be characterized as having a "chicken and egg" problem. The nascent industry has yet to deliver on its full potential, and further growth is being hampered by a series of technical and procedural obstacles. Without reliable service and a consistently available hydrogen supply, customers may grow dissatisfied, rendering many projects unsuccessful. This in turn could lead to a low rate of adoption in the market, and a lack of incentive for improvement. We cannot move forward into profitability until we identify the underlying causes of these hindrances.

The urgent need to address climate change, the desire for carbon footprint reduction, and various geopolitical incentives for clean energy all act as strong drivers, but companies are still facing many technical, safety, and reliability issues that make final investment decisions on hydrogen projects difficult. Compounding these problems are a lack of communication amongst partners, poor data collection, insufficient reportage, and incompatibility between various proprietary systems.

When it comes to improving performance, the question that often emerges is, "Where do we start?" A better question to ask is, "How can we shift from a cycle of underperformance to a cycle of continuous improvement?"

Though inspiring opportunities await in the hydrogen industry, operators and asset owners must establish key performance indicators (KPIs) beforehand to determine operational viability. A well-designed asset performance management (APM) system is the best approach for utilizing these KPIs.

Barriers to a Turnkey Solution

Due to their complexity, hydrogen projects are rarely based on turnkey programs. When designing for hydrogen, there is no "one-size-fits-all" solution. While a broad range of hydrogen-suitable equipment already exists, systems and supply chains are often unintegrated, with no clear path for defining KPIs. In many cases, the interfaces between system components have not been designed for compatibility or customized to meet the specific needs of a particular customer. This results in many projects not being immediately profitable from the outset. Even when reasonable initial efforts are established to optimize both interfaces and protocols, a fully realized solution still requires ongoing refinements and adjustments as the project progresses. The incremental nature of this growth will come up against many potential roadblocks, as depicted in

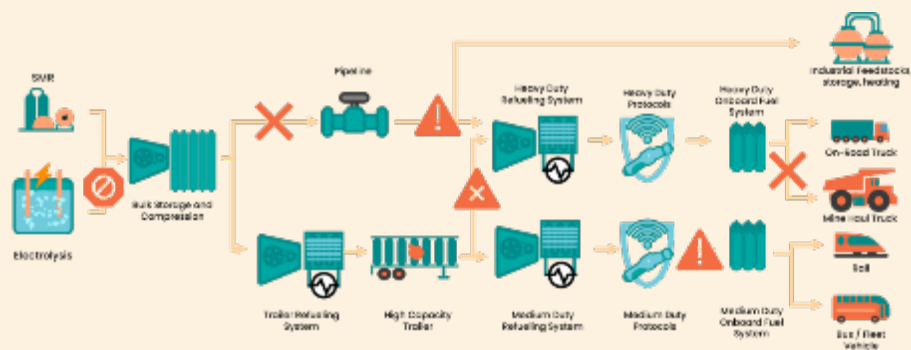


Figure 1: Lack of optimized supply chain interfaces leads to roadblocks in hydrogen infrastructure performance.

Lessons from Previous Projects

How do these challenges manifest as problems in hydrogen operations? Here are two real-world scenarios in light-duty vehicle (LDV) hydrogen refueling stations (HRS).

Use Case 1: Underperforming storage tubes

In one HRS, alerts indicated that the hydrogen storage tubes were repeatedly reaching their purging cycle limit, far ahead of supplier projections. As each of these units cost hundreds of thousands of dollars to replace, finding the root cause of these mysterious discrepancies became a matter of some urgency. The operator combed through a year's worth of data, to identify similar shortcomings in the equipment's history. This search revealed that the purging cycle alerts were being tripped during maintenance sessions, not because of typical use patterns. Each time an attached pressure transmitter got disconnected by a technician during a depressurization event, the system counted this as a complete cycle, thus artificially shortening the tube's lifespan. The storage tube vendor did not account for the number of times panel maintenance would be required, thereby skewing the data. The operator needed a complete set of HRS time-stamped records to resolve this issue, which could be correlated with documented maintenance events.

Use Case 2: Station unavailability

In another HRS, availability data was routinely reported to a governing body and subsequently presented on a website for consumer viewing. Consumers relied on seeing status updates online, but they often found when they arrived at the station that they were unable to refuel, due to trouble with the station's point of sale (PoS) system. The payment apparatus could be down for hours at a time. The operator had no remote access to the status of the PoS, and no way to synchronize payment events with HRS activity. The necessary solutions to these problems with the PoS were veiled by vendor secrecy. This resulted in mounting consumer frustration and business losses for the station.

Issues like these have significant and long-lasting effects on station availability, OPEX, and overall operational performance. The problems are exacerbated when an asset manager doesn't have the proper tools for data collection and reportage, when downtime isn't fully documented, when data is lost between shift changes, when a dependency on subcontractors yields inconsistent results, when there is a lack of alert prioritization protocols, and when vendor privacy leads to inadequate event responses.

Solving Real Problems

So, what can we learn from the challenges in the previous examples? Using the elements of their APM, the engineers proposed corrective actions and began building solutions to remove inefficiencies from the system. This was a *reactive* solution to a problem rather than a *proactive* one, but it still solved the problem for their customer, and contributed to a knowledge base that might prevent similar snags in the future.

Use Case 1: Mystery solved

In the first example, an Internet of Things (IoT) device was installed with the help of digital platform experts. The data gathered by this device saved a tremendous amount of time, as downloading HRS data from the programmable

logic controller (PLC) had previously been very slow and labor-intensive. By relating the storage tubes' use cycles to actual maintenance events, necessary repair work could be differentiated from any low-pressure counts that might occur during normal operations. With a digital platform to collect the IoT device data, the operator could correlate all this information in one graph. The operator now had a complete data set of the tube's history to effectively negotiate with the vendor for a corrective action. This significantly reduced OPEX for current and future stations.

Use Case 2: It takes two in tandem

Our second example found that the POS system did not connect properly with the HRS, and often failed to recognize valid credit card transactions. The internet connection to the PoS was inoperable from four to eight hours a day, preventing payment transactions, regardless of the station's availability. Furthermore, the two subsystems were operating on different clock sources. Changes were made to both systems to align the clock sources, and the PoS internet connection was upgraded, significantly enhancing performance. Once IoT devices were installed, the operations team could finally obtain complete data from both the HRS equipment and the payment provider. They cross-referenced their data with customer refueling events and customer complaints to establish a complete picture of the situation. Clear evidence of network interruptions could now be presented to the internet service provider. After these operational improvements were implemented, consumers and the station owner enjoyed the benefits of higher station availability.

These situations, while painful to experience, offered valuable insights. Taking issues and using them to examine the whole system, then codifying, communicating, and replicating the most optimal strategies throughout the business, allows us to take full advantage of what an asset performance management system can offer. By building upon these lessons and applying insights gathered through adverse experiences, LIFTE will be able to help the hydrogen industry make the leap from "firefighting" to "fireproofing".

Breaking Hydrogen Data Silos

Data from existing hydrogen projects is often collected in a limited, labor-intensive, and "siloe" fashion. Before any useful analysis can begin, many time-consuming transfers, reformatting, and collation must occur.

Analysts and engineers with hydrogen expertise are rare, making it difficult for projects to be designed appropriately from an end-to-end system perspective. This lack of expertise also hinders the ability to provide reliability and improvement analysis throughout the project's life cycle. The shared historical knowledge base will remain quite limited until operational data can be made available outside of proprietary company vaults. One of the most critical aims of any APM strategy is the controlled dissemination of pertinent information.

Figure 2 depicts the challenge that data silos cause in collecting project KPIs.

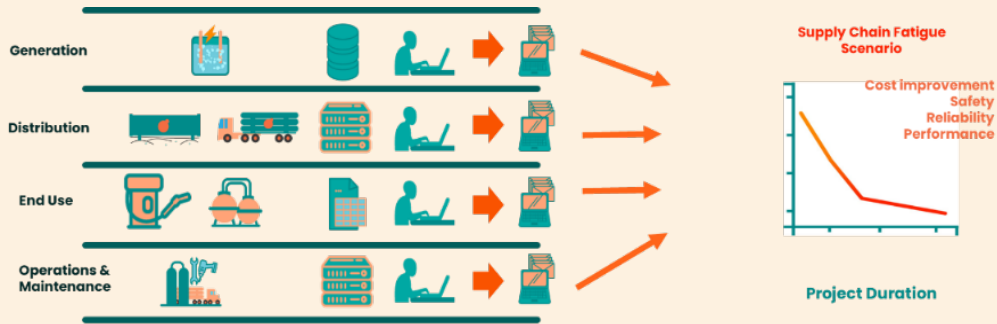


Figure 2. How data silos present roadblocks to effective APM

Performance, Cost, and Safety Implications

Monitoring equipment performance is essential to improving hydrogen infrastructure. Downtime for maintenance and unexpected failures can impact operations, thereby increasing costs. By incorporating accurate data collection, using expert analysis to identify systemic issues, and implementing predictive maintenance, an APM system allows for a holistic view of each hydrogen project and its specific needs. To maximize an asset's performance over time, a team needs to examine its operational history and gather relevant data in a quickly accessible form so that proactive or preventative measures can be taken as required. Standardization, consolidation, and transparency are paramount.

Cost in any commercial venture is a key factor in assessing bankability. For hydrogen projects, the cost is typically measured in terms of levelized cost, which factors in cost per installed kilowatt, cost per kilowatt-hour, cost per kilowatt-year, capital recovery, and fixed/variable operations and maintenance.

Hydrogen, like other fuels, presents safety challenges that must be recognized and reduced. With proper procedures and training, these hazards can be mitigated ... but to help prevent accidents, many stringent and perhaps unfamiliar practices must be implemented and enforced. An APM should consider the need for security, supervision, and accessibility.

Asset performance management (APM) tools and methodologies improve the reliability and availability of physical assets by integrating data capture, visualization, and analytics. Deeper insight enhances performance, lowers costs, and promotes safety.

Asset Performance Management to the Rescue

An ideal APM system consists of three components: a tool for collecting operational data, a team of hydrogen experts that analyze this data to

recommend corrective actions, and procedural strategies that are shared between all involved partners (vendors, suppliers, owners, technicians, and engineers).

An APM is more than just a toolset ... it is a forward-thinking methodology, a schema of recognition and responsibility that encourages an attitude of collaborative excellence throughout an entire team. It starts with careful and accurate data collection, continues through ongoing analysis by qualified experts, and eventually leads to suppliers and asset managers implementing recommended changes. Any improvements are tested, evaluated, and refined, and the process is repeated to move the project incrementally closer to its goals. An effective APM transforms the aforementioned "chicken and egg" problem into a program of ongoing enhancement.

Figure 3 depicts the APM system elements. The toolset consists of an Industry 4.0 digital infrastructure that collects all asset data via Internet of Things (IoT) devices.

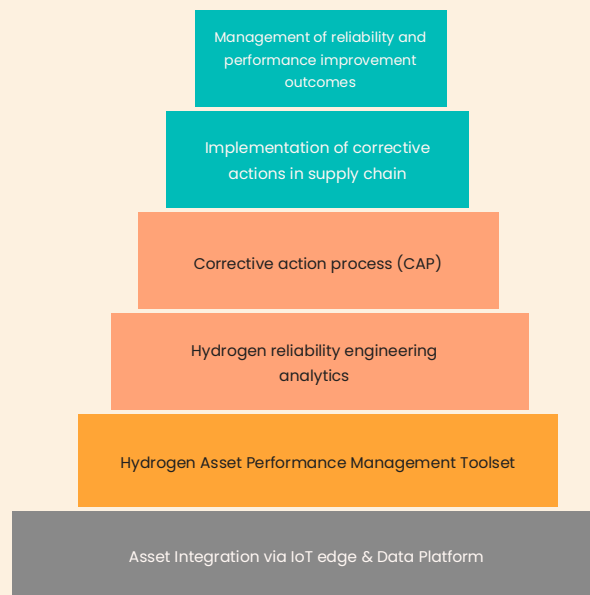


Figure 3: Optimal asset performance management system for hydrogen projects

Enabling an Asset Performance Management System

An effective asset performance management system is comprised of a digital platform, expert personnel, and a network of committed partners. The APM's collective efficiency determines the rate and overall cost for every improvement.

A recent [study published by Deloitte](#)¹ identified several stages of maintenance maturity.

Any improvements will be costly and slow to establish if operations are supported only by manual data collection and *reactive maintenance* actions.

Operations that use *preventative maintenance* will slightly improve over the reactive mode, as maintenance events are regularly scheduled.

Condition-based maintenance provides more even more efficiency, as maintenance is performed only under given condition sets.

After a period of operational data has been collected, *predictive maintenance* can be implemented, further enhancing equipment performance.

A more sophisticated approach uses advanced reliability data collection and analysis, combining scheduled maintenance processes with other operational measures to enact *prescriptive maintenance*.

Intelligent collaboration between suppliers, operational personnel, and safety experts, supported by large data sets and analytic tools, will afford the most rewarding use of an APM.

The efficiency of a continuous performance improvement cycle directly affects the rate of achieving project goals, as depicted in **Figure 4**. The optimal destination, from an operations perspective, is in the lower-left corner of this graph, where the cost and time of improvement are at a minimum.

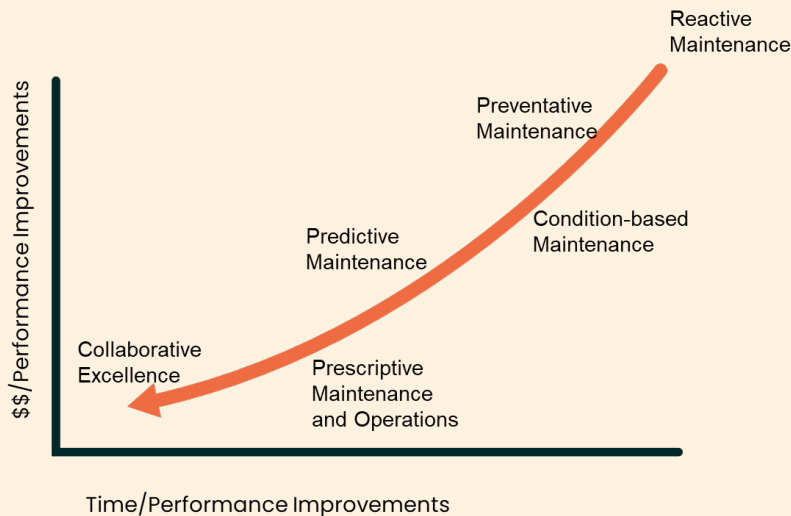


Figure 4. How efficient is your performance improvement process?

How LIFTE APM Can Help

With its extensive hydrogen expertise, LIFTE recognizes that asset performance management is essential to achieving overall project goals. LIFTE offers an APM tool that provides the capabilities of data capture, integration, visualization, and analytics. With the support of dedicated experts, this

technology improves the reliability and availability of physical assets and allows for better assessment of KPIs.

LIFTE APM is a scalable and secure cloud-based platform that receives and stores all operational data. Users can easily observe, monitor, visualize, and analyze equipment data, respond to alerts, track updates, and enter additional information about related events.

When enough material has been collected and correlated, it is ready for analysis by reliability engineers and commercial specialists. These experts can focus their time and energy on establishing corrective actions and making concrete operational recommendations, rather than burning unnecessary hours on data collection and collation. Performance improvements can then be rapidly implemented, and the outcomes measured.

The third (and most essential) segment of the APM system is a network of committed and informed partners who are willing to implement corrective actions and other improvements. While the reliability and commercial analysts can provide educated recommendations, a system must be in place to ensure that the vendors and technicians correctly follow such directives. LIFTE establishes binding agreements with manufacturers so that our findings will yield actual results.

As depicted in **Figure 5**, 'LIFTE's APM tool is a single source for all project data. This APM was built by LIFTE hydrogen experts, expressly for hydrogen projects, and it ensures privacy for all projects and their users. It enables the collection of all asset data via Internet of Things (IoT) gateways. It includes web-based entry of various operational activities and specific modules to enable real-time monitoring, graphic visualization, and reliability analysis.

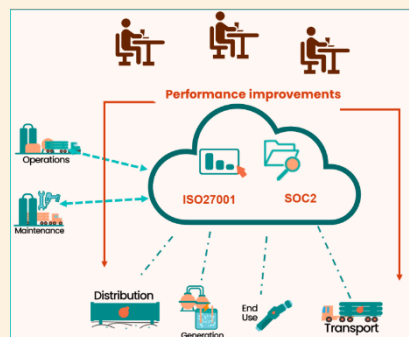


Figure 5. LIFTE 'H2's APM enables secure and private efficient performance improvements to hydrogen projects.

Call to Action

According to a [Deloitte study](#)¹, "oil and gas leaders rated the big data derived from programs such as APM as the most likely to provide the greatest business value." However, adopting asset performance management as a proactive tool for improving hydrogen projects has been surprisingly slow in the industry.

APM can accelerate the pace of hydrogen project profitability by enabling efficient continuous performance improvements, as shown in **Figure 6**. Hydrogen asset owners, asset managers, developers, and even technology providers are encouraged to investigate how APM has the potential to transform the industry completely. LIFTE is in the ideal position to provide an optimal set of hydrogen-specific asset performance management tools and services.

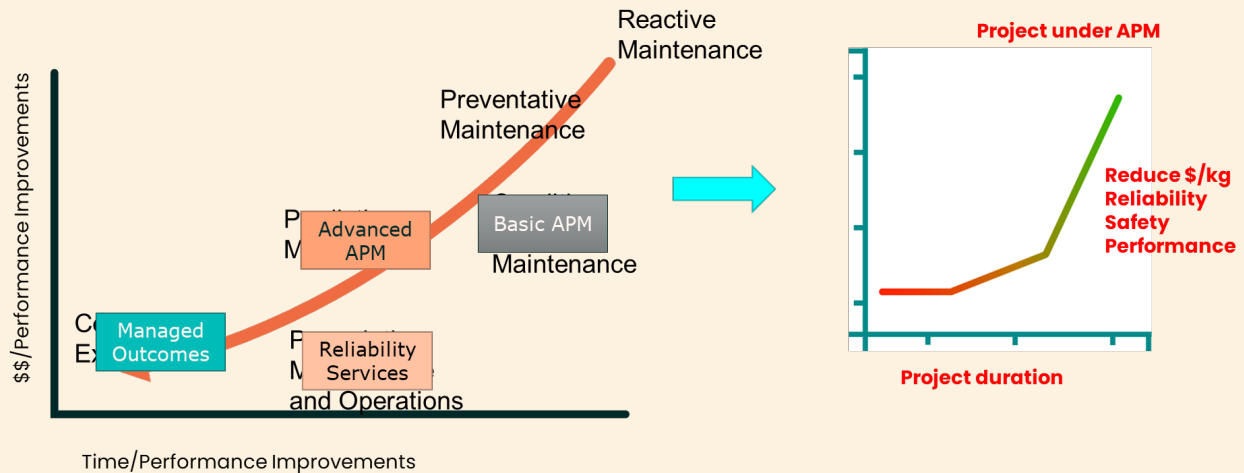


Figure 6. Asset performance management can enable effective continuous performance improvements for hydrogen projects

¹ Daecher, A., Dunn, P., Dipanker, D., & Sniderman, B. (2019, February 26). *Asset performance management Driving value beyond predictive maintenance*. Deloitte Insights

<https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/focus/industry-4-0/asset-performance-management-equipment-reliability.html>

Legal Narratives

These are personal stories to be included in insurance claims and lawsuits, written for individuals and families who have been affected by accidents, medical malpractice, or other traumatic events.

- ["The New Reality of N_____", Motorcycle accident](#)
- ["On The Shoulders of R_____", Multi-vehicle accident](#)
- ["The Right Direction", Motorcycle accident](#)
- ["A_____ 's Smile", Dental malpractice](#)
- ["Getting Back Out There", Car accident](#)
- ["Being The Man Who Gives", Car accident](#)
- ["Sunshine", Car accident](#)

Click links above to arrive at content.

Legal Narrative: "The New Reality of N_____"

On the morning of March 10th, 2018, N_____ woke up a happy man. He enjoyed a healthy and active lifestyle ... with a loving family, an engaging social circle, and a successful career as an ironworker. Making a swift progression from apprentice to foreman in the space of only four years, he felt assured that solid professional opportunities lay directly ahead. More than anything else about his job, he appreciated that it always kept him moving. Ironworking was a field that allowed him to discover new places, meet new people, and stay physically fit. Outside of work, N_____ was known as an energetic guy, a devoted husband and father who loved baseball, basketball, skateboarding, paintballing, hiking, fishing, and working on cars. He was described by his then-wife T_____ as being "outgoing" and "carefree".

Later that afternoon, N_____ 's life, and the lives of his family members, would be forever transformed. In a single instant, every aspect of N_____ 's reality changed.

After suffering a devastating trauma to his spine, N_____ lost connection with half of his body. This injury was quickly compounded by others: the abrupt end of his career, the dissolution of his marriage, the reduction of his mobility. Some losses were deeply personal, and much harder to define ... unexpected and significant impairments to his dignity, autonomy, and pleasure. While he is working very hard to adapt to his new situation, living with paraplegia continues to present many extreme hardships.

N_____ is now fully dependent on a wheelchair. As a result, his command over physical spaces has diminished. The upper part of his home is completely inaccessible ... he cannot get to high shelves, cabinets, the top of his refrigerator, smoke detectors. Washing dishes in the sink is too difficult, due to his reduced reach, so he finds himself buying disposable plates, cups, and cutlery. He doesn't use hangers in his closet anymore, as he kept tearing his clothes while trying to take them down. Because getting dressed is so complicated, he no longer dresses for style but for convenience, choosing loose sweatpants over the jeans he once preferred.

"I want people to understand how it really is to live in a wheelchair," he says, "what it's like to make the transition from being able-bodied to living like this." Everything involving the chair requires extra time. Getting into and out of the bed or the shower is a lengthy process. Formerly simple tasks, like taking out the garbage or making the bed, become Herculean. Though he has built up considerable upper body strength from operating his chair, his lower body is unable to make the necessary adjustments to keep his torso balanced, and thus he lacks "trunk stability". Raising any bulky object above his shoulders causes him to wobble. If he tips over too far in one direction or another, he may topple out of the chair and injure himself further.

When he first started using his wheels, even the smallest of ramps seemed insurmountable, and he thought, "I can't do this." Washington's frequent rain can be especially aggravating, as it's tough to simultaneously maneuver a wheelchair and hold an umbrella, or to navigate through puddles without spattering clothes

with mud. He must be careful to avoid tipping over backwards when carrying a heavy bag. His hands get dirty, and the chair itself requires constant maintenance. He can't go everywhere he wants to go, especially since most homes and businesses have stairs. Even after the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990, many restaurants, bars, parks, and sports venues still don't provide adequate wheelchair access. Public lavatories are often too small to maneuver in, and their mirrors are too high. Plane travel is extremely uncomfortable because the cramped spaces and cabin pressurization stress his upper spine.

He's had to relearn how to do everything, from bathing to sleeping to driving. Though he's taught himself to drive using a specially modified set of controls, the small size of his car causes a number of problems. Having to transport his wheelchair reduces the available space for passengers, and the business of dismantling it for storage during rides makes even a simple trip to the store a long and complex operation. The interior of his car gets dirty, and its exterior is covered with scratches. He no longer goes grocery shopping by himself, as he cannot easily maneuver the cart or reach items on shelves.

He suffers from an ongoing list of health issues, including new sensitivities to certain foods. He doesn't know when he's hungry, or if his stomach is upset, or if he has gas, or if he's been sitting too long in one position. The loss of sensation in his abdomen is so complete that he isn't aware of the interior processes of his body, and has to rely on careful scheduling and dietary restrictions to avoid digestive complications. It's hard to regulate his body temperature, and he gets chilled easily. Showering takes 30-40 minutes, and once he's in the shower, he cannot feel the water on most of his skin.

He must regularly shift himself in his seat to avoid pressure sores. He's developed a condition known as Heterotopic Ossification, which causes excessive bone growth in his right hip and fluctuations in his weight. Because of his need for a catheter, he lives with frequent urinary tract infections (UTIs), which are becoming increasingly resistant to antibiotics. There are other complications, including kidney damage, bleeding, and irritation along his urethra. In addition, he has to undergo Botox injections in his bladder to reduce the frequency of urination. A visit to the bathroom may take upwards of an hour, including preparation, enemas, and cleanup.

One of the most debilitating aftereffects of his accident is incontinence. This is a source of considerable embarrassment and frustration, causing N____ to isolate himself further and refrain from attending most public gatherings. He spends less and less time out of his house, worried that he might experience an accident while with friends or among strangers. This causes him to miss out on important family functions and sharing experiences with those he cares about.

His friends try to remain encouraging, even suggesting that with effort he might walk again, but their good intentions occasionally rub him the wrong way, and it's hard for N____ to watch them doing things that he once did himself. In public, people approach him differently than before. On a few occasions, when he goes with friends to bars or other social spaces, well-meaning strangers strike up conversations in a manner that makes him feel singled out. He wonders if their interest is born of pity rather than sincerity. Some people are even less

empathetic; children and insensitive adults stare openly at him. "Being seen struggling in a wheelchair is embarrassing. You're looked at as someone who is asking for help. I don't like having all those eyes on me."

N____ knows that the worse is not necessarily behind him. He worries about the latter part of his life, and what will happen when he reaches old age. He's young and fit now, better able to manage the challenges he faces ... but he knows that things will get increasingly difficult as he gets older. He's spoken before about the likelihood that he'll spend his late adulthood in an assisted living facility, and that he may eventually lose the self-reliance he's fought so hard to achieve. Above all else, he doesn't want to be a burden to anybody else. The lack of independence weighs heavily on him, and he sometimes resents having to ask for additional help with everyday tasks. Though he has made many great leaps forward in overhauling his life, he still wrestles with doubt and fear. He finds himself sinking into grim emotional spaces whenever he can't reach certain milestones. He feels frustration over his own lack of physical progress, his unemployment, his uncertain future.

"I had my life, I had a career, I was married. In a blink of an eye it was all gone. Now I keep struggling, finding new things that are a struggle. I keep hitting rock bottom."

During the darkest days of his depression, he said to T____, "I feel like a dog. I can't even go to the bathroom on my own." He struggled with feelings of inadequacy as a husband and father, and he reached the very edge of his will to survive as more and more obstacles revealed themselves. Over time, he shut down emotionally, becoming increasingly withdrawn and despondent. T____ found herself changing from a happy wife to an overwhelmed caretaker. Even with her professional experience in the medical field, she began to buckle under the weight of the added responsibility. "It's hard when you're both feeling lost," she recalls. "The accident really beat us down. You think these things happen to someone else, until they happen to your family."

The loss of physical closeness was another staggering blow to the relationship. Even if, as T____ notes, "Intimacy can come in many different forms," she can no longer hug him, because any external pressure hurts his back. She grieves the many disappointments they've experienced as a couple, but she cherishes the things they are still able to share together as friends.

Though their marriage did not survive the strain of their post-accident circumstances, T____ remains closely bonded to her former husband, and continues to act on his behalf as an advocate. "Our divorce wasn't because I didn't love him," she says, "I just couldn't help him enough." She feels that some of their mutual friends and family judged her harshly during the separation, as they subtly (or even overtly) accused her of abandonment. She suffers through her own bouts of depression, and finds herself coping with post-traumatic anxiety.

N____ and T____ are working together to co-parent their son, R____; their family also includes two other children (N____ and Nico) from prior relationships. Despite N____'s eagerness to do his part, T____ has to take up a lot of the slack in terms of managing childcare, errands, and appointments. "N____ is the best dad that he can be," says T____. "But I still have to do so many things by myself."

She wonders about the long-term effect that N____'s paralysis will have on their son. The post-accident version of N____ is all that R____ knows. She worries that he might be singled out or bullied because of his father's disability, or that he may feel like he's missing out on special father/son activities. They cannot play sports together, or go on long outdoor trips, or easily travel to popular destinations. At an early age, R____ showed some signs of selective mutism and separation anxiety, though recently he's become much more communicative, and has grown into a lively, animated young boy. After the accident, he became especially attached to his father, often cuddling with him on the sofa. Now, N____ feels a rising anxiety whenever he is out with his son in public. He imagines scenarios in which he is unable to protect R____ from harm.

"I don't know what the future holds for N____," T____ says. "It's not like a scar, because a scar closes up. This is more like an open wound."

A stairlifter in the family's two-story house once malfunctioned, leaving N____ stranded and vulnerable. He's since relocated to a split-level apartment, which he shares with a childhood friend, and this grants him a greater degree of mobility and self-sufficiency around his home. He has two dogs, Buddha and Bam Bam, who keep him company and cheer him up, but it demoralizes him when he cannot take them out to a park for exercise and play. He cannot clean up after their messes, due to stairs and mud in the backyard, and so his parents handle that duty for him. "The hardest thing for me is to ask people to do things for me. I've always been an independent person, trying to take care of things on my own." He feels especially uncomfortable in placing additional chores on his parents, who are redirecting a lot of time from their own lives to take care of him. While he appreciates the increased closeness he shares with them now, he'd prefer if they were able to focus on their own concerns.

N____'s top priority is to undergo enhanced physical therapy. Acupuncture and massage can help stimulate his circulation, but such remedies are expensive. He is also eager to explore aggressive experimental treatments, such as cell transplants and epidural stimulation, cutting edge technologies that might someday restore some sensation and control in the lower half of his body ... but all of these measures are cost-prohibitive. He sometimes wakes to find that his legs have involuntarily kicked or changed position overnight, and he wonders if perhaps this can be seen as a positive sign. He hopes that with better medical care, he might someday stand upright again. "I'd take anything if I can get it," he says.

Beyond his medical concerns, he aims to further his education. Once his bodily functions have been stabilized, he plans to attend college. Though he isn't sure yet what professional roads he'd like to pursue, he is interested in possibly studying software design or business. He's shown an aptitude for computers, having recently built himself a system so that he can play video games and stay in touch with his friends.

He yearns for both fiscal and medical stability, so that he can achieve much more with the remainder of his life. T____ adds, "I know he has a purpose. I just want his voice to be heard. I want him to feel like he still matters."

N____ remains hopeful that he can have an improved quality of life, one that includes unimpeded movement and travel and discovery, one that allows him

Legal Narrative, "The New Reality of N____"

to set new goals and to see fresh possibilities. He is eager to build a financial and emotional foundation upon which he can reinvent himself. N____ is ready to establish a new reality.

Legal Narrative: "On The Shoulders of R_____"

R_____ has always been a strong and capable guy, a man who felt he could carry a lot on his shoulders.

He joined the Army in 1986, spent three years in the infantry, and then devoted another two decades to the Navy. His eight tours in the military brought him to Hawaii, Japan, San Diego, Mississippi, and Seattle. R_____ enjoyed the global travel and ongoing opportunities for growth. He ran the welding shop and oversaw firefighting training, a job he especially relished. "We were the quick response team, taking care of smaller stuff before it got big." During his time as a Chief Petty Officer, he learned a great deal about hydraulics, machining, and electrical systems.

This diverse skill set eventually landed him a second career as a maintenance machinist for the city of T_____. Starting in 2014, he worked at a wastewater treatment plant, on a team that could "make realities out of ideas." He'd create heavy-duty plumbing parts, duct pipes, and complex bracketry. He worked among millwrights, welders, and foundry workers, and he became highly knowledgeable about grooving, rerouting, replacing, and rebuilding parts. Because of his extensive experience in the Navy, he intuitively understood how fluid systems and pumps worked. He could read diagrams, and quickly grew computer-savvy. The dynamic nature of his work appealed to him. "I got to do a different job every day," he says. "There was a huge variety, good jobs and bad jobs."

In recent years the industry had experienced a massive turnover, with many retirements and resignations. As a result, R_____ had to manage more responsibility than normal. "That's where my firefighting really helped me out. I was very good at remembering the little things that made a system work. It all made sense to me."

He met L_____ in 2017. Soon they were sharing a home in E_____ with their five dogs. They co-created an active lifestyle ... going out to see live shows, hunting, fishing, hiking, and camping, spending a lot of time outdoors, maintaining game cameras in the woods. They'd often take out their 20' boat for extended rounds of halibut fishing, sometimes inviting their friends along for fun trips. They could fill their freezers with upwards of 200-300 pounds of fish annually. "We got to where we could eat fish and elk all year."

R_____ was a highly experienced hunter, harvesting elk, bear, and ducks depending on the season. He dressed his own game, and could pack out an entire elk, carrying the yield by himself for a four-mile hike. Both he and L_____ became avid cooks. They felt that knowing how to process their own food would be an important skill to develop, so they learned how to make sausage, snack sticks, and jerky. "Wild game always tastes better," he says. "We'd make meals for our friends." The life they led had many rewards.

On April 5th, 2019, R_____ was heading home in his 2012 Dodge Ram, a silver half-ton truck. He had stopped at a red light, and was talking with a friend on his speakerphone, when he happened to look up into his rearview mirror. Barreling straight towards him was a large commercial vehicle with a crane in the

back. When R_____ realized that the driver would not stop, he instinctively relaxed his entire body, and leaned back into the seat.

The truck, all 36,000 pounds of it, came crashing into the rear of his vehicle. In turn, R_____’s vehicle smashed into the car in front of it. The front and back of his Ram crumpled like the bellows of an accordion.

R_____ doesn’t remember the moment of impact, only the aftermath. He immediately felt waves of immense pain in his right hip. He went through a mental checklist of his body, making sure that he had not been paralyzed or badly cut. His entire back tingled, and he had some trouble breathing. Both shoulders hurt, and he couldn’t lift either arm. The airbags had deployed and deflated, and they hung limply in front of him. White powder coated every surface. His seat had broken, and it lay nearly flat, to such an extent that he was not easily visible from the outside. Miraculously, the cab remained mostly intact. None of the car’s windows had been broken, though he saw two round holes in his windshield; he later realized that his fingers had somehow pierced the glass.

He could hear his friend’s voice over the phone, asking about the loud sounds she had just heard. R_____ had enough presence of mind to say, “I’ve gotta let you go, I was just in a really serious accident.” He called 911, and then L_____.

First responders arrived at the scene right away, as a police car had already been following the commercial vehicle. However, the officers took a long time to check in on R_____, possibly because of his semi-hidden position within the cab. Firefighters used the “jaws of life” to pry open the driver’s door. As the paramedics conducted their physical assessment, R_____ began to feel shooting pains throughout his back and neck. “I had a massive headache.”

L_____ arrived at the accident scene, and she set about removing valuables from the wreck of the truck. Meanwhile, R_____ got rushed by ambulance to the _____ Hospital in nearby P_____. “That was one of the worst rides of my life,” he remembers. “I felt every bump.” He underwent a CT scan, bloodwork, urinalysis. Doctors checked his stomach, liver, kidneys, gallbladder, pancreas, and intestines, but they couldn’t pinpoint the cause of such extreme pain in his hip. They also couldn’t detect any major breaks, though they did see that he had cracked a small bone in his left wrist. Nonetheless, he remained in excruciating pain. He was discharged from the hospital and told to follow up later with his doctor.

The next few months at home grew exceedingly uncomfortable, as he adjusted to his new limitations. The accident had ripped four muscles in his right shoulder. The pain had gotten so bad that he collapsed at an X-Ray tech’s office after merely turning his head. An orthopedic surgeon focused first on R_____’s left shoulder, where he had a 98% tear of the supraspinatus muscle. This was successfully reattached. Later, doctors took out six centimeters of bone spurs in his right shoulder, and they warned R_____ that they would eventually need to do this again. Though his back pain slowly cooled down, he still felt random twinges throughout the day.

After the accident, he lost a lot of feeling in his right hand ... so much so that he once accidentally burned himself at a welding station without realizing it. An electromyography (EMG) procedure revealed a nerve path blockage in his elbow. Doctors recommended surgery, and in July of 2022 he finally underwent an

operation to restore some nerve function. The day after the surgery, he could feel his fingers again, to his great relief. Thankfully, his hand is slowly getting better, though he still lacks some grip strength.

The after-effects of the whiplash lasted for almost three months. During that time, he couldn't scratch his own head, wash his hair, or reach behind himself. Nothing above his mid-section was accessible. Brushing his teeth was painful. L_____ had to remind him not to do stuff he had easily managed before. There was also a notable impact on physical intimacy. "There was nothing we could do that didn't hurt," R_____ says, drily. "I'd scream with pain, and then we'd laugh."

R_____ ended up taking nine months off from work, using up the entirety of his remaining vacation and sick time. Though he had health insurance through his job with the city, the combination of missed work and medical costs put the couple in a huge financial crater. They quickly accumulated credit card debt and took out three private loans.

The timing of the accident proved especially unfortunate, financially speaking, as R_____ and L_____ were already in the midst of a major home remodeling project. They had just ripped up the carpeting in the house, and so they had to ask their friends to put in the new flooring. They had just purchased a bed set and other furniture, and a truck for L_____. In addition, R_____ was acting as the primary caretaker for his father, G_____, who lived with them at the time. The responsibility for G_____’s care, including errands and medical appointments, now fell on L_____.

For several months after the accident, L_____ had to handle all the cooking, cleaning, laundry, bedding, vacuuming, and the care of five dogs. As a full-time manager at _____, she spent much of her day on her feet, and often came home already exhausted from a long shift. The additional layers of domestic responsibility became a tough grind.

The difficulties compounded. R_____ couldn't fish or hunt or hold a gun. He couldn't raise his arm enough to fasten his seatbelt or comfortably drive. "If I hit a bump wrong, if I reached for something, it would hurt." When he tried to go for a boat ride, he found that he couldn't brace himself, or push the throttle forward or backward. He couldn't throw a baseball for the dogs.

Sleeping became a real challenge. He discovered he couldn't sleep on his stomach, or pull up his bedsheet. To this day, he still can't rest on his right side. For the first several weeks of his new life, he spent most of his nights on the reclining couch. Standing was more comfortable than either sitting or sleeping.

R_____ couldn't work in the yard, repair vehicles, or bring in groceries. He tried to continue gardening in his yard, but his injuries got in the way, so he could only grow a much smaller volume of plants in boxes.

He's trying to build back up his stamina, though he can't perform pulling motions like he used to. "Pushing isn't as hard as pulling. But tightening anything is murder on the shoulders." Though he has regained some mobility, his right hip still feels terrible. "The hip will probably stop me before the shoulders," he says. Physical therapy, acupuncture, hot/cold treatments, massage, and visits to a chiropractor have all yielded unsatisfactory results. He's still trying to get an appointment to see a specialist, but has been running into some roadblocks.

R_____ is an accomplished bowhunter. He's put a lot of work into being able to draw his bow again, but he doesn't have the range or stability to hunt at the level he had been used to. "I don't want to just wound an animal," he says, "so I've had to pass on a lot of great shots." He can no longer use a normal shotgun for taking down ducks or geese, as the kickback would be far too intense for his shoulder. As a result, he's had to purchase a specialized gas-operated shotgun, one with a less jarring action.

In his prime, R_____ had been accustomed to hiking 20 miles in a day, carrying a pack weighing 45-50 pounds. Now he can only do single-day hunts. "The two guys I used to hunt with liked to pack in for two days. But I can't sleep rough on the ground anymore. Can't do the heavy backpacks all day long." Sadly, he had to turn down an opportunity to do what would have been his first moose hunt in Alaska. "I don't know that my shoulder will allow me to do it." He and L_____ had to suspend their halibut fishing, so they went without fresh fish for a year.

R_____ has type 2 diabetes, and his blood sugar has been hard to control since the accident. He has lost any tolerance for alcohol, so he can no longer enjoy beer or Scotch. During the first year, his metabolism slowed dramatically, and his once firm 5'11" frame ballooned up to 245 pounds. At one point, his cholesterol shot up to extremely dangerous levels. He can no longer eat pasta or some of his other favorite foods.

There is a psychological dimension to the accident that still needs to be addressed. R_____ acknowledges some anxiety whenever he sees large vehicles coming up behind him. Though he's feeling more comfortable driving now, he still admits to having some PTSD about the accident. He experienced a lot of frustration and irritability during the first few months of his recovery. "I went for a lot of long walks," he said. His guilt and frustration mounted as he mourned the loss of daily activities that he wasn't able to do anymore. "It started out as a nightmare, and just grew from there."

Three years after the crash, his short-term memory is still drastically impaired. "Before the accident, he could remember stuff," L_____ says. "Now he doesn't remember things we just talked about." R_____ needs to write everything down in lists, and sometimes forgets why he went into a room, or what he needed at the grocery. Recently, he had turned on a hose to water a patch of raspberries, and accidentally left the water running for a month. Conversations, plans, chores, bills, payments ... all get lost in the fog. He has to set alarms for regular tasks.

During the first several months, he had a really hard time coming up with words he wanted to say. He underwent some speech therapy, but still struggles occasionally to remember a turn of phrase or an easily retrievable fact. "My resume took me forever to write, because I couldn't come up with the words." He finds himself unable to remember passwords. "I used to have amazing memory for passwords. I had top-level security clearance for the Navy, and I had to change my password every thirty days."

R_____ has nine more years until he can retire from his job with the city of Tacoma, and he's not sure if he can make it. He's unable to lift heavy objects or climb ladders. Squatting is far too painful. He does his best to manage the labor, but he pays for it with ongoing pain. "When I first came back to work," he notes,

"they shielded me from some of the harder jobs. But that's not an option anymore. I can do some things to shield myself based on my knowledge ... but I don't feel right taking the lead job."

He had been the leading candidate for an upcoming position for the city. This opportunity, working as the Senior Maintenance Machinist, would have included a 5% pay bump and a higher professional profile. "I took myself off the list," he says. "I didn't think I could do the job the way that I wanted to." Painful as this was, he realized that he was likely to underperform due to his recent memory loss. He also did a phone interview for a great gig in Alaska, to be a roustabout at the Prudhoe Bay Oil Field. His friend worked with the hiring manager, the interview went well, and the job seemed as good as his. Unfortunately, he had to turn that one down, too.

R_____ is taking a "wait and see" approach to his career, but he's not sure he sees himself getting much better in the long run. In the meantime, he's trying to figure out what his next move will be. He wants to get back on track with the bills and pay things off. "We both like to travel," he says, "and that's been put on hold. We're still catching up on everything." He would eventually like to build a shed for their tractors, vehicles, and their boat. "We don't really have anywhere to put things."

L_____ aims to build a wood shop, where she can refinish furniture. For her, this has also been a challenging, deeply grounding experience, with a tremendous impact on their enjoyment of life. "We had it rough for a long while. But we love each other," L_____ says. "We have open communication."

Before and after the accident, R_____ proved that he could handle a lot. Now he and L_____ are ready to reclaim more of their lives. "We're just getting back into things. We're trying to get back to where we started."

Legal Narrative: "The Right Direction"

By the summer of 2022, A_____ felt like he was heading towards a good place.

He held down a terrific job, shared a home with a loving family, and led a highly active lifestyle. At the beginning of the year, he started working for L____, a company that stores and ships potato products for the fast-food industry ... he found that he liked the work, and knew that he fit in well with its tight-knit group of employees. He shared many of his greatest life pleasures with C____, his partner of sixteen years. They were both avid motorcyclists, and they'd often go on extensive road trips together. Their most ambitious journey took them across 23 states, covering some 7,000 miles in two weeks. They attended regional and national motorbike events, like the famous Sturgis Motorcycle Rally, and watched car races at both the R_____ and H_____ Raceways. Together with their three kids (C____, Z____, and A____) they enjoyed many fun activities ... bowling, visiting theme parks, hitting waterslides, fishing, camping, and eating out at local restaurants. On their acreage, the family took care of four cows and three dogs, and kept up with the demands of running a full household. Theirs was a busy, rewarding, engaging life.

But on Monday, August 22nd, A_____ 's road took an abrupt turn.

He was heading back to E_____ on a friend's bike, taking it on a test run after some routine maintenance. He was traveling at a little less than fifty miles an hour, when he approached the intersection of State Route ___ and the exit/entry ramps of Interstate ___.

Suddenly, A_____ caught an unexpected movement from the corner of his left eye, and watched helplessly as a truck sped directly into his path. The truck's driver had pulled off of I-__ prematurely, and was attempting to use the opposing on-ramp as a quick re-entry. Rather than pausing at the intersection, the truck had simply barreled through it.

A_____ 's instincts kicked in. He knew that he couldn't possibly stop in time, so he immediately threw the bike sideways, hoping the skid would slow him down. This quick action probably saved his life. A_____ and the bike slid into the truck, and then he lost consciousness. His friend's bike was totaled ... and A_____ himself came very close to losing everything.

He awoke in H_____ Center, two days after he had been airlifted from the crash site. C_____ was by his side. A_____ could talk, but he struggled to remember any details of the accident. He looked terrible, with two black eyes and a nose that had been "jogged up pretty good."

The doctors arrived with a grim list of injuries. He had numerous facial fractures, and extensive damage to the bones around his left eye. His eyeglasses had snapped across the bridge of his nose. Any light pressure on his face could be felt all the way into his teeth. His left wrist was broken, and he had two fractures in his thoracic vertebrae. His left leg took a bad beating, with the tibia and femur shattered. As a result, he had to have screws implanted in both bones. He suffered terrible bruising, and severe trauma to his knee.

A_____ was released the following Monday, and went home to a completely different reality.

Some swelling remained in his brain, and his speech was notably slurred. For the next several weeks, he endured terrible headaches, blurry vision, and some aphasia. Conversations seemed spotty, his memory became patchy and unreliable. "The weekend before the accident is still hazy," he says. His thought processes felt oddly "short", and he lost track of things. Reading became difficult, and he could only handle looking at emails for five minutes or so before he felt mentally exhausted.

For the next month, he crashed on the sofa, as it was much easier than trying to climb in and out of bed. He overslept, remained groggy, and the days began to smear together. "I'm a very independent person," he says, "so laying down on the couch was killing me."

He even had trouble getting into the shower, and onto the toilet. Fortunately, C_____ was around to help him during those tough first few weeks. They eventually installed a shower chair, a safety handle, and a handheld nozzle, so that he could manage bathing by himself.

A_____ now has good days and bad days. His concentration is still uneven, and he has no memory of the time immediately following the accident. He cannot focus his left eye, and so he's lost his depth perception. This loss, coupled with his extensive leg injuries, prevents him from driving a car. He now wears an eyepatch to avoid dizziness or headaches. As he gets tired, the vision in his "good" eye gets blurrier. Unfortunately, his facial fractures and swelling have to heal before these vision problems can be addressed.

Due to the impact on his jaw, his teeth are in constant pain, to such a degree that it hurts to even brush them. Chewing is impossible on the right side of his mouth. A sudden sneeze can be agonizing, and he must wear a back brace. He's always sore.

Though his knee is slowly regaining flexibility, he still cannot put any weight on his legs. He is unable to use crutches because of the damage to his wrist. As a result, he will be confined to a wheelchair for several months. This presents several accessibility problems at his home. Because his house has stairs in the front and back, he can't leave without assistance. He can wheel himself onto the front porch, he says, "But that's about it."

He has been unable to enjoy his normal activities, and knows that he's missing out on things with his family. He hasn't driven since the accident, and worries that he may not be able to ride again, due to his deteriorating vision. He can't get to work, can't go out to eat, can't cook dinner, can't make his own coffee, can't tie his shoes. He can't watch any television, he can only listen to it. "I can't make anything," he notes. "I can't even put on my own socks."

Ordinary chores, like laundry or housekeeping, are completely out of his reach. There are many tasks that need doing, such as mending fences, fixing waterlines and sprinklers, feeding and watering the cows, bringing out hay, mowing three acres of land, taking care of cars. All of the outdoor maintenance must be done by others.

He feels he can't contribute, and it's embarrassing. Instead, he's had to rely on neighbors and friends. C____, his twenty-year-old son, has had to do much of the outdoor work, despite his own ongoing ankle injury. When the property's fence broke down, A____ couldn't repair it. Luckily, his nephew C____ was available to jump in. A____'s parents, D____ and M____, have also been working hard to help keep things running. D____ takes Z____ to school in the morning, and cooks for the whole family. M____ is recovering from his own medical issues, including a cancer diagnosis, so these new burdens are coming at an especially unwelcome time.

C____ has been forced to take up much of the slack. She's already a busy woman ... she works as the office manager for L____, a freezer storage company in P____ ... and the extra demands on her energy are proving to be a strain. She frequently takes two or three days off at a time to bring A____ to his many appointments in S____, a city that's 300 miles away. They try to consolidate these appointments as much as possible, sometimes stacking up as many as six visits in a three-day stretch. Aside from being his primary caretaker, she's also had to bear the brunt of his frustration. There has been a significant impact on intimacy.

A____ has ongoing appointments with a neurologist, a maxillofacial surgeon, an orthopedist, and a plastic surgeon. He also sees specialists for his knee and his back. Physical therapy sessions will help to increase movement, flexibility, and to strengthen his tendons, but the long-term mobility prognosis is still uncertain.

There have been many more subtle after-effects of the accident that go beyond the obvious physical ones. A____ is also experiencing some behavioral changes and emotional challenges. He gets irritated fast, and he admits that he now has a "short fuse". He feels like he's often agitated, but he's not sure why. "I used to be calmer," he says. "Now I try to avoid snapping."

Although A____ feels mentally ready to return to work, he's not there physically. He still can't perform certain tasks required by the job, such as walkthroughs, perimeter inspections, and checking railroad spurs. Parts of the facility, including the dock offices, are upstairs, and thus inaccessible to him. For the time being, his assistant manager has to act as his "feet on the ground".

A____ is eager to get back to the warehouse. He's been in this industry since 1997, working in inventory and operations, driving a forklift, managing teams. He's known his boss for twelve years, and holds many long-standing relationships with his peers. "This is a good company," he notes. "They take care of their employees. They've been nothing but helpful."

Because of his strong work ethic and consistent performance, the company values him enough as a team member to keep him on, and so they are trying to figure out what he can accomplish remotely. He's using all of his Short-Term Disability and Family Medical Leave, giving him "protected time" until November ... but this will soon be coming to an end.

His body and mind are slowly healing. There have been some measurable improvements, though the effects of the accident are still being felt every day. Nonetheless, A____ remains optimistic, and is thankful for the support of his family and friends. "We stick together," he says. The whole family is in this." His

Legal Narrative, "The Right Direction"

hope is that in the coming years he can get back to his normal routines, restore his health, and return to the life he was enjoying before the accident. A_____ wants to know that he is once again moving in the right direction.

Legal Narrative: "A____'S Smile"

A____ had arrived at a place in her life where everything seemed to be coming together. An active woman, she enjoyed traveling, reading, kayaking, swimming, exercise, yoga, listening to music, taking long walks, and being outdoors. She worked full time as an occupational therapy assistant, but knew deep down that she was ready for a significant transition. "After twenty years of working in occupational therapy, I found a passion for mental health treatment. I knew if I wanted to continue helping others in this particular way I needed a career change," she says. "Becoming a social worker would allow me to grow professionally and provide me with a unique skills set to serve my clients." Determined to redirect her professional life, she enrolled in a graduate program for social work, a field in which she was certain she could make a positive impact. By the beginning of 2019, she was making real headway in her education, and feeling especially optimistic about the road ahead.

Throughout her childhood and early adolescence, A____ had suffered from Temporomandibular Joint Dysfunction (TMJD), a condition in which the muscles that control chewing and the joints that connect the lower jaw to the skull fail to function properly. This misalignment can cause severe pain, audible clicking, limited jaw movement, referred pain, and migraines. Severe cases can even lead to malnutrition. During her teens, she underwent many procedures to correct this problem, including procedures to widen her palate and bring her lower jaw forward. By the age of 21, she had a functional jaw and was free of pain, to her great relief.

"I had no more issues with pain until now," she said. "My jaw was finally comfortable. I had decades with no problems." After enduring such extensive and expensive work, she became very protective of the progress she had fought so hard for. At the start of every dental appointment, she'd warn each dentist, "Don't change my bite. My bite is off, but my jaw is comfortable. Just do what we've agreed upon."

On January 22nd of 2019, she went to the second of three appointments with Dr. P____. The first appointment had gone well, and she felt ready to return for a crown and filling.

"I had so much faith and comfort in going back there," she says. "I had a ton of trust in him."

Her confidence, however, proved to be short-lived. She noted that the doctor seemed distracted. It bothered her that he was answering texts on his phone, and chatting with his assistant about other clients.

Dr. P____ set to work on a filling on the left side of her lower jaw, and a crown on the right side of her upper jaw. At first, this work seemed to pass by uneventfully. After finishing the two procedures, he asked if anything felt "off" ... but with the effects of the anesthetics A____ couldn't determine if her teeth were sitting properly. So, without any further explanation, the dentist just plunged ahead and continued working.

Despite her clearly expressed request that he not attempt to adjust her bite, Dr. P____ began to file away teeth in attempts to get the bite right. He moved

around her mouth, grinding down areas that were nowhere near the two teeth he had previously worked on. As he bore down on her incisors, her unease grew. "Something just didn't sit right with me," she says.

He did not describe what he was doing, or why. Anxiety began to set in. She didn't feel comfortable in asking him to stop, but she also knew that this wasn't what they had agreed to. "It seemed unusual at the time," she remembers. "I've had a couple of crowns and many fillings before, and I've never experienced this. This was not normal."

She interrupted him to ask, "Why are you having to file down so many different teeth?"

"The bite's not fitting," he replied. He appeared nervous, and his body language communicated a rising frustration. "Maybe it's because you're numb on both sides, and you can't tell."

After a long while, he halted, and set down his tools. "I think we need to stop for today." He handed her a mirror, and she looked in disbelief at the results.

Dr. P____ had shaved down her lower incisors, creating a dramatic and uneven downward slant. The effect was shocking.

Horrified, she asked, "What did you do to my front teeth? I didn't agree to any of this."

His response seemed defensive. "You had pressure on your front teeth, I had to relieve the pressure." He further explained that he would continue to build the teeth up and take others down over repeated visits, making various corrective adjustments. Despite her panicked objections, he refused to acknowledge the apparent mistake. "I don't see what you see. Your bite is coming together perfectly."

A____ returned to her car, profoundly upset. She wept as she drove to work. She had felt completely helpless and vulnerable during the procedure, but the doctor's insouciance afterwards made her feel even worse.

She couldn't sleep at all that night. The next morning, her entire face was wracked with pain, and she had a terrible headache.

As a result of the excessive reduction, A____'s bite had been thrown far out of alignment, undoing decades of relative stability. For the next several months, she remained in a state of constant discomfort, with daily muscle spasms on the right side of her face and mouth, and pain radiating all the way to her front teeth. "Every time I closed my mouth or bit down," she said, "my teeth would slide around." She developed sympathetic aches in her neck and eyes, and non-stop debilitating pain where no amount of medication seemed to help. The symptoms continued to worsen over time.

She had difficulty eating, and could barely open her mouth enough to admit a spoon. Her mandible felt like it had been awkwardly crammed into its joints. She even developed arthritis, with the inflammation becoming almost unbearable.

Seeking some kind of solution, she tried again and again to reach out to the P____s ... but they never called her back, never arranged for a consultation. It was as if she had been abandoned by the practice.

Eventually, the crown Dr. P____ installed failed, and had to be replaced. She returned to the office, but this time saw Dr. P____'s father, another dentist and co-

owner of the practice. To her dismay, the elder Dr. P____ also seemed to ignore her concerns. He sternly instructed her not to have anyone fix the problems with her front teeth, as doing so “would make things worse. You will end up in more pain and regretting it.” He refunded the cost of the crown so, it could be redone by another provider.

For the second time, A____ felt manipulated, belittled, and bullied into accepting the unacceptable. Once more, she left the office in tears.

A____ started going to other doctors and TMJD specialists for pain management. In a short span, she was prescribed a wide range of drugs, including Diazepam, Vicodin, Indomethacin, Botox, steroids, antidepressants, and muscle relaxers ... all of which affected her concentration.

She found herself tired all of the time, unable to get a good night's rest. She began to snore, and found herself especially irritable in the mornings. Hot packs on her face brought only temporary relief. Because she couldn't chew very well, she chose much softer, higher-calorie foods. This, in addition to her exhaustion, led to significant weight gain. "Being tired made it tough to exercise and burn calories," she said. Her figure ballooned. She found it difficult to even accomplish simple everyday chores at home. She experienced some urinary incontinence, due to the heavy combination of medications and reduced muscle tone. Because she had to take care of patients during the day, she couldn't take any painkillers on the job. This inevitably resulted in a hard crash during the evenings, and many nights sleeping on the couch. In a desperate bid to dull her discomfort, she began to drink. Her studies slipped, and she found herself struggling to get through her workday.

The ongoing disruption slowed her school program down significantly. She had been on track to complete a two-year accelerated program, but had to lengthen it to three years.

A____ was once a person who smiled often; now she found herself constantly trying to hide her lower teeth. Her embarrassment was so extreme that several months passed before her boyfriend even knew what had happened.

Unfortunately, the long-term effects from this incident had a detrimental impact on her relationship. Her partner would invite her out for a date, but she'd have to say, “Sorry, I just took a muscle relaxer.” She couldn't even focus enough to watch TV with him. They both worried about her escalating drug dependency. Intimacy became problematic, her pain took center stage at night, and the relationship eventually collapsed. In a moment of extraordinary insensitivity, her ex said to her, "You're ruined. It's not worth it."

“It was such a dark period,” she admits. "I knew I couldn't keep going like that." A____ eventually sought the help of a psychologist, and continued to search for a more capable dentist. After looking at her lengthening list of prescriptions, one concerned doctor said, “You have to get off these pain medications.”

Like many chronic pain issues, the cause of A____'s anguish was hard to pinpoint. Many providers were at a loss. "Too many doctors dismissed my pain as psychosomatic." The repeated frustration of being ignored reignited memories of being helpless and voiceless in the dentist's chair, making it difficult for her to move forward.

She tried Botox injections, to lessen the severity of her mouth spasms and relax the muscles around her jaw. These really affected her expression, so much so that she once frightened her grandchild with the distorted appearance of her mouth. "Moments like that will always stick with me."

In four years, she saw two different TMJD specialists. The first of these doctors, Dr. M_____, created a special orthotic appliance to help correct her bite. He warned her, "It's going to take at least a year for your mouth to stabilize." Initially, she felt better ... but over time it became apparent that her bite was still being thrown off significantly.

She began working with Dr. S_____, her current provider. He took a highly technical approach, incorporating imaging and electromyography in order to more carefully study the ongoing damage being caused by the misalignment. He also made her a new appliance, which helped reduce the severity of her symptoms.

Now, five or six months into the latest round of treatments, her jaw feels more stable. She feels a "heaviness" once in a while, however, and she still cannot open her jaw all the way. She worries that this might be "the new norm", and is unhappy with her smile. "This has been the most successful part so far," she says, "but the journey isn't over." Both Dr. M_____ and Dr. S_____ advised her that her lower teeth may not be repairable, and that she may need to see a maxillofacial surgeon.

Financially, this incident has been ruinous. A_____ has had to take loans out, and she's struggled to scrape together money for her many appointments, X-Rays, and diagnostic tests. Because her insurance doesn't offer any coverage, she has spent tens of thousands of dollars in out-of-pocket costs. Any reconstructive surgery or further work will be entirely on her to fund. "I think about it almost every day," she says. "How am I supposed to pay for all of it? This will be going on for a long while."

Nowadays, A_____ is cautiously optimistic about her prospects. This August will make one year of treatment with Dr. S_____, and they will determine then what the next steps will be. Even though she suffers some PTSD from both the incident itself and the subsequent years of insufficient treatment, she is hopeful that her life is getting back on track. Her new career as a social worker is going well, and it allows her to assist others with restoring their mental health. She especially finds fulfillment in helping veterans cope with post-traumatic stress. "I like being there for other people. I feel like I have a gift for nurturing."

She's looking into developing a life coaching business and self-help program. "I'll need to do a lot of videography and presentations," she notes, "and I'm concerned about my appearance on camera."

She's also worried that her pain will return, that once again the slow progress she's made will be negated. The experience has taught her a lot about expectation management, and has made her much more empathetic towards the physical struggles of her clients. Only one thing has been clear in her mind ... she felt perfectly fine before going to Dr. P_____'s office, and has been struggling ever since. The delicate balance she had previously achieved with her mouth was destroyed by an overzealous intervention.

A____ realizes now that she was traumatized by the experience of being in the hands of a doctor who made significant choices without her consent. Remembering that feeling of powerlessness still makes her heart race, and sets off anxiety attacks. She has repeated nightmares of her teeth falling out, and of her retainer being broken into pieces.

"I wish I could have my teeth back, and my original bite," she says. "Those few minutes at his office changed everything."

Legal Narrative: "Getting Back Out There"

B_____ has always been a man with a strong sense of duty.

From an early age, he knew exactly which career path he wanted to follow. His father worked in S_____ 's police department and had served in the Special Forces, and his mother was an Army nurse. Their careers awoke in him a strong desire to support both his country and his community. As a teenager, B_____ joined the P_____ County Sheriff Department's Cadet Program. "Law enforcement was in my blood," he says. "I wanted to wear the uniform." He earned a Bachelor Degree in Criminal Justice from _____ University, worked hard to meet the job's entrance requirements, and was ecstatic when he joined the force in his early twenties.

B_____ worked as a deputy in the P_____ County Sheriff's Department for two decades, and as an investigator for the P_____ County Transit Police. For the last eight years, he's been a member of the P_____ County Metro Dive Team. This highly trained group tackles difficult jobs in underwater environments ... retrieving evidence, vehicles, and even human remains from the rivers, lakes, and marine waters of P_____.

In addition to his long career in law enforcement, B_____ served eight years in the Marine Corps, and ten years in the Army National Guard. His military experience dovetailed with his police work; both required great physical and mental discipline, and both tapped into his innate sense of responsibility.

When he met E_____, who had already established a career for herself as a corrections officer, he knew that his professional and personal lives were finally coming into alignment. Their blended family would eventually include six children from previous relationships and marriages. "I was living the dream," he recalls.

E_____ says about her husband that he used to be "very proactive, very by-the-book. He was out there doing his job." She adds that he was known among his peers for being an excellent communicator, always patient with civilians. "He was very thorough, very proud of his work."

Aside from his professional duties, B_____ led an active recreational life. He became a certified SCUBA diver at the age of 17, and enjoyed diving in a variety of settings. He and E_____ both kept themselves in good physical shape; avid gymgoers, they loved to work out, jet-ski, and take long walks together.

On December 18th, 2015, B_____ was returning home from the Emergency Vehicle Operations Course (EVOC), which trains officers to execute various high-speed maneuvers, when he stopped at a red light near the I-__ overpass by B_____. Shortly after the signal turned green, he began rolling forward. Seconds later, a car traveling in the opposite direction collided with another vehicle, forcing this second car into the front of B_____ 's truck. The force of the impact was enough to render both vehicles immobile.

Acting on instinct, with the reflexes of an experienced first responder, B_____ immediately leapt out of his truck to check on the other passengers. He then radioed in to the local dispatch, describing the accident and parties involved. Backup arrived shortly afterward.

It was only then that B_____ noticed some tightening in his lower back.

He was taken to S_____ Hospital. There, he was given only a cursory examination and a few mild painkillers. A panicked E_____ rushed to meet him, and she was greatly relieved to see that her husband had no visible cuts or bruises. He looked, at least outwardly, like he had escaped serious harm.

A couple of days later, though, B_____ started feeling sharp aches. Pain started to radiate outwards from his lumbar spine, and it showed no signs of quieting down.

"He'd groan whenever he moved," E_____ said.

Over the following months, the pain in his lower back grew worse and worse, until it became almost unbearable. Without warning, his muscles would seize, "locking up" his back to the point where he could not walk, bend, twist, or carry any weight whatsoever. These agonizing episodes happened with increasing frequency, forcing him to miss many days of work. Whenever his back flared up, he'd have no choice but to call in sick, something he was extremely reluctant to do. As a man who was proud of his work ethic, who enjoyed his job, this came as a terrible blow to his sense of self-worth.

Due to the worsening pain, he found himself unable to sustain the same level of physical activity as before. Eventually, he cancelled his gym membership, and stopped lifting weights. His once muscular physique ballooned to an unhealthy 294 pounds. His clothes no longer fit.

"He didn't want to go out," E_____ remembers, "because he didn't have anything to wear. We stopped going out on dates."

Worst of all, it seemed that he could never get comfortable. He couldn't find a good position in which to stand, sit, or sleep. Even after he and E_____ purchased an expensive adjustable bed, he couldn't get a full night's rest.

The aftereffects of his accident began to multiply. He found himself unable to lift heavy objects. A formerly simple task, like weeding, would knock him out for the remainder of the day. His backyard became neglected, and many outdoor projects (such as landscaping, the building of a pond, the repair of a fence, and the movement of a retaining wall) were left undone. Where B_____ was once the muscle of the house, he now had to hire laborers to finish tasks. Everything seemed to come to a halt. This put an extra burden on E_____, who was herself nursing a shoulder injury, to maintain the house.

Even his kids noticed a change in his personality. He could no longer roughhouse with them, or take part in the same fun activities as before. Metalworking and woodworking, hobbies that he enjoyed sharing with K_____, his 17-year-old son, became too difficult to sustain, as he couldn't remain hunched over a tool bench for long stretches. He could no longer lug his heavy SCUBA equipment from his car to the shoreline. Opportunities for diving (both recreationally and professionally) became increasingly limited.

The nadir of his unhappiness came during a long-awaited vacation to Hawaii. The latter part of the trip was ruined when his back seized up so badly that he could hardly move. An urgent care center on the island refused to see him, as their policies prevented them from addressing workplace injuries, so he spent much of the trip feeling miserable in his hotel room or sitting idly on the beach.

Deeply depressed, and suffering from unaddressed anxiety, he began to self-medicate with alcohol. Over time, his drinking escalated into a serious everyday problem. He would sometimes become belligerent, clumsy. His marriage suffered, as he found himself irritable and argumentative, lashing out at those closest to him.

The intimacy he once shared with E_____ evaporated, and they began to fight. "It became a lonely home," E_____ remembers. "It felt like we were roommates, not husband and wife." Things became so strained that she seriously considered a divorce, going so far as looking at other houses. "I did not like him. This was not who he was."

B_____ sought many treatments for this injury, including medication, physical therapy, massage, and visits to a chiropractor. He refused to use opioid-based painkillers, but found many of the non-addictive alternates to be ineffective.

Eventually, he underwent surgery, which greatly relieved his symptoms. The procedure allowed him to regain some of his mobility, and he's made other adjustments to help his body cope with his injury. A new standing desk makes doing paperwork a little easier, though he tires more quickly than before. Instead of using a gun-belt, which puts too much pressure on his hips and lower back, B_____ now uses an external carrier, a specialized vest that distributes the weight of his equipment across his torso.

Even after these extra efforts and medical interventions, he still cannot sit still or lay flat on his back for long periods. Some tingling and discomfort remain, no matter how much he tries to stretch. Recently, he's been experiencing severe shooting pains in the lower right quadrant of his body, from his hip down to his shin. He hopes to have this properly diagnosed and treated.

Despite his chronic pain, B_____ keeps trying to reconnect with himself and his family. He and E_____ have worked very hard to improve their communication, and he's since acknowledged and apologized for how his behavior caused a rift between them.

He's also trying to restore some of his strength. One form of exercise that he can still manage is bike riding. Because of its low-impact nature, biking allows him to coax more out of his body than hiking or lifting weights; he recently calculated that he can now ride about 70-80 miles a week. He continues to practice his shooting skills, maintaining his proficiency with his weapon and teaching his kids about firearm safety. He also remains a part of the military's Inactive Ready Reserve, prepared to return whenever his country needs him.

According to E_____, he occasionally pushes himself too far, as doesn't want to miss out. He might do something even if he knows he might suffer for it later. "He doesn't do well just sitting," she says.

B_____ recently got a promotion, and works now as a detective, a move that he was planning to make later in his career. He notes that the accident "forced my hand to enter detective work, five to seven years earlier than I wanted to."

He misses being on patrol, being visible ... but working as a deputy in the field is too risky, as he can't engage in foot pursuits, climb over obstacles, or arrest combative suspects. Still, he'd rather be on the beat again than remain stuck behind a desk. Doing off-duty security details and the occasional traffic control gig

just does not bring the same level of excitement as his previous job. "It's not as fun," he says.

His eagerness to be of service ... to his family, to his community, and his country ... hasn't waned, but he is constantly frustrated by the limitations his injury has created. "I just want to get back out there."

Legal Narrative: "Being The Man Who Gives"

In everything he does ... whether he's serving his family, his coworkers, or his community ... R_____ devotes his entire being. He commits fully to the task at hand, maintains his focus, and gives all that he has to give for those in need. Through decades of professional and academic achievement, he's demonstrated a powerful work ethic and an abiding interest in justice. Shortly before his well-earned "retirement", though, R_____ faced one the most significant tests of his life, an accident that would make him grapple with many significant physical and psychological hurdles, and force him to scale back or even surrender many of the things he loved doing most.

Born in M_____ but raised in the P_____ area, R_____ knew early on that he would build his life around the idea of service to others. His family instilled in him a strong sense of duty; his father was in the police force, his mother worked with at-risk youth, and his sisters volunteered for various social causes. He earned an AAS in Criminal Justice from _____ Community College and a BA in Interdisciplinary Studies at _____ University. His coursework included communications, gender studies, and multiculturalism, recognizing the needs of an increasingly diverse population. He steadily rose through the ranks of academia and his profession, and demonstrated an aptitude for leadership and philanthropy. He enjoyed a long and successful career in law enforcement, and was well-regarded among his colleagues. He refers to himself as a "Pracademic", one who is both a practitioner and an academic, and he acknowledges that his strongest gifts are in teaching and empowering others. A natural storyteller, he quickly wins over his audience, whether it is a classroom full of students or a large assembly of his peers.

R_____ spent thirty years as a patrol officer in the K_____ Police, then served as M_____ 's police chief for another four and a half years, which included a nine-month assignment as Interim City Administrator. In late 2011, he became an adjunct professor at S_____ Community College, in the Social Science division, teaching courses such as "Ethical Considerations of Criminal Justice", and "Beginning Criminal Justice". As a contractor for Pursuit Programs, he instructed new police officers on how to read and follow pursuit policies, and assisted agencies in preparing their own policies. He oversaw the local internship program for SCC students. He lectured on the fourth and fourteenth amendments, citing and explaining Supreme Court and _____ State laws on pursuit and seizure, introducing a curriculum that is still used today by the Academy. In 2015, at the age of 55, he took on a special role in the Criminal Justice Training Commission, managing the Building Public Trust Program. The CJTC strived to humanize police officers in the eyes of the public, to help them understand their roles in the communities they served, and to better their situation physically and mentally. Within a year, he was promoted to Operations Manager, then made Deputy Director. When a discussion was held with the Director regarding succeeding her in that appointed position, he declined, as he did not want to work in a largely political position. In 2019, he was promoted again to Basic Law Enforcement Academy Commander; he oversaw all new police training for 300 agencies around

the state, plus all of the associated jails. This was a massive responsibility, one that he met with his usual capability and dedication. To this day, R_____ is a master instructor for _____, a leadership development workshop, where he teaches and facilitates classes and workshops on emotional, physical, spiritual wellness for law enforcement officers.

R_____ enjoyed his work with the force ... but other forms of service were even more spiritually fulfilling for him. His personal philosophy is to "Leave Things Better Than You Found Them", which has been included in his expectations of staff and students for more than 20 years. "I want to give," he says. "It's my form of philanthropy."

Since 1986, he has been a passionate volunteer with the Special Olympics, and is currently serving his sixth year on the board of directors for the state division. This calling has brought him to such faraway places as Germany, Mongolia, and the UAE. He is a long-time member and administrator of the Law Enforcement Torch Run, an international group that raises funds to support Special Olympics athletes. Through t-shirt sales, fundraisers, and events like the annual Polar Plunge, they've raised more than a billion dollars. In 2016, the _____ Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs awarded R_____ a lifetime membership for his charity work. In 2017, _____ gave him its _____ Award, recognizing his tireless efforts on behalf of the organization.

R_____ and his wife D_____, married since 2000, both believe in the importance of contributing to their community. Together, they volunteer with the Ronald McDonald House Holiday Cruise, an annual event in which patients and their families are treated to a special boat tour around P_____. Each Christmas Eve, they've donated hundreds of cookies and set up decoration stations for visitors while on the cruise. R_____ also regularly served as Emcee to coordinate events for the evening. They've also distributed backpacks full of healthy food for kids, and helped out another charity in Sumner that supported new mothers, homeless shelters, and domestic violence shelters. Over the last several years, they've been making quilts, hats, and scarves for Special Olympic athletes and schoolchildren. During a three-month span in 2018, R_____ made over 800 scarves for students and staff at an elementary school. They've put together two work areas, or "shops" as D_____ calls them, in separate but nearby rooms, so they can talk as they finish their projects. Overall, they've made some 4,000 objects in the last few years. "We love giving," says D_____. "Everything we create we donate."

Always stressing health and wellness among his students, R_____ strived to lead by example, working out several times a week in the Academy gym, emphasizing to others the importance of staying fit. Even in his late fifties, he could still pass the Physical Ability Test ... doing thirty pushups, thirty sit-ups, running a mile and a half, and finishing a 300-yard dash. "The morning of the accident," he said, "I could have easily done the physical test. Now there's no way."

On Wednesday, February 21st, 2018, everything changed in the blink of an eye.

R_____ and his coworker M_____, the advanced training division manager, were invited to go to the U.S. Marshall's Office to attend a special presentation, the Black History Month Recognition of Law Enforcement in _____. This was an

especially important outing for R____, who felt that he was not only standing for his department during a controversial time, but also representing his own multiracial family. They took his personal vehicle, a 2015 Toyota Tacoma. After the event, R____ and M____ left downtown Seattle, heading back to the Academy. As they were driving southbound on East ____ Way, going 30mph in a 45mph zone, R____ caught some movement in the corner of his eye. Seconds later, they were hit head on by a northbound Dodge Caravan that had been forced into their lane. This vehicle had just been struck by a dump truck making an illegal turn from the center northbound lane. As it crossed three lanes of traffic, the careening Dodge first struck a Toyota Sequoia (which rolled over several times and landed on its side), then it continued on an uncontrolled diagonal towards R____'s truck, smashing into its front left corner and bringing both cars to a total halt.

R____ had been driving, as was his usual habit, with his left hand on the steering wheel and his left elbow resting on the window frame. At the moment of impact, he felt his thumb get yanked sharply backwards. Following this initial collision, R____ and M____ were struck again from behind by a Chevrolet Malibu, the front of which crumpled against the truck's rear right corner.

R____'s trained instincts as a police officer kicked in. He immediately went into first responder mode, checking on his passenger, looking for any apparent injuries. He then squeezed out of the badly damaged door of his car, walked around to the passenger side of the Dodge, and spoke to the badly shaken driver. An eyewitness called 911. R____ asked for her phone, and began speaking to the dispatcher himself, describing the accident in detail. His first thought was to help manage the scene, to avoid further mishaps. The fire and police departments arrived shortly afterwards, and all seven lanes of ____ Way were blocked. The Dodge was so badly mangled that first responders had to cut off the entire top of the vehicle to safely extract the driver, who was strapped to a board and brought to the hospital. Because of his experience as a collision investigator, R____ noticed that the other officers on the scene were not taking enough pictures to document the scene, and so he took several snaps with his own phone.

He remembers it all feeling quite surreal. He declined a fire department aid car ride, so as not to tie up potentially important resources, waiting instead for his coworker and friend Ian Edwards to pick him up. They went to ____ Hospital Emergency Room for X-Rays and an exam. During the trip, he began to feel pain in his left elbow, neck, chest, and back. The thumb that had been bent backwards strained his wrist, and his ulnar nerve throbbed with intense pain. After checking him over for any obvious trauma, the emergency room staff only prescribed anti-inflammatories, and recommended that he follow up with his personal physician if the pain got worse. He went back to the Academy, where a relieved D____ came to pick him up. He wouldn't learn about the dump truck's involvement until two weeks later, when he spoke with a State Farm agent.

R____ missed the next day of work. "I hurt like hell all weekend," he said, "so I went to see a doctor the following Monday." The physician gave him an additional prescription for muscle relaxants, and referred him to a physical therapist.

He went to physical therapy twenty-eight times in the course of a year, and set himself diligently to the exercises, trying to loosen the affected muscle fibers and tendons. He applied heat, ice, pressure, electrostimulation, and he stretched constantly. Nevertheless, conditions did not improve. Nine months of sessions yielded almost no results. He was then referred to an osteopath, Dr. P____, who ordered new X-rays and an ultrasound. R____ learned then that his clavicle had separated from both his sternum and his shoulder. His acromioclavicular joint had been badly damaged, as had his rotator cuff. "Turns out my shoulder was broken," he says. The severity of his injury hadn't been recognized earlier; as a result, he lost hundreds of hours, including travel time to and from the doctor. Furthermore, the recommended exercises were not only ineffective, but may have actually exacerbated his discomfort.

More treatments followed, eventually totaling more than fifty physical therapy appointments. In December 2018, he received his first cortisone injection, at his sternum. He received two more in his shoulder in January and June of 2019. In August of 2019, Dr. P____ recommended surgery, and referred R____ to Dr. W____, who specialized in shoulder joint injuries. Because of a pacemaker installed in 1997, special prep work and tests were needed before R____ could undergo the procedure. In the months leading up to his operation, he slept on a recliner in the living room, as he could not find a comfortable sleeping position on a bed. On September 27th, 2019, R____ underwent extensive reconstructive surgery on his shoulder. He spent the next month out of work, wearing a sling. That October, he saw Dr. P____ again, for an experimental treatment ... injecting harvested blood platelets to the injury site to speed recovery. This procedure proved to be shockingly painful.

Despite all of these efforts, R____'s mobility remained quite limited for the first year. He had to move slowly and deliberately, and could not firmly grip anything with his left hand. "Everything hurt," he remembered. "My thumb was useless for a year." His chest and shoulders stayed sore. He could no longer do his favorite gym exercise ... lifting a 45-pound barbell over and behind his head, and then in front of his chest. Before the accident, he could easily do three sets of thirty reps; now he struggles to carry heavy items with that arm. He's gained weight, feels less attractive, and struggles with intense bouts of depression.

The damage to his body has had a ripple effect on every aspect of his home life and marriage ... affecting his ability to sleep, to share intimate time with D____, and to manage household tasks. It takes much longer to do domestic chores. He's unable to trim the family's fruit trees, repaint the house, or mow the lawn, and he's had to hire additional help for lawn maintenance. Back in 2010, he repainted the house himself, doing all the trim and ladder work ... but since the accident, his ladder has mostly remained unused, he cannot lift it or carry it, and he has a hard time reaching. As a result, he will have to ask somebody to do a simple paint job that he once could do himself.

The stress did not go unnoticed at his workplace. His coworker, I____, who had retrieved him from the accident site, once confided, "I was really worried about you. You were a wreck."

D_____ sees the lingering effects of the accident as an ongoing trauma. She feels that his training as a police officer encouraged to detach his emotional responses at the accident scene, as he had kicked immediately into "cop mode". She recognizes that these new limitations affect his pride, damage his self-image, slow him down, and challenge the expectations he had set for himself. "He feels like he isn't doing enough," she says. "The strain underlies everything."

R_____ once loved to hike, frequently went backpacking with friends. It'd be no big deal for him to put on 40-pound backpack and climbing gear, and head out into the wilderness for three to five days. For the two years following the crash, he was completely unable to hike. Only recently, in June of 2020, he resumed taking some short and very cautious outings, only four or five hours long, carrying a five-pound pack. Even with this modest improvement, recent attempts at multiple-day hikes have proved very difficult.

In previous years, R_____ and D_____ bicycled together constantly. They owned a tandem bike, and would ride hundreds or even thousands of miles a year. They might go 113 miles in a single day, and then go another 55 miles the next. In the four years since the collision, though, they've only taken out their tandem bike out four or five times. It weighs over fifty pounds, and is too hard for R_____ to lift onto their bike rack.

After the surgery, R_____ went back sleeping on the recliner again. "I knew that I was doing everything that I could be doing ... but sometimes I'd just sit in the garage and do a crossword for hours."

The accident effectively forced an early retirement. "I would have stayed longer on the job," he says, "but it's too hard to sit in the office. I can't perform at same level. It's hard to be in front of a class." And this has been perhaps the most significant loss of all. Speaking in front of hundreds of people as an instructor or keynote speaker was once as natural as breathing. Now, his ability to walk around onstage and present has been compromised. He couldn't perform duties and functions at the level he wanted for himself, and he felt like he was not meeting his own standards. He could no longer lean on his left elbow, which affected everyday activities like working at his desk and speaking at a podium. He used to be more involved in the physical aspects of these charities like LETR ... not only coordinating the activities, but also participating in them ... and he resents that he cannot easily continue to do so.

"He's struggling," says D_____. "Remembering all of this brings him into an emotional slump. He's ready for this to be done."

As R_____ himself acknowledges, "It's been a long, slow road. It's cost me hundreds of hours. My life has changed dramatically. And none of this was my fault."

Even with his limited mobility, though, R_____ remains determined to continue his charity work, donations, and social engagements. His lifelong commitment to giving back has not been diminished. He is eager to move past the physical and emotional damage caused by the accident, so that he can focus his time more effectively on his true calling, his philanthropic work ... on being the man who gives.

Legal Narrative: "Sunshine"

H_____’s nickname used to be “H_____ Sunshine”. She was known among her friends as a warm, funny, highly motivated person ... a bubbly lady who loved to laugh and share her happiness with friends, a woman who lived life to the fullest. The successful dental hygiene/denturist practice that she shared with her husband was growing rapidly, and she had developed a strong rapport with her patients. On weekends, she and her family enjoyed camping in their motorhome, heading out into the country for fishing, hiking, and outdoor sports. She kept very physically active ... exercising with weights, swimming laps, riding a recumbent bicycle, and gardening. H_____’s garden, brimming with vegetables, was her pride and joy.

On the evening of November 13th, 2017, H_____ was out running errands, picking up a prescription for her daughter. The pouring rain and early dusk made driving conditions less than ideal, so she tried to be especially careful on the road. While stopped at a red light, waiting behind a queue of other cars, she glanced out of her passenger window at a scene unfolding near a bus stop. Suddenly, she felt a tremendous lurching impact, and heard a thunderous crunch. Her head, which had been turned to the right, crashed into the headrest. She could feel the lower part of her seatbelt dig into her pelvis. An overwhelming wave of pain washed over her entire body.

H_____ had been rear-ended by a speeding driver. She’d noted his aggressive driving earlier, but figured that she would be safe once she joined the other cars at the stoplight. The collision was so significant that it caused \$10,000 in damage to her vehicle, though this was not immediately apparent. Eager to get her daughter’s medication back home, and feeling somewhat dazed, she refused medical care and continued her errands.

In the days following the accident, however, her condition worsened dramatically. She could not turn her head, and was frequently jolted by excruciating shocks in her neck and back. Like the severe damage done to her car, the full extent of her injuries was not clear at first ... but it became increasingly obvious over time that something was seriously wrong. She had suffered a significant trauma to the cervical region of her spine, causing a cascade of interconnected health problems.

Leaning over became impossible, and she lost the stamina and upper body strength to hold a position for long stretches of time. She discovered that she could no longer securely grasp objects with her right hand, and was horrified when she accidentally dropped a dental instrument on a patient. Unable to perform the tasks of her profession, she had to hire another hygienist, at a significant cost to the practice. Her income dropped precipitously. Even after taking six weeks off in an attempt to recover, she realized that these issues were not temporary, and would never get better without a more aggressive approach. The career that took her through four years of college, that she had worked so hard to build, was effectively over. To this day, H_____ mourns the end of a job that she truly loved, and misses the great relationships she had with her favorite patients. Her path to retirement and financial security disappeared.

Physical therapy, massage, meditation, breathing exercises, hot tubs, and other treatments offered little relief. Medication masked a few symptoms, at least at first ... but as soon as she tried to wean herself off of painkillers, the pain roared back into the foreground, and she found herself completely debilitated. Subsequent overuse of acetaminophen and ibuprofen led to additional stomach and liver issues.

She couldn't load gear or prep the motorhome for trips, couldn't sit still long enough to fish, couldn't carry anything to a campsite. The loss of her favorite activities, many of which were highly physical, triggered a spiraling depression. Reduced mobility led to significant weight gain, and a near-total flattening of her libido. H_____ could no longer help maintain the family's large house, or keep up with her growing daughter, or be romantic with her husband. The sudden lack of intimacy, coupled with the strain on the family business and her mounting health problems, proved too much for her marriage. After having shared a life together for three decades, H_____ and her husband divorced.

Years after the collision, the aftereffects are still being felt. Her right arm remains in a constant state of pain, with frequent bouts of tingling or numbness. "It feels heavy and dead," she says, "like a log that's been floating in a lake." Both her right shoulder and left leg sometimes seem as if they are on the verge of dislocation. She can't move her fingers much of the time. "It's like they're not a part of my body." In addition, constant jaw pain and headaches, due to nerve damage, have led to dietary changes; there are many foods that are just too hard to eat. "I can't even chew gum or eat my favorite candy."

She struggles to manage many household tasks. Formerly simple chores, such as loading a dishwasher, taking out the trash, or putting dishes back on shelves prove extremely challenging. The house has become a mess, as objects have to stay where they are until she feels well enough to move them. Boxes remain unopened. Sometimes she looks upon the piled-up evidence of her unattended duties, and says, "I just can't."

To make matters worse, she's now dealing with intermittent incontinence, which she attributes to nerve damage caused by the accident. Forced to wear sanitary pads and lined underwear, she gets nervous about leakage and odors. Even with the maximum prescribed dose of bladder medications and muscle relaxers, she's embarrassed and demoralized by her condition. "I sometimes don't even know when I need to pee," she says. "And that's how I live every day."

Her self-image has suffered, due to the effects of chronic pain and weight gain. It's hard to keep her arms lifted long enough to style her hair. She cannot swim or use a bicycle, and exercise is nearly impossible. She cannot pull weeds, haul dirt, or bend for long periods. H_____ used to love baking, picking vegetables from her garden, preparing meals; now, the best she can manage is to grow a few small plants in her kitchen, only a few tomatoes and herbs. It cheers her somewhat, to know that "there's something living that I'm taking care of," but she grieves the loss of her garden.

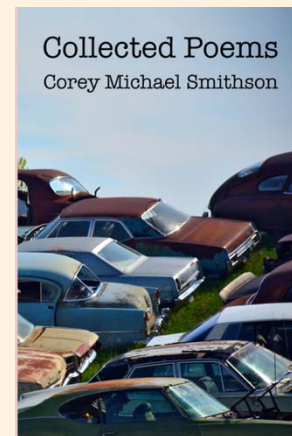
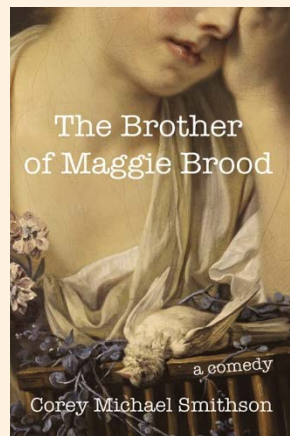
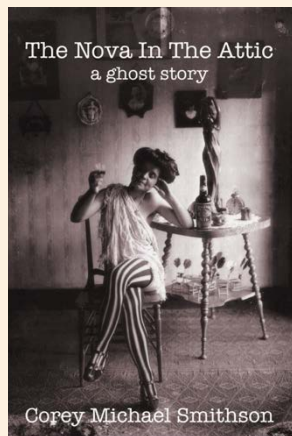
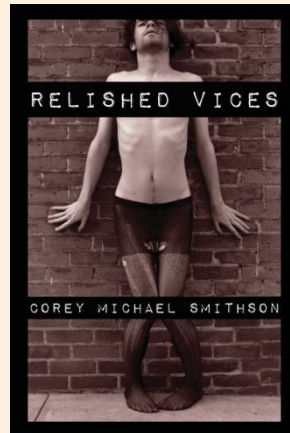
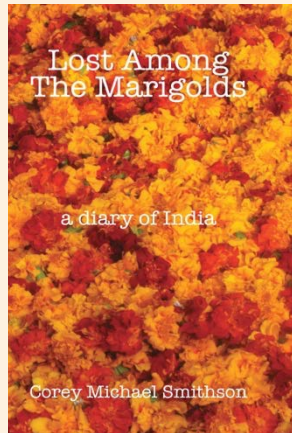
H_____ feels that she has no support system. Her friends have become increasingly remote, and her once vibrant social life has evaporated. She knows that her personality has changed, and that all she has to talk about these days is

discomfort and disability. People don't want to hear any more about what's she's going through, as they get bored by the incessant discussion of her health issues. Pain has become the center of her existence. She's suffering from what she calls "situational anxiety", noting that she doesn't feel comfortable driving, or enduring certain public situations, and she doesn't feel like her family understands the full extent of her limitations. Few people have been sympathetic or patient, and it's turned her into something of a loner.

Despite this, she remains hopeful. She intends on "writing the next chapter" of her life as soon as possible, and get this ordeal behind her. While she understands that she will never again be the woman she once was, she still believes that she has things to contribute, and that there are more possibilities ahead. "I know I'll find myself again someday." She has been holding off on surgery for longer than she'd like, because she wants her child to be a little older, a little more self-sufficient, and far less anxious about the attendant risks of the procedure. Once her daughter is old enough to drive, and is better prepared to take care of herself, H_____ will finally be ready to address the spinal injury that is at the root of her problems.

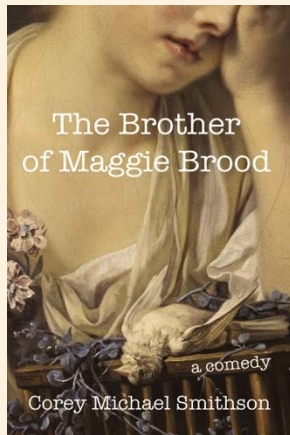
H_____ used to enjoy sitting out on her deck with a cup of coffee, but she finds herself spending less and less time outdoors these days. Occasionally, though, she'll take a moment to step outside, and get some fresh air. Even on the most overcast day, she won't let her natural optimism disappear entirely ... she'll look up into the sky, and search the clouds for any small break, looking to see if she can find herself at least a little hint of sunshine.

Published Works



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Excerpt: "THE BROTHER OF MAGGIE BROOD"



**"CHAPTER 3: THE ENVOY AND
THE GUILDSMEN"**
an excerpt from the novel
THE BROTHER OF MAGGIE BROOD

The Envoy shot up in the center of Our Dream like a gleaming white thunderhead. Other than the skull-trees, which braced the fixed bones of our world, it was the tallest structure in sight, and it towered above all the other buildings in town. Tapering through a series of dramatic setbacks as it rose from the ground, its powerful masses created an impression of incredible might, of a giant preparing to leap into the heavens. The hotel's grand marble reliefs and fanned silver chevrons drew the eye upwards along its masses ... but its fussy mullions, thin as pulled taffy, and the tongue-wagging gargoyles that protruded from every gutter, added a much-needed touch of whimsy.

The Envoy was the most glamorous destination in town, and its beautiful rooftop garden hosted hundreds of parties, weddings, wakes, and luncheons. Anybody who was anybody stayed there. Its pale blue drapes held the cigarette smoke of dead ambassadors and minor celebrities, and its floral arrangements danced in a perpetual cycle of bloom and decay. Flashbulbs fired in its mirrors, even when the rooms were empty.

Our heavens were projected from a magic lantern mounted on the uppermost antenna of The Envoy. Our sun and moon, both of which had smiling faces and the look of old pirate maps, along with our skies (whether blue or grey or green), and our constellations all came from this magic lantern. We had our own real weather, of course, so the clouds were pretty much on their own, but "sunlight" was merely a reflection of the daily flickershow against the vast dome of the skull. The stars rotated and swirled at night and the moon, with an expression both jovial and menacing, looked kind of like a creepy uncle leaning over our crib.

The Guildsmen, foreigners who had crash-landed in Our Dream ages ago, held their nightly urban planning sessions in an old galleon, which lay half-sunk in the roof garden of The Envoy. Few citizens had ever seen the inside of its curved wooden walls. The boat rested on its side in a small artificial lagoon, surrounded by exotic shrubs and lily pads. Strings of red paper lanterns ran from the gunwales to nearby tree branches, and rope-lined gangplanks led into and out of the mouths of the ship. Tiny wooden bridges, more cute than functional, arched over

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shimmering waterways, and the water in these courses had been dyed blue, to look more like water than real water did. Peacocks dragged their glories beneath the lemon trees, and scented silk mimosas blossomed in perpetuity overhead. Willows and phony magnolias stayed wrapped in holiday lights year-round. There wasn't a single leaf out of place in this garden; its pirate-ship theme had been art-directed within an inch of its life, even down to the roosting parrots and open skull ashtrays mounted on the benches. The galleon itself had lain perched on the rooftop for so long that its features were now merging with those of the hotel. Its mizzenmast had been broken off years ago, in order to make room for a row of palmettos, but The Guildsmen let the foremast grow back, and now it poked over a transom of the ballroom with a mirrorball hanging from its crow's nest. Every Tuesday was Disco Night.

When the horns sounded for Curfew, every citizen was expected to be on their way home, whatever they considered home to be. Home might be a house, or a hole in a tree, or even a wet mattress covered by old blankets ... it really didn't matter where we laid our heads, as long as we got there, finished our day's business, and tucked ourselves in before the echoes of the final horn faded in our ears.

The first horn would sometimes catch us by surprise. By the third horn, some time later, most of us were already secured in our houses ... or teepees, or treehouses, or yurts, or whatever ... brushing our sets of false teeth, laying out tomorrow's toupees and prosthetics, grinding down our hooves, saying our prayers.

Hardly anybody was still walking the streets after the third horn sounded. It was widely believed that those who failed to find their beds in time would simply collapse wherever they were standing, and drift into sleep ... or that the officers would come around, and gather up all those who were left in the streets and shops, and lock them in the jails.

But wherever we were, home or jail or pigpen, our eyes would automatically snap shut at the sound of the fourth horn, through no action or choice of our own, and we would drift off into our smaller dreams. And these dreams were our personal domains, free and clear.

For The Guildsmen had no influence over our inner dreams. There, and only there, were we free to do as we pleased. This is where we enjoyed our full imaginations. In the town of Our Dream, we were pieces of a grander design, cogs in a vast machine, we were merely the hands and mouths of The Guildsmen ... but in our dreams, our own private dreams, we could be whatever we wanted to be. We raged and we sang, we shimmied and shined, we laughed and we wept and we were free. These were the lives that we claimed for ourselves, the lives we had to put back on the shelf when Wakeup came, and we once again returned to the drudgery of daily life.

During the dark hours between Curfew and Wakeup, after everyone else in Our Dream had gone to bed, The Guildsmen labored to plan the fates of the town. As the rest of us slept, they spent the whole night scribbling fresh ideas into the clay of their big wooden modeling box, frequently revising their blueprints on slanted tables. Under their fancy candelabrum ... fashioned from antlers, painted

gold, and dripping with stalactites of wax ... they charted the course of Our Dream, pushing and kneading and smearing new shapes in the mud. And as the first horns of Wakeup sounded across the hills and valleys of Our Dream, the candles were blown out, the blueprints were rolled, the wooden box was sheeted, and The Guildsmen prepared to reveal our daily orders to us from the poop deck. They built while we slept, and we built while they slept.

The Envoy, being the highest and most beautiful joint in town, was as good a place as any to hear word of our destinies, so those of us who had the night before received invitations to the Morning Announcements gathered an hour after Wakeup and listened to the latest plans of The Guildsmen, those mysterious architects of our town's fortunes.

Every morning, one of them would emerge from the darkness of the galleon, gliding forward in a confusing and cluttered outfit, and he would mumble his pronouncements from beneath a beaked ceramic half-mask. The Guildsmen's silhouettes were obscured by layers of heavy clothing ... long black robes and woolen petticoats, overskirts and bunched pleats and pads and pillows, frilly pantaloons, hundreds of tassels and crisscrossing lengths of fringe, broad-brimmed and buckled hats, furbelows, pearled and curled and pointy shoes. The fat tendrils of their wigs left smudges of talc on their shoulders. It was widely rumored that The Guildsmen had no actual bodies, that they were merely ghosts in piles of enchanted clothing, and if you were to peel away all those layers of brocade and cord and ornamental nonsense, and attempt to unravel the mystery of a Guildsman like a mummy or a tangled ball of yarn, you might find nothing inside but a whisper, a suggestion that dissipated into the air.

Long ago, when their galleon sank atop the hotel, the aliens surveyed the disorder of Our Dream with a mixture of dismay and resignation, and then they took charge of organizing its refurbishment at once. They came from a society of builders and architects, or at least they claimed as much, so we naturally assumed that they would know far better than we how to go about designing a civilized, functioning society, and we handed over the keys of the city in a big showy parade that included lots of majorettes twirling their batons and tubas boompng their oompahpah.

However, as the years went on, the town's cycles of construction and destruction overlapped in such a way that navigation became nearly impossible. The instructions from previous months were sometimes forgotten, or ignored altogether, so that many buildings remained in state of skeletal incompleteness, their lines left hanging in the air like doodles. Since no highways led into or out of Our Dream, the only roads we had were piled up on top of one another, their tangled loops and ramps leading everywhere and nowhere at once. Morning commutes were a bitch.

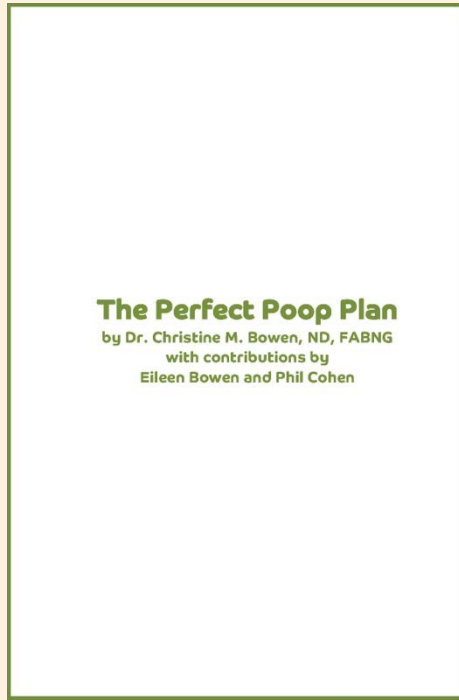
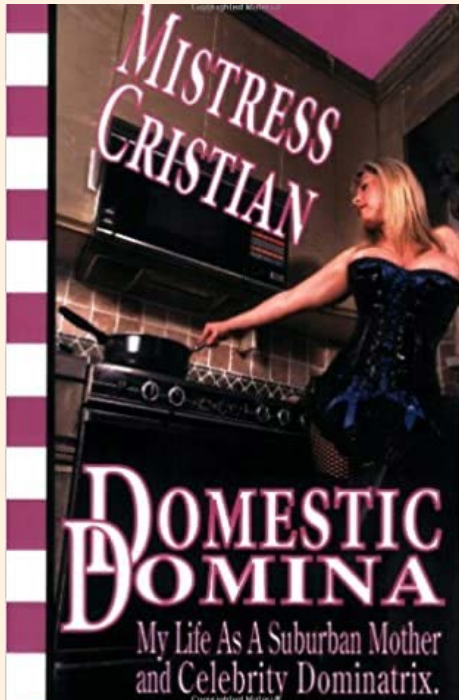
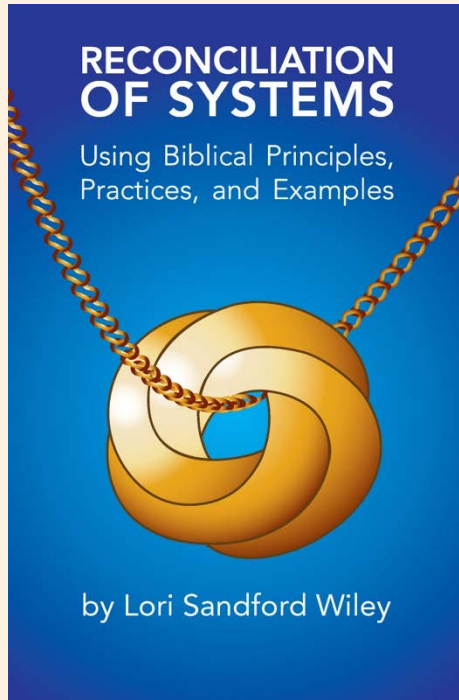
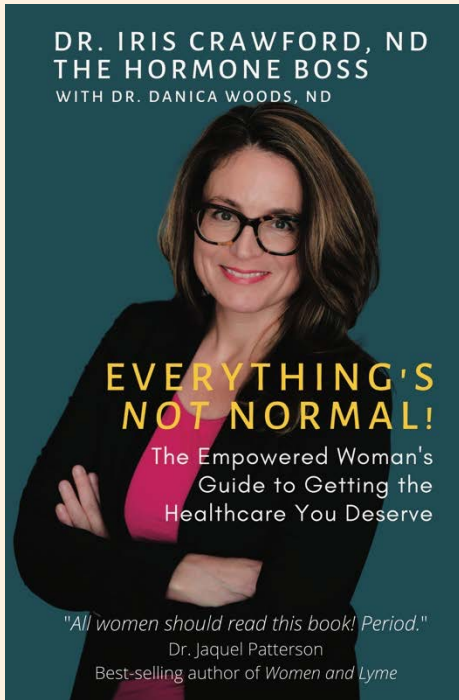
As a result, Our Dream became a nightmare of smashed grids and aborted developments. Dozers scraped hills into unstable terraces and then abandoned them to gravity, allowing mounds of debris to slide like scoops of ice cream into sinkholes and gullies. Houses were plopped off-axis into the middle of intersections, cutting off thoroughfares and making mail deliveries a life-threatening business. Towers rose and fell for no reason, ramps for the

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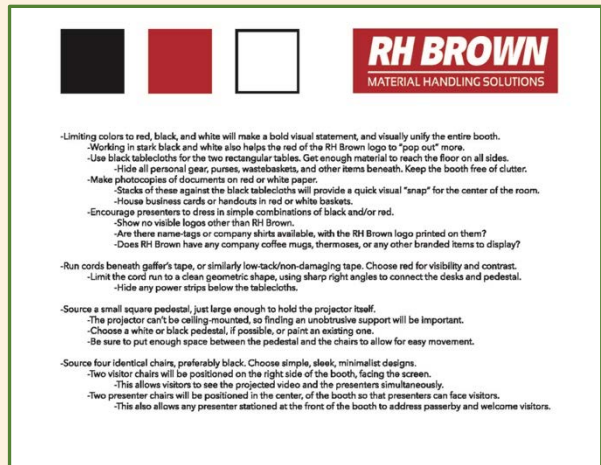
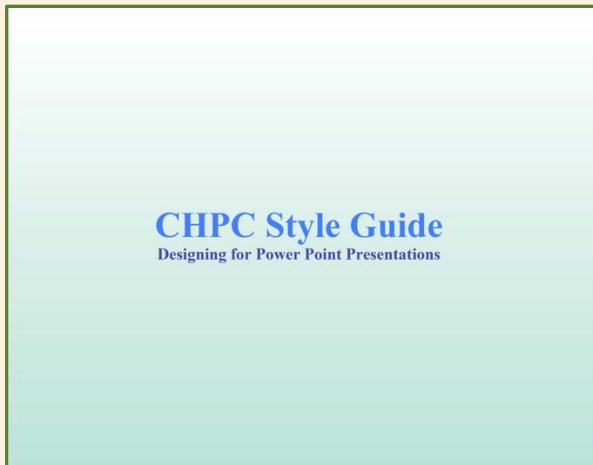
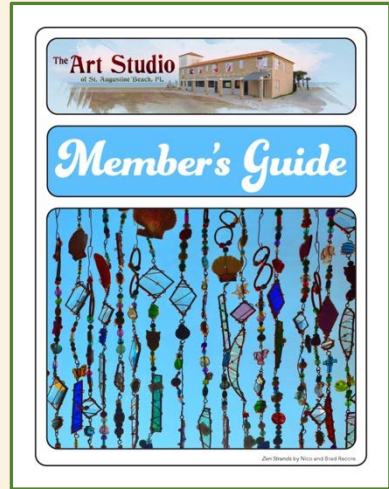
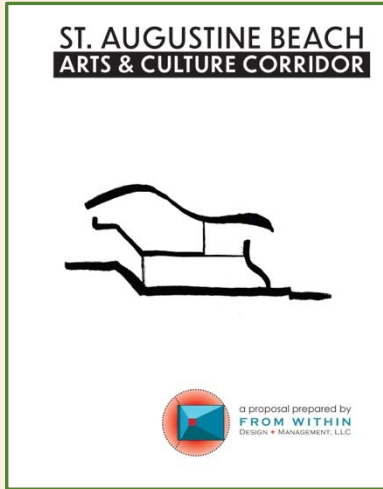
handicapped led only to bricked-up windows, doorways opened into multi-storied drops. Stairwells climbed into empty air, or ended in ceilings, or simply reached their unambitious peak and went right back down again. In the midst of this chaos, the existing buildings fell into an egregious state of disrepair. Giraffes were then dispatched to keep all the church spires from collapsing; on any windy day you might see two of the panicked beasts rushing from one side of a church to another, batting the steeple back into verticality with quick sweeps of their necks.

The plans of The Guildsmen frequently called for improbable and inconvenient arrangements, but we did not question their orders. We listened to them, with our avid fingers at the ready, and we followed their every instruction. This is the way that things had always gone, and the way that things would always go, and this is how we kept order in the movements of Our Dream. Yes, the cartographers wept, and the glaziers threatened to defenestrate themselves, and the surveyors hurled their tools from the rooftops ... but, still, we remained as dutiful as schoolchildren, and listened to our betters, and did as we were told.

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Document Construction



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