

Dr. Cone

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11th July, 1961

Mrs. H. Rae Hershenkopf,
3029 Maplewood Ave., Apt. 10,
Montreal, P.Q.

Dear Mrs. Hershenkopf:

I was delighted to receive your
tribute to Dr. Cone and I am so glad that you
liked the things that I said about him. Carry
his memory with you and do a good job in life.
That what he would want.

As ever yours,

WP/mb

The doctor in St. Agathe told someone that I would die on the way
home. I didn't die. When Dr. Cone first looked at me and saw my
first ex-rays, he said, "You have a broken back, but we know how to
cope with it." His beautiful voice. I never saw the man before,
but his beautiful voice inspired me. I knew that I had nothing to
worry about. Then Dr. Cone was about to go on, and I stopped him
and I said, "I understand." He had a look of surprise on his face,
then walked away. His voice inspired me. Later on I started to
call him God to myself. I was told that if I were taken to any
other hospital, I would have been crippled for life. When I got
out of the hospital, one woman called that I did not know, and she
asked me if my bladder was paralyzed and I said no.

Dear Dr. Penfield,

I have written you several times, and destroyed the letters. This was after Dr. Cone died. I couldn't then, and I can't now, tell you what I really want to. I have no training of any kind and didn't even go to high school. I find it difficult to express myself as I have no vocabulary. My typing is poor because I am still very nervous. I say still because I was very sick for a long time. My problem here is, that I have no idea what to tell you. Dr. Cone operated on me in 1945. I was brought in from St. Agathe, with, as the old man Dr. Turner called it, "A badly battered back." I jumped out of a burning building and broke my back. One morning there were a whole lot of doctors near my bed, my ex-rays were being looked at, and my case history read out loud. You, Dr. Penfield, were near my bed too. You have a wonderful face. I wanted so much to hear your voice. The doctors were sailors. Dr. Morris, interne at the time, read my history. The doctor in St. Agathe told someone that I would die on the way home. I didn't die. When Dr. Cone first looked at me and saw my first ex-rays, he said, "You have a broken back, but we know how to cope with it." His beautiful voice. I never saw the man before, but his beautiful voice inspired me. I knew that I had nothing to worry about. Then Dr. Cone was about to go on, and I stopped him and I said, "I understand." He had a look of surprise on his face, then walked away. His voice inspired me. Later on I started to call him God to myself. I was told that if I were taken to any other hospital, I would have been crippled for life. When I got out of the hospital, one woman called that I did not know, and she asked me if my bladder was paralyzed and I said no.

She told me that hers was and how lucky I was that mine wasn't.
 The first time I asked for a bed pan, they all got hysterical.
 One of the nurses shouted, "WAIT UNTIL DR. CONE HEARS THIS." They
 made such a fuss with me. You would think I created something
of rare value. I evidently did. Little did I know that taking a
 pee would cause such a commotion. That was when all the doctors
 came in. Then Dr. Cone came in the next morning and tickled my
 feet with his keys, I didn't see him. He sneaked in behind my bed,
 and all of a sudden I screamed and couldn't jump as I was still
 partially paralyzed. And there he was, laughing his gorgeous laugh,
and holding his keys. I told him to take the (~~gibberish~~) big
 heavy weight off my back, and his face turned sad. ~~It~~ felt as if
 there was a trunk on it. My ribs were taken out and fused into my
 back. I didn't know why I should have such pain so high up and
nobody told me. That part was horrible. No answers. These special
 smiles that doctors and nurses have. They walk away from your bed,
 and you are ready to die with frustration. You must change that.
 Tell us something. Then the casts started. I was wonderful. I
 felt no pain after about a month. I had nothing on my (~~back at all~~)
 back at all. Not even a board on my bed. I was doing everything.
 Dr. Cone walked in one morning, when I could barely talk, I looked
 at his face and (~~saw~~) saw the compassion on it. I wasn't drinking
 enough water. I couldn't bare anything. Then he said, "You must try
to drink." I looked at his face and saw how bad he felt for me.
 So, barely able to talk, and whispering and very slowly I said, "Dr.
 Cone, don't be worried about me. I am not a sickly person and I
 straighten up fast." The most gorgeous smile came out on his face,

and I said, "This is God." Then the casts started. He did several. Always under such bad circumstances. There seemed to be no system to do me, or no table to do me on. One night they improvised some sort of rope. It was horrible. I was hanging suspended. Just my hands and feet were touching. I was holding a bar. My body was swinging freely. I was fighting and crying and started to vomit. Dr. Cone got sick. Then another time bad things happened too. ~~xxxx~~ Then one ^{CAST} was too small and had to be done over. Then one had to have a window cut on the back. It was touching my bone and the pain was unbearable. This was always in the night because there was no time to do me in the day. And that hot little room. Now this ~~one~~ ^{CAST} next will stay in my mind for all my life. It was in the middle of the night. I think around 1 or 2 in the morning. Dr. Cone brought down his beautiful chrome operating table. I don't know *How* he did it, but he worked round and round me. I suppose it ^{THE TABLE} spread apart in the middle. It was so hot in there, it was unbearable. There was a tiny little fan up near the ceiling. We didn't even feel it. The perspiration was pouring down his face. (~~xxxx~~) I felt horrible for him. He didn't know. I was crying and not for myself. THEN HE STOOD THERE AND STARTED TO SCRUB THAT TABLE ALL BY HIMSELF WITH A BIG HARD BRUSH. I DIED. I COULDN'T BEAR IT. I CRIED. HE THOUGHT I WAS CRYING BECAUSE I WAS MISERABLE FOR MYSELF. HE DIED A LITTLE BIT THAT NIGHT TOO. That God. That wonderful man. He had so much trouble with me. I was so good for a while. Then those horrible lumbar punctures and those casts. In all, I wore for a long stretch of time, 5 different casts and then a walking cast that Dr. Turner did on a frame of plumbing pipes. When I was put in the bathtub, ~~then~~ the nurses would say, "You are so lucky

you have no weakness." Dr. Cone, when I was much better, told me ~~that~~ that too. I didn't even know what they meant. I knew at once that I would be fine, as soon as Dr. Cone said, "We can cope with it." God spoke. One day, I was very sick. I couldn't eat or sleep or anything. Towards the end of my stay at the Neurol. I was brought back and forth for change of casts. Dr. Cone came in to see if I had eaten. I yelled at him and screamed. He was frightened. He backed away from my bed and quietly said, "Well, you ate the potatoe." Dr. Joe Tarkington told me he was going to tell you, Dr. Penfield, to throw me out. I made Dr. Cone very sick. The last cast, my walking cast, Dr. Turner did on a frame of plumbing pipes. (~~xxxxxxx~~) He told me I was a good patient. I choked on that. I spent about $4\frac{1}{2}$ months at the Neurol and then kept coming back for change of casts. I died when I looked at Dr. Cone. I made no sound when I got that lumbar puncture. Dr. Cone was showing one of the interns how to do it and then he said, "She relaxes slowly." It was a horrible experience for everybody concerned. That Neurol was not a hospital, but a factory. Nobody and nothing stopped. I wanted, at the time, to ask your permission to call in a reporter, and tell them what goes on there. I didn't. I was such a bad patient. (~~When I read your articles in your~~) When I read your articles in the Star I cry. You are talking about religion. I like that. And that wonderful man who donated that window. That picture of Dr. Cone is so beautiful. You can see the kindness and the sadness on his face there. He had the face of God. I NEVER EVER TOOK IT FOR GRANTED THAT I AM WELL AND WALKING. NEVER. PLEASE, DR. PENFIELD BELIEVE THIS. AS GOD IS MY WITNESS THIS IS TRUE. I have the clipping of Dr. Cone's picture and the window. I keep it in my purse.

I saw many more things that Dr. Cone did. I don't have to tell you this. Whatever you say about Dr. Cone is not enough.

There are no words for Dr. Cone. There are many brilliant surgeons today. BUT THEY HAVEN'T GOT DR. CONE'S FACE. HIS EXPRESSION, HIS COMPASSION, HIS TRUE SYMPATHETIC FEELING.

Dr. Penfield, these are no idle words. I know what I'm talking about.

I am crying now. If I could only tell him I'm sorry. Well, maybe he knows anyway. I pray God keep him in everlasting peace. You

once tried to tie him down to the bed and he wouldn't stay. There

are not many men like you and Dr. Cone in this world. But I must

say, that I was chosen by God to have the luck to know Dr. Cone and

to have him work on me. I also must say, that I know a few more

doctors that I place in the same category as I place you and Dr.

Cone. Psychiatrists.

Thank you for reading my letter. I have much more to say, but I think I got across what I wanted to.

Most sincerely,

Mrs. H. Rae Hershenkopf,
3029 Maplewood Ave. Apt. 10,

Rae Hershenkopf

I clipped your item about religion in the Star. Please write more. I like that.

M

CONE

June 23rd, 1961

The City Editor,
THE MONTREAL DAILY STAR,
245 St. James St., West,
Montreal 1.

Dear Sir:

Thinking that you might be going to publish a photograph of Dr. Cone in connection with the dedication of the Memorial window to him in St. Andrew's Church on Sunday, I am sending you the enclosed Karsh photograph which you might like to use. I was shocked by the one in THE GAZETTE this morning and afraid you might be planning to use it also.

If you do not want this, or if you do use it and are finished with it, would you be good enough to return it.

Yours sincerely,

WGP/AD
Encl.