Hemiplegia Recovery - Shaelyn Poisson

Shaelyn is recovering from Hemiplegia after a carotid artery dissection at 17 years old created a clot that caused an ischemic stroke.

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Shaelyn Poisson 0:00

I had like a ponytail on the top of my head and I was whipping it around like that, and my head ended up getting stuck, like literally to the side like this. And, like it's as dramatic as that, like, I'm not even exaggerating.

Shaelyn Poisson 0:16

And my mom ended up taking me to urgent care to get it checked out and stuff. But the doctor that was on call, it was a Sunday and it was like kind of later in the evening that we went, so I'm assuming he just wanted me in and out and wanted to probably go home but he told me that it was just a muscle strain and that

ultrasound wasn't needed.

Shaelyn Poisson 0:36

My mom was like, on it. She wanted me to get checked out for everything because she was like pretty concerned about it. So, yeah, he sent me home and told me to take ibuprofen and that it wasn't a big deal, so I didn't get proper treatment or diagnosis of that at all.

Intro 0:59

This is the recovery after stroke podcast, with Bill Gasiamis, helping you navigate recovery after a stroke.

Bill Gasiamis 1:12

Hello, and welcome to another episode of the Recovery after Stroke podcast. Recently, Spotify released a new feature that allows people to rate their favorite shows similarly to how the Apple podcast app allows them.

Bill Gasiamis 1:25

If you think my show, the recovery after stroke podcast deserves it. I'd love it if you left the show a five-star review. This will help the show rank better on search engines and help newly diagnosed stroke survivors find the show quicker, better, and easier.

Bill Gasiamis 1:42

And it could make a massive difference in their recovery. So it would be a tremendous honor. And you'll be doing me a great favor. If you go to your favorite podcast app and share what the podcast means for you that really will make a huge difference.

Introduction Hemiplegia Recovery



Bill Gasiamis 1:58

Thank you so much. Now, this is episode 180. My guest today is Shaelyn Poisson, who was left with hemiplegia after an ischemic stroke, which was caused by a carotid artery dissection at just 17 years of age Shaaelyn Poisson.

Shaelyn Poisson 2:18 Yes.

Bill Gasiamis 2:19 Welcome to the podcast.

Shaelyn Poisson 2:20 Thank you glad to be here.

Bill Gasiamis 2:23

That's the first surname that I've tried to pronounce. And I couldn't do it justice. I've never spoken French before. But I'm gonna blame my stroke, it's because of the stroke that I can't pronounce it.

Shaelyn Poisson 2:35

Fine. It's all good, lots of people don't get the pronunciation on that one.

Bill Gasiamis 2:42

Your surname is spelled Poisson. So I imagine most people just say poison

Shaelyn Poisson 2:49

All the time. That's the majority of the things I get. Kind of funny actually.

Bill Gasiamis 2:56

Tell me a little bit about your stroke and what happened to you.

Ischemic stroke



Shaelyn Poisson 3:00

Okay, so I was 17 at the time, I think I was like, a week or two away from turning 18 I was a university student, I was working two jobs at the time, I was incredibly stressed out and just super busy all the time, my schedule is completely packed all the time.

Shaelyn Poisson 3:27

And I was studying at my ex-boyfriend's house for a midterm that I had coming up. We ended up getting into an argument and lots of just stress going on in my life at the time.

Shaelyn Poisson 3:47

Long story short, I was about to leave his house. But he was trying to make me not leave his house. He was in my car. And we were kind of just going back and forth. And I ended up feeling what felt like a pop-in like the side temple of my head.

Shaelyn Poisson 4:10

And I've heard another girl on your podcast kind of describe the same thing. And I was like, Oh my God, that's weird that we kind of experienced the same thing. But I guess that's what it is.

Shaelyn Poisson 4:22

And immediately after I felt the pop in the side of my head, I kind of went into like, what I call a trance type thing. I remember being like in like a complete state of confusion and just like, I couldn't hear what he was saying, but I knew he was talking to me.

Shaelyn Poisson 4:42

And next thing I know well, from what he told me, I fell out of the left side of my

car, which makes sense considering my paralysis on the left side of my body. And he grabbed me so I didn't hit the ground obviously and he ran me into his house.

Shaelyn Poisson 5:04

And that's when I immediately just started uncontrollably vomiting. And, I didn't want him to call my mom because I didn't want my mom to, like be mad that like we got in a fight and I don't know, whatever. Either way, he called my mom because something bad was happening to me.

Shaelyn Poisson 5:26

So, she arrived and she immediately wanted to call the ambulance. So then the ambulance came. And unfortunately, since I was a young girl, I was 17. They had like, really, unfortunately, a bad impression of the scenario that was going on.

Shaelyn Poisson 5:30

And they automatically assumed that I was either on drugs or drunk or something. That was not the case, I was studying for a midterm that was coming up. So not at all what was happening there. But because they had that assumption of me.

Shaelyn Poisson 6:12

That kind of carried over to my hospital experience that ended up happening that night. I have a video up on my YouTube channel, but I'm kind of describing every event that happened that night, essentially, the doctor and the nurses honestly were very unprofessional and rude to me and my family members, more specifically, my mom and it was a really bad experience.

Shaelyn Poisson 6:48

And I ended up not getting diagnosed for 10 hours so I was stroking for 10 hours before they even got the idea that I might be having a stroke. And honestly, it wasn't even the doctors that diagnosed it, It was my mom and my ex.

Shaelyn Poisson 7:04

They kind of were like, okay, so what are her symptoms, and they ended up googling. And then when the Google Search came up, it was stroke, stroke stroke, and they were like, Okay, we got to tell somebody, she's probably having a stroke.

Shaelyn Poisson 7:16

So, yeah, at that point, I wasn't eligible for the clot buster. Yeah, the TPA. So I

believe that that left me with probably worse results than I could have been, but it is what it is.

Bill Gasiamis 7:37

So you heard a pop. So was it a bleeding blood vessel?

Shaelyn Poisson 7:43

So I had a previous neck injury, I think it was like three months prior. And so what had happened was my carotid artery had a micro tear, they called it. So that was probably bleeding over three months formed a clot and then in that moment of stress and everything, it shot up into my brain and stroke.

Bill Gasiamis 8:08

Okay, so this is what I think happened based on what you said, I'm not a doctor, but I've interviewed a lot of people who had similar strokes. So what you had was a carotid artery dissection inside the blood vessel, that kind of creates a flap inside this blood vessel wall, and then it changes the blood flow around that flap, and that blood flow kind of creates a little clot.

Bill Gasiamis 8:37

And then that clot eventually gets bigger and bigger, it either blocks the blood vessel or moves up into the brain and causes a blockage. Depending on where it is and the size of it, then it can be more severe. Now, how did the neck injury happen? Do you recall what that incident was?

Injury Before Ischemic Stroke

Shaelyn Poisson 9:02

Yeah, so I had been a dancer my whole life from like, age three, honestly. I mean, I guess that doesn't have anything to do with this, but I loved dancing my whole life. And so it was just one day in the car, I was dancing with my best friend at the time.

Shaelyn Poisson 9:22

And I had like a ponytail on the top of my head and I was whipping it around like that, and my head ended up getting stuck, like literally to the side like this. And like, it's as dramatic as that like, I'm not even exaggerating.

Shaelyn Poisson 9:41

And my mom ended up taking me to urgent cares to get it checked out and stuff but the doctor that was on call, it was a Sunday and it was like kind of later in the evening that we went so I'm assuming he just wanted me in and out and wanted to probably go home.

Shaelyn Poisson 9:55

But he told me that it was just a muscle strain and that anonymity wasn't needed. My mom was like, on it. Like she wanted me to get checked out for everything because like necks are pretty serious, especially injury, so she was like, pretty concerned about it. So, yeah, he sent me home and told me to take ibuprofen and that it wasn't a big deal. So, yeah, I didn't get proper treatment or diagnosis of that at all.

Bill Gasiamis 10:26

So how old were you then?

Shaelyn Poisson 10:28

I was 17. That was only about three months before my stroke.

Bill Gasiamis 10:33

Okay, so that ponytail movement, mucking around having fun just being silly, right? Which is just normal life, like, that's what you're supposed to do. This caused a tear in the carotid artery, and that caused the lighter stroke.

Bill Gasiamis 10:56

So a couple of things went wrong all in the damn correct order for you to end up in the hospital undiagnosed for 10 hours. Because everybody was flippant on their responsibilities, I think, in checking out somebody who presents and making assertions and judgments.

Bill Gasiamis 11:20

And all these assumptions are based on no evidence, and then perhaps putting themselves first I need to go home or whatever it is. Or I'm too busy. Or she's probably taken drugs. I mean, so much bullshit.

Shaelyn Poisson 11:38

Yeah, exactly. I know.

Bill Gasiamis 11:41

That could have all been avoided. How does that make you feel? Because I'm hearing that and I'm getting frustrated and mad and angry right now. And how did it make you feel?

Shaelyn Poisson 11:54

I mean, it was such a whirlwind. Like that whole night, that whole experience, my mom kept saying, like, Somebody, please pinch me, because this can't be real. This has to be like the worst nightmare humanly possible.

Shaelyn Poisson 12:07

Like, it was honestly just hard to believe, even months afterward that this was reality. And this happened to me, and it could have been most of it probably avoidable. If I had gotten the chance to have TPA. Who knows? Honestly, you can't turn back time and see, but I mean, yeah, it's upsetting because I was a very active girl, soccer player, and dancer.

Shaelyn Poisson 12:39

You know, like, lots of stuff going on in my life. But, on the bright side of things, I took it as a sign to kind of just like, slow down completely, because obviously, can't handle that kind of stress. Stress is not good for anybody, honestly. But, yeah, I guess I like to look on the bright side of things. So I took it as I needed to slow down and go at a better pace.

Bill Gasiamis 13:08

How old are you these days?

Shaelyn Poisson 13:09

I'm 24.

Bill Gasiamis 13:11

Now, so it's been a good amount of time that you've had to grow really to grow, to learn to live with it, to find ways to continue to live your life. I mean, It's been a few years. What do you think was the hardest part at 17 for you?

Bill Gasiamis 13:32

Because, like I said, life was "normal" for a 17-year-old, and then you're recovering from hemiplegia. You wake up in the hospital, you can't walk, and what goes on after that? How do you approach your recovery?

Shaelyn Poisson 13:50

Ah, honestly, it was like, I don't recall, like, thinking anything. A lot of the people surrounding me like the nurses, nurses on like, the floor that I was on was great. In the emergency room, I have other things to say about that.

Shaelyn Poisson 14:09

But, yeah, they were great and supportive, and everybody was positive speaking to me, and it was always, oh, you're going to go through physiotherapy and you're gonna beat this and recover and you're going to get back to quote-unquote, normal life.

Shaelyn Poisson 14:31

And that's all I had in my head because that's all everybody was feeding me. So I was just kind of rolling with the punches and going through the motions of kind of just doing the recovery thing and going to physiotherapy. And so I didn't have any other thoughts, I guess going through my mind.

Bill Gasiamis 14:53

That's pretty cool. I mean, you were just going with the flow, and the flow was heading towards rehabilitation getting back on your feet recovery getting back into your life. How long did it take before you got back to whatever it was that you were doing before the stroke? I think you were studying, were you?

Hemiplegia Recovery



Shaelyn Poisson 15:12

I was yeah, I never ended up going back to dance. Unfortunately, that was my main goal. And I had because I was working, I was a dance teacher at the dance studio that I had grown up at my whole life.

Shaelyn Poisson 15:28

I told my boss, I told her that I would be back in dancing by the end of the years, like recital dance show type thing, which was, I think it was like only five or six months, I was like, yeah, I'll be back to normal by then I'll be fine. And I'll be back to normal. It's good.

Shaelyn Poisson 15:45

But obviously, that didn't happen. And I was like, Okay, fine. I didn't meet that goal, but a year, and I'll be fine. And obviously, strokes are complicated, and everybody's different. But that didn't happen. So I'm honestly still just on my road to recovery with that, and I forgot where I was going with that.

Bill Gasiamis 16:14

You're on the road to recovery. So what are you doing these days? You're 24, 7 years have passed, how are you occupying your day?

Shaelyn Poisson 16:25

I honestly focus a lot on Oh, yeah, I was saying that. Like if I went back to what I was doing, I did end up going back to school. Not what I was doing before I tried that. And it wasn't really for me.

Shaelyn Poisson 16:43

So I ended up just going back to school for a quick year program for office administration. And I did some work on that. But I didn't end up doing much with that I ended up getting married. So I'm living with my husband, we're living in the States now.

Shaelyn Poisson 17:13

I don't know if I mentioned this, but I'm from Canada. And he's an emergency nurse now, so I'm just kind of living off of a visa and doing kind of like a housewife thing, I guess. Yeah. So it's kind of I just kind of these days work on my recovery, go to the gym. That kind of thing.

Bill Gasiamis 17:40

Awesome. No, I'm just trying to understand where you're at because I was similar

in that. It's February for me the 10th anniversary since the first bleed in the brain. And then there were a couple more after that.

Bill Gasiamis 17:54

And honestly, I could say that for about, I think for about seven or eight years, I was kind of in no man's land, I was just in this weird place where I was attempting to do normal life or whatever normal life was.

Bill Gasiamis 18:12

And for me, it involved being a husband and a dad and all the usual stuff. And I couldn't go back to my regular work, I had to do other work. And that was temporary and then I was just going to go through the next phase, whatever that was, but there was a ton and ton of recovery in that seven years that didn't involve the regular going to rehabilitation type recovery.

Bill Gasiamis 18:44

It was strange, like it was happening, kind of in my mind and my body and my heart. Like it was a different kind of recovery. And I needed stillness. And I needed to do as little as possible and I needed not to have complications in my life. And then the kind of the switch kind of flipped at around the eight-year mark.

Bill Gasiamis 19:12

I kind of felt like, Oh, I've gotta go back to this thing that I had in my mind or this thing that I was going to do. And then it happened I was similar to you so I can relate to what you're saying that there's no real plan. It's just about being and getting better and then finding a way to overcome your daily challenges whatever they are.

Shaelyn Poisson 19:36

Yeah, definitely. Yeah, I like to say too I was stuck on like, and I hear this a lot honestly like hearing other people who have had strokes. It's always about trying to get back to the old me and whatever and I like to just kind of think of not that like it's kind of morbid to say but I like to just kind of think oh the old me is dead like I'm a completely new person now since a stroke.

Shaelyn Poisson 20:04

And I have to just accept and adapt. And it's all about adapting to me, I kind of just feel like I'm taking on this new lifestyle, I guess. And yeah, it's, you kind of have to just let go of the old view, you can take in pull things from the old you, of

course, like, you're not gonna just completely leave that in the dust. But yeah, you just have to kind of start fresh, almost, it's kind of like a rebirth type thing.

Bill Gasiamis 20:38

Yeah the common words, they're words that lots of stroke survivors use 100%. And I like the fact your mindset is not stuck in the past, it's going going-forward mindset. It's about growth, change, and adapting. And that's really what it's all about.

Bill Gasiamis 20:56

I mean, even if you haven't had a stroke, but you've had a serious relationship issue with somebody, you know, many years ago, again, it's adapting, you want to leave behind the part of you in that relationship that acted incorrectly, or that was emotionally distraught by whatever it was that went wrong.

Bill Gasiamis 21:16

But then you also want to bring forward with you those lessons and grow and change and evolve. But the same person comes with you, maybe you're doing different tasks. So for example, you're not dancing now. But how are you enjoying yourself? How are you occupying? Or feeling that little creative part of yourself?

Shaelyn Poisson 21:38

Well, I mean, it is hard because yeah, my creative outlet was always dance and soccer and, like, things like that, but I guess now, I mean, honestly, just in the past, like, I don't know, how long has it been like six months only.

Shaelyn Poisson 21:59

I started a YouTube channel and I kind of just like upload videos on how I've adapted as somebody with hemiplegia and how I do like normal day-to-day things with a disability, things like that.

Shaelyn Poisson 22:14

So I guess that's kind of filling my creative outlet right now. I did go through like a makeup phase where I was like, doing makeup as like, kind of a job. And I did makeup on a movie set. So that was kind of like my creative outlet for a while.

Shaelyn Poisson 22:29

But yeah, I guess, for creative probably like YouTube and social media and things like that. But for like, I guess, an active outlet instead of doing dance, because I

can't do that anymore. I have gotten into hiking with my husband.

Shaelyn Poisson 22:47

Well, we haven't gotten them in the winter months, because it's kind of chilly out on the mountain. But there are a lot of mountains where we live. So yeah, we've enjoyed climbing mountains.

Shaelyn Poisson 22:58

And it's kind of crazy to do with hemiplegia. It's really hard. But it's an accomplishment when I do get through the whole hike. It's like, ah, another one done. And it feels good to be able to do that. So that's, I guess, another outlet for me.

Bill Gasiamis 23:19

I love that a lot of people get creative after a stroke, and they jump on social media, they share tips and tricks and what's helping them and that's how I got creative as well. It's when I started the podcast, it was in 2015.

Bill Gasiamis 23:36

I wasn't doing a lot of episodes, I was really bad at it or slow. I was all sorts of things. I couldn't edit it I didn't know what I was doing. But I was doing it and it was helping me more than it was helping anybody else. So I think at the beginning that might have switched a little bit now.

Bill Gasiamis 23:53

But you do share some pretty cool things that even I haven't considered on your Insta page. And we'll share all the links to your socials and your YouTube people will be able to get that from the show notes.

Bill Gasiamis 24:13

The very first thing that I saw was how you plug in your phone to recharge with Hemiplegia with one hand less, how do you do that? And it's like, I never considered, that would be driving me bananas not being able to charge my phone, you know?

Bill Gasiamis 24:36

I can't plug it in at the best of times, you know, sometimes the cable goes in wrong or it doesn't go properly or doesn't connect properly. It drives me nuts. And you're you've got tips like that and I think that was great, that little video

that I saw how to plug in the iPhone, so I'm going to share that as well via the show notes so that people can see that.

Shaelyn Poisson 24:58

Awesome thank you.

Bill Gasiamis 25:00

What has your feedback been from people who have come across your page?

Planning Ahead

Shaelyn Poisson 25:05

Yeah, honestly, just like, kind of like what you said, like, you wouldn't think about it. But it is like the little things like day-to-day, little monotonous tasks that you don't think would be a struggle or anything like that.

Shaelyn Poisson 25:21

But I always say like, you have to, whenever I do any task at all, like, even if it's just getting up to go walk over and grab something, I always kind of just plan out how I'm going to go about doing that, how I'm gonna, when I'm going to grab things like how I should grab things.

Shaelyn Poisson 25:40

Because, honestly, you have to kind of plan it out. I don't know, it's always been like, something that I had to do, but a lot of people yeah they just say that they're like, really shocked that, like some of the things that you have to relearn a different kind of movement pattern for or like, rethink how to do.

Shaelyn Poisson 26:05

Like, you don't think of it as somebody maybe without a disability, they are just like, oh, like it's just a normal task that anybody can probably do. But yeah, a lot of just, like love and support. I've gotten I'm really lucky and happy that everybody's been nice and supportive of everything that I post. So it's been nice, honestly.

Bill Gasiamis 26:36

What's the hardest thing that you have to do with hemiplegia? What's the hardest task to accomplish?

Intro 26:42

If you've had a stroke, and you're in recovery, you will know what a scary and confusing time it can be, you're likely to have a lot of questions going through your mind. How long will it take to recover? Will I recover? What things should I avoid in case I make matters worse?

Intro 26:59

Doctors will explain things that obviously, you've never had a stroke before, you probably don't know what questions to ask. If this is you, you may be missing out on doing things that could help speed up your recovery. If you're finding yourself in that situation, stop worrying, and head to recoveryafterstroke.com where you can download a guide that will help you.

Intro 27:22

It's called seven questions to ask your doctor about your stroke. These seven questions are the ones Bill wished he'd asked when he was recovering from a stroke, they'll not only help you better understand your condition, they'll help you take a more active role in your recovery. Head to the website now, recoveryafterstroke.com, and download the guide. It's free.

Shaelyn Poisson 27:46

I mean, immediately, I want to say just like a kind of like my therapy, my physiotherapy that I do for myself is always gonna be the hardest thing because it's just aggravating and uncomfortable to have to do things that make you uncomfortable. But the uncomfortable is what's going to make you better.

Bill Gasiamis 28:15

Does that mess with your head? So you have to do something uncomfortable. Is it also painful sometimes?

Shaelyn Poisson 28:22

Yes, definitely. can be super painful, honestly, it's not pleasant usually.

Bill Gasiamis 28:32

You gotta think about it, it's time for me to do my exercises, it's gonna be uncomfortable, it's going to be painful, It's going to be frustrating and annoying and all that sort of stuff. But I have to do it because that's the right path to recovery.

Bill Gasiamis 28:44

That's the only way recovery is going to happen. Do you sometimes have enough and go I'm not doing any of this junk anymore. I'm not doing it anymore, and stop and then do get over it? Like how does that work?

Shaelyn Poisson 28:56

I have gone through different stages, like I was doing outpatient therapy at the hospital after I got discharged from being an inpatient. That one I did get discharged from because they ultimately told me that they didn't know how to further my recovery at that point.

Shaelyn Poisson 29:14

I was like, best that they could make me essentially so I moved on to a personal trainer, who's he's quadriplegic so he walks with two canes on both of his arms. He's honestly really amazing.

Shaelyn Poisson 29:31

Like his knowledge of paralysis and everything like that. But then I think I eventually got to the point. Like even just working with him where I was like, okay, like this is just getting repetitive and I'm kind of over it. So I did stop doing any kind of physiotherapy even for myself for I think, like a couple of years at least.

Shaelyn Poisson 30:01

And then like, it wasn't until I felt like the beginning of 2021 where I started committing to going into the gym. I think I was going a few times a week at least. And I still do that's something that I do.

Breaking 10,000 Barriers to Hemiplegia Recovery



Shaelyn Poisson 30:23

But I just actually put out a brand new series on my YouTube channel today was my upload date. And I'm calling it breaking 10,000 barriers. That's the series. And it's because I explained in the video, but essentially, I kind of Googled because I was curious if there was a scientific number of repetitions of an exercise that you would have to do before like relearning a neuro-connection neuro-pattern type thing.

Shaelyn Poisson 30:54

And I got an answer that was 10,000 repetitions of an exercise, and you'll relearn it. So I did the math. And if I do 30 repetitions of an exercise per day, I'll relearn it. So I have several exercises that I do, and I'm doing monthly updates for my series, that's kind of what I'm doing for that.

Shaelyn Poisson 31:19

So I've gotten into that at the start of 2022. And there have been some days, since I started January first this year, where I like, well, there's been a couple of days that I haven't felt well, either where I've been sick, and I'm like, Okay, I'm just not doing it today. I don't care.

Shaelyn Poisson 31:39

But yeah, I, there are some days where it's just, I don't want to feel defeated that day by having to do these exercises. And I'd rather just not feel uncomfortable that day. So I'm just not gonna do it.

Bill Gasiamis 31:55

It's 333 days to get to 10,000, by the way, if you do 30 repetitions a day, it's 333 days that you have to do that.

Shaelyn Poisson 32:08

Okay, yeah, I think I rounded up a little bit because it was like 27 points or something. So I just rounded it up to 30. Because I was like, I'm gonna miss some days anyway. So I might as well just round it up to the closest 10 number.

Bill Gasiamis 32:24

There is a bit of discussion out there about the 10,000 rule where, you know, to become a great public speaker, you'd have to do 10,000 hours. To become an expert in your field, you know, you have to do 10,000 hours, all these 10,000 hours thing.

Bill Gasiamis 32:44

I think it makes you very competent to be able to do 10,000 hours in anything if you do 10,000 hours of reading on just one topic. You become an expert in that topic. But it still allows for more of an opportunity to learn later on.

Bill Gasiamis 33:02

But yeah, 10,000 tasks or repetitions it's a good target. Because when you get to it, it's gonna be quite an accomplishment regardless. Something to brag about. And to be proud of that. You got there and you persevered. And you're probably going to learn a lot about yourself because you're going to have those down days that are not the ones that you just said, I felt tired, or want to feel bad.

Bill Gasiamis 33:31

You might have other issues that come up that you start to notice that might be getting in the way of the rest of your life. And you might be going oh, okay, I didn't know that I was doing that or behaving that way. You'll get this awareness and you'll get this wisdom from it.

Shaelyn Poisson 33:47

For sure. Yeah. That was another thing that I thought honestly, it's gonna be a journey. It's gonna be really hard, but I feel like, Yeah, I'll probably learn a lot about myself during it.

Shaelyn Poisson 34:01

And I think I also said, I forget what the number was, but it was only like 1.7% of people in the US have stated that they have or are living with some type of paralysis. So I was like, well, if I'm that small portion of the population, who am I to not try this challenge because not many people can say that they want to try and defeat the process and I figured it'd be a nice challenge to do.

Bill Gasiamis 34:39

Absolutely. And a good story to share and regardless of the outcome, the fact that you've gone through that process is going to be a big win anyway like I said, you'll learn a lot you will achieve something you will get better at something. You will feel better about yourself having gone through that. I mean, there's so many positives to it. There are no negatives at all.

Shaelyn Poisson 35:01

Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. I feel like I'll at least have a little bit of recovery, and it

might not be perfect. And all the exercises that I'm doing to regain a specific movement, not all of those are going to be perfect. And I might not even get like, a lot of them. But I'll still get something out of it. I'm sure. So, yeah, just something to look forward to with that.

Bill Gasiamis 35:28

Good on you on the other videos on your YouTube channel. At the moment, you've got walking and running. For the first time post-stroke, you've got driving with an assistive device, which is cool, because people need to see that that's a great possibility, wrapping Christmas presents, or one-handed.

Bill Gasiamis 35:55

I can't wrap Christmas presents under normal conditions. They always look messy. You know, when you go to the store and you say to them, can you please wrap my gifts for me? And then you compare those gifts to the ones that you've wrapped and yours look terrible?

Shaelyn Poisson 36:09

Yeah, they're always so good at the stores. It's not even a comparison.

Bill Gasiamis 36:14

Yeah, the professionals. They've done 10,000 hours.

Shaelyn Poisson 36:17

Yeah. Yeah, exactly.

Bill Gasiamis 36:20

And we and we only do it for about 30 minutes every Christmas. We're never gonna get to 10,000 hours. And then you've got a how-to type with Hemiplegia one-handed, and, traveling, you've got what's in my carry-on?

Bill Gasiamis 36:40

So they're the ones that I can see right now, but I'm sure there'd be others. So I think it's gonna be really useful for people in the earliest stages of their recovery with Hemiplegia to be able to have a really good resource of somewhere where they can go. I wonder what she does for this?

Shaelyn Poisson 37:02

Yeah, for sure. Yeah, it's really, what's the word? I guess I was just excited

because I didn't have something like this. I know, when I first was navigating being hemiplegic, I was sitting in my hospital bed on my phone on YouTube, trying to kind of look up different ways, I would see videos of people tying their shoes with one hand, which I've done video on too.

Shaelyn Poisson 37:33

But really, that was like, the only thing that people were curious about, there weren't a lot of one-handed checks. And honestly, not a lot of channels, just specifically dedicated to doing things with one hand. So it wasn't all in one place type thing.

Shaelyn Poisson 37:49

So I thought that I would be a good resource since I've been doing it for six years, going on seven in October. I feel like I have some good insight on how to get around it. So I figured it'd be a good idea for me to post videos about it.

Bill Gasiamis 38:10

yeah, there's no better reason to do that. That's the reason. Women have other skills that they need to get good at, that men don't have to worry about if they're hemiplegic women need to put a bra on but men don't need to do that.

Bill Gasiamis 38:26

So I imagined that would be a little bit difficult as well. And I've never really understood how women have solved that because I've never delved into that. But have you got a video on that just in case any girls are listening that want to access that?

Shaelyn Poisson 38:44

I do have a video I think I called it just like dressing myself with Hemiplegia. Yeah, I didn't specifically do a bra. But I did do like a bikini, like a swimsuit. So I figured you could get the information from that. Essentially, I didn't want to get into the undergarments. I've just felt a little bit uncomfortable with that.

Bill Gasiamis 39:11

Fair enough I wouldn't imagine that you would need to show yourself you might use a mannequin or you might do it at the top of a T-shirt. So you don't have to show yourself but like, I know where you're going that's why it's a difficult conversation for me to have as well.

Bill Gasiamis 39:26

I don't want to put anyone, you know, under pressure or embarrass anybody. And so I've never raised it. But since we're on the topic of doing things one-handed and you're a lady, I think many women would appreciate something along the lines of that.

Bill Gasiamis 39:42

And I do hear that some undergarments are being developed or have been developed to help people who only can use one hand. I've heard that I just don't know much about it.

Shaelyn Poisson 39:57

I don't I don't know I guess sports bras are kind of like, easier to put on. I mean, if we're on the topic of bras, I really just only wait for like the back classic ones, I just kind of do them up without them being on and then you just kind of put them on as a T-shirt, like as you would a T-shirt.

Shaelyn Poisson 40:20

So it's not like a huge workaround, I guess that was one of the first things they taught me when I was in the hospital. My occupational therapist went over that with me, one of the first things she wanted me to dress myself independently.

Shaelyn Poisson 40:36

So that was learned very quickly. But yeah, I haven't heard of what you're talking about on the one hand, but I'm sure somebody is working on something out there.

Friends Who Stick Around Hemiplegia Recovery

Bill Gasiamis 40:55

What about at 17 your social lives are probably huge, you know, friends, a whole bunch of things going on? How did your friends react to you having a stroke? And how did that impact your relationships?

Shaelyn Poisson 41:13

Well, they were coming around a lot in the beginning. That was something that I didn't get into on my channel, I was going to talk about it, but then I just kind of left it out.

Shaelyn Poisson 41:28

But I got the my I have like a decent-sized group of friends. And they did come around in the beginning I think a couple of times. I'm still best friends with the one that I was closest with in that friend group.

Shaelyn Poisson 41:46

But essentially, they ended up kind of deciding that I wouldn't be able to keep up with them. When it came time for us like made plans to go to parties or like going out and things like that.

Shaelyn Poisson 42:01

So, yeah, that was not great to hear that I wasn't included because they didn't think I could keep up. But, yeah, I'm still best friends with my one really good friend from that group.

Shaelyn Poisson 42:17

And I have another one of my best friends. I've been friends with her since she was two years old. And I was three years old. So we've been good good friends since diapers, literally. So yeah, she's still very much in my life too. So I have two really good friends. And that's about it.

Bill Gasiamis 42:40

That's more than enough.

Shaelyn Poisson 42:42

Absolutely yeah.

Bill Gasiamis 42:43

100 good friends there's no such thing as that. It doesn't exist, right? Two close good friends. They're going to help you get through the dark times the fun times, and you're going to help them etc. Right?

Bill Gasiamis 42:54

That's all that's needed. But it's probably unfortunate, but But it's what teenagers do anyway, like they find a reason to isolate people for no reason anyway, like, they just do that.

Bill Gasiamis 43:15

It's the age, it's not being aware of how their behavior is impacting other people. It's about being selfish and making themselves by putting themselves first and not

having the ability to think about, you know, the other person. Did it feel personal and isolated because of it, did it make you feel isolated?

Shaelyn Poisson 43:39

Yeah, it was that upset me honestly, when that whole situation happened. I was pretty upset about that. But, I guess, I don't know how long exactly it took. But, I very quickly became happy with my situation of just having a couple of friends.

Shaelyn Poisson 44:00

I wasn't really into especially since my stroke kind of slowed me down quite a bit. I was kind of happy to just be able to go at my own pace and not kind of feel obligated to have to attend all the parties and go out and everything like that. So I guess Yeah, I ended up just kind of accepting it. And I mean, it was what it was. So yeah, I just kind of accepted it.

Bill Gasiamis 44:33

It happens at every age anyway, it doesn't happen just at 17. And I speak to stroke survivors of every age group. And let me tell you, some friends turn up and some friends don't turn up and they can't turn up or they don't know how to turn up. They don't know what to say.

Bill Gasiamis 44:49

It's confronting to see somebody who's had a stroke maybe it's a problem. It makes them feel uncomfortable or mortal, all these things. There's a lot of stuff going on. And the ones that don't end up are probably doing you a really good favor because at least they're not turning up with negative energy and being uncomfortable, and therefore, all you have to do is just worry about yourself and not worry about them.

Shaelyn Poisson 45:15

Yeah, yeah. And honestly, like I had, like I said before, all the support in the world from like, friends and whatnot, I mean, my family more so my family. And yeah, all of my aunts and uncles, and cousins and everybody, they were always just there showing up for me more than anything. So I didn't feel like I lacked any support or love and anything, so I was good. Get them through that. In that sense. Oh, yeah.

Bill Gasiamis 45:56

And how was the family coping? How did they manage with all of the drama that

you put them through? I know, you said your mom was the first person to attend after the phone calls. Yes. Yeah. How did she go through the recovery and all the other stuff that had to happen?

Shaelyn Poisson 46:19

Oh, man, yeah, that was incredible I probably aged her so many years, because of how stressful that was, I couldn't even imagine if like my child had a stroke, how I would deal with that.

Shaelyn Poisson 46:33

I can't even imagine what she went through. I know she was incredibly stressed at the time. And I know I was so eager to get out of the hospital and get home. I know, I was bugging my doctor in the hospital for a discharge date so that I could finally get home.

Shaelyn Poisson 46:55

I know my mom did not want she wanted me to just stay as long as possible because she wanted me to be able to move around a little bit better so that she wouldn't have to worry about me if she was at work. And I was home alone and things like that.

Shaelyn Poisson 47:12

And there were a few times where like, she had scares like she would come home from work. And I hadn't been answering my phone because I was in the shower or something like that. I know, because I hadn't been doing independent showers at that point.

Shaelyn Poisson 47:31

And my very first time I just decided I was like, You know what, I'm gonna do my shower completely independent I'm not gonna tell anybody because my mom is gonna rush home and be like, panicked and whatever.

Shaelyn Poisson 47:41

So I just did it all by myself. And I didn't realize she had been calling me and texting me. I think I had my ringer off on my phone or something like that. And so she came like barging in the door. She said she was expecting to see me lying at the bottom of the stairs, like knocked out or something.

Shaelyn Poisson 47:58

But yeah, she was like, why didn't you just tell me you wanted to take a shower by yourself? I would have been a lot better off knowing that that's what you were doing. But yeah, there were so many times when she was stressed out, I'm sure. And that time is one of them. But yeah. I feel bad for my mom having to go through all that.

Bill Gasiamis 48:24

They overdo the caring of the mums and dads, and you almost do have to trick them into letting you get to the next stage without them there. You almost have to I did the same thing.

Bill Gasiamis 48:38

I was 37. My parents were way older. Like, I'm a dad already. And I'm also lying and not telling people what I'm doing and how I'm gonna do it, because they they do get in the way because sometimes they over care and they over worry.

Bill Gasiamis 48:57

And then I don't want that stuff to rub off on me that over-caring and the over-worrying. So I go well, I'm just gonna do it anyway, and we'll see what happens. Just try and be as safe as possible when you're doing it and just try and make sure that you've taken precautions so that it goes well and therefore you don't worry them even more.

Rushing Independence

Shaelyn Poisson 49:24

Yeah, exactly. Yeah, there was, I know my dad was in and out of the hospital I was into, he was always there helping me too, there was I think, when I was bugging my doctor to like, give me a discharge date so I could go home.

Shaelyn Poisson 49:43

The one thing she told me was I have to be able to get to the bathroom, do my thing in the bathroom, and get back to my bed all by myself. And I told my dad that because I knew if I told my mom that she'd be like, no, like, you got to call the nurse and they got to help you but my dad was like, oh, yeah, like, I'll help you get there.

Shaelyn Poisson 50:03

Because I don't know, he was like, all for me being independent. I don't know. I

don't know why there was such a difference. But he ended up setting up in the bathroom in my hospital room, a couple of commodes around the toilet area so that when I did get there with my cane, I could just kind of like rest my cane against the door, and then kind of like, hold on to the commodes as I maneuvered my way around to the toilet.

Shaelyn Poisson 50:33

And so he did that for me. And I did successfully do that by myself, I think a couple of times or a few times, or something like that. But then there were a handful of times I think I told this in like a video on my YouTube channel, too. I can't remember. But, there were a handful of times when I ended up falling because I was going in the middle of the night, even by myself.

Shaelyn Poisson 51:01

And even during the day, like I was just going by myself and I wasn't I was kind of rushing because I didn't want a nurse to walk in and find me going by myself because I wasn't supposed to do it by myself but I wanted to.

Shaelyn Poisson 51:16

And yeah, there were a couple of times when I could have been seriously hurt. And I did fall and it was not great. But I figured it out. And I got myself back in bed by myself. So, yeah, my mom had reason to worry, but I figured it out.

Bill Gasiamis 51:33

Your mom's worried she's gonna get injured. Your dad's thinking. I'm not gonna be coming to the hospital to visit her for the rest of our lives. Get her home, get her out of here.

Shaelyn Poisson 51:43

Yeah, I feel like that was the separation with the thinking on that.

Bill Gasiamis 51:48

And moms thinking of putting her in some more cotton wool, and just protecting her for a little bit longer. She's frail, she's fragile, all this stuff. It's a typical mom thing to do, it's gorgeous. I relate to that story of getting to the toilet as well because I couldn't walk for the first month I was in a wheelchair for the first month before rehabilitation kicked in.

Bill Gasiamis 52:15

And I was able to get on my feet and be independent again. And I was in the hospital bed and I pressed the button for the nurse to come so that I could go to the toilet. And the nurse wasn't coming. There was no nurse, they were busy.

Shaelyn Poisson 52:32

Same thing, yeah.

Bill Gasiamis 52:32

I'm not gonna just let it happen here. I'm gonna go, I'm gonna get there. So I dragged myself into the wheelchair. I robbed myself of the toilet. I tried to pull the door and slide the door open.

Bill Gasiamis 52:46

And I got busted by the nurse trying to get up onto the toilet. She's like, What are you doing? You can't be doing this. And I was like, well, I have to do this. Because I've been pressing the button, no one came and I've got to go good to go.

Bill Gasiamis 53:01

And them like, you shouldn't be doing that. I said to him, Look, I said to them, you can either help me get up there, or we can argue about it. Or you could have been cleaning up something even more terrible, like, yeah, so you know, don't complain, you know, just get me up there.

Bill Gasiamis 53:18

Anyway, they got me up there. And then they wouldn't leave the room. They wouldn't leave the room. And I was like, no, no, no, no, you have to leave. And they're like, No, we're not allowed to leave because it's dangerous and all that type of thing.

Bill Gasiamis 53:30

And I went, uh-uh if you don't leave, I'm gonna stay here. I'm gonna clench or whatever, I don't what I was gonna do. I said to him you have to go, you have to go. And then I said, I promise I won't move, I won't do anything that I'm not meant to do.

Bill Gasiamis 53:49

Just leave close the door, please close the door, please close the door. I begged them. And I told him to stand outside the door. And they did thank God. And then that was kind of my first attempt at being independent without anybody. And it

was shocking. It was shocking to have to go through that.

Bill Gasiamis 54:10

But I kind of gained their trust after that. Even though I was going to have to ask them to at least support me into the wheelchair, and then to the toilet. And then the rest of it. I was going to do my own so they were going to put me up there but I was going to do the rest on my own.

Bill Gasiamis 54:27

And yeah, it was traumatizing for me. You know, I can't imagine what it's like for some people who have to recover longer than me and have got to go through all the time.

Shaelyn Poisson 54:41

Yeah, I know. That was the worst part. I remember I was because of all the medications that they had you on right in the beginning. I remember I was backed up in the beginning and I hadn't gotten to the I mean, I went pee and things like that, but I hadn't gone to the bathroom in I think it was like a couple of days or a few days or something like that.

Shaelyn Poisson 55:07

And finally, it was like time and I was like, Okay, I gotta go like right now. And I think oh, yeah, my family they were like, okay yeah, just because they had me in like an adult diaper.

Shaelyn Poisson 55:22

Because just in case I were to have an accident or whatever, and I can't have sensation on half of my bladder and things like that. They were like, oh, yeah, just go in the diaper. And I was like, I am not pooping in a diaper. That's disgusting. That's there's no way.

Bill Gasiamis 55:40

If I can avoid it I'm not doing it.

Shaelyn Poisson 55:44

Yeah, there's no way it was not happening. So they ended up having to go get a nurse. And that was the worst. That was the very first time that I went to the bathroom. And yeah, the nurse was standing right next to me, like holding my shoulder.

Shaelyn Poisson 56:00

And I was just like farting. And it was like, so embarrassing. And I was like, oh my God, I can't believe this is my life right now. It's so like, dehumanizing. I felt like an animal like having to use the bathroom with somebody holding me up. I was like, this is just not gonna work out. I gotta figure something else out here. But yeah, shortly after that. I don't recommend having a stroke to anybody. It's not fun.

Bill Gasiamis 56:33

I mean what are you supposed to talk to them about while you're in the middle of doing farts.

Medical Professionals



Shaelyn Poisson 56:37

I know, I just kept apologizing. I'm like, I'm sorry. And she's like, don't worry about it. I deal with it all the time. And I was like, no, like, I'm so embarrassed, I'm so sorry that you're listening to this and smelling this.

Bill Gasiamis 56:54

They are professionals, they're amazing. The nurses and the doctors, mostly the nurses. I had amazing nurses. I had the most amazing male nurse. Oh my god, he was just a next-level amazing guy.

Bill Gasiamis 57:07

He was the one that was in my recovery ward after surgery. My god, he was just

all over, all over me. Like a rash. There was nothing that he didn't know, that was happening to me that he wasn't aware of and that he hadn't noted. And he got one of the doctors in trouble because the doctor didn't take action on what he requested.

Bill Gasiamis 57:32

He requested blood results and all this kind of stuff. And the doctor didn't take action on it. And then my surgeon who came to visit me the next day, had a meeting with the doctor and the nurse at my bedside.

Shaelyn Poisson 57:47 Oh my god.

Bill Gasiamis 57:48

And she was just telling off this doctor. She was just having a go at him saying to him, you know, I can't believe that you have a nurse here who has experience and knows what they're doing and has asked you for certain results because he's noticed certain things and you haven't done anything about it.

Bill Gasiamis 58:07

How can you not have done anything about it? It was just wow like I hit the jackpot with that guy, I tell you. So they're amazing people they put up with so much he stripped me naked because I had a temperature he covered me with ice.

Bill Gasiamis 58:25

He did you name it every procedure that you could imagine to keep the temperature down and to keep what he thought was happening was infection and all that kind of stuff. And he wanted to get to the bottom of it.

Bill Gasiamis 58:38

And, it's that whole it's that mindset that we spoke about that the doctors didn't have for you when you got there first was he didn't make any assumptions. He just decided that what we need is to get answers to all these things. And these are the things that need to be done.

Bill Gasiamis 58:56

But the doctor he was dealing with was making assumptions. And he wasn't taking the word of the nurse. And maybe he thought he was smarter or better or whatever. I don't know what maybe he was having a bad day. But it's a lot to

learn from that thing.

Bill Gasiamis 59:14

You know, you've got a person in hospital, they're a patient. You have to assume that they're unwell. And even if it is drugs, you have to assume that the drugs have made them unwell. And then life is at risk. Instead of assuming they're on drugs. They'll get over.

Shaelyn Poisson 59:30

Yeah, and that was the main thing too. Like, I did arrive at the hospital. It's like okay, I wasn't on drugs or drunk or anything like that. I was underage. So obviously not but regardless, if I was like, I'm still a patient, I'm still seeking help.

Shaelyn Poisson 59:46

You have to see the clear symptoms in front of you and make a diagnosis upon seeing that like, it's just the craziest thing because I was showing complete left-side paralysis.

Shaelyn Poisson 1:00:00

Half my mouth was paralyzed half my face like everything was paralyzed on my left side and the vomiting, just everything added up. It was a stroke, right? So it just, yeah. It's nice, though, that you had that nurse as an advocate for you.

Bill Gasiamis 1:00:18

That's exactly what he was. It's the best way to describe him. He was amazing. So, tell me about your husband. How long have you been married?

Shaelyn Poisson 1:00:30

Not very long. We just got married. March? May?

Bill Gasiamis 1:00:38

You've already forgotten your wedding anniversary, congratulations.

Shaelyn Poisson 1:00:43

May 2021. So just it's coming on a year.

Bill Gasiamis 1:00:47

All right, just to show you how I'm better than you today is my wedding anniversary. The 28th of January is my wedding anniversary. And this year, we've been married for 26 years. So that's how you're supposed to say it to not get in

trouble with your spouse.

Shaelyn Poisson 1:01:09

Yeah, yeah. Oh my gosh. That's so coincidental that it's your wedding anniversary,

Bill Gasiamis 1:01:17

And you can't remember yours. Oh, my gosh, is it the stroke? You blame the stroke.

Shaelyn Poisson 1:01:23

I do remember it. I just always mix up March and May for some reason. Honestly, before this stroke those two months for some reason you couldn't make me decipher them. I don't know why, but May 10, 2021.

Dating with Hemiplegia

Bill Gasiamis 1:01:45

It worked out beautifully. Was it difficult to date? Considering that you had hemiplegia? And you had to deal with all of that complicated version of dating, which was different from "normal" dating?

Shaelyn Poisson 1:02:04

Yeah, absolutely. I had quite my boat of strange people and people that just didn't accept, like, me being disabled and things like that. Luckily, I came across Brandon and he was a nursing student when we met at the university that we were both at.

Shaelyn Poisson 1:02:27

Honestly, for people who had strokes, I feel like nurses are the best partners because they just understand everything. They know all the terminology. They know how to work with you and the Yeah, he's honestly great about it.

Shaelyn Poisson 1:02:43

He helps me with my recovery and my physiotherapy sometimes if I need help, and anything honestly, if I need him to I like, whenever I get new shoes or anything like that, he pre-ties them for me. So he's honestly amazing and so helpful. And I couldn't have asked for somebody better. So yeah, they're amazing people. I love nurses.

Bill Gasiamis 1:03:08

Sounds like you guys hit the jackpot.

Shaelyn Poisson 1:03:10

Yeah, he's happy too I hope.

Bill Gasiamis 1:03:16

Yeah, I love the nurses. I love that approach. Especially well, because I can't relate to nurses at all, but other than the way that I've been supported by them, they're amazing. And I know that females as nurses have that nurturing side over men, you know, it's usually associated with motherhood, and, you know, being, you know, nurturing and that usual kind of stuff.

Bill Gasiamis 1:03:40

But when you get a male nurse, who's nurturing and caring, and that like, it's a completely different thing. Just for me. It was like, first, that nurse was kind of like, yeah, you know, like, you're me, you a dude, you know, and all this kind of stuff.

Bill Gasiamis 1:03:59

And it's like, Oh, my God, and then you're so caring and kind and compassionate and supportive. And it's like, Whoa, what a guy. Just amazing. I had a bit of a man crush on him because I was so well treated, and he was on my side and he just, you know, and that's kind of the sense I get when you tell me about your husband. It's like, you know, people would think he's a hero.

Shaelyn Poisson 1:04:25

Oh yeah. Everybody at the hospital he works at just loves him. He's the most chill and like, calm guy, but like, just so amazing and helpful and nurturing. He's just amazing. So yeah, he's one of those. Sorry, that was my notification. My mom texted me. Yeah, he's one of those one-of-a-kind guys.

Bill Gasiamis 1:05:00

Fabulous. Well, I appreciate you coming on to the podcast. I enjoyed our chat. Thank you so much for being here. You're doing great work. And if people want to find you, I will share the links anyway. But if they're listening, and they haven't had a chance to look at the show notes if people wanted to find you on Instagram, where would they do that? What is your Instagram handle?

Shaelyn Poisson 1:05:25

It's @shaethestrokesurvivor. Instead of the shea butter, it's different.

Bill Gasiamis 1:05:37

And the YouTube Channel?

Shaelyn Poisson 1:05:41

You can honestly just find me by typing in my first name Shaelyn. So yeah, I pretty much pop up if you just type in Shaelyn I guess or stroke survivor I'm sure comes up to I'm not sure.

Bill Gasiamis 1:05:58

Yep, no worries. And if you can't find it, well, then just head to the show notes on the recoveryafterstroke.com website and you'll be able to see it there. Thank you so much for being on the podcast.

Shaelyn Poisson 1:06:09

Yeah, absolutely. Thank you so much for having me. I had so much fun. This is an amazing thing that you're doing here. And I appreciate that you have these resources for people who need some insight and guidance after having a stroke. So thank you.

Bill Gasiamis 1:06:24

My pleasure. I hope you enjoyed this episode and learned something. Please comment, like, or share, and give the episode a thumbs up. Every interaction with the show online helps the podcast to rank better and therefore be found easily by stroke survivors from all around the world.

Bill Gasiamis 1:06:42

And hopefully, that will help them on the path to their recovery. And it'll might make their recovery a little easier, because they'll find what you were looking for. Those very early stages of stroke recovery might even make a massive difference for the caregivers. So if you can leave the show a five-star review, thumbs up, leave a comment. Anything you can do will make a massive difference. Thank you so much for listening.

Intro 1:07:07

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protocols disgusting any podcast or the individual's own experience and we do not necessarily share the same opinion nor do we recommend any treatment protocol discussed.

Intro 1:07:25

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Intro 1:07:41

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Intro 1:08:02

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Intro 1:08:26

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