

The One-Percenter Biker Who Turned His Stroke Into a Documentary

How Making a Stroke Recovery Documentary Helped a Former One-Percenter Reclaim His Life



Shayne DeMarce spent most of his adult life defined by physical strength. He rode Harleys through the Canadian Rockies in every season, ran a plumbing and heating business, and had recently begun prospecting with a one-percenter motorcycle club drawn there, he says, by the brotherhood at a time when his wife's cancer diagnosis and a failing business were pulling the rest of his life apart. Then, on a low-speed group ride at under 20 kilometres an hour, his back wheel slid on loose gravel. To avoid landing on a fellow rider, he dove off his bike into a ditch and broke nine of his twelve ribs, his collarbone, and his scapula, punctured a lung, and tore his aorta.

What nobody caught for another thirteen hours was that he'd also had a stroke.

A Low-Speed Crash With High-Speed Consequences



Shayne's accident is a reminder that the danger in a fall isn't always where it looks like it is. He walked away from the crash site convinced his injuries were broken bones, painful, but familiar territory for a man who'd spent a lifetime playing football, doing judo, and dirt biking. It wasn't until he was in the truck heading to hospital, feeling suddenly and inexplicably worse, that anyone suspected something else was happening. By the time doctors in Edmonton confirmed it was a bilateral carotid artery dissection that had cut off blood flow to his brain, the left side of his body was already gone.

He spent five months in hospital and ICU, then seven more in inpatient rehab. Non-weight-bearing for most of that time, he had to relearn how to exist in a body that no longer matched the identity he'd spent decades building.

Losing the Body He Built His Identity On



"I was a physical guy," Shayne said. "My job was physical, everything about me was physical. So it wasn't just my identity; it really was who I was." For a man

whose sense of manhood was tied to strength, work capacity, and being able to hold his own, losing the use of half his body wasn't just a medical setback. It was, in his words, "very humbling."

The turning point came from an unexpected source: a blunt question from the principal at his rehab facility's education centre. When Shayne told her his only goal was getting his body back, she asked him plainly, "So what if you don't get your body back?" It's a question that stroke survivors and their families rarely get asked directly, and it's often the one that needs asking. Shayne describes it as heartbreaking in the moment, and something he's since come to be grateful for.

Why He Turned to a Camera Instead of a Gym

That question pushed Shayne toward a skill he'd never have considered before his stroke: typing, then editing, then filmmaking. He describes teaching himself to type as doing more for his affected hand than any of his occupational therapy, and it opened a door to something bigger. Once home, he noticed a gap: plenty of content from doctors and news stations about stroke, but very little from survivors themselves, talking honestly about what recovery actually looks like.

So he started the UpStroke Podcast. Then, within days of getting home from inpatient rehab, he set himself an ambitious goal: make a full-length stroke recovery documentary about his own experience, and finish it within six months. No film background, no crew, no guaranteed audience just early mornings, self-taught editing, and a refusal to let pride keep him from trying something that scared him.

Making a Stroke Recovery Documentary From the Ground Up



The finished film runs 55 minutes and represents hundreds of hours of work planning, scripting, filming, and re-filming after the inevitable rookie mistakes (forgotten microphones, unrecorded interviews, background noise nobody caught until the edit). Shayne interviewed his own kids and friends for the film, describing the process as "ripping the same band-aid off fifty times a day for six months straight."

What makes a stroke recovery documentary like this different from a polished studio production is exactly what makes it valuable: it was built by someone still living the recovery it documents, using the same self-taught persistence he'd once applied to fixing pipes and riding through winter.

Screening the Film for the People Who Understand It Most

The most meaningful moment of the entire project, Shayne says, wasn't a premiere or a review; it was screening the documentary at the rehab facility where he'd been an inpatient, for a room that was roughly 80% stroke survivors and staff. He remembers patients in that same gymnasium who never had a single visitor in six months, and he now sees his film and podcast as a way to reach exactly those people: the ones running out of hope in a system that doesn't always have room to give them much of it.

A New Club



Shayne no longer rides with the one-percenter club he'd started prospecting with before his accident. He describes his community now as "a bunch of stroked out stokers," the friends, fellow survivors, and families he's met through the podcast and the film. It's a different kind of brotherhood than the one he set out to find, but by his own account, it's the one that's carried him.

His documentary is now available free on YouTube, so that as many stroke survivors, caregivers, and healthcare professionals as possible can watch it.

If Shayne's story resonates with where you are in your own recovery, Bill's book, *The Unexpected Way That A Stroke Became The Best Thing That Happened*, walks through ten tools for recovery and personal transformation built from these same kinds of conversations: recoveryafterstroke.com/book.

If this show has helped you, you can support it at patreon.com/recoveryafterstroke.

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to your health or recovery plan.

The transcript will be available soon...