

Transient Ischemic Attack (TIA) Recovery - Kevin Snit Fitzpatrick

Life-long musician Snit Fitzpatrick experienced a transient ischemic attack at age 64 and is helping to raise awareness about the situation he found himself in the hope that others will be more prepared than he was.

Snit's Dog & Pony Show

Instagram

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Transcription

Snit Fitzpatrick 0:00

We have another drummer friend. And unfortunately, he did the "I'm gonna lay down and take a nap" routine. And he called Mark like three days later, and it was way too late. So obviously, I know it's preaching to the choir for people to go, you have to act fast. But if you go to the hospital and it wasn't a stroke, they're not going to berate you for coming in there.

Snit Fitzpatrick 0:26

They're going to say, Well, luckily, you're okay. But it was good that you came in. And I was at the dentist today and my dentist was talking about I guess it's a male thing like no, I'm okay. I'm not, you know, I don't need to do anything.

Intro 0:46

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

Bill Gasiamis 0:59

Hello, and welcome to episode 208 of the recovery after stroke podcast. If you are a stroke survivor with a story to share about your experience with stroke, and you have been thinking about reaching out to be a guest on the show but we're waiting for the right time to reach out? This is it.

Bill Gasiamis 1:14

If you go to recoveryafterstroke.com/contact you'll be able to find a form that you can fill out to apply to be a guest on the show. As soon as I receive it, I will respond with more details on how you can choose a time that works for you, for us to meet over zoom.

Introduction - **Snit Fitzpatrick**



Bill Gasiamis 1:32

Now my guest today is Kevin "Snit" Fitzpatrick, a lifelong musician who noticed something weird happening to his arm and went to the hospital within one hour of the first symptoms presenting themselves. Kevin Fitzpatrick, welcome to the podcast.

Snit Fitzpatrick 1:49

Thanks for having me.

Bill Gasiamis 1:50

Thats a very good Irish name. Kevin Fitzpatrick.

Snit Fitzpatrick 1:55

Yes indeed.

Bill Gasiamis 1:57

Kevin, thanks so much for reaching out to be on the podcast, tell me a little bit about what happened to you.

Snit Fitzpatrick 2:04

Well, in April 2018, it was a Tuesday night. And I just got home from work, I play in a band, and also work retail in a music store guitar shop. I had a real busy weekend, worked on Saturday, I had a long show with my band Saturday night, I had a long drive Sunday to play at a place I played out a lot which goes to what something I read on your website.

Snit Fitzpatrick 2:33

But by Tuesday afternoon, I came home from work, it was uneventful, I felt fine. Probably turned on to the Braves game and next thing you know, I started to feel some numbness in my arm. And my first thought was like what's going on here? Something's going on here.

Snit Fitzpatrick 2:52

And then I got up and it got worse. And my first thought was call 911. So I called 911, and I said, I think I'm having a stroke. And I'm very fortunate Bill that I live about 10 minutes from the Houston Medical Center, which is one of the best medical centers in the world.

Snit Fitzpatrick 3:19

So the EMT showed up, there's gonna be some humor in here too, because some of it's funny now, but where I live is behind a place where I was sitting right where I'm talking to, you know, when I had to stroke.

Snit Fitzpatrick 3:37

The place in front when the EMT showed up, I was struggling to get dressed. And I could see the lights flashing because it was dark and literally fell down once and then finally got like some shorts on and a shirt. And I kind of crawled to the door and open the door and I said I'm back here.

Snit Fitzpatrick 3:58

So they come inside and one of the guys said you should probably get a posted sign with your with your address closer to the street. I said fine, we'll stop at Home Depot on the way to the hospital. So they hooked me up, they started taking my blood pressure and at the time Bill in 2010 I had an incident where I woke up one day and felt dizzy I went to the ER my doctor put me on blood pressure medication then.

Snit Fitzpatrick 4:33

But eventually he kind of weaned me off of it, when I had the stroke I wasn't taking any blood pressure meds at all. So when they got me to the hospital it was just straight out of a movie they wheeled me in there's a bunch of people looking down while you're looking up and they're this that the hour and they wheeled me into this room.

Snit Fitzpatrick 4:55

And the first person that came in was a doctor and She said, you've had a stroke. And I was hoping that a friend of mine was going to join us. He is actually a neurosurgeon at the hospital, where I was taken to. And we'll get to his story more later as we go along.

Snit Fitzpatrick 5:16

But this doctor, she immediately told me that I mean, Memorial Hermann is a great system. I'm not saying anything bad about them, because they took care of me and you could see I was fine. But she gave me some information and made me feel that it wasn't correct. She said, we're going to train you to walk in three months.

Snit Fitzpatrick 5:36

And she said, we're going to give you a medication, which turned out to be TPA, which I didn't know anything about if we can get your blood pressure down. So I was laying there, and the gentleman next to me had fallen off a roof.

Snit Fitzpatrick 5:52

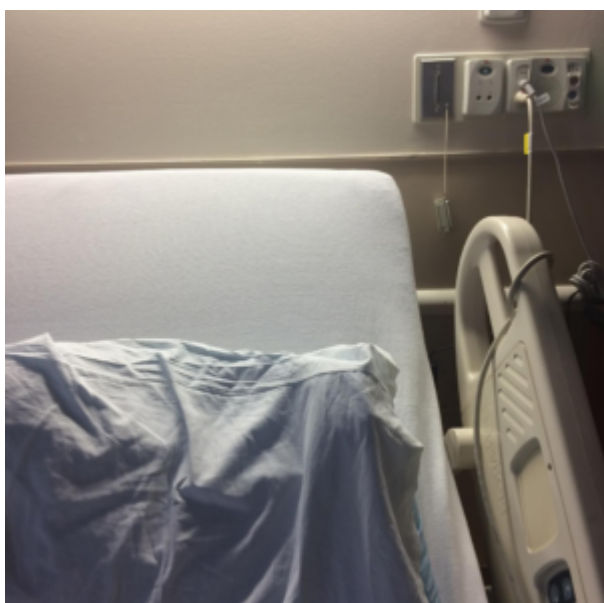
And he's in agony, and I was just sitting there, I was proud of myself, because I'm pretty A personality. But I was proud of myself, because I was pretty calm. And I was just basically, feeling well, I thought about the last song that I played, I thought about how am I going to feed myself because I'm a bachelor, I live by

myself.

Snit Fitzpatrick 6:13

And I just laid there. And eventually, it was about 9:30 at night when they took me into the room. And when it first happened, it was probably I got there within an hour, I got there quick, real quick, because I'm close. I knew it. Like I said, if it would happen two days before when I was 50 miles from here or driving home. There's no telling what would have happened. I'm so lucky that how it happened was right here.

Transient Ischemic Attack (TIA)



Snit Fitzpatrick 6:45

So yeah, they took me to the emergency room. And I'm pretty well aware of the timeframe and how it went. But eventually, I guess they had given me the TPA, but didn't tell me because another doctor came in a couple of hours later, and I started to get feeling back, and it was this side, it was all this side.

Snit Fitzpatrick 7:12

And she said, how are you doing? I said, better, I'm getting feeling back. And she says, that's great. That means the drug worked. I was like, what drug? And she said, we administered this drug called TPA, I said well, the first doctor never told me that.

Snit Fitzpatrick 7:28

She said, we're going to try to get your blood pressure down. So then it was about three or four in the morning, they took me to have a CAT scan and all that. And

then checked me into the room early that morning.

Bill Gasiamis 7:44

Wow. So you know, when you were lying down there in the hospital, and the guy's in agony, and he's freaking out, and you're sitting there. And you're thinking about how you're going to feed yourself and how you're going to go about your life? Were you doing problem-solving? You were thinking well, my arm doesn't work, I'm gonna have to find a new way to do this? What was the thinking process?

Snit Fitzpatrick 8:08

Well, going back to it, like I said, it was more reflective about what happened, I've been a relatively healthy person. I was a smoker, but I quit 10 years in 2012. So at that point, I've quit for like six years. Like my barley pots and I play in a band, but but I did have a pretty rigorous schedule.

Snit Fitzpatrick 8:39

There's another real important thing I'll get to in a minute about what they thought might have caused it. But no, Bill, I was being more reflective on what had happened other than questioning myself going, how am I going to do this, but I didn't have any answers at that moment.

Bill Gasiamis 8:53

Yeah. How long have you been playing in bands? What kind of music do you play?

Snit Fitzpatrick 8:59

I'm 68 now, I was 64 when it happened, I started when I was 15 or 16. I was a drummer for years. On a road with bands coast to coast. I grew up in New Jersey, I lived in Atlanta. I call Atlanta, my spiritual home. I've been in Houston for 28 years.

Time Management After A TIA



Snit Fitzpatrick 9:16

When I got here I joined a road band and we played literally everywhere. We were like one of those “almost made it” bands, you know, real popular around town. And then around 2000 I started my own band as a singer guitar player. And I kind of do both now. But believe me I’ve slowed my schedule way, way down because I had to.

Snit Fitzpatrick 9:38

When I try to do too much now I’m still working a full time job. Retail guitar store, but I can tell when I’m pushing it too hard. Recently I have work on Monday. Have a gig Monday night. Work on Tuesday have a gig Tuesday night.

Snit Fitzpatrick 9:56

I told the Tuesday night guys I said I can’t do that. That’s pushing too much. And they understood it. So sometimes I think I can do more than I can. But, you know, I’ve been a pretty much a life have been playing music, mostly professionally for my whole life.

Bill Gasiamis 10:14

Did you lose the ability to play for that short amount of time when the injury first occurred?

Snit Fitzpatrick 10:21

This happened on Tuesday. I think it was April 17. I walked back into work on Friday. And the people I work with thought they saw a ghost. They were like, what? And I’m like, I’m good, I’m good. And I had a gig that Saturday.

Bill Gasiamis 10:38

Wow.

Snit Fitzpatrick 10:40

And at a place that was quite a bit of ways, but my drummer drove and it was one of those low-key kind of gigs. And the guy that ran the place had health issues, too. But yeah, I mean, people that saw me were like, wait a minute, didn't you just have a stroke?

Snit Fitzpatrick 10:56

I was like, yeah, set of transit, ischemic attack. And before I did, that gig, probably why I did it. While I felt good about doing it. I told you about my friend, his name's Mark Tannenbaum. He's a neurosurgeon at Memorial Hermann, he came over here and I think you'll find this really fascinating because when I read your your story, it seemed like you wish you had gotten more information about one of the things that happened to you.

Snit Fitzpatrick 11:24

Well, Mark, being in the Memorial Hermann network, was able to come over to my house, get his laptop out and go, here's your brain. Here's what happened. And he explained to me a lot more than they did at the hospital, because I guess they just figured, well you're fine, see you later.

Snit Fitzpatrick 11:42

And, he pointed out what, as far as I can recall, just a lot of things that he saw that were positive. He told me not to worry, he said that I was lucky. But at the same time, he didn't anticipate me having any more issues. Certainly not then. And he was right.

Asking The Right Questions

Bill Gasiamis 12:02

That's brilliant. I love that. Because one of the things that you can get from my website, if you go to [it recoveryafterstroke.com](http://recoveryafterstroke.com) is you can download a guide, that's called seven questions to ask your doctor about your stroke.

Bill Gasiamis 12:16

And the purpose of it is exactly that. It's so that people when they go to their doctors, and they have a conversation, they can hopefully trigger their GP or their neurosurgeon or their neurologist to show them the brain, where inside specifically, the impact has been.

Bill Gasiamis 12:40

And as a result of that, what gets affected so that they have a visual of that. And then they have more understanding. And hopefully what that does is reduce the frustration and the challenge that I remember facing, which was.

Bill Gasiamis 12:58

I know that this thing has happened in my head, but I don't know why I'm experiencing the things that I'm experiencing, are they another stroke? Or are they because of the thing that happened there and therefore I'm currently missing this function, or I am currently have this function being impacted.

Bill Gasiamis 13:16

So that's the beautiful thing that you've done there. And recently, unfortunately, a friend of mine has contacted me in Melbourne here to tell me that one of their friends was in a car accident, he was hit by a car, this particular gentleman, and he was announced brain dead and clinically dead pretty much a few hours later, and they needed the family's permission to switch off the life support.

Bill Gasiamis 13:46

And of course, the family initially said no, we don't want to do that. And the only way that they were able to get them over the line to convince them that unfortunately, he's not in a state that's going to be survivable was to ask the neurologists, to see a scan of a healthy brain and a scan of his brain.

Bill Gasiamis 14:11

And their visual, unfortunate as it was, was able to paint the picture as to the seriousness of the situation or where the damage was. And I think having that third layer of understanding, okay, you've been told, you're experiencing it, and then you see it.

Bill Gasiamis 14:31

Having that third layer of information, I think, makes for a far better understanding of what's going on in your own brain and then I think allows for better questions to be asked and for you to approach the whole situation in a different light, at least that's how I see it. Sounds like you got a similar benefit.

Snit Fitzpatrick 14:59

Oh, Well, I mean, first of all, this friend of mine, Mark is also a drummer, he's a customer of mine where I work. So we were friends for a long time. So it was like,

gee, how convenient. He's a wonderful guy. And sure the fact that the whole thing Bill, the whole incident from beginning to hopefully end, which it did for him to be able to come over exactly he showed me what you were just talking about.

Snit Fitzpatrick 15:28

And he was able to go through the whole process of what had happened. And give me that much more information. That's like, obviously, what you're trying to do. And I will say one more thing about that is, recently, a friend of mine had suffered a stroke.

Snit Fitzpatrick 15:50

And matter of fact, he was in the same stroke ward that I was. Now he's okay. But he's not doing as good as I am. And but he's not incapacitated. He's not shut down. So I'm not really sure what happened to him. I'm gonna try to hook him up with my friend so we'll see. But so yeah, so you asked me, when did I start playing again, it was literally that next week, I was back to work. And it was like nothing ever happened.

Bill Gasiamis 16:21

Was it too early? In hindsight, do you think you should have given yourself a bit of a break?

Snit Fitzpatrick 16:26

I don't think so. I mean I think I took a couple extra days off if I remember correctly, I had to pulled out my journal from that, which I had a record and as I recall, it was pretty much how I'm telling you now it wasn't any more like, Oh, my God, it was like, I had a stroke, this happened, I'm okay. And thank God for miracles and luck and friendship.

Bill Gasiamis 16:54

And modern medicine.

Snit Fitzpatrick 16:56

Yeah. And modern medicine for sure. So, the only time I ever came back too soon from something I had throat surgery, 2016. And I tried to sing sooner than I should have. So that was a mistake. And like I said, in hindsight, that everything had happened, the whole process and the issues that had happened now, I didn't feel like I was pushing myself, I mean, I was fine.

Bill Gasiamis 17:28

Music doesn't seem like it's your job, though. It seems like it's something that is just your life part of your life. It sounds like it's in your blood. And you can't do without it either way. So it doesn't sound like it's like something you have to motivate yourself to go and do. It's like, what you do?

Snit Fitzpatrick 17:49

Well, yes or no certainly is my passion for life. But as I get older, you know sometimes, some nights are harder than others to go, alright come on, you know, but what I find interesting is I've never gotten home from a gig good, better or ugly, where I felt like, I wish I wouldn't have done that.

Snit Fitzpatrick 18:11

Or even if it was bad, I felt I always feel like okay, I accomplished something. I played my songs. I did what I was doing, or I played my drums with somebody else, or whatever I did. Yeah. I mean, it's what I've done since I was a teenage boy.

Snit Fitzpatrick 18:24

And that's another thing. I mean, I kind of wound up in Houston. Not by accident, but I followed a lady down here that I knew and my dad was here to time. So a lot of things turned around for me, musically, when I got here in 94. That probably wouldn't have happened for me. If I had stayed in Atlanta. That's just the way it turned out.

Bill Gasiamis 18:47

Yeah, right. So your bad days at a gig are what? As a guest, who's watching the show, do I pick up that you've had a bad day on the instruments or anything like that? You're the only one that knows.

The Follow-Up - Snit Fitzpatrick



Snit Fitzpatrick 19:08

No, I that's part of being a pro. You know, you got to suck it up. And, you know, like I said, there's days I mean, I was like I said it really struck a nerve when I was reading your story about how you said pushing yourself too hard could be a factor because I know that had to be a factor. But there's something else that before I forget, I want to tell you the follow up.

Snit Fitzpatrick 19:35

So when when I they followed me up with a neurologist, and the day that I want to see this neurologist I'm 5'6", about 155 I'm not overweight. And I went to see the neurologist and I didn't sleep well. And I was cranky and went to see her and she was you know from probably from India or Pakistan or something.

Snit Fitzpatrick 20:02

So the conversation was strained at best. But she said something about sleep apnea. And I thought, there's no way in the world that a guy my size has sleep apnea. Here's where it gets interesting. I'm glad I wanted to make sure I remember to tell you this part of the story. So guess what they did? They sent me for a sleep study have you ever had one of those?

Bill Gasiamis 20:28

No, my wife has.

Snit Fitzpatrick 20:30

Okay, well, there you go. I mean, they had all these note things and then they say, go to sleep. Now I'm pretty much a night owl. So this is like, I don't think I fell

asleep till about four o'clock in the morning. So at six o'clock in the morning, they wake me up, get up, I'm like what? And they said, we'll show that there were some sleep apnea incidents during your sleep.

Snit Fitzpatrick 21:01

And I thought, well, great. So then I go back, and I talked to the doctor, and she says, we recommend that you get a CPAP machine. So I went back. And the second time I went back, they gave me the CPAP machine, and it was the one like, there's an octopus on your face.

Snit Fitzpatrick 21:20

And the machine is making a lot of noise. And I'm like, and you want me to go to sleep with this thing? So after a couple hours, I said, you know what, forget it. I can't really if I left or whatever, it was horrible. So I came home and I called the neurologist, so we're going to send you to another place that specializes in different kinds of equipment.

Snit Fitzpatrick 21:48

And sure enough, they gave me the I thought I had a here hold on. This is the one I've been using for almost four years. It's the one it's just a pillow sits in your nose. So I've been using a CPAP machine since August of 2018. And I use it every night. So they're saying, you know, like I said, that could be a reason.

Snit Fitzpatrick 22:17

Like I said, when I went back to the neurologist this past April. I said, Do I really have to keep using this thing? And she said open your mouth? And she goes, Okay, exactly. She said, What I have is a very thin windpipe. So it was, but it's interesting that it took that far in my life for me to realize that there was an issue with sleep apnea.

Bill Gasiamis 22:46

Do you feel like you're sleeping better with the sleep pillow thing at the bottom of your nose?

Snit Fitzpatrick 22:51

I used it for so long that I don't really experiment. And there's been a couple of times where I didn't have it. I think I went out of town and I forgot it. And I don't recall really remember at this point if it has helped. But you know, I wasn't about to say no if that's what they thought the problem was.

Snit Fitzpatrick 23:14

Now what I thought the problem was. I'm laughing because it's funny wasn't funny when it happened. I had a jealous ex-boyfriend punch me right here. Boom! And this is 20 years ago. So one of the things I talked to the doctors about when I'm asleep on this side, because I sleep on my side. When I sleep on this side, I was okay.

Snit Fitzpatrick 23:45

When I sleep the other way around sleep on this side. I wasn't okay, because this is the side that I thought was blocked. Now, I'm scheduled to see her again next month because I have the app on my phone, that every morning is the first thing I check that tells me you know the AHI and the times has come off it has.

Snit Fitzpatrick 24:09

But for the most part does it help? I think I will have to say that it does. I mean like I said I don't want to experiment and say I'm not going to use it for a week or a few days. Because to me I wear a bite guard because I grind my teeth I put that in and put that thing and I go to sleep.

Snit Fitzpatrick 24:31

You know very seldom when I first got it oh yeah, the first month was horrible. Most of the nights it was screw this and I take it off and throw it on the ground. So it does even with the pillow setting. Because the first time like I said the first time with the fighter pilot mask and the machine made horrible noises it was it was not good.

Snit Fitzpatrick 24:52

The machine I have now it kind of ramps up the amount of pressure at blow so you can set it where it doesn't blow real hard and I've gotten used to it. So I'll continue to use it till they tell me I don't have to.

Bill Gasiamis 25:04

Yeah. So what it does is just pumps air into your airway right?

Snit Fitzpatrick 25:09

Right. So it's supposed to help your breathing. And like I said, when you know what, interestingly enough, I've had a primary care physician since 1996. Now, when I went to see him after I got out of hospital when I was ok, and the first thing he said to me is what happened?

Snit Fitzpatrick 25:34

And I was like, you're supposed to tell me that you're my doctor. You know, so I told him what was going on and when I've mentioned this CPAP thing he just says, well, if the neurologist keep telling you to use it, then keep using it.

Bill Gasiamis 25:48

Yeah. Was this your first major scare, healthwise, in your 64 years?

Snit Fitzpatrick 25:56

One other time when I was 45, I had eaten something at a truck stop that was tainted with bacteria, and within a few days, I had a raging fever, not knowing that's what it came from. So my doctor put me in the hospital. And they said that I was severely dehydrated and they told me at hospital they said that I had hepatitis B in my liver, which that was wrong.

Snit Fitzpatrick 26:31

That was not what happened. But I remember that I had a road band. This is one of the stupidest things I've ever done in my life. And it was a four day trip with a long drive. It was like the first one was from here to Oklahoma City, which is about eight hours. And then from Oklahoma City to Denver, no Santa Fe, New Mexico, these are long drives, four or five 600 mile drives.

Snit Fitzpatrick 27:01

When we got to the first stop, in Oklahoma City. I dried up there was I was laying in the back of the van thinking I was gonna die. I really did. And the other guys in the band were like nah, shut up, you'll be ok blah blah. You need help driving. It's the kind of guys they were that's why I don't talk to him anymore.

Snit Fitzpatrick 27:23

But, the gentleman that was in the headlining act was also our manager. And he was aware of what happened, what's going on. And he said, We're gonna get you your own room and get some rest so you could feel better. So I remember walking into the room that night, and everything was gray. Because my liver was whatever the bacteria had gotten into my liver.

Snit Fitzpatrick 27:48

And even the doctors told me, Don't you don't need to go on this trip. But I did it anyway. And by whoever's looking out for me, the next day, we drove from Oklahoma City to Santa Fe, New Mexico. And by the time we got there, I was fine.

Those were the two in my lifetime, the two incidents or health issues that I would say, I can't recall anything else other than, some gum surgeries or whatever, but nothing that was brought on by something going on in my body.

A Life-Changing Situation



Bill Gasiamis 28:31

Okay. So it's interesting, though, has this been impactful? Has it made you change the way you do things, think about life or that kind of stuff. Because you came across me and I came across you on my Instagram page, where I put the call out for people to come onto the podcast that have had a stroke and want to talk about it.

Bill Gasiamis 28:50

So I imagine you were following me for some time or if you weren't, you were following some hashtags that are related to stroke. So it's done enough to get you into the zone of kind of connecting with other people and being aware of some communities about stroke. So what has it done? Has it changed your mindset and the way you go about things?

Snit Fitzpatrick 29:14

Well, that you know, you kind of asked me two questions at once at the beginning of that. Has it changed the way I live my life? Probably somewhat Yeah, sure. Because I was blowing and going, you know, before like, just way too much. I mean, it was it was a wake up call, you know, as far as I mean, when I came across your Instagram and it was like wow, this is great because you could get on

the, on the internet or whatever.

Snit Fitzpatrick 29:43

And I haven't really looked into like support groups or anything like that because in my mind, I was okay. But also one of the main reasons I wanted to be here today with you is to help other people and to let them know because I've had this, first I told you about my doctor, neurologists buddy.

Intro 30:04

If you've had a stroke, and you're in recovery, you'll know what a scary and confusing time it can be, you're likely to have a lot of questions going through your mind. Like, how long will it take to recover? Will I actually recover? What things should I avoid? In case I make matters worse, and doctors will explain things that obviously, you've never had a stroke before, you probably don't know what questions to ask.

Intro 30:29

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 it's called seven questions to ask your doctor about your stroke.

Intro 30:48

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.

Snit Fitzpatrick 31:07

We have another drummer friend. And unfortunately, he did the "I'm gonna lay down and take a nap" routine. And he called Mark like three days later, and it was way too late. So obviously, I know it's preaching to the choir for people to go, you have to act fast.

Snit Fitzpatrick 31:27

But if you go into the hospital and it wasn't a stroke, they're not going to berate you for coming in here. They're going to say, well, luckily, you're okay. But it was good that you came in. And I was at the dentist today and my dentist was talking about I guess it's a male thing wher "No, I'm okay I don't, I don't need to do

anything”.

Snit Fitzpatrick 31:52

I wouldn't call myself a hypochondriac. But there's there's a few other things that have happened in my life that I think have stayed with me. First of all, my aunt on my dad's side, my dad's sister, when she was about 42. And I think I was about 10 or 12 years old, she had a stroke, and she was in a wheelchair.

Snit Fitzpatrick 32:12

And it was very much a memory of my childhood. Also, not to sound morbid when my mother passed away when I was seven, she had brain tumors. And I remember as a little boy with her dizzy spells and freaking out now, of course, that was the number one question that I had for doctors, my friend Mark was this hereditary? Could that what caused it?

Snit Fitzpatrick 32:40

And my friend Mark, the neurosurgeon said no, it was not a factor and it wouldn't be a factor. Those two helped me know that when I had the stroke that I needed to act quickly. I needed to know I needed to call 911 I need to get to the hospital. And it wasn't one of those like, you know, I have a slight headache or there's a pain in my arm, it was a major incident going on, where I knew I had to do something quickly.

Bill Gasiamis 33:13

So in the last four years, has this become common knowledge in your circles? Does the because you will back at work so quickly and back in the band so quickly? Does do the fans to the people that listen to your music know that this happened to you? Did they become aware of that?

Snit Fitzpatrick 33:31

The time, sure. Now, like I posted something tonight about being on your podcast, because I want my friends to see it when it's aired. And my close friends were my girlfriends, certainly. But you know, when you're in playing with a bunch of people around, there's people that are your friends that of course know and there's people that are just basically I don't share that with everybody. But I mean at the time, sure, at the time, anybody that was around me or saw my band or work with me or whatever. It was a story that I told often.

Snit Fitzpatrick 34:10

But it's great. It's very therapeutic. And great for me to talk to you about it now. Because having gone through what you're going through that stuff that I hadn't done, other than this friend of mine recently that what's happened to him, but I certainly hadn't talked to somebody who's put as much into it as you have.

Bill Gasiamis 34:34

Yeah, fair enough. I appreciate that. So you're going about life a little differently. Today you're reflecting on what it is that you've been through and you're changing a few things and you're doing things a little bit differently. Tell me a little bit about The Snit Show? Did I say it right?

Snit Fitzpatrick 34:55

Yeah there's no snitch.

The Snit Show - Snit Fitzpatrick



Bill Gasiamis 34:58

The Snit Show and how did you end up with the name Snit?

Snit Fitzpatrick 35:02

Okay, I'll be happy to tell you that I'll keep it short. When I grew up as a kid, when my mom passed away I was living in northern Minnesota, and I got sent to live with my dad. God rest his soul, and it's a series of horrible stepmothers.

Snit Fitzpatrick 35:19

Luckily, they've not made me women hater, I love women. But when I finally got to the point where I was on my own, I lived in a little house out in the woods, in a

town called Rancocas woods, which is near Philadelphia, between Philly and New York.

Snit Fitzpatrick 35:34

So we could make as much noise as we wanted, and nobody could hear us. Now the only thing that was close to where I lived was a liquor store called Martin's Liquors . Now, what we did back then was, we would read everything backwards.

Snit Fitzpatrick 35:52

So the town I lived in sounds ridiculous, but where it came from, was called Rancocas Woods backwards that Sacocnar Sdoow Martin's Liquors backwards is Srouqil Snitram. So shorter the story here, they started calling my house Snitram's Palace, we're gonna go to Snitram's.

Snit Fitzpatrick 36:14

And then they started calling me Snitram, and they shortened it to Snit. That's where it came from. That was 1975. So that nickname kind of stuck around. And ironically enough, I'm a huge Atlanta Braves fan. That's my team. They won a World Series last year, and their manager's name is Brian Snitker. And he goes by Snit.

Snit Fitzpatrick 36:39

Now it was just a coincidence. It doesn't have anything to do with that. And nobody knows that. But here's where the meaning of the word Snit or whatever it slang or whatever. In the south, where I live. "Don't get yourself in a Snit" is an expression, meaning don't get your panties in a wad.

Snit Fitzpatrick 37:02

So I've had to live with that, too. So when I started my band, in 2000, I was on the road with this other band called The Hollisters. And we had a really good run. It was kind of alternative country, honkytonk, Texas, blah, blah, blah, which I'd never played before, but it was fun.

Snit Fitzpatrick 37:20

So I decided I wanted to start my own band. And I was hanging out with some people one night and said what have you been doing? And I said, I've been dragging this dog and pony show around the country, meaning The Hollister my old band. I thought that's a good name for a band. So there you go. I came up with the name Snit's Dog And Pony Show and 22 years later, still going.

Bill Gasiamis 37:44

Still going? And that's awesome. So would there be people who don't actually know your real name, and they only know you by the word Snit?

Snit Fitzpatrick 37:53

Oh, yeah lots of them.

Bill Gasiamis 37:55

I remember playing football club. Soccer, I remember playing in a soccer team. And the majority of the guys I actually did not know their real names. I knew them only by their nickname. And it's because I came into the club late and I was introduced to them by their nickname.

Bill Gasiamis 38:30

So two or three years down the track, I'm learning their real names, because somebody will refer to them by their real name. They'll say, you know, Peter, and I'm like Peter, who? We don't have a painter at the club. That's like, yeah, we do that guy. And they'll give me the nickname.

Bill Gasiamis 38:45

And then it's like, ah, that guy's name is actually Peter. So I find it really interesting how nicknames evolve. And then how the group changes it and makes it something so that it's easy for them to say and pronounce. And you just have to go along with it. You can't do anything about it. You can't change it. You can't make them stop saying that. It just sticks.

Snit Fitzpatrick 39:11

Well, it's funny too, because like somebody will call the store where I work. And they'll ask to speak to Kevin, and a couple of guys that work there that were new, somebody's looking for Kevin I said, Oh, that's me. That's my real name. So yeah. As far as on the gigs, and as far as the world, whatever it is what it is, and you know, I'm destined to be Snit. So there you go.

Bill Gasiamis 39:39

Yeah, fair enough. It's not a bad thing. So living at home when you got back from hospital, did anything have to change at home to kind of help you settle back in or was any of that stuff happening? Or was it all kind of just back to the usual routine?

Snit Fitzpatrick 40:00

And as far as I can recall Bill, it was back to the usual routine, other than the changes I had to make, you know, in a few months to get used to the CPAP machine. And I don't recall really changing anything. I mean, I'd have to look back and read through the process of what happened.

Snit Fitzpatrick 40:21

But as I recall, no, it wasn't. Because I was so lucky. That everything, I mean, obviously my case, is the ultimate result of what you'd like to happen to somebody that had happened to me, obviously. It was funny, because the day they got me up to do, they wanted me to walk toe to toe and do all these things, and had four hour sleep.

Snit Fitzpatrick 40:50

And I said, I didn't get any sleep. That's nothing to do with why I can't do this. I mean, what happened to me? The fact that I can't really do what you're asking me to do is because I'm tired, but as far as anything else goes, No, it was just, like I said, a medical miracle, for sure.

Bill Gasiamis 41:10

Yeah. That's why I'm probing because the more than 200 people that have already been on this podcast, nobody has had that version of a stroke before nobody has reported your version of it. And it's hard to contemplate. It's hard to get my head around it.

Bill Gasiamis 41:28

And it's great that I can't get my head around it. Because I'm glad that that's what happened. It's just so interesting and bizarre, but awesome, and amazing and fantastic and blessed. You know that's the way it went. Good on you, well done.

Snit Fitzpatrick 41:44

Well, I mean, that hits home really hard now to hear that you've never had anybody else that's been as lucky as me.

Bill Gasiamis 41:55

I know, they're out there. But I haven't had them on the podcast. And I normally get people who have been impacted in some way shape, or form and are still living with the impact of it many years later, or a few years later.

Bill Gasiamis 42:08

And, they're living a new version of themselves and a new way of life. Or they've adjusted a lot of things or, you know, they can't do things they used to do, I've met some musicians who haven't been able to go back and play their instrument anymore. So it's like, wow, this is such a great outcome. This is such an amazing thing. It's great to hear it really is.

Snit Fitzpatrick 42:29

Well, it's great. I feel course, like I said, I have friends, a friend of mine, who is a very well-known jazz drummer in Houston, that unfortunately, I mean, he's fighting the good fight. But, you know, he waited too long. He waited too long.

Snit Fitzpatrick 42:47

And I realized that, you know, all the things I had to have happened, after the whole thing was done, when I realized what had happened and realized that the TPA has a one in three shot that works. I had to get there quickly, that works.

Snit Fitzpatrick 43:04

And, everything that needed to happen for me to carry on my life, like nothing happened. happen. So I mean, yeah, that's why it's so important that was the main reason I told the story before, but that was the main reason why I wanted to talk to you other than, you know, sharing my stories to let people know that if something happens, and anything you feel like this is, like you said something I've read about you said something like numbness in your toes are.

Snit Fitzpatrick 43:37

I got a pinched nerve in my back. So my right toes are numb constantly. But it was either deal with that, which is just nothing or have somebody slice by backup, and I didn't want to do that. But any kind of numbness or any kind of loss you've got to move quick.

Snit Fitzpatrick 43:57

There's a refrigerator magnet says FAST, you know, it's like, I know one of the words afterwards, basically, the message is, act quickly the fact that I was so close on that particular night, like I said if it happened two days earlier, when I was 60 miles away from here, loading my gear, you know, huffing and puffing or whatever driving home or something.

Bill Gasiamis 44:28

Different situation.

Fear Of Driving Long Distances After TIA

Snit Fitzpatrick 44:30

So that part brings me to something else. The one thing I'm a little bit I wouldn't say paranoid or scared. I was I don't like to take long trips by myself in a car. I just went to Atlanta three weeks ago to visit friends. It's a two-hour flight, but I am a little bit queasy about like, you know, so we got a gig that's 80 miles from here about driving there by myself. So that part of what happened is probably the biggest thing that sticks with me as far as being concerned about stuff to happen again.

Bill Gasiamis 45:13

And you most likely been given the "all clear" to drive and do all that stuff anyway, and you look very capable of doing that. But I know what you're saying. It's kind of a thing that you're thinking about. And you're thinking about what might happen if something happens and when you're driving and you're doing a rapid speed, it could be a serious thing.

Snit Fitzpatrick 45:32

And there's something else I'm gonna remember this in 2019. About a year after I started using the CPAP, around summertime, I was having moments where I felt like something wasn't right. And I get to work now I'm okay, I'm okay.

Snit Fitzpatrick 45:53

And one day I came home from lunch, I live very close to where I work, and I didn't feel okay. And I took an Uber to a urgent care center not close, not far from here. They checked me in they ran a bunch of tests, they said, we need to take you to the hospital.

Snit Fitzpatrick 46:12

And I was like, Okay, here we go again, but I wasn't having any stroke symptoms. I was just lightheaded and spacey, and something wasn't right. So they checked me into the hospital. And I was there for two or three days. Bill, they ran tests on everything. Every blood test imagine every cat scans this, that the other and they said, there's nothing wrong with you.

Snit Fitzpatrick 46:40

So the cardiologist told me to come see him. I went to see my regular doctor who said no, I think it's called I can't remember what exactly it's a heart specialist. I mean, cardio physiologist maybe I think it's something like that.

Wrong Medication

Snit Fitzpatrick 47:00

When I went to see him. Obviously, after the stroke, I was put on another blood pressure medication. So I told you earlier in the story that I hadn't been taken when I had the stroke. Obviously, that was probably a mistake. Well, when I went to see this cardio physiologist, I hope I'm saying it right, somebody will correct me, I'm sure.

Snit Fitzpatrick 47:25

He said lay down. And he took my blood pressure. He said in a sit up. It's about blood pressure. Again, he said now stand up. And he took my blood pressure again. And he said, your blood pressure just dropped 30 points when I put you through that.

Snit Fitzpatrick 47:42

And he asked me what I was taking. And I can't for the life of me remember what it was. I know what I'm taking now. But he said, Oh, that's your problem. We're taking the wrong blood pressure medication. So all that, something's wrong with me. Oh, shit, you know, blah, blah. That put me in the hospital. All that was because I was taking the wrong blood pressure medication.

Bill Gasiamis 48:03

Wow. So that's really important. Actually, that's a really important message, if you're noticing symptoms, could be related to medications that don't agree with you.

Snit Fitzpatrick 48:12

Absolutely. So obviously, they switched my meds and you know, there you go. But that was a little over a year after the stroke. So, you know, somewhere in my subconscious was telling me something's not right here.

Bill Gasiamis 48:25

Sounds like you're really in-tune. In tune to that internal voice or something. I ignored my subconscious, my conscious my everything, I completely ignored

everything with the numbness that I experienced. And the numbness that I experienced was new, I had never had it before I was 37 years old. And I had work to do, I was too busy to pay attention to it. So it sounds like you're actually very well in-tune with, with what it is that you're noticing in your body. You're paying attention.

Snit Fitzpatrick 49:00

Well, yeah, it was just certainly that, having a stroke and knowing what that was about and knowing that, there was times where I hadn't felt well, but there's a difference between not feeling well and like I said, when I had the stroke, my first thought I remember was like it just happened. I was like, What the hell's going on here? You know, this isn't right. This is not like, my arm hurts. This is like, whoa, something major is going on with my body right now. So I was lucky that I didn't act like I'm sure a lot of people did and do nothing.

Bill Gasiamis 49:37

Yeah, I know that a lot of stroke survivors often over well, I did it I did it for sure. I kind of I was over anxious. So every time I noticed the headache bit, you know, between stroke one and brain surgery. I was at the hospital all the time. And and I was saying look, you gets probably I was going there and kind of apologizing at the beginning thing. Look, it's probably nothing but you know, I've had these things happen to me and I'm feeling weird, and you need to check it out.

Snit Fitzpatrick 50:10

I'm sure that any professional medical person was fine with you coming in and checking you out again. That's the message. Feel like well, I don't want to bother him BS it's your life. It's the only one you got.

Bill Gasiamis 50:25

Yeah, they were always lovely. And always tried to make me feel better about going in and checking in and a couple of hours later or say the next day, they would send me home and say, Look, everything's okay. You know, just keep coming back in if you need to. And that makes you feel relieved about about the fact that, you know, they want you there. That's what they do. They're supposed to prevent stuff. And prevention is better than cure, you know if they can.

Snit Fitzpatrick 50:51

One more thing, I'm glad I didn't forget this. When I was 21, I was getting ready. I

was with a band in New Jersey, we're getting ready to move to Atlanta, we're going to be southern rockers, and here we go. Right before that happened, I started having anxiety attacks, panic attacks.

Snit Fitzpatrick 51:10

And man looking back at it, it was scary. real scary, because my first thought once again, was going back to my mother with the and so a couple of times they took me to the emergency room. And by the time I got there they were about this a long time ago bill but I remember them saying there's nothing wrong with you got the flu.

Snit Fitzpatrick 51:36

There's nothing wrong here. So luckily, that was an hour thing because I had a similar situation years later with hypoglycemia, which is low blood sugar, which is something which caused the same kind of effect, Whoa, you're dizzy. Now, this was about 25 years ago. And I went to the doctor and they did where they take your blood. And they said, Well, yeah, you have low blood sugar.

Snit Fitzpatrick 52:02

So easily fix just eat, you know, eat something. So now I know if I haven't eaten. And I started to feel like that. That's the cause of it. So I'm glad I remembered those things, because those were before the stroke. But they were also things that happened to me that needed to be addressed. And were similar. As far as how I felt like something like this happening. That's not right.

Bill Gasiamis 52:32

Similarly, you know, I've had a few people on the podcast tell me about when they've had their stroke. And say, the day before that, or a week earlier, somebody said to them, man, I've got a massive migraine, you know, and that person is a migraine sufferer.

Bill Gasiamis 52:49

And they automatically did a scan in their own mind, then they went back and they tried to work out what was happening to them. That massive headache that they had the worst headache in the world they've ever had. And they went back to their friend and said, I and my friend had a migraine, it's probably a migraine.

Bill Gasiamis 53:08

And they then reported safe, for example, to the doctor with that type of

information. And then they kind of took the potential time to diagnose what was happening and make it last longer. And then, of course impacted more dramatically with a stroke, you know, so that's kind of what what I was doing as well, in my mind, I was going I've got a numb toe.

Bill Gasiamis 53:33

Well, that means there's something wrong with my back. And because I had a relationship with my chiropractor, because I had a property maintenance business where I would be lifting heavy things all day, putting my back out or twinging muscles or whatever. I outsource the responsibility to have good physical health to my chiropractor, base to go to him and say, look, you sort it out, get me back on my feet again.

Bill Gasiamis 53:56

And that's what happened with the numbness. I went to my chiropractor and I said to him, I've got a numb toe or numb leg by the time I got there. I've done some time back, you know, check it out. He checked it out and said there's no numbness there. And then it took him and then it took me a few more days to go back to him again and say look, the numbness has now spread to my entire left side.

Bill Gasiamis 54:16

And then when I got there, he said to me, you need to go to the hospital. This is not a chiropractic issue. And what I was doing when I went to him the first time was I was downplaying the seriousness of the situation or how bad it was affecting me. Because I didn't want to end up in hospital. I didn't want to be away from work. I didn't want to be out of action. And it's just so ridiculous.

Snit Fitzpatrick 54:40

I got stuff to do.

Bill Gasiamis 54:45

And that's that's the whole reason behind it. And even when he said to me, you have to go to the hospital that Friday, and I couldn't feel my entire left side. I argued with him even then I said, Am I gonna go to work tomorrow I told my wife the same thing. And I wouldn't and I wouldn't comply anyway, eventually went to the hospital. And then I found that it was a stroke. And then I felt like a bit of an idiot. But how could you have ever predicted that a numb toe is a bleed in the

brain?

Snit Fitzpatrick 55:11

I've never heard that before. There you go. This friend of mine I was telling you about, you know, he was on the floor with food. So he thought was food poisoning for two days before he finally got to the hospital and they said no you have a stroke.

Snit Fitzpatrick 55:26

So that part of it too is, what I found out obviously, what's happened to you I've never heard I've heard "yeah had a mini-stroke or transient ischemic attack or a major hemorrhage". I didn't I didn't realize there was more situations or more things that could happen to

Bill Gasiamis 55:56

That cause a stroke.

Snit Fitzpatrick 55:58

Yeah, that cause it and the results of what afterwards? What's going to happen to you. So I didn't realize that.

Bill Gasiamis 56:05

Yeah. And the thing about some people that have a TIA is they don't take it seriously, it sounds like you definitely have, but some people they'll be back at work a couple of days later. And they didn't take it seriously, they don't pay attention to what the doctors are saying. And then they have another stroke down the track. And that's because the TIA is a warning sign and saying, Hey, there's something wrong. You need to pay attention and do something about it.

Snit Fitzpatrick 56:32

When I got to the hospital, they were like, they said you had a stroke. They didn't say, Well, you might have had a stroke. They said you had a stroke. And it was like, okay, yeah, I guess I did. And, the follow up. And once again hitting home I can't say enough, it's, acting quickly. That's the most important thing. I mean, it's not 100%. But it's certainly not going to get any better on its own.

Bill Gasiamis 57:05

100% Yeah, very much so. So tell me about the next gig that you've got coming up with the next gig? And, and just be aware that this interview will probably be out

in about three weeks from now, because we've got a few in the pipeline now that everyone responded and said they wanted to be on the podcast, which is great.

Snit Fitzpatrick 57:27

Friends of mine were like, When can I see it? And I said, well I'm sure you'll send it to me and I can share when COVID hit, we were very lucky, there was three or four places that we played out, they were outside, or, you know, covered up mostly outside, where we were away from people.

Snit Fitzpatrick 57:51

And we were able to continue to work and do what we do. So now, I mean, at this point in my life, travel is not as much as it used to be by any means unless I get a chance to go to Europe. And that hasn't happened in a long time.

Snit Fitzpatrick 58:06

But, you know, tomorrow night, I'm doing a little thing in Houston, a place that we play it normally with just playing acoustic and electric guitar and bass. And I play drums with a guy and we play every Monday night, a little place just outside just on the west side of town.

Snit Fitzpatrick 58:27

So I'm doing enough to keep my chops up drum, singing, and guitar, and I know how I am to save my day off. And usually, the first thing I do is get my books out and try to book more gigs and, you know, stay busy and stay in the game, you know, when it's like, I don't know how much more I get to stay in the game because it's like, at 68 there's always somebody coming up behind you.

Snit Fitzpatrick 59:00

And as long as I can do what I do and make a few bucks, have some fun, I keep doing it. And the website is snitshow.com and all the posts on there as far as the links and everything as far as what I do.

Bill Gasiamis 59:16

Yeah, we'll definitely send everybody if they want to catch up with you or find out how to follow you or do any of that stuff. They can go to recoveryafterstroke.com/episodes and they'll be able to see the episode with your name in it.

Bill Gasiamis 59:34

And it'll be Kevin (Snit) , and then we'll finish it off with your the rest of your name and we'll be able to get people to see that. I really appreciate you coming on the show. Reaching out and sharing your story. And I especially love the fact that you want to do it to raise awareness for others. People. That's brilliant. That's exactly what the show is about. And I wish you well, man, and I hope you keep playing to your 100.

Snit Fitzpatrick 1:00:07

Yeah, and I'm really happy, thanks for having me first of all, and if I can help somebody out there in the world, it's like when I help kids quit smoking, there's a kid that I work with, at ike 22, and it finally got her to quit. I said, Sunday, when I'm dead and gone, you're gonna remember me, I was the one that help you quit smoking?

Snit Fitzpatrick 1:00:28

You know, because it's hard. It took me a long time to do, like I said, I'm really glad I came across your Instagram, and it's immediately got my attention. And the fact that the first time I had a chance to really share my story with somebody that is so aware of it, and just doing so much to help people in our position.

Bill Gasiamis 1:00:31

I'll tell you why I got overwhelmed with the response, I put it out there, just off the cuff, just not thinking too much about how many people would respond. And I think I got 30 or so responses. There's 52 weeks in the year, I release one episode a year, I mean, that's the majority of one of my years, you know, filled with podcast episodes, if I continue to release one a week.

Bill Gasiamis 1:01:25

So I'm gonna have to start releasing a couple more a week. Because I don't want it to be such a long delay between recording and then releasing that's too much of a delay. But I was so overwhelmed. And it's amazing that there is so many stroke survivors that want to do exactly what you want to do. They want to share their story, and they want to help other people. And I just love that about our community. I think it's amazing.

Snit Fitzpatrick 1:01:47

Right? Well, it's great. It's great that it's something positive for our social media site really positive, what you're doing other than just frivolous, nonsense, which a

lot of it is.

Bill Gasiamis 1:02:01

Thanks so much. I really appreciate it.

Bill Gasiamis 1:02:03

Well, thanks again for joining us on today's episode. If you would like to learn more about my guests, including links to download a full transcript of the entire interview, please go to recoveryafterstroke.com/episodes. If you'd like to support this podcast, and I would really appreciate it, the best way to do it is to leave a five-star review, and a few words about what the show means to you on iTunes, and Spotify.

Bill Gasiamis 1:02:29

And if you're watching on YouTube, leave a comment below the video, give it a thumbs up, subscribe to receive notifications of new episodes so you can get them as they come out. Now, sharing this show with family and friends on social media, we'll make it possible for people who may be in need of this type of contact to find it easier.

Bill Gasiamis 1:02:29

And that may make a massive difference to somebody that is on the road to recovery after their own stroke experience. So thanks again for being here. Thanks for supporting me and doing all the things that you do to make this show what it is I really appreciate you for listening I really appreciate the listeners and I really appreciate the the guests for coming on. See you on the next episode.

Intro 1:02:53

Importantly, we present many podcast designed to give you an insight and understanding into the experiences of other individuals. The opinions and treatment protocols discussed during any podcast are the individual's own experience and we do not necessarily share the same opinion nor do we recommend any treatment protocol discussed.

Intro 1:03:38

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Intro 1:03:50

The content is intended to complement your medical treatment and support healing. It is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice and should not be relied on as health advice. The information is general and may not be suitable for your personal injuries, circumstances or health objectives.

Intro 1:04:06

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Intro 1:04:22

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Intro 1:04:45

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