

I learned about Parkinson's, really learned about it, through my dad. "Through" is the important word, because we've walked an interesting part of this journey together.

Make no mistake, Dad is the one who has Parkinson's - it's much more his burden than mine. But because of the way he has allowed me to share his story, exploring his experiences and compare them against others, we've helped each other in more ways than either of us imagined.

It was the summer of 2001. I was preparing for a film shoot called, "the long road home". Though I had acted and written my first two films in Hollywood, this was my first attempt at adding directing and producing to my job title - and I was out of Tinsel town.

I returned to fertile ground in the east San Francisco Bay Area, where I grew up - Walnut Creek, specifically - to shoot this film. My dad, who was deeply supportive of all my works said, after reading this script, it was my best yet.

About six weeks before production started, my mom found out she had breast cancer. Less than two weeks later, my dad was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease (PD). Shock isn't the word - flattened is closer. There really was no understanding why. And as my mom's cancer treatment was going to be aggressive, my dad and I put the whole question of what PD was on the back burner.

Three years later, mom was a breast cancer survivor. Dad's PD symptoms had become slightly noticeable, but our understanding of what PD was and what one could or should do with it, were very limited.

I rewatched "Field of Dreams" on a whim and began to cry. My dad and I had started a tour of the Major League Baseball parks back in the early 1990's, but only got to 7 out of 30. Ray Kinsella's story of love, loss and regret with his father lit a fire underneath me - we would complete our journey before PD had anything to say about it.

That summer we road tripped 20,000 miles in two months to see a game at each of the 30 MLB parks. We met many people with Parkinson's (PWP's), care partners and PD experts along the way. We saw the disease manifested in many ways and became aware of the saying, "if you've met one person with Parkinson's, you've met one person with Parkinson's."

I completed a documentary of our journey called "Boys of Summer". It won a few awards on the film festival circuit and even got an interesting nibble back in Hollywood to adapt the story into a feature film. Nothing more materialised and that was okay. We got the journey out of it, met a ton of interesting and wonderful people and had the confidence from the brightest minds in PD that there would be a cure within ten years.

As of 2014, there was no cure. But PD was still plugging away.

As people were asking me how my dad was, I decided to show, rather than tell them, with a sequel. That film, "Second Base", has a marked shift in tone, with the emphasis on maximizing quality of life, which we can do something about, over finding a cure - something that we're hopeful for, but realize is beyond our personal means.

It began to screen for audiences in fall of 2017. The Oakland A's and Cincinnati Reds have held private screenings and more teams are lining up in 2018.

As we share "Second Base" we're also in production with the third film, "Short Stop". In this film, we work to discover the best work being done in MLB communities across the country for PD. From exercise and social groups to fundraisers and out-of-the-box wellness programs, we are highlighting the best work people are doing as communities, in an effort to inspire others to do their best in their own community.

Our plan is to premiere "Short Stop" at the World Parkinson's Congress in Kyoto, Japan in June 2019. Along with the Boys of Summer work, I'm proud to have helped found Parkinson's Place, Las Vegas and be partnered with top-level entities in Las Vegas like the Cleveland Clinic for Brain Health, UNLV and Rock Steady Boxing.

Our job is to be one of the shining beacons of hope for those with or affected by PD. We are better together and we aim to prove that every day.