

Greetings, I am a former patient of Dr. Stern's from 1984, a long time ago in a galaxy far far away, called the '80's. I wanted to contact Dr. Stern to thank him for providing me with a second chance at life that I've gone forth and done more than I ever thought possible.

To refresh his memory, I was shot in the head on the evening of Nov. 3RD, 1984, and brought to Palomar Memorial Hospital's ER/Trauma center. I staggered in with a bloody handkerchief held to my face with my schoolmates running around screaming, "he's been shot!" After awhile in the ER, my condition worsened (obviously! I had a freakin bullet in my brain and a depressed skull fracture!) Anyway, Dr. Mark S Stern was called in and things moved forward. Did I mention I was conscious through this entire ordeal? Dr. Stern performed the surgery to remove the bullet and damaged brain matter. God smiled and allowed me to live.

This coming Nov 3rd is my 24th Anniversary of surviving this ordeal. I wanted to contact Dr. Stern and let him know I made it! I'm still here! I'm now at a stable point in my life post TBI that I want to give back to others who are dealing with the beginning stages of living with brain injury. Most of who are US Military men and women. I enlisted in the US Army Reserves at 37 years old in 2005, going to Boot Camp at 37 years old in 2006! It was tough but I kept saying, "I won't quit, I've survived being shot in the head and this won't stop me either!"

My message to Dr. Stern is thank you. Thank you for giving me the second chance at life. I've done so much with it. I've been in Law Enforcement and Security since 1992 and now serve as a United States Soldier in the US Army Reserves in Denver, CO. I feel driven to speak out about TBI on behalf of the service men and women coming back from the war with TBI's. I know what they're going through, I've been there.

I'd like to extend an offer to Dr. Stern to use my case as a success story for brain surgery and life post TBI. I want my story of triumphing over tragedy to be able to inspire and help people who are in the beginning stages of TBI recovery and see there's hope they can have a somewhat 'normal' life again. I'd like to somehow come back to San Diego from Denver and meet with Dr. Stern to tell him face to face what I've done since he used his skills to perform an act of God in my mangled skull. I owe a lot to him on that fateful night.

Last weekend I participated in the Pikes Peak Challenge fund raising event with the BIA in Colorado. It is a fundraiser and I raised over \$450.00 for the event. But I'm getting it more exposure through a local newspaper story and the Army Public Affairs Office photographers. I want to be a spokesperson for TBI survivor's, because I am one, and it's been a long climb back up to have a life again!

Please enjoy the pics and have Dr. Stern give me a call or email me, we've got lots to talk about. The car pictures are related to a rolling 9/11 Memorial car I'm working on called the Freedom Firebird Project. I'm transforming my 1977 Formula Firebird into a tribute vehicle. The colorful pics are the scale model prototype. The real Firebird is the white one in primer with a groovy 70's hood. The twin hood scoops serve as the fallen twin towers with the Pentagon behind them. The face of the Bald Eagle will be on the front end with the American Flag down the long front fenders. Let's Roll will be on the rear spoiler, honoring the Flight 93 crash victims, thus all three crash sites are represented on the car. The goal is to complete it and drive it cross country from the Denver area to the three Hallowed Ground crash sites from the 9/11 tragedies. It's on myspace at <http://www.myspace.com/freedomfirebirdproject>. I wouldn't have been able to be this creative without the magic that Dr. Stern worked on my brain 23+ years ago in 1984! I'm trying to make the most of my 2nd chance at life and truly want those that helped me get there to step up and be recognized!. Dr. Mark Stern and Dr. Michael Martelli, VA, were the two most instrumental persons outside of my parents and the Lord Almighty who DIRECTLY allowed me to be as functioning and free spirited as I am today. I look back at the years of pain and psychological anguish and recognize it as a necessary part of healing. Now I want to give back, but in a big way. I want to begin being an outspoken spokesperson for the needs and rights of Brain Injury Survivors, for I too am a Survivor, and I have a voice, and I use it.

Thank you,
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Support the Freedom Firebird Project-Rolling 9/11 Memorial car!
<http://www.myspace.com/freedomfirebirdproject>