

## The Case of the Missing Chiropractors

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Editor's note: This article is a sequel to "[Private Chiropractor](#)," published in the Nov. 18, 2004 issue of DC.

I was in my office, reading the daily news, my feet up on the desk and leaning back in my old office chair when it crashed. I shouldn't have been surprised, since I bought it back in 2018, and the antique springs just couldn't handle the stress anymore. The laptop went flying, smashing on the floor, and I fell on my rear end, no damage noted. I loved that old chair, but have always hated these cheap laptops. The government has distributed laptops to the populace like lollipops, at no cost, but these machines only receive the "state" approved Internet sites. That's why I have hidden my old Mac from the authorities and joined a secretive ISP called the "underground railroad." Although often jammed by the federal communications police, it gave me access to the rest of the world.

Practicing chiropractic in the third decade of the 21st century is much like practicing any kind of medicine. Health care is now run by the government. All bills are paid through an intermediary company, Multinational Healthcare Corp (MHC), which is responsible for administering the plan. MHC is also the banker for student loans in all medical and healing arts schools, and the interest rates are extremely high.

Many years ago, I said "Enough already!" I dropped out of the system and moved into an old office building in a forgotten part of the megapolis. I now operate on a "barter" system, and only accept new patients if they are referred by another patient or a friend. That's why I remain: Johnny Hawks ... Private Chiropractor.

Marge, my assistant knocked on my door. "There's some gal at the front desk who claims she was referred to you as a new patient by Bud, the janitor." Marge had the countenance of a poker player, so I couldn't take her read on the referral. One can't be too careful, since the HIPAA cops come in all shapes and sizes. "Well ... OK," I said, "Let's meet her."

She walked in like she meant it. It turned out her coach had referred her to a young DC to treat her knee problem, but he had disappeared. "I showed up for my next appointment, but the door was locked! I could see through the window that all the equipment was gone!" She looked honestly puzzled. "He was a good doctor. How could that happen? Weird."

I had heard the rumors: young DCs, usually solo in practice, vanishing without a trace. Now here was this young athlete telling me her DC was "beamed up" somewhere. I needed to find out the "low-down."

I fixed her knee, and then strolled down to Mike's Elbow Room, where I often meet up with a few of the other "underground" chiropractors for a cocktail or two. Most of the guys were already there, including Stempy Stathopolous, Larry "Lordosis" Lujack, Mary Margaret Maniac, and my old friend, Stanley Kowalski. High fives and kisses, small talk and then, "What's the skinny on these new chiros fading out overnight?" I finally asked. To my surprise, nobody knew nothin'.

Stempy, the nervous one, spoke up first. "Nobody knows nothin'." But Dr. Maniac understood the

question. "It's got to have something to do with the heavy start-up costs in a solo practice."

Stan spoke up. "Call the Big Fish." He meant the one DC who could ferret out the truth, and separate the wheat from the chaff: Axel Axelberg, "The Activator." He treated a lot of politicians, bureaucrats, and robotic engineers, and seemed to be the one guy among us who could get things done. I sent word to him about the disappearing DCs and that I needed information.

The "Activator" figured out a way to meet up at a place with no security cameras peering at us. He was always blunt. "Any chiropractor with a student loan that is in default is picked up by the MHC police and 'reallocated' to the giant state-run medical clinics." I just stared at him. Dr. Axelberg continued, "Until the loans are paid up, that's where they stay."

On the subway, going home, I couldn't stop thinking about these young DCs. The government clinics paid slave wages, not enough to come close to paying off the debts. It made me nostalgic for the old days of the "cash practice," before the feds made all currency digital and outlawed paper money.

The rail ride home was always long. I tried to sleep. We underground "old guys and gals" and the young kids are keeping chiropractic alive, but the threats to our sovereignty keep on coming. The "print" newspapers are gone, but the information is still out there, if one can only find it. Reading the newspaper on a cheap laptop was never my choice. Our struggle may never end.

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