**Amnesia! (from 1958)**

I never thought this phenomenon was real until it happened to me. This was a (thankfully) one time experience. The world was a blank for a while, and all I remember is lying face down on some concrete with some voices in the background. There was a puddle of goo in front of my face and the voices kept insisting that I move something. I finally was able to focus on the goo, but did not respond to those insistent voices. They would not leave me alone. I finally recognized them as the Physical Education teachers from school; after all I was at Walter Reed Junior High School in North Hollywood at the time. Nobody wanted to touch me at all. As I slowly awakened, I decided to move a finger. I was surprised at the happy reaction from the voices when the finger moved. What is going on here? I did not want to do anything, but the voices kept encouraging me to move the whole arm. “Oh, all right”, I thought, so I moved the arm a little. The voices even encouraged me some more. I then decided I was tired of looking at the goo and slightly rolled over to see like six people hovered over me. “Why are they so interested in a very sleepy person on the ground?”, I am thinking. Oh well, I might as well get onto my knees a little bit. I have never before and never since heard so many people so happy with a little movement. They then helped me to my feet, helped me into a waiting vehicle and drove me to the nearest hospital. I kind of fell asleep again during the ride. That was not well-received, so I was forced to stay awake until I was placed in a hospital bed, and collapsed.

This time, when I woke up, there was only one person present looking at me. I thought to myself, I am fine, what am I doing here. The person said I was there for observation. I said, “I am fine, let me out of here!”. After a couple of days, it was a Friday, so I was released to go home for the weekend. I showed up at school as usual the next Monday. The other students were glad to see me; they said that I had had an accident in the parking lot. The teachers were afraid that I had broken my neck and was paralyzed from the neck down. I did not have a mark on me. Oh well, back to the usual schoolwork.

Then there was an Algebra test. Wait a minute here! There are symbols and expressions on this test that I have no idea what they are. There was some discussion in history class about events that I knew nothing about. After some discussion with my friends, I find out that this material was covered in class two months ago. Meanwhile, there were some poor exam grades. Well, I used to be a good student.

The friends that were with me at the time explained what had happened. We were in the parking lot next to the bicycle racks and playing touch football. I had just intercepted a pass and was running for the goal line. They all yelled at me to STOP, so I turned my neck around to look at them. The parking lot was under construction with the posts in place and a cross bar between the posts, but no fencing installed yet. I saw the posts and went between them, but the cross bar hit me right in the side of the neck and my feet went sailing out from under me, leaving my body unconscious and face-down on the concrete. My friends had rushed over to the Physical Education department nearby to recruit help.

I did not remember a thing about the incident. I had to study all the material from class for the last two months, and my memory gradually spooled back the information. It started to recall incidents from two months ago, then one month ago, then weeks, and finally after about a year, I could recall what had happened that day. By that time, I had many poor exam scores, poor grades, and parents that were so happy that I was still alive with no serious side effects except that I could not remember meeting certain people or doing anything outside of school over that two month period at all.

By this time, I was already going to Hollywood High School. I had decided that missing class was too much work to make up, and I was tired of being sick and spending time in the hospital as there were several such events in junior high. I set my target as a Perfect Attendance for high school. With the help of my Mom, who got me out of bed, and my Dad, who drove me to school every day, I achieved that goal. I even got to sit in the front row of graduation at the Hollywood Bowl because I had achieved that Perfect Attendance honor.

Epilog: The Ventura Freeway was under construction at the time and went through the north part of the school just east of Colfax Street. I still remember that area when going down that part of the freeway which is now 20 feet of fill dirt over that zone. They had replaced the lost land by expanding to the south and planning to move the old bungalow class rooms from the north to the south (two of which fell completely apart during the move) as well as move the parking lots. Hence, there was a new bicycle lot for the students and a school employee parking lot under construction when school started again after the summer vacation. My football playing friends and I were members of the Service Club who were assigned to watch the lots until they were locked up for the day. All I remember about the Service Club was that they assigned the good students nonsense jobs to try to keep the campus operating smoothly. One such example was students assigned to stand in the middle of hallways to make sure of a clockwise movement of people. The bicycle watching job was great, we got to play games in the morning away from everyone else and show up for class 15 minutes late. By the time I got to high school, I felt like I had been liberated. I could go down any side of the hallway in any direction and even skip stairs going up or down.