

AMAZONIAN MEDICINE

Written by

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INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - MORNING

Bible Study members BARNEY (69), DARLENE (66), CLIFFORD (73), MARTHA (72) and HERBERT (18, grandson of Clifford and Martha, not a Bible Study member) sit in cushiony chairs. They silently pray, holding hands. Herbert rapidly taps his foot.

A NURSE (27) walks in with a frown.

NURSE  
(remorsefully to Herbert)  
You are going to die.

HERBERT  
What?

BARNEY  
(trying to make light)  
Always serve us the truth cold,  
don't ya?

CLIFFORD  
Welcome to the sick squad, champ.

A DOCTOR (40) walks in.

DOCTOR  
The amount of myeloid cells in your  
blood is out of control.

HERBERT  
Fuck!

CLIFFORD  
Buddy. Not a "f word" situation. A  
prayer situation.

HERBERT  
What can we do?!

MARTHA  
There's a question for the Lord.

Herbert opens his mouth, but is too defeated to argue.

LATER

Herbert sits against the wall outside, teary eyed. A DELIVERY MAN (30) approaches with an AMAZON PACKAGE. He gives it to Herbert.

HERBERT  
I don't work here. I--

The Delivery Man walks off. Herbert walks inside. Everyone else is talking with the Nurse and Doctor.

HERBERT (CONT'D)  
Got a package. From Amazon.

MARTHA  
The Lord has spoken!

CLIFFORD  
Let's travel to the Amazon!

DARLENE  
Praise be, what a wonderful idea!

HERBERT  
The fucking Amazon?

CLIFFORD  
Herbert, language.

HERBERT  
Sorry Grandpa.  
(beat)  
Isn't that place, like, dangerous?

BARNEY  
It's rich with thousands of God's  
creations.

NURSE  
Excuse me. Not that it's really my  
place, but you could die there.

The Doctor nudges the Nurse.

NURSE (CONT'D)  
That was a bit insensitive, I'm  
sorry. What I'm saying is wouldn't  
you rather do something, like, go  
to Florida? Be in the sand and sun  
with your fellow people? Give chemo  
a shot?

HERBERT  
I like that.

CLIFFORD  
Would the Lord want you staring at  
ladies in those tiny swimsuits?

HERBERT  
I would.

Clifford passes Herbert a playful "Come on, now" grin. The four oldies put their hands on the Amazon box. They all look at Herbert.

HERBERT (CONT'D)

Dying from cancer does sound lamer.

Herbert puts his hand in. The oldies cheer.

LATER

The Nurse goes through paperwork with the Doctor.

NURSE

Well, I'm at least going to  
Florida. Sick of this sick shit.  
Need my Spring Break.

INT. DHC-6 TWIN OTTER PLANE - MIDDAY

All five are equipped parachutes. The PILOT calls back.

PILOT

Why the thrilling trip to the  
Amazon?

CLIFFORD

We have lethal illnesses.

PILOT

Wasn't expecting that. Whatch'all  
got?

CLIFFORD

Lung nodule.

DARLENE

Critical limb ischemia.

BARNEY

Brain tumor.

MARTHA

I forget what I have.

HERBERT

Leukemia. AML.

The Pilot walks over to the door.

PILOT

You've come to a gorgeous place.  
Take care and God bless, my  
beauties.

Pilot opens the door. Darlene, Barney, Martha and Clifford file out. The Pilot offers a dap to a shaking Herbert.

PILOT (CONT'D)

Sometimes you just gotta send it.

Herbert hits a dap that can be heard across the Amazon.  
Herbert jumps out.

Everyone pulls their chutes and feathers into the emerald rain forest. Herbert untangles himself and looks down into the darkness. He checks his phone -- no bars. Everyone begins climbing down, drops of dew falling onto their faces. Herbert hears a hissing... jump scared, he loses his grip and falls with a scream. A bush gently catches him and eases him to the ground.

CUT TO:

Herbert and the oldies fish through the brush. Darlene limps due to her leg. Clifford takes a moment to catch his breath, hands on his knees. Barney rubs his head and winces.

MARTHA

Where are we?

HERBERT

I'm wondering the same thing,  
Grandma. It's scary here.

CLIFFORD

Come now sport. Sitting around on  
your screens and the slow death of  
cancer might be the same thing. If  
you're gonna die, might as well  
live.

EXT. FLORIDA BEACH - DAY

The sun blasts the sand, rolling with turquoise and spotted with swimsuits, umbrellas and volleyballs.

The Nurse sips a bottle of Tito's and sunbathes with her  
FRIEND (27). Both answer some Snapchats.

NURSE

How do I look?

FRIEND  
Girlfriend... the sexiest.

EXT. AMAZON JUNGLE - NIGHT

Martha and Darlene finish up leafy beds. Clifford and Barney create huts with sticks and leaves.

CLIFFORD  
(to Herbert)  
Hey champ, go fetch some more  
branches?

HERBERT  
No thank you.

BARNEY  
(waving his hand)  
Unless you want to be exposed to  
the creepy crawlies that--

HERBERT  
(walking away)  
Got it, got it.

Herbert, away from camp, explores. He looks to the sky. Suddenly a few lightning bugs stir up in front of him, illuminating the bruises on his arm. He chases, but can't catch. He spots two in the distance. As he runs over, the lightning bugs begin to snarl. A JAGUAR with a large spot around its left eye steps into the moonlight.

HERBERT (CONT'D)  
(shitting himself)  
Aww, look at the friendly kitty.  
Wanna go chase the lightning bugs?  
(small beat)  
And not me?

Unwavering, Herbert ducks and chucks a stick into the brush away from him. He pops back up, but the Jaguar didn't fall for it... it's now walking towards him quicker. Herbert starts sprinting back to camp.

HERBERT (CONT'D)  
(yelling)  
Jaguar! Jaguar!

HERBERT (CONT'D)  
(ducking behind Clifford)  
Sorry Grandpa.

The Jaguar slowly and ominously enters the campsite. Darlene stumbles, backing up. Barney rubs his head.

BARNEY  
(trying to stay calm)  
Everyone take it easy. He looks  
friend--

The Jaguar leaps at Barney and starts ripping and biting at his head. Herbert screams. The Jaguar's teeth penetrate the skull, and with its claw, it carefully picks out the tumor. The Jaguar chews it up and proceeds to lick Barney's wound, stopping the bleeding.

BARNEY (CONT'D)  
(through the pain)  
Ticklish, oh my!

Everyone stares in wonder. The Jaguar walks off.

EXT. FLORIDA BEACH - DAY

The Nurse and her Friend pose like they're on a Victoria's Secret photoshoot, taking pictures of each other.

CUT TO:

The Nurse lays on the beach, photoshopping the photos, polishing her skin and enlarging parts of her body. She and her friend finish the bottle of Tito's they smuggled on to the beach.

CUT TO:

INSIDE THE NURSE'S BODY:

The alcohol rushes through the Nurse's bloodstream.

EXT. AMAZON JUNGLE - MORNING

All five trek on from their camp, Barney missing some hair.

MARTHA  
Barney, what happened?

HERBERT  
You saw! A jaguar attacked him!

BARNEY  
I'm pretty dandy though. A little  
less hair for one less bump is an  
okay trade for me.

Barney's stomach grumbles.

BARNEY (CONT'D)  
I'm hungry if anything.

Clifford spots some colorful fruit up in a tree.

CLIFFORD  
(to Herbert)  
Help your old old man, champ.

CUT TO:

Clifford and Herbert swing on a vine from one tree to another.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)  
I'm Cliff-zan!

Herbert laughs in adoration. Both collapse into the other tree. Clifford has his hands on his knees, breathing heavily, but smiles. Herbert picks their snack. He sticks his hand out behind him.

HERBERT  
Here you go, Grandpa.  
(beat)  
Grandpa?

Herbert turns around and sees an massive ANACONDA slowly wrapping its way up and around Clifford. Herbert's jaw drops.

CLIFFORD  
Oh goodness. Hey there, snakey boy.

The Anaconda begins to constrict Clifford's stomach. Clifford begins to choke.

DARLENE  
Herbert! Do something!

Herbert sticks his hands up, eyes bulged, body shaking.

Clifford begins to choke even more, coughing rapidly. Herbert's fists are white. Suddenly, a bloody chunk comes flying out of Clifford's mouth. The Anaconda unwinds. Struggling for his bearings, Clifford stumbles backwards and splashes into the Amazon River. Herbert firefighter slides down the tree. Martha swims in after Clifford. Clifford pops up from the water. He takes a few deep breaths. He swims over to a bloody chunk floating in the water.

CLIFFORD  
Well look at this stinker.



Clifford laughs. He takes a long, deep inhale. He exhales slowly. He chucks his tumor deep into the brush.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)  
Thank you, snakey boy.  
(to Martha)  
Martha, so good to see you.

MARTHA  
C-- C--  
(beat)  
Why are you in the water?

A DARK SHADOW slinks around Martha. Herbert taps Darlene.

HERBERT  
(pointing)  
Yo Darlene, you see that?

Darlene adjusts her glasses.

DARLENE  
That might be an Eel.

The ELECTRIC EEL suddenly attacks Martha's leg, sending 600 volts through her body. She tremors and wails and her hair frizzles. After twenty seconds, the Eel swims away. Martha collapses into the water with a hiss and burst of steam. Now Darlene rushes in. Clifford pulls his wife up.

MARTHA  
Clifford? Darlene?

EXT. HOTEL BALCONY - NIGHT

CLOSE ON:

The Nurse's duck-faced face being flashed with the Snapchat flash. Blue light pierces her eyes.

FRIEND  
Hey. Let's get our bonfire goin'.

NURSE  
(on her phone)  
Gimme, like, one minute.

PHONE FLASH CUT  
TO:

The Friend walks in, dressed in a lanky sweatshirt and pj's.

FRIEND

You've been on that all trip.  
Bonfire. Let's go.

NURSE

Bonfire? What bonfire?

FRIEND

Are you stupid?

EXT. AMAZON JUNGLE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

All four oldies chuckle. Herbert is too shocked to respond.

CLIFFORD

This water feels heavenly.

MARTHA

Warmer than those retirement home  
pools.

DARLENE

Barney, give it a try.

He steps in, breaths in relief. Everyone looks to Herbert. He  
shakes his head.

BARNEY

(pointing and panicked)  
Herbert! By your feet!

Herbert screams and runs and jumps into the water. He pops up  
and everyone is laughing. Herbert shakes his head and laughs.  
He joins everyone else, floating on their back.

The sun outlines the thousands of plant species with a golden  
light. Flowers provide constellations of color. The warm,  
gentle water lulls everyone along.

CLIFFORD

Passion fruit flower, orchid,  
bromel-something.

(beat)

Had no clue the Amazon smelled so  
good.

HERBERT

Grandpa, you can't smell Five Guys'  
fries...

CLIFFORD

Champ, I'm breathing my best life.

Long beat.

HERBERT

Do you guys believe in Heaven? I'm sorry, I know I shouldn't ask.

MARTHA

Don't apologize. Take a look around.

BARNEY

Thousands of different, diverse species, under one moisturizing roof. Pretty heavenly to me.

LATER

Montage of Herbert running along shore and jumping in, making various poses.

Herbert runs along the bank and cannonballs in. Everyone claps and holds up ten fingers. Herbert swims back to shore.

HERBERT

Anyone else?

Darlene swims to shore. Everyone cheers. Herbert offers Darlene a fistbump.

HERBERT (CONT'D)

Let's go Darleeeeeeeene!

Darlene stumbles on her swollen red leg. Herbert catches her. He spots her as she briskly limps/hops on one leg to the River. She jumps in. Everyone cheers, Herbert loudest of everyone.

HERBERT (CONT'D)

One hundred out of ten.

Darlene winces and grabs for her leg. She rapidly starts rubbing and itching her leg. She's tossing and turning in the water. As everyone swims to her aid, Herbert feels the current shift beneath him.

HERBERT (CONT'D)

Woah. What the--

Nostrils and eyes surface in front of the lazy river riders. A CROCODILE cranks open its jaw as Darlene floats right towards it. Everyone starts paddling and splashing away. The Croc is locked on Darlene, and the current leads her right to its plaque-y teeth, which come thundering down on her injured leg.

Darlene calls out in agony as the Crocodile pulls at it like a tug toy. The other four scream. The Croc rips the leg off and leaves it to drift down the River. The Croc closes its mouth and pushes Darlene to shore near a sunny break in the trees. It then swims away. Everyone swims to Darlene.

HERBERT (CONT'D)  
(hand to his mouth)  
Losing a lot of red.

Everyone paces and looks around. Darlene drags herself to the sunny spot. The rays blast her leg while dew drops trickle on and wash it out. Herbert fiddles with his hands, trying to think of something to do. He breaks off a giant leaf and begins to rub Darlene's open wound. The leaf gradually absorbs the blood.

INT. FLORIDA BAR - NIGHT

The Nurse looks at her Insta post of her pics from earlier, reading comments of "GORGEOUS" and "WISH I WAS YOU". Her Friend walks up.

FRIEND  
Sister, what's on your chest?

The Nurse stares blankly at her Friend. She shakes her head and proceeds to touch her chest and feels a little bump.

EXT. AMAZON JUNGLE - NIGHT

Everyone sets up camp again with sticks and vines. Darlene one foot hops away from the shack and takes a seat.

DARLENE  
On the bright side, he took the  
right leg.

HERBERT  
(chuckles)  
That's facts.

Everyone cuddles into their leafy tree-gazing blankets. The moon barely creeps into sight.

MARTHA  
This feels like the first time  
Grandpa and I took you camping,  
Herbert.

HERBERT  
You remember that?

MARTHA

(laughing)

You don't?

(reflective)

You were six. Hiked for an hour in Bend, Oregon. All you did was chase lizards and recite SpongeBob episodes, word for word. It was adorable.

(beat)

We pitched our tents, built a fire, and laid under the stars, listening to owls and coyotes. And you weren't scared at all. But somehow you hated the little bugs.

HERBERT

(laughing)

Still do.

Animals and insects continue to perform a symphony for their five audience members.

EXT. AMAZON JUNGLE - MORNING

Everyone but Martha is asleep. Martha is gone.

CLOSE ON:

Herbert smiling, eyes closed, half dreaming.

HERBERT

(sleep muttering)

Mmmmm... Friendly little doggy.

Martha returns with some breakfast fruit.

MARTHA

Aww, Herbert, fuzzy buddy wants to say hi.

HERBERT

(stirring)

Huh?

Herbert looks down. He becomes paralyzed. A huge SPIDER slowly begins to crawl up him from his feet.

HERBERT (CONT'D)

(incredibly panicked, but  
trying to stay quiet)

Oh fuck. Get it off.

The Spider begins to crawl quickly up Herbert's bruises towards his face. Herbert stands up and starts screaming incredibly high pitched.

HERBERT (CONT'D)

Fuuuuck!

CLIFFORD

Hey now!

HERBERT

This is a "fuck" situation,  
Grandpa!!!

Herbert is jumping around, hoping the Spider falls off -- no luck. The Spider crawls up to his neck. The Spider stings into Herbert. Herbert screams loud enough to be heard across the world. As the Spider is locked in, Herbert's bruises slowly lose color. The Spider then crawls up to Herbert's face, winks all eight eyes, and crawls away. Herbert is violently shaking uncontrollably, making incomprehensible noises. He pukes and faints.

LATER

Clifford and Martha help Herbert walk along through the jungle. Herbert slowly comes to he reaches for his neck.

HERBERT (CONT'D)

(dazed)

What happened?

Everyone looks at each other and grins.

MARTHA

Probably just some sunburn.

EXT. FLORIDA BEACH - DAY

The Friend walks into the Nurse's room, filled with White Claws.

FRIEND

Mr. Handsome is out surfing, let's--  
What the?

NURSE

Who are you?

The Nurse is vigorously itching her skin. She has lumps on both breasts and is beginning to develop them on her butt. Her arms are swelling. She starts to gag.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

The Doctor looks over the Nurse and some test results.

DOCTOR  
(baffled)  
You've got leukemia, tumors and  
signs of Alzheimer's... what did  
you do?!

EXT. AMAZON JUNGLE - DAY

MONTAGE:

All five push through the brush.

Herbert carves everyone's initials into a tree.

Herbert tarzan-swings from a tree with fruit and everyone  
eats along the River, toes dipped in.

Everyone lays under the trees, mouths open, and drink the  
rainfall.

Everyone goes flower picking, and Barney and Clifford put  
bouquets together for their wives.

EXT. AMAZON JUNGLE TREE TOP - NIGHT

At night, everyone climbs up through the trees to stare at  
the moon and stars. They take in all the constellations.

HERBERT  
(looking up)  
Thank you.

EXT. AMAZON JUNGLE - DAY

HERBERT  
We are lost though, right?

Everyone tilts their heads back and forth. Suddenly, swinging  
in from one vine to another at blazing speed is a MAN (30's)  
in rugged clothes. He emphatically lands in front of everyone  
and ruffles his pristine, long, golden hair. He holds out his  
hand.

MAN  
(smouldering tone)  
Dr. Dan the Man. Heard I may be of  
assistance.

Herbert firmly shakes his hand.

BARNEY  
We're a little lost.

DR. DAN mimics a Jaguar growl. Within moments, a leap of Jaguars arrive. They jump on Dr. Dan and start giving him kisses.

DR. DAN  
(puppy voice)  
Hi guys!  
(beat)  
Yo, where Kieth at?  
(calling out to the  
jungle)  
Kieth? Where you at, brother?

KIETH THE JAGUAR (a large spot around his left eye) comes running up. Dr. Dan daps him up.

DR. DAN (CONT'D)  
Good to see you as well, buddy.

All of the Jaguars sit and Dr. Dan faces the five.

DR. DAN (CONT'D)  
Let's ride.

CUT TO:

Everyone is riding Jaguars through and out of the jungle.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

MARTHA  
(to Dr. Dan)  
...and now we all feel great.

DR. DAN  
(spitting bars)  
O-two, breath true, vite D, sick  
free.

Herbert daps up Dr. Dan with a smile.

DARLENE  
This is us. Thank you Dr. Dan.

DR. DAN  
My pleasure.  
(beat)  
And you're never lost in nature.  
(MORE)



DR. DAN (CONT'D)  
 'Cause you're always finding your  
 soul. Stay wild.

Dr. Dan waves bye to everyone as they re-enter the hospital.

LATER

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - DAY

The Doctor walks in to all five.

DOCTOR  
 Unreal. You're fine. All of you.  
 Myeloid cells are gone. Cancer is  
 cleared out.

Everyone looks at each other and hugs. Barney notices the  
 Nurse in the background

BARNEY  
 What happened?

DOCTOR  
 Very sick.

Everyone takes a silent moment and closes their eyes in  
 prayer.

HERBERT  
 (yelling to the Nurse)  
 Hey Nurse lady! Group nature trip  
 to Australia!