

## Old memories came flooding back after an accident

**Zackary:** My name's Zackary. I'm from an island called Saipan. I was born in Guam, raised upon an island. I was in the Army. I got a medical discharge, retired as an E-6 Staff Sergeant.

October '06 I got blown up. I got a second-degree burn. I couldn't even lift up this bottled water and hold it straight out for at least a minute. I cannot. It is like... okay, put it this way, you have a sprained ankle and you're running for miles. That's how it feels.

Yeah, I got medical discharge and all that. A bunch of high-ranking people come into the office. I went in and they gave me a paper to sign. I looked at it. It was like a retirement. I was in tears big time. For the first time in my life, I was in tears with strangers I don't know. I was like, I don't want to get retired like this.

I had problems with my marriage because of all of this PTSD and all that. We've been married seven years but it didn't work out and I know that one of the reasons was being away from family and seeing things I never thought I would see.

Being in the mall for like 30 minutes or more, I cannot, because it's like everyone that's standing in the corner or walking behind me, I would be like flinching. I would be like, what? Or if I hear loud sounds, like explosive, pow! I would be getting ready to jump under a table or what. And dreams I get at night, sometimes I wouldn't know but like family, whatever, they would say, "yeah, you got up, you wake up, you sit at the edge of the bed."

I never seek help. Never seek help. Until I got into a motorcycle accident 2011 and end up in a coma for three weeks. I woke up, and that's when everything came back again. It came back like it was just yesterday I shot someone or someone shot me, and that's when I started seeking help.

Everyone has different ways. Me, one-on-one counseling would be better, because I want that person I'm talking to, to concentrate on me. Whatever works for you, do so. So if medication works, hey do so. I don't like taking medication, but I do take it because I want to get better. Understand it and accept it, and you continue pushing yourself to get better, you get better.

You join the service, you do your time, just accept it, because you are a role model to future soldiers. Don't ever regret the past. Just learn from it. And that's all I can say. Just learn from it.



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