

8 MAY 2018

Hey JW,

Wayne told me about your broken leg – I'm *so* sorry. But it reminded me of yet another adventure with Sunny. Since you've got to stay in bed for a few weeks, I assume you have time for the long version. This happened several years ago, and it's all true. Here goes.

So. Cory and Jade (Cory's mare) and Sunny and I headed out to ride at Mt. Madonna (the top of Hecker Pass, between Watsonville and Gilroy – where the In 'n Out is), where we used to go every couple of weeks. We were about 6 miles into our canonical 7.5 mile loop, when I got sidetracked by something at the side of the trail and pulled Sunny off. Jade and Cory stopped, too, while I futzed around. After a little while, Sunny must have gotten too close to Jade because Jade made mare-faces at Sunny, who made them back. That brought me out of my unconscious state, we separated the mares, and rode on, Jade leading, Sunny following – at the NATRC-approved one horse length distance.

After we'd been moving for a couple of minutes, all of a sudden, Jade started backing straight at us, at about 900 mph. She could have reached 950 mph, easy, but she was kicking at every step, which slowed her down a little. (And I might add that Jade is about 40 axe-handles across the butt and about a foot taller than Sunny, so she was an impressive sight as she was plowing into us.)

By the time I processed the situation, Sunny had taken matters into her own hooves: she backed a little, then swapped ends, and started hopping sideways to get out of range. I made it through the backing, and the end-swap, but I came off about the third hop – I *think* I stayed on until the 8 second whistle, but not too much beyond that. And on her fourth hop, I watched as she landed on my left foot with her left hind hoof.

I'm not sure what Jade was doing while Sunny was taking evasive action. When I looked up from my prone position on the ground, Sunny had stayed with me, and Cory was off Jade and pulling her away from where Sunny and I had ended up.

I had landed on my elbow and had a scrape, and Sunny had landed on my foot, but those were the only issues. My foot hurt, but not as badly as I expected it to, so I climbed back on Sunny and we rode back to the trailer, with Sunny and me leading the whole way. By the time we got back to the barn, my foot was hurting a little more and in a familiar way: it had felt this way when another horse had stepped on it and broken it during a fire evacuation a few years ago, so I immediately left for home and had Wayne drive me to our doctor.

The Doc manipulated my foot and unburdened himself of the opinion that it wasn't broken. We've been going to him for quite awhile, though, so when I said I thought it was, he respected my opinion and referred me for x-rays. He was pretty humble when he called and told me that I didn't have *a* broken bone, I had *three* broken bones – stable fractures of the third, fourth, and fifth metatarsals. I immediately wanted to know about timelines for healing and made sure that he knew that, with this switch of diagnosis, he had seriously interfered with my plans. (I was doing a long (260 mile) bike ride in a couple of months. I was part of an all-woman, all over-60, team, so if I wasn't going to be able to ride, they'd have to find a

replacement, which would be harder as time went on.) So he referred me to one of his buddies who's a Sports Medicine Doctor, Dr. Warren Scott.

So I took my x-rays and went to see Dr. Scott. When I got into the exam room, he's sitting at a monitor, looking at my x-rays and shaking his head. I got on the exam table and he starts gently manipulating my foot. After about 30 seconds, he gets more . . . vigorous.

After about a minute, he stops and looks at me and says, "This is amazing. I shouldn't be able to do that – you should be shrieking in pain and jumping out of your skin. When I hear about someone getting three fractures in their foot from a horse stepping on them, I think of 9 months to a year for healing time. The reason isn't the broken bones, it's because the breaks are usually accompanied by serious soft tissue damage; the horse twists as he hits, or just rests a moment on the foot, which is enough to pulverize the ligaments, which take months to heal and are incredibly painful while they are compromised."

"In your case, it must have been like when someone breaks a board with a karate chop: the board is broken but the hand is unhurt because the energy was transferred so quickly. Your horse karate chopped you and, as a result, you have an 8 week injury, not a 9 month injury – and you should start riding your bike as much as you can and walk as little as you can." So I did.

So – is that how you expected that to end? Me neither. And if you're curious, I rode my bike 35 miles about a week later and my foot felt better at the end than it did in the beginning. I guess it was moving the fluids around? Anyhow, due to Sunny's untapped karate skills, what could have been a show-stopper for me was turned into an inconvenience – it hurt quite a lot to walk for a couple of months, but I did the bike ride, and Dr. Scott said he'd never seen an injury like that heal so fast.

So, JW – got a bike? We have a couple we could loan you!