

from Leslie Feinberg August 2011 transgenderwarrior.org
my research notes on the medical politics driving the "Lyme Wars"

Part 26:
The rich get best care: George Bush and Lyme

Why such establishment intransigence when it comes to developing more scientific understanding about Lyme and its serious co-infections?

Certainly when it comes to care, the wealthy get the best care money can buy. The issue of different standards of care was raised in the British media in August 2007, for example, when the White House media officially reported that George Bush—at that time the U.S. president, from a wealthy, ruling-class family--had been bitten by a tick the previous summer.

According to Guardian.co.uk journalists Dean Baker and Helene Jorgensen, the White House media spokesperson acknowledged that Bush had discovered a bullseye rash on his leg a summer ago, but that his doctors had determined after his annual physical in summer 2007 that he had fully recovered from Lyme. (August 13, 2007)

"However," Baker and Jorgenson stressed, "the spokesperson refused to disclose the treatment that Bush had received, citing doctor-patient privilege."

Baker and Jorgensen pursued the question of the U.S. president's course of treatment in the article headlined: "Bush and Lyme disease: what's the secret?"

The article boiled the question down to a damning question: "The White House won't reveal the length of the president's antibiotics course. Are they protecting the insurance industry?"

The journalists restated the right to medical privacy, but countered that in terms of publicity, "[T]his is certainly a sharp contrast with how the White House dealt with Bush's recent surgery. The public got the play-by-play on the operation in which several polyps were removed from the presidential colon. By comparison, the course of treatment for Lyme would appear to be G-rated."

The British journalists observed: "Given the controversy around the disease it is difficult to see why Bush would not disclose his treatment, unless he was in fact treated for more than the standard two weeks.

“After all,” Baker and Jorgensen pointed out, “what would be the issue if his spokesperson told the press that Bush got two weeks of antibiotic treatment?”

“The standard course of treatment recommended by the medical establishment is two weeks of antibiotics,” the journalists state, noting that tens of thousands in the U.S. do not fully recover after the standard course of treatment.

“Instead they experienced increasingly severe symptoms, which include joint and nerve pain, headaches, cognitive problems, and fatigue. In some cases the symptoms are debilitating, preventing the patient from working or carrying on a normal life.”

The wealthy owners of capitalist industries get the best care, there's no question about that.

But as a ruling class, the capitalists have always known that their wealth does not create a blood barrier in times of epidemic.

So why haven't competing capitalist interests blown the whistle on the seriousness of the Lyme/+ epidemic?

Next: Lyme/+ epidemic: corporate profits, real estate values, seasonal tourism