

## May 2017 Client Corner: Don't Worry, He Won't get Far on Foot

For almost 20 years, I had the pleasure and opportunity of working with Chuck and Lois Dunn. While working with them, I got to hear the many stories they shared about their two daughters, Kathy and Patty. Within the last 5 years, I have had the pleasure and opportunity to get to know each of them better and I understand why Chuck and Lois were so proud of their children.

Kathy Dunn recently retired from the San Diego VA Medical Center as a Spinal Cord Injury Clinical Nurse Specialist after 43 years as a nurse, including 28 at the VA. Rather than sleep in on her first

day of retirement, she was summoned to superior court Jury Duty, a rude awakening to retirement. If that wasn't enough, Kathy was recently informed she will be on the federal jury duty call list for the entire month of June. However, since she retired, she has had some fun along the way. Calling Kathy a "Movie Buff" is probably not giving enough credit where credit is due. "Aficionado" is probably a better term. Movies were not just for fun and entertainment for Kathy. She has collected a list of 20 or so movies that deal with spinal cord injuries or disease that she has used over the



years to train colleagues at the hospital. Movies like "The Men" from 1950 starring a not so well known actor at the time named Marlon Brando. Other movies include, "Coming Home", "Passion Fish", "Water Dance" and "The Sessions". Ultimately, she felt the movies were good education to provide insights to the staff from the patients' perspectives to better assist in their care. Watching many of the movies, Kathy would be distracted by the setup of the scenes in regards to their accuracies. But for those that met her approval, they were used for instruction. Due to Kathy's expertise in SCI care, she was recently contacted to provide technical consultation for a movie to be released in 2018 about the life of cartoonist John Callahan, who suffered from a spinal cord injury. The movie is being made based on Callahan's autobiography entitled "[Don't Worry, He Won't Get Far on Foot](#)". Kathy has a friend that is a social worker at a San Diego rehabilitation center who also has a side job in Hollywood as a "Voice Actor" doing voice commercials, audio books, etc. Her friend was contacted to see if he knew anyone that had spinal cord expertise and Kathy was contacted shortly thereafter.

Not only does Kathy have Spinal Cord injury expertise, but she was very familiar with the work of John Callahan. She had followed John's cartoonist career for years through the San Diego Union, New Mobility Magazine and John's website [www.callahanonline.com](http://www.callahanonline.com). In fact, back in the day Kathy even had a T-Shirt with the phrase and the famous cartoon "Don't worry, he won't get far on foot" on the front. John wrote many books that Kathy had also read, including his autobiography.

Kathy spent one day in Hollywood where she met with the director, Gus Van Sant, and the crew in charge of the set, props, costumes, hair and makeup. The goal was to make the set and actors appear as much like 1972 as possible. She also spent time answering emails from the crew prior to the start of filming. She then spent two days on-set at Daniel Freeman Hospital in Inglewood, which has been closed for years, but is used for movie hospital sets now. Kathy helped with the set dressing and props, saying "yes" to this and "no" to that. She even challenged and helped rewrite a few lines in the script that may or may not be used when the movie comes out.

Kathy met with the lead actor, Joaquin Phoenix, and supporting actress, Rooney Mara. Jack Black and Jonah Hill, who will also appear in the movie, were unfortunately not on set for these particular scenes. She got to see the actors rehearse and then film the actual scenes from the movie. While she spent two full days on set, it will probably only be five minutes of actual footage in the movie. She also spent time answering emails from the directors following her couple of days on set. And yes, she was paid for her involvement in the film and should be included in the credits at the end of the movie. Who knows, maybe a new part-time career has been started.

"To be on set, to see the production process, lighting, rehearsal was lots of fun! I probably would have done it for free." Congratulations Kathy on your retirement. We hope you have many more experiences like this that are simply unforgettable for years to come.

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The John Callahan cartoon whose caption was the origin of the title of the book (and movie) and a couple of Kathy's favorites:

