



Mr. Emerson Brian Denike

July 11, 2017

LIFE OF BRIAN

Brian passed away peacefully July 11, 2017 @ 11:57. He was shockingly diagnosed with Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease on July 7, 2017 after a one month stay in hospital.

Born in Flin Flon, Manitoba on September 29, 1939, Brian lived a full, rich and fascinating life.

During his teenage years Brian was in the Air Cadets, oftentimes sneaking off to the airport to watch planes land and takeoff. He wanted to become a pilot or an air traffic controller. He did get his pilot's licence, but due to a serendipitous friendship, he landed a summer job in broadcasting as a radio announcer at CBC Frobisher Bay (now Iqaluit). He was known as VOICE FROM THE BOX WITH WINDOW PANES ON FACE. Later he went to a radio station CKX in Brandon, Manitoba where he started reporting as well as producing newscasts and interview programs.

Broadcasting quickly caught his imagination and this led to his life-long career. Brian spent almost all of that 30 year career at the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. He mastered all aspects of radio and television production and was highly respected, coupling a creative flair with the instincts and passion required for high-quality journalism.

He moved to CBC Winnipeg in the late 1960's to become a very successful producer of radio current affairs programs. But Brian was intrigued by television and in the early 70's became a producer on the Winnipeg supper

hour program, 24-Hours. He showed a great flair for television and within a few years became Executive Producer of 24-Hours.

Under Brian's leadership the Winnipeg supper hour show became one of the most admired in the CBC regional system. It was known for its lively, tough interviewing, colourful features and penetrating documentaries. It also had a reputation for breaking the normal conventions of the day. One of Brian's favourite episodes was the night he allowed the cast of Monty Python's Flying Circus to take over the entire back half of the program. Things got a bit out of hand. Bosses were not impressed, but the audience loved it. It was a very "Brian" thing to do.

The success of 24-Hours caught the attention of network executives and in 1977, Brian was asked to move to Toronto to become Senior Producer of the CBC's flagship investigative program, The Fifth Estate. He played an essential role in shaping the style of that program and in supervising the team of journalists, until 1981, when he was an early recruit for the CBC's new daily current affairs program, the Journal. His first role there was as Senior Producer of presentation and special effects, again playing a key role in shaping "the look" of the program.

After The Journal was well established on air, he left for TV Sports to produce OLYMPIC JOURNEY, a series of documentaries during the L.A. Olympics in 1984.

In 1985, Brian returned to the Journal's documentary unit as a producer/director, travelling the world and covering many of the major stories of the time. He had many fascinating stories from the field but none more dramatic than his experience in the first Gulf War in 1991.

Brian and his team (reporter Eric Rankin, cameraman Hans Van der Zande, and sound man Christopher Davies) were in Baghdad when the Pentagon warned western journalists they should leave because an Allied aerial attack was imminent. Most fled, and CBC executives told Brian and his team there was no pressure on them to stay... they should feel free to leave... but the Journal crew voted to remain in the hope of covering the start of the

attack. They did manage to get a few brief reports out and spent two terrifying nights in a basement bomb shelter before they decided to leave. They lost all communication with the CBC for a few days as they made a harrowing road trip to the Jordanian border, the last 300 kilometres huddled below blankets in the back of a truck, encountering Iraqi missile launchers, and field artillery units along the way. Later all Brian would say, in his typical unassuming manner, was that it's what they had to do to try to get the story out.

In 1990, he was posted to London for the Journal and carried on his work there where his greatest project of all, his daughter Jasmine, was born in 1993.

He returned to Canada in 1995 for Prime Time News (later re-named The National) and continued to produce documentaries until his retirement in 2001.

Brian was admired by all the people he worked with, not just for his many talents but especially for his integrity, his belief in teamwork and his respect for others in different production roles. He was never afraid to accept the responsibilities of leadership and stand up for others, whatever the consequences. He had a natural easy-going manner and a wonderful, wicked sense of humour which made him very popular with all his colleagues. Many became lifelong friends.

In addition to his journalistic chops, he was a loving father, a strong partner, and a spitfire critic of politics well into his retirement. Those who followed him on Facebook would eagerly await his "hot takes" on issues ranging from the U.S. Election, to corruption in our own backyard. He was always able to capture the room with his energy, his flare for storytelling, and his immense respect for everyone around him lucky enough to sit at the dinner table.

After his retirement Brian helped some colleagues with independent production ideas but in the end he decided to pursue his favourite passions... golf, reading, and (of course) trolling Donald Trump on his iPad.

Brian is sorely missed by his partner Mary, daughter Jasmine, and sisters

Susan and Mona.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Canadian Journalist for Free Expression. https://cjfe.nationbuilder.com/in_memoriam_for_brian_denike

A celebration will take place early September. Details to follow.