

# The Road Ahead: Event Industry Landscape in 2021

By Howard Givner

# State of COVID

# 1. 'Hygiene Theater' = False Sense of Security

- 1/3 of carriers are asymptomatic
- Surface spread is low
- \*Aerosol spread is high

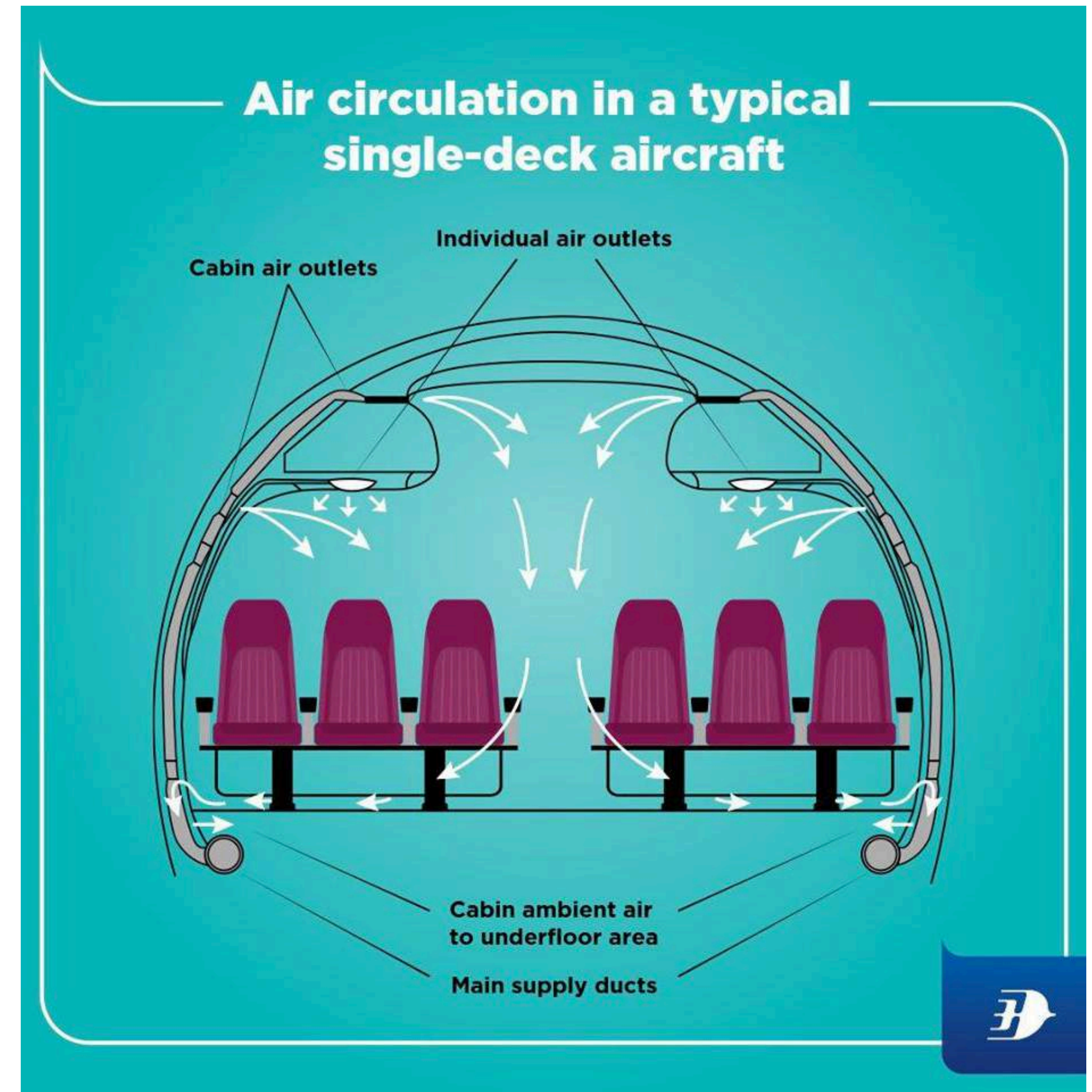
*“A temperature check is a very dubious tool for ID’ing those who have the virus; (it) is hygiene theater, if you will. It’s communicating to folks . . . that you’re now entering a place in which we’ve got protocols to protect you.”*

Arne Sorenson | CEO, Marriott  
Source: Skift Global Forum



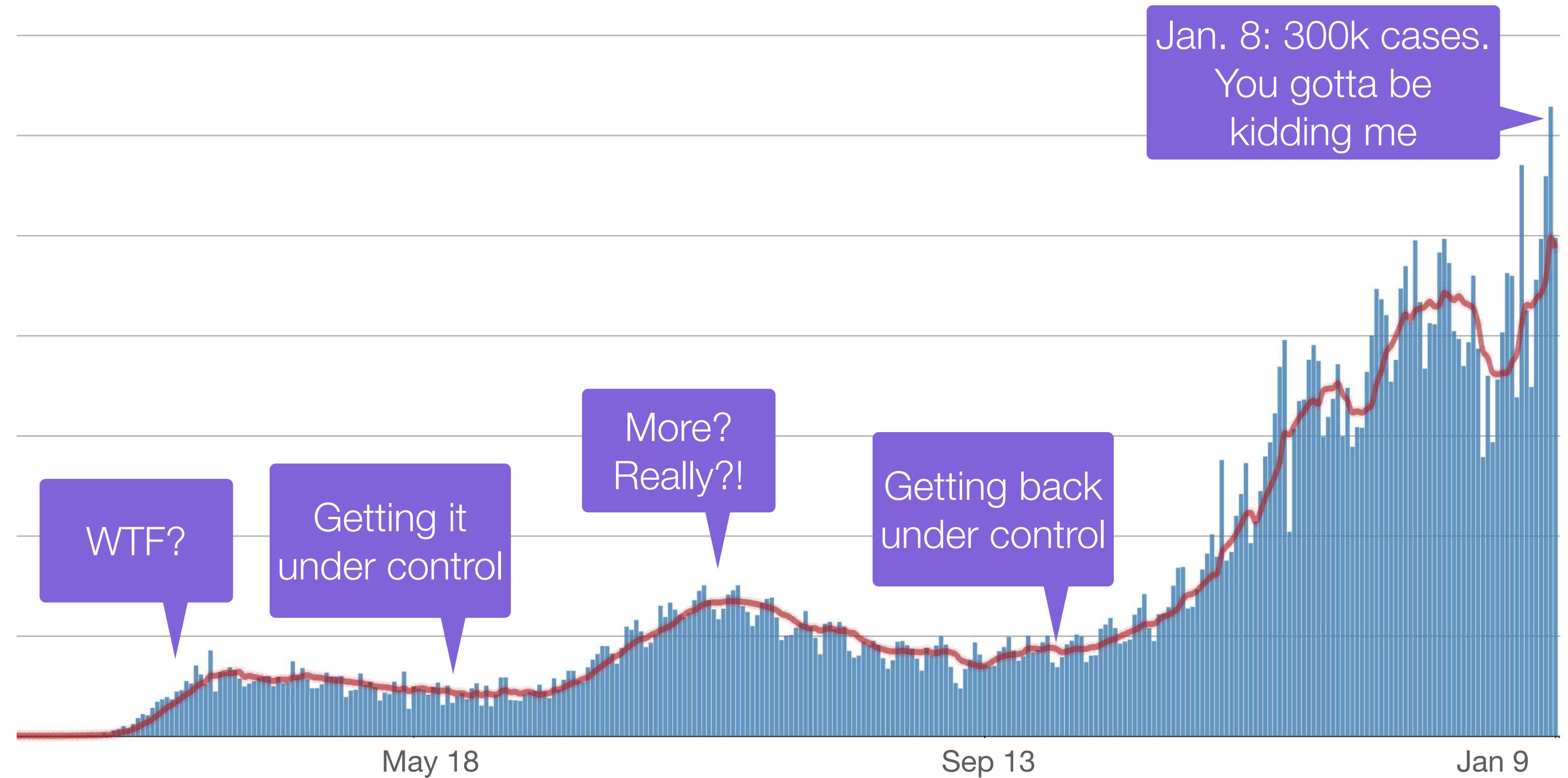
## 2. Venue Ventilation is Key

LOCATION	# AIR CHANGES / HOUR
Airplane cabin	12-15
Hospital Surgical Room	20
Hospital Emergency Room	12
Hospital Patient Room	6
Business Conference Room	8-12
Public Auditorium	12-14



# 3. Unpredictability of Spread & New Variants

- Hot zones can crop up suddenly.
- Gathering limits can change quickly.
- New variant = 50% more contagious



Source: Centers for Disease Control

# 4. Vaccine Update: Really Good News . . . Eventually

- Pfizer & Moderna 90-95% effective: 🦵
- 1/3 of people may not take it.
  - Mistrust of gov't guidance
  - Conspiracy theorists, anti-vaxers
- Widespread distribution: mid-2021
- Event impact will take time



## 5. Moving the Goalposts on Herd Immunity

*"When polls said only about half of all Americans would take a vaccine, I was saying herd immunity would take 70 to 75 percent. Then, when newer surveys said 60 percent or more would take it, I thought, 'I can nudge this up a bit,' so I went to 80, 85."*

Dr. Anthony Fauci

Dec. 24, 2020



# What's In Store for: In-Person Events

# 6. Unpredictability of Attendance

- Attendees waiting until last minute to register, book travel
- Last minute no-shows



# 7. Room Set Up Challenges | Venue Economics

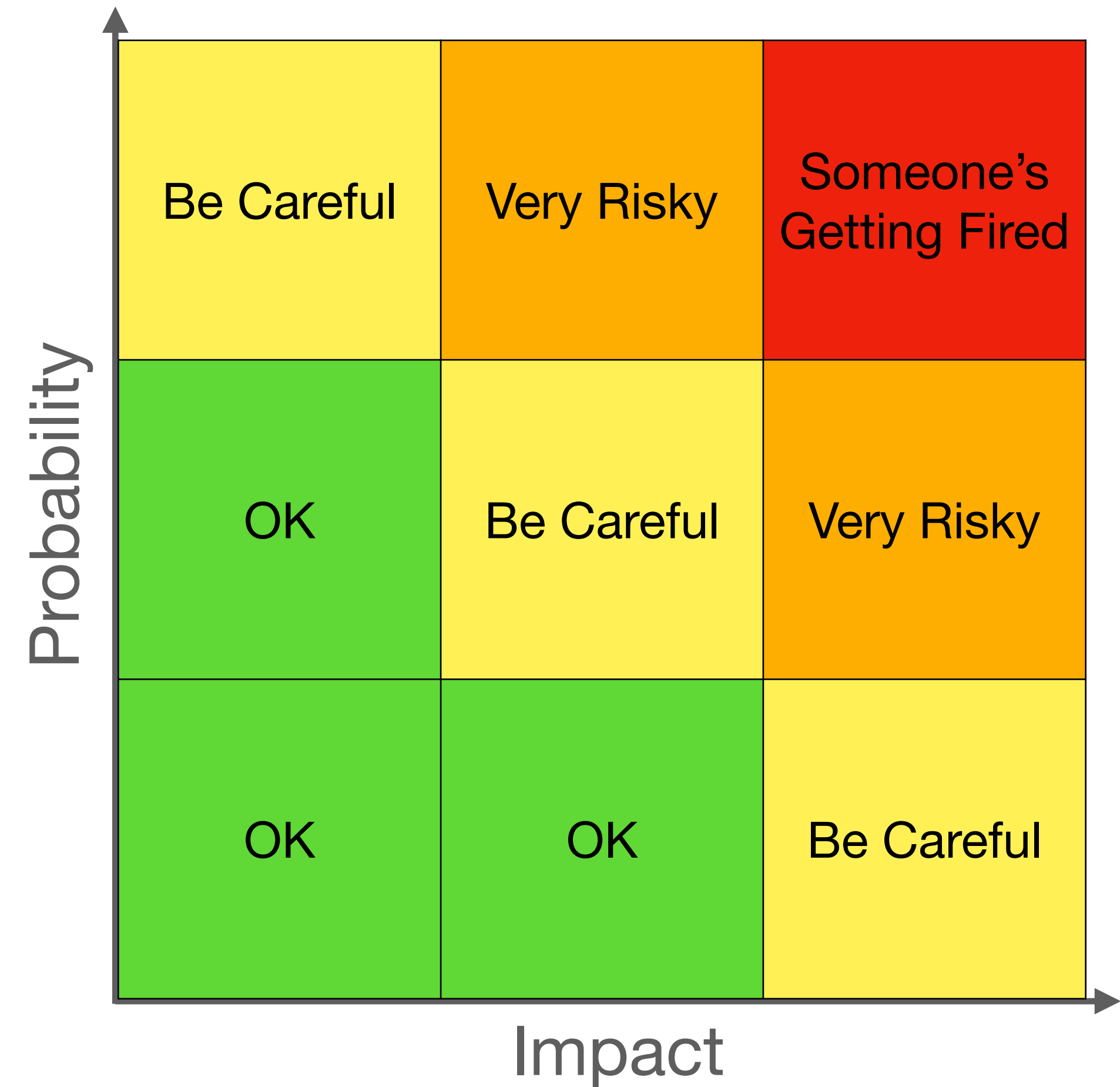
- Just because you ‘can’ doesn’t mean you ‘should’
- Can you achieve your goals with socially-distanced room set ups
- \*What will the economics be for venues?



Photo: Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police  
Source: BizBash

# 8. It's All About (Individual & Host) Risk Calculus

- Attendees: psychological comfort
- Hosts: liability concerns



# 9. 'Reverse Hybrid' Planning



# 10. Super-Spreader Events & Comms Plans

- “We met safely!” [But did you?]
- Super spreader event risks:
  - PR
  - Economic
  - Health
- Importance of good comms plan



GLOBAL EVENTS PLANNING > RISK MANAGEMENT

## A Cautionary Tale: Industry Event Reports Covid-Positive Attendees

*“We are writing today because we have received information indicating that three Connect Marketplace attendees tested positive for Covid-19 three or more days after returning from the event.”*

# 11. 3rd Parties Will Earn Higher Commissions



# 12. Ignore Planner Surveys | Watch Case Counts

When will in-person events return to pre-pandemic levels?

IGNORE
Planner surveys
Predictions from people in sales

LOOK FOR
Rise in leisure travel
Rise in business travel
Return to offices
Drop in COVID case counts

# 13. 3+ Years for In-Person Events to Return to Pre-Pandemic Levels

Pre-Pandemic = No COVID + Booming Economy



*“Business won't return to 2019 levels for 3 years”*



*“Airline traffic won't reach pre-pandemic levels until 2023”*



*“Business travel for major industry events will be the last to return”*

# 14. The 4 Stages of Recovery



2021				2022	
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2
Vaccine distribution ↗					
	COVID cases ↘				
		Confidence to attend events ↗		Confidence to book events ↗	
			Economy ↗		

Source: Howard's Magic 8 Ball

# 15. The 'New Normal' for Work & Business Travel

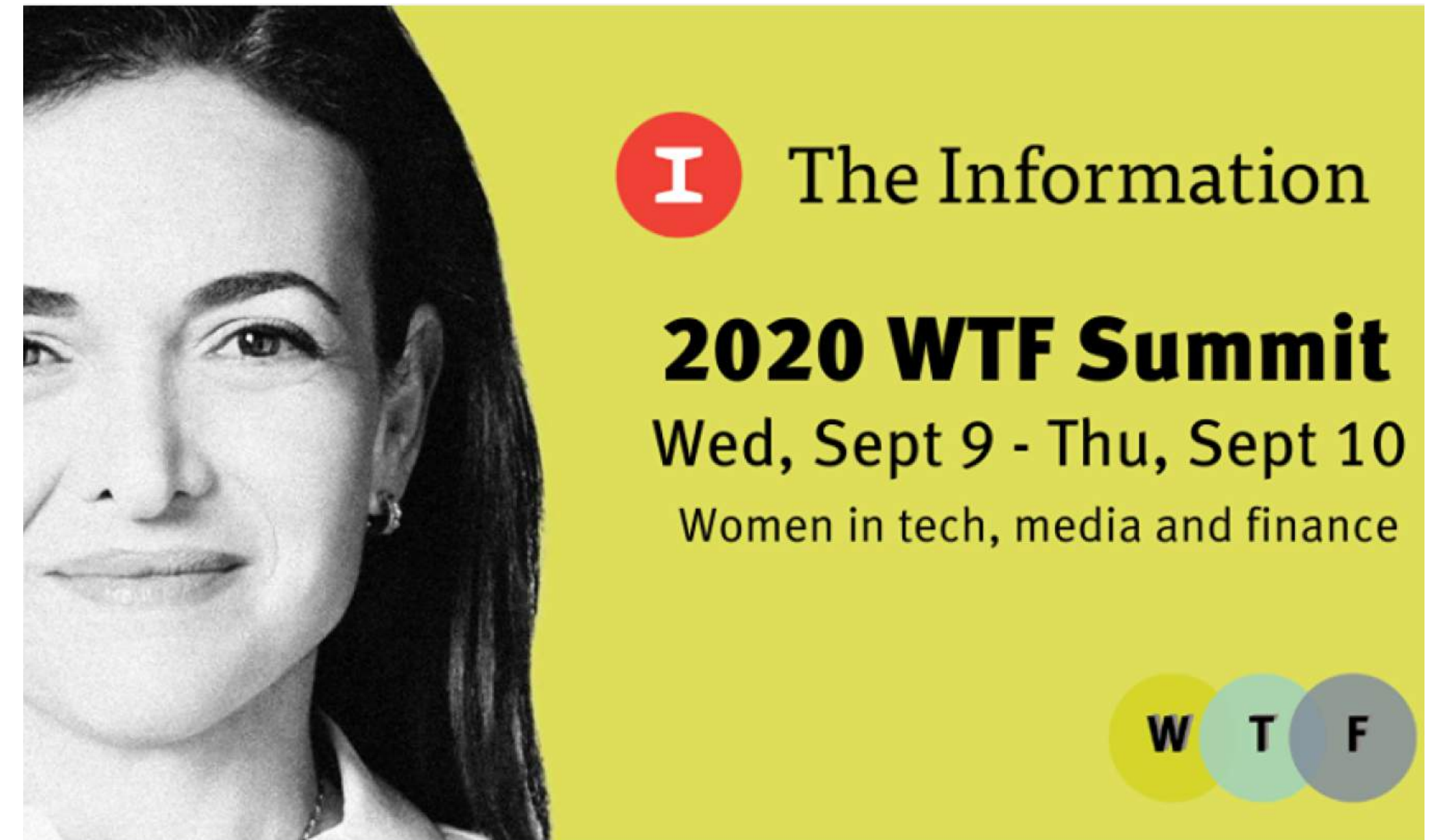
*“My prediction would be that over 50% of business travel and over 30% of days in the office will go away (post-pandemic).”*

Bill Gates | Nov. 2020  
NYT DealBook Online Summit



# 16. Clients Will Have A Laser Focus on In-Person Event R.O.I.

- Clients/bosses have seen what they can do/save on virtual now
  - Better data
  - Easier to get good speakers
  - Elimination of travel time/cost
- Will be laser-focused on ROI of in-person spend



## Virtual Events and Why I Am Never Going Back: The Information's Weekly Newsletter

Published on September 12, 2020



Jessica E. Lessin fluencer  
Founder, CEO at The Information

50 articles

# 17. Global Risks May Play A Role

1. 46\*
2. Long Covid
3. Climate: Net Zero Meets G-Zero
4. U.S.-China Tensions Broaden
5. Global Data Reckoning

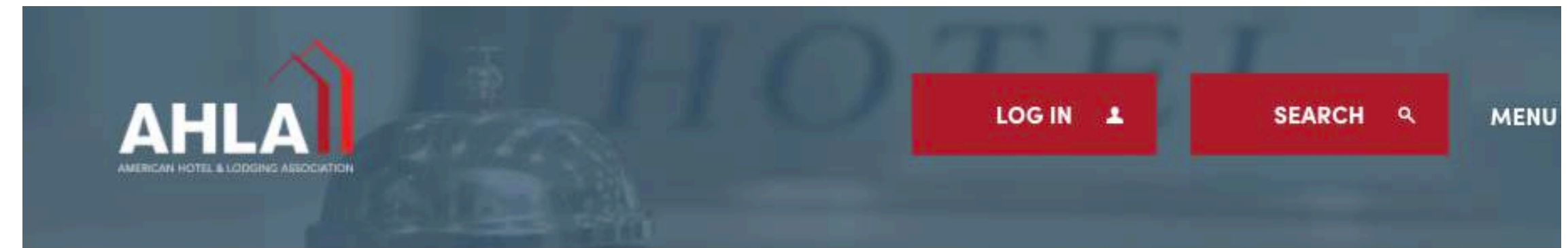
\*Jan. 4, 2021

Eurasia Group Top 10 2021 Risks



# 18. Industry Contraction | Venue Risk

1. Many hotels, venues, DMCs, etc. will go out of business.
2. Planners may be reluctant to lock in big deposits > more cash flow problems for venues.
3. Dangerous reinforcing cycle.
4. M&A/consolidation of vendors.



## **SURVEY: 71% OF HOTELS WON'T SURVIVE ANOTHER SIX MONTHS WITHOUT FURTHER GOVERNMENT COVID RELIEF**

With Drop in Travel, 77% Expect More Layoffs at Current Levels

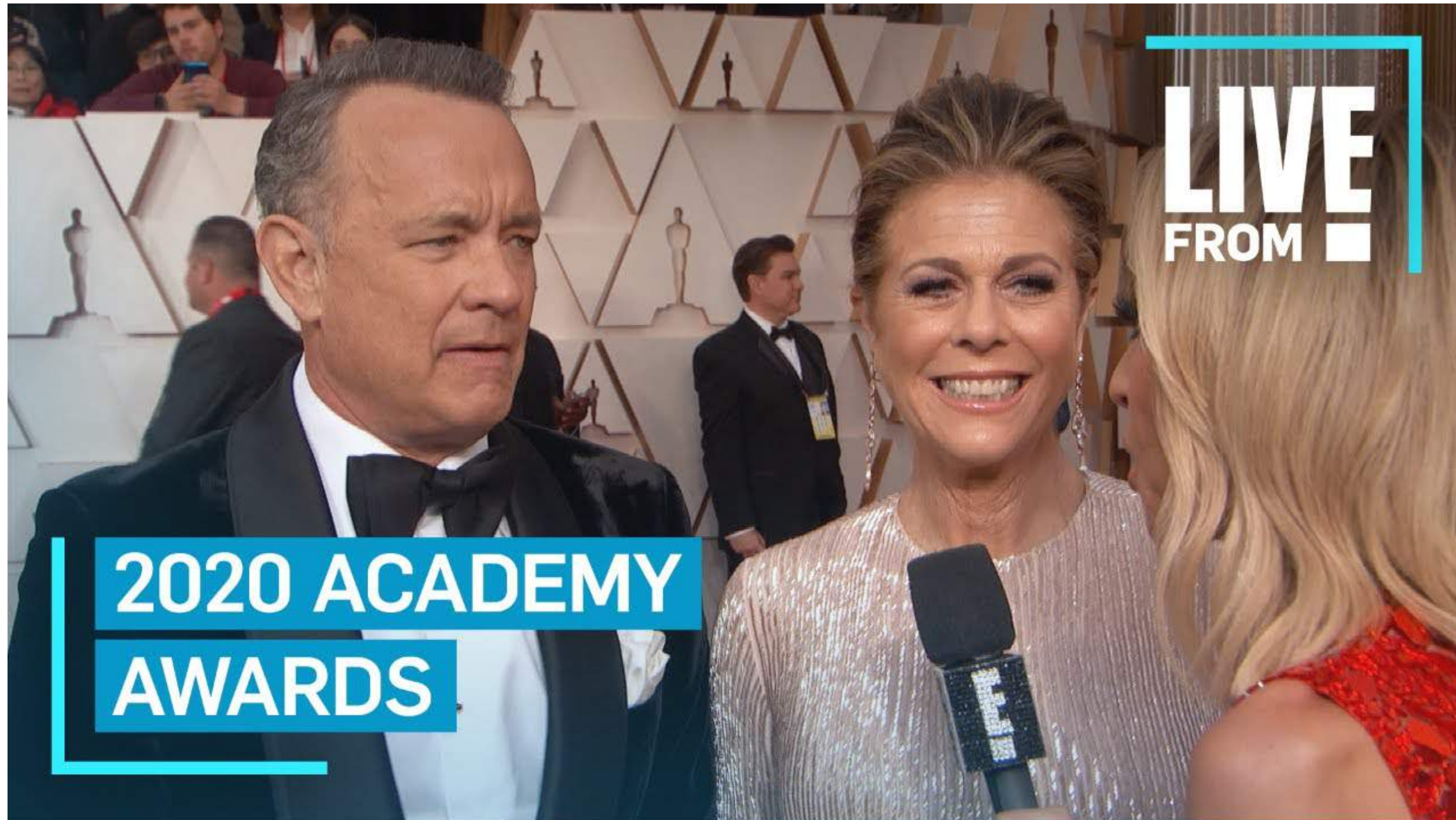
American Hotel & Lodging Association  
November 18, 2020

# What's In Store for: Virtual Events

# 19. 2020 = Functionality | 2021 = UX



# 20. Exclusive, Insider Content for Remote Hybrid Viewers



# 21. Give Virtual Exhibitors Good Value, or They'll Go Rogue



## 22. Maintain Pricing Integrity



# 23. From Revenue Source to Marketing Vehicle



2019	2020
In-Person	Virtual
\$2,395 pp	Free
Attendees: 6,000	Attendees: 197,000

# 24. Niche Virtual Events Will Erode Mega Event Market Share

- 2020 = Pivot from in-person event
- 2021 = Virtual designed from ground up
- Lower costs > lower barrier of entry
- Shorter lead time > ability to roll out new events faster to adapt to market changes.

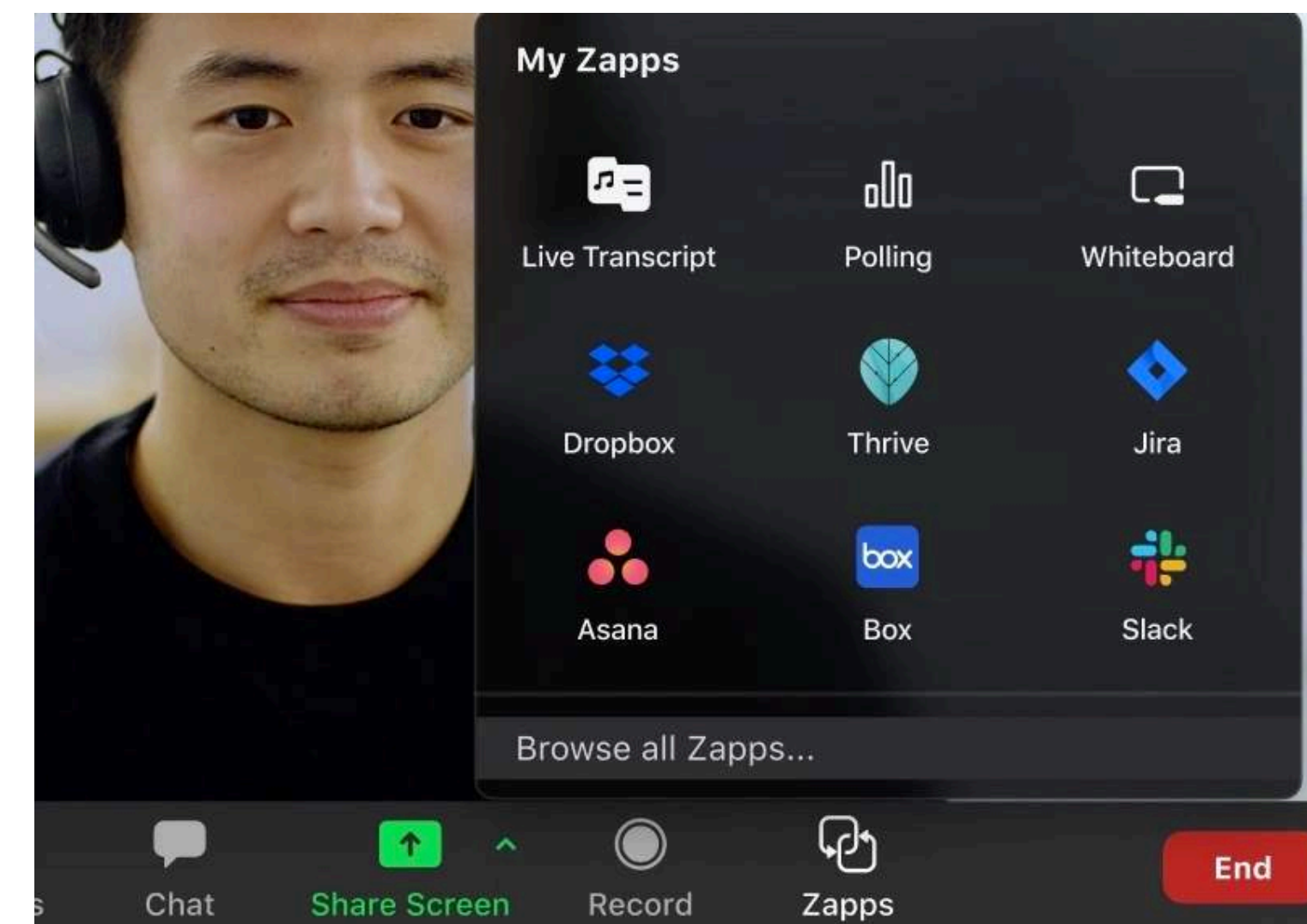
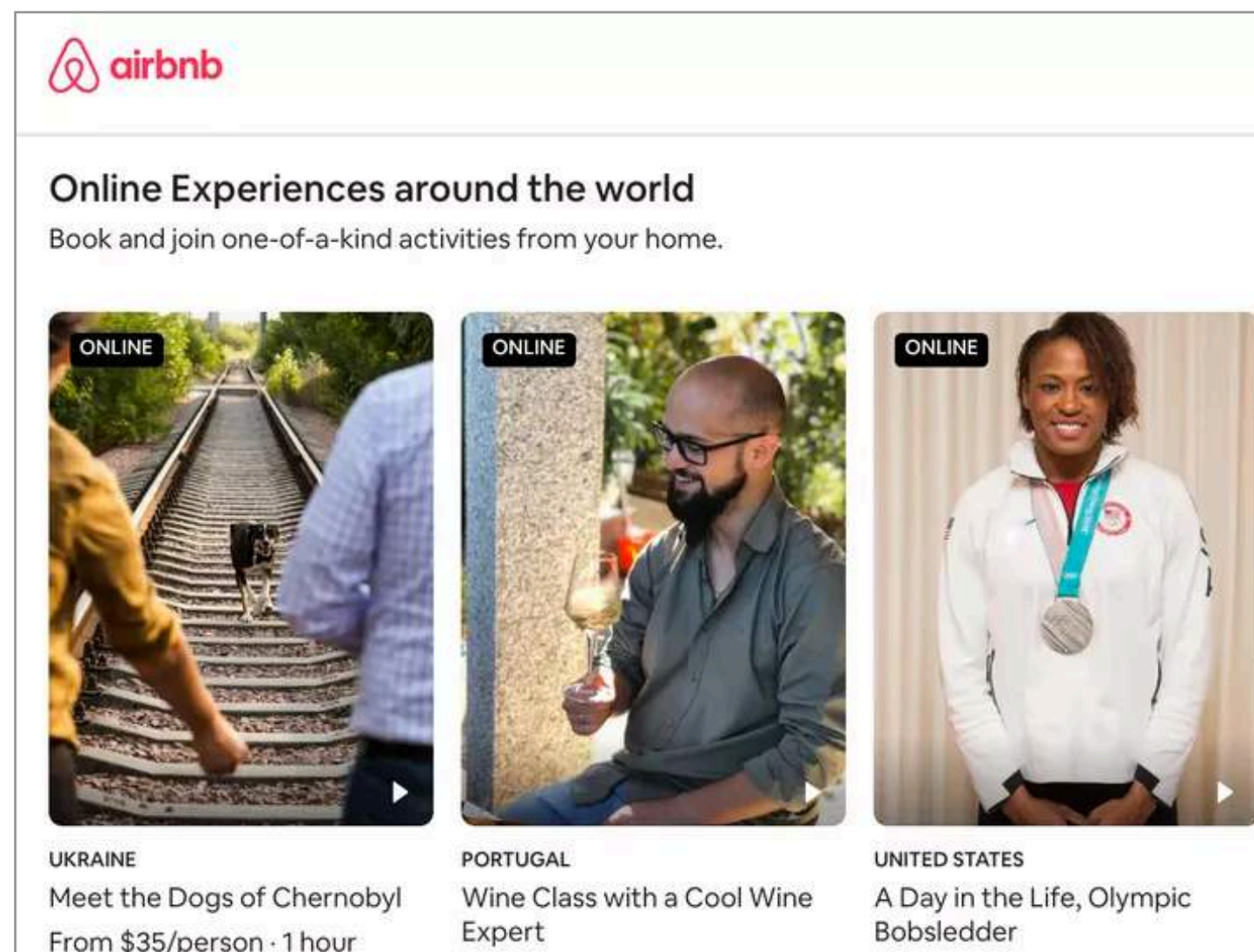


# 25. Top Local Vendors Can Become Global Brands



George P. Johnson Offices Worldwide (30)

# 26. The Elephants in the Room

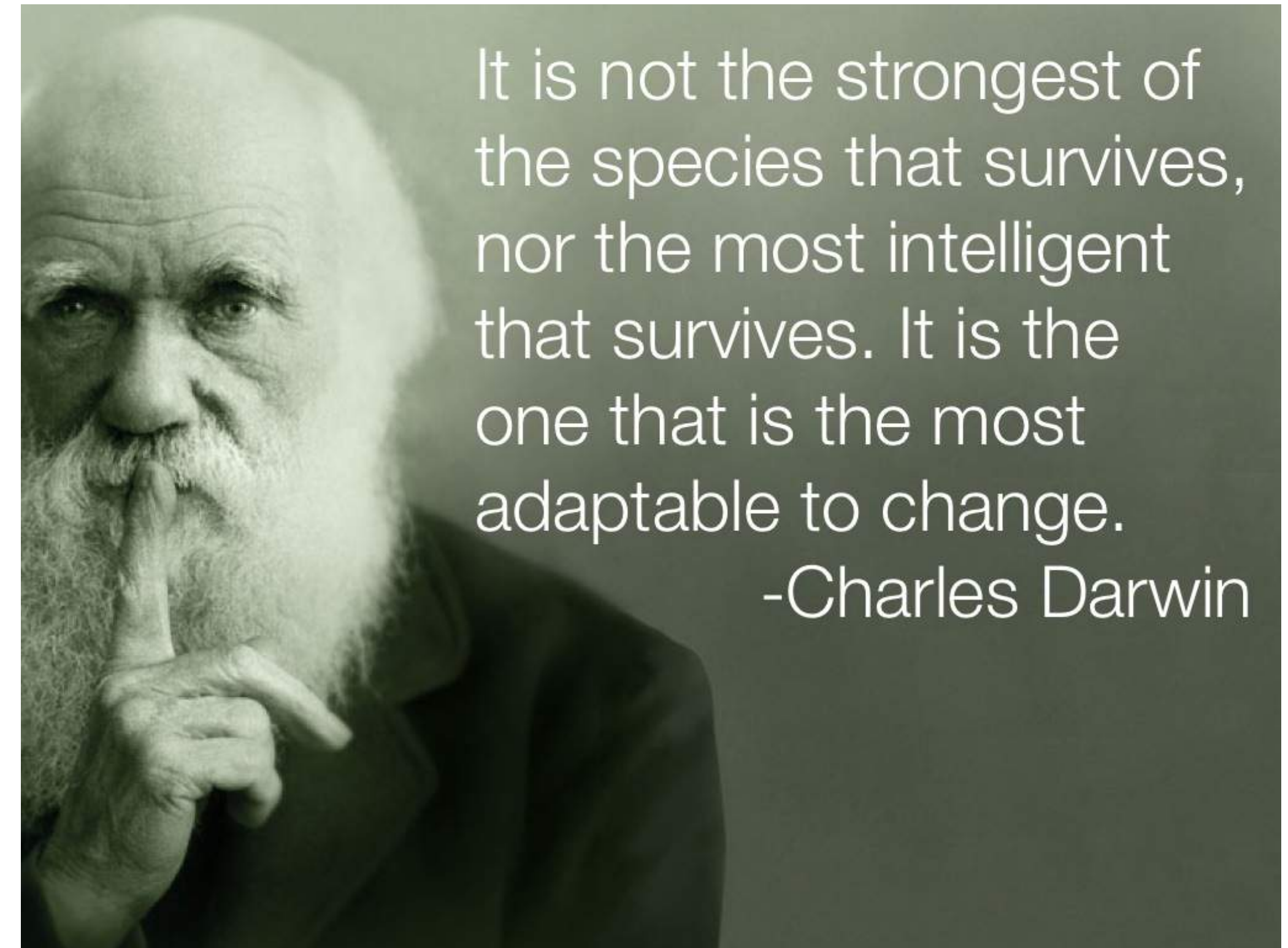


# 27. Increased Pace of M&A



# 28. Re-Skilling & Lifelong Learning Required

- 2020: ok to make mistakes
- 2021: need to know your s\*\*t
- Tech & virus continually changing



# Personal Journey

# 2017: Diagnosed with Ocular Lymphoma



Bad eye

Good eye

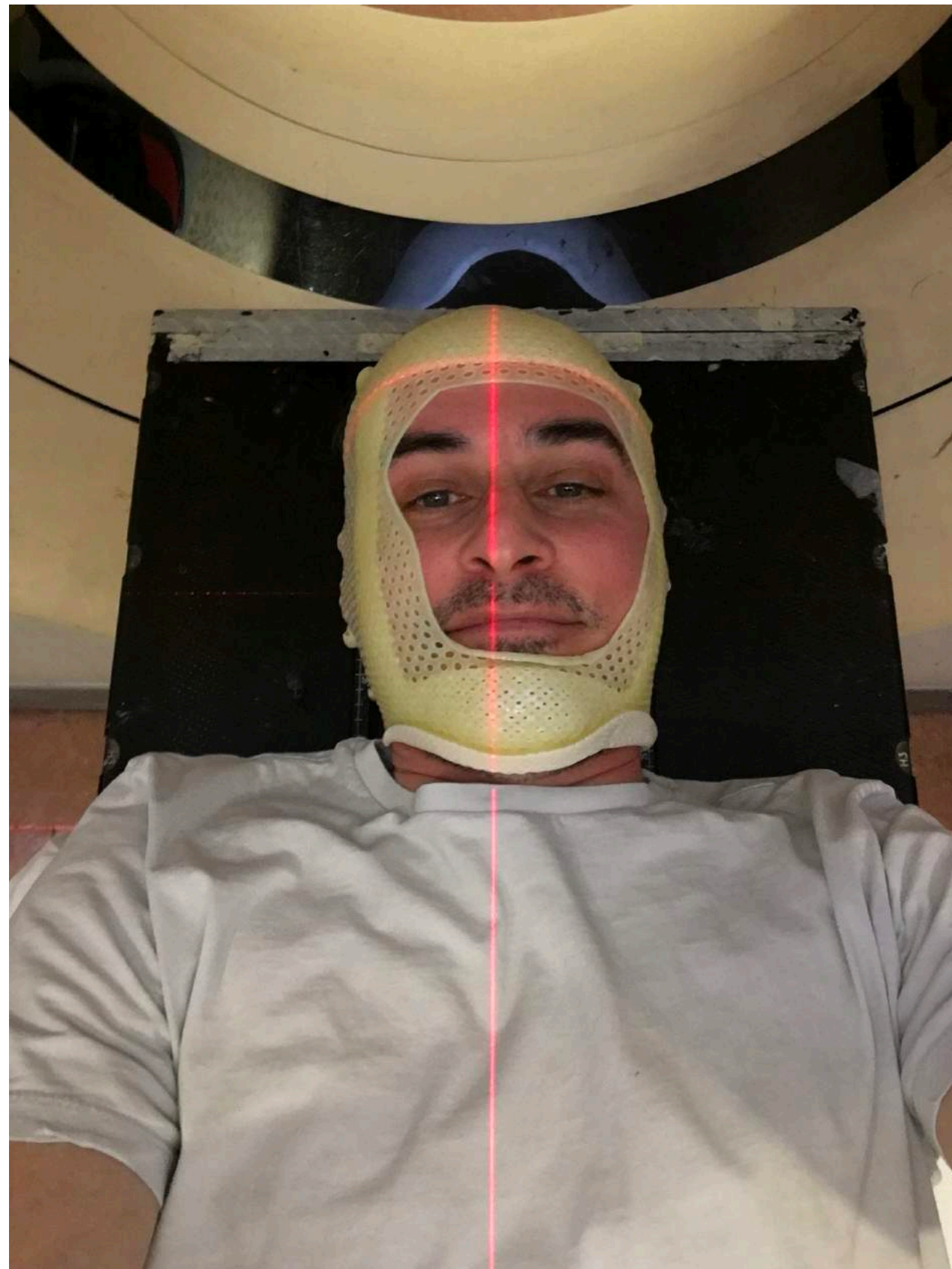
@HGivner

@EventLeaders

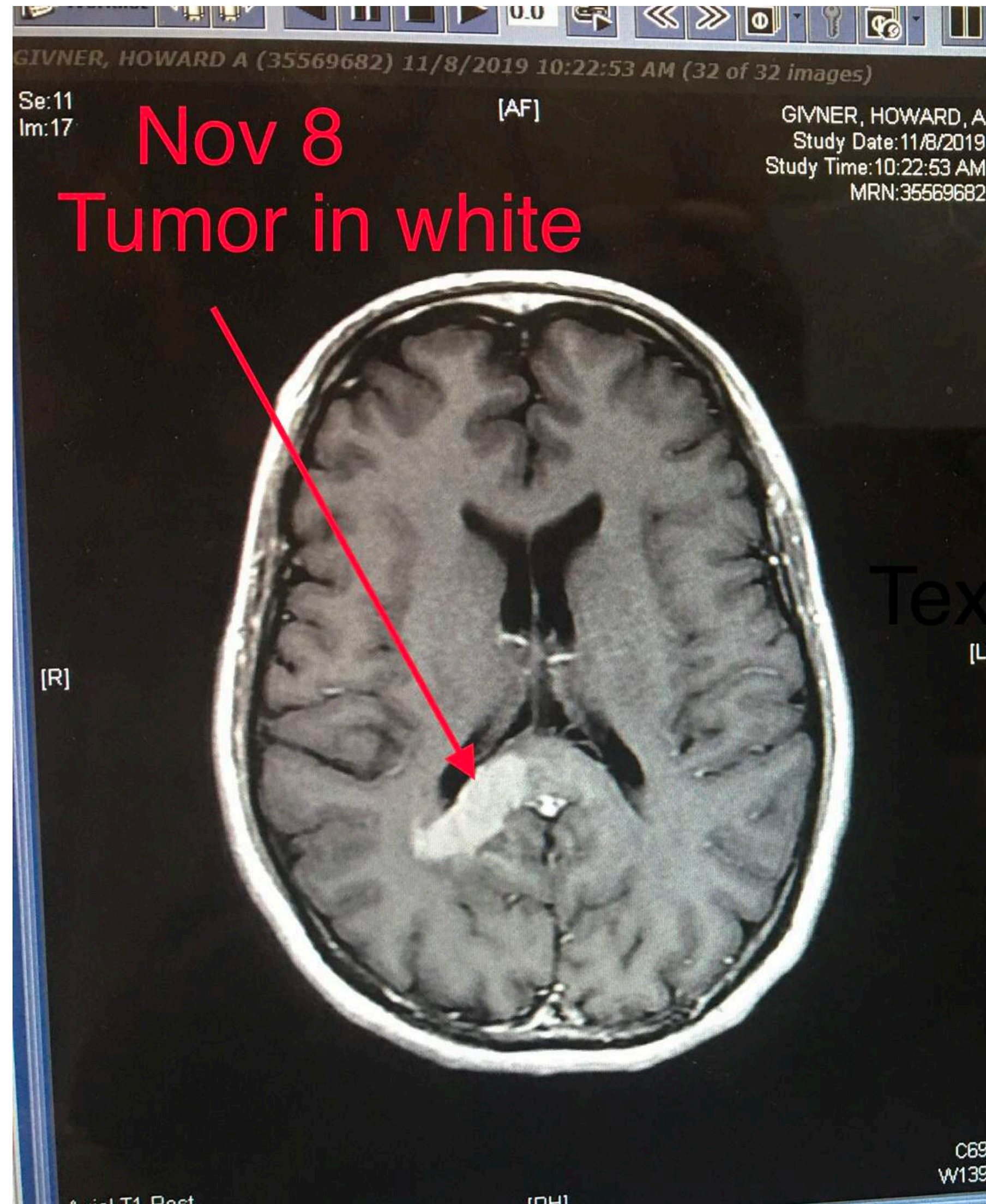
# 2017-2018: Surgery + 6 Rounds of Chemo Injections



# Summer 2019: 18 Rounds of Radiation



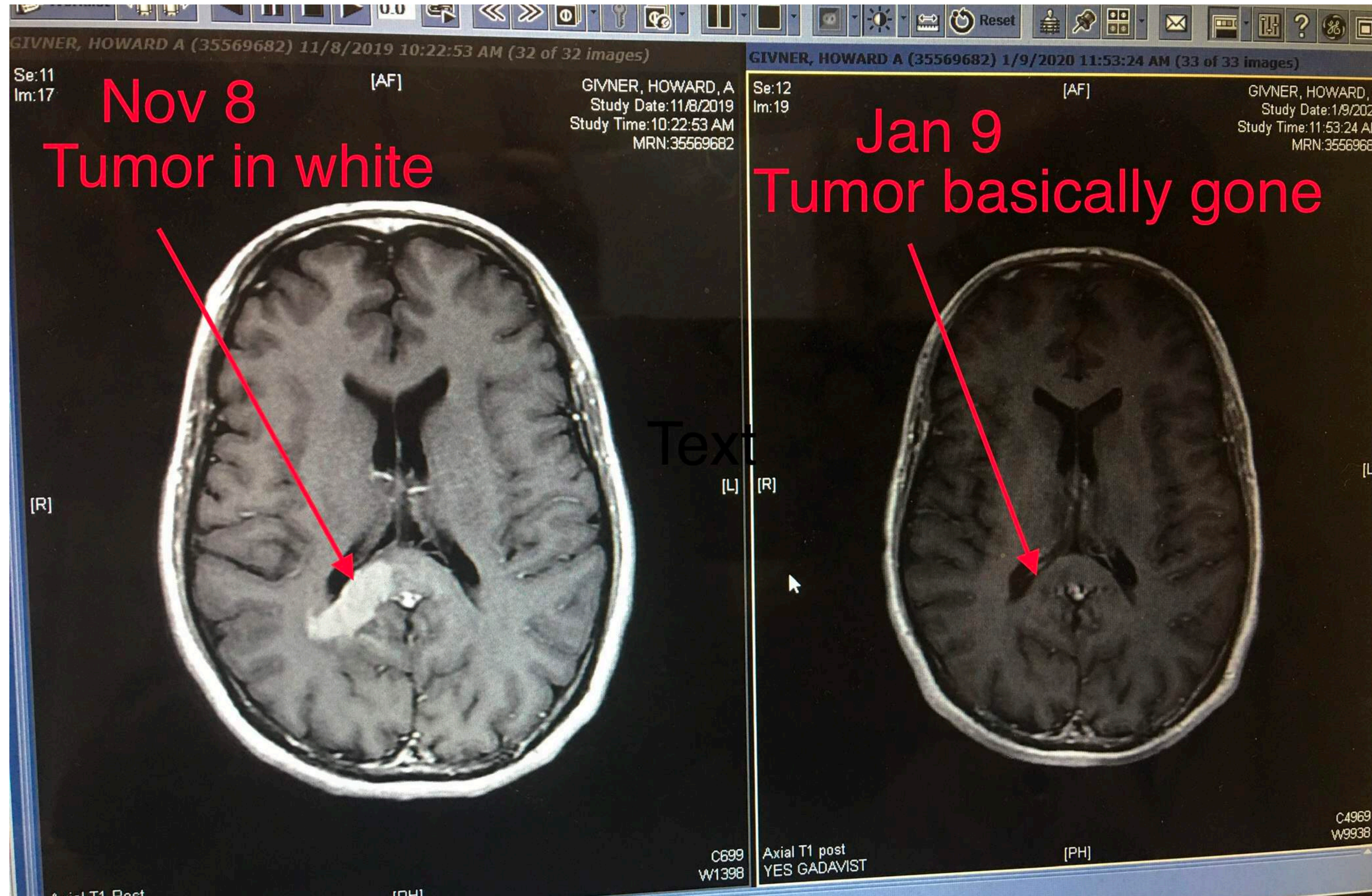
# Nov. 2019: Diagnosed with CNS Lymphoma



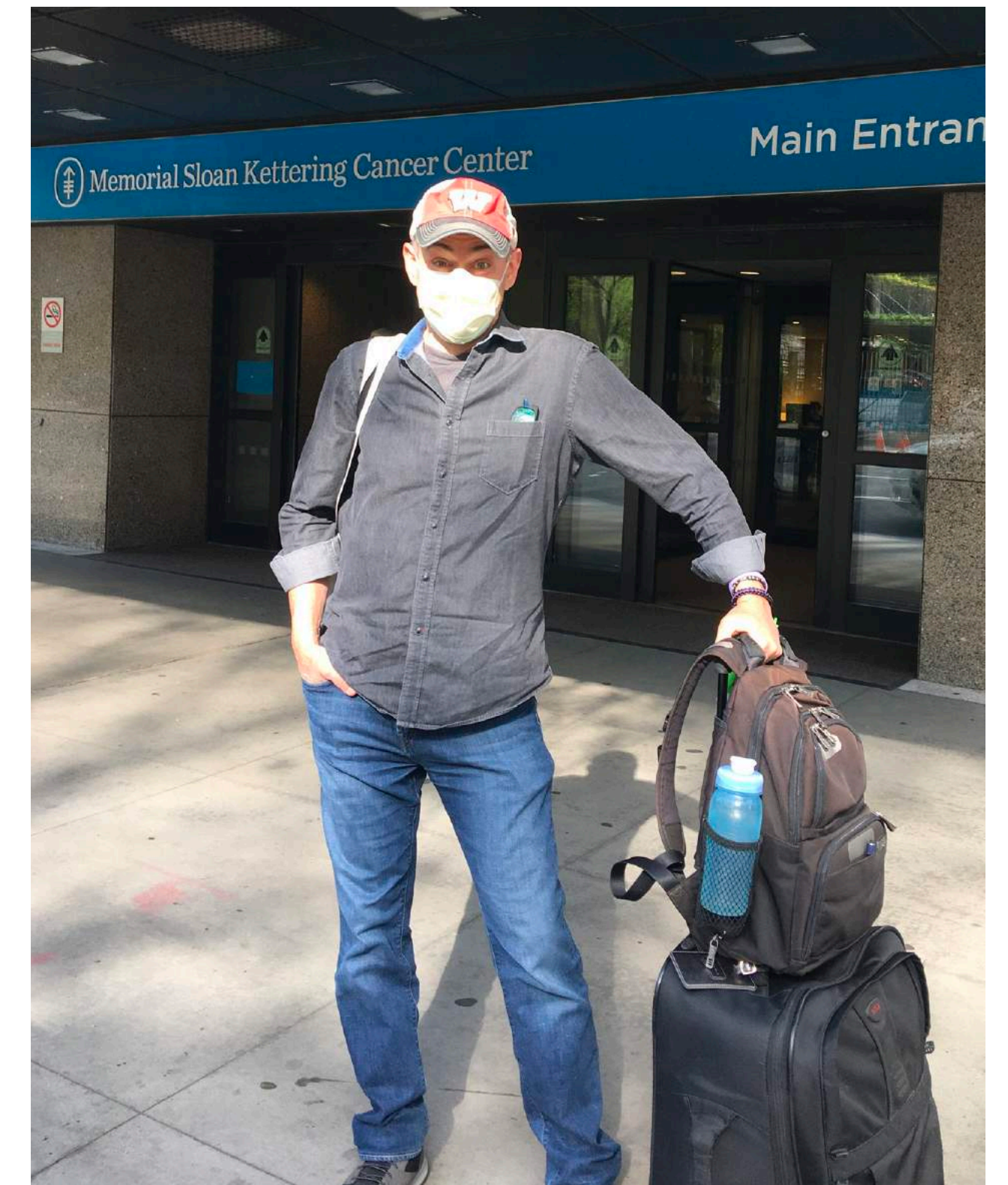
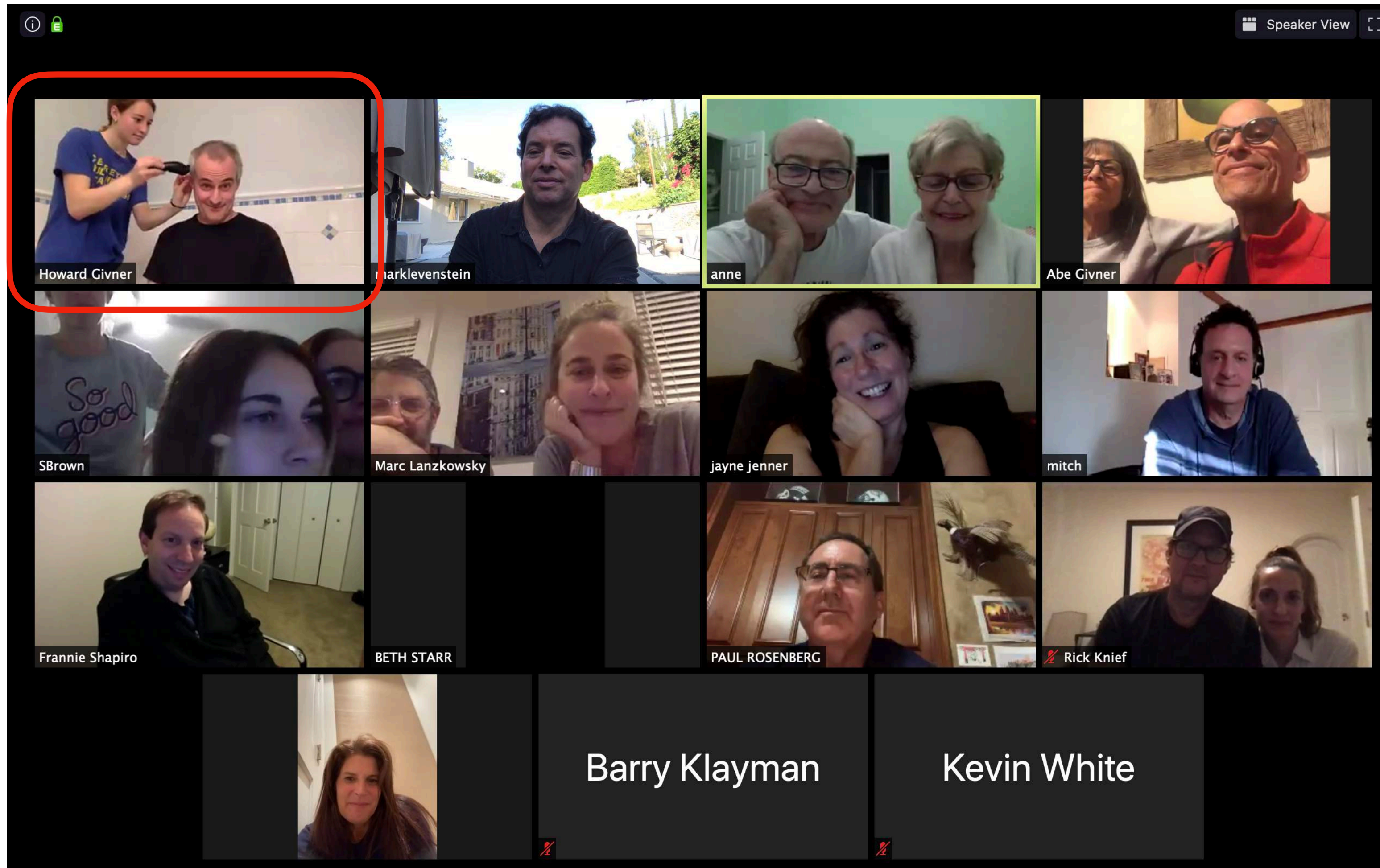
# Nov. 2019 - Mar. 2020: 16 Weeks of Intravenous Chemo



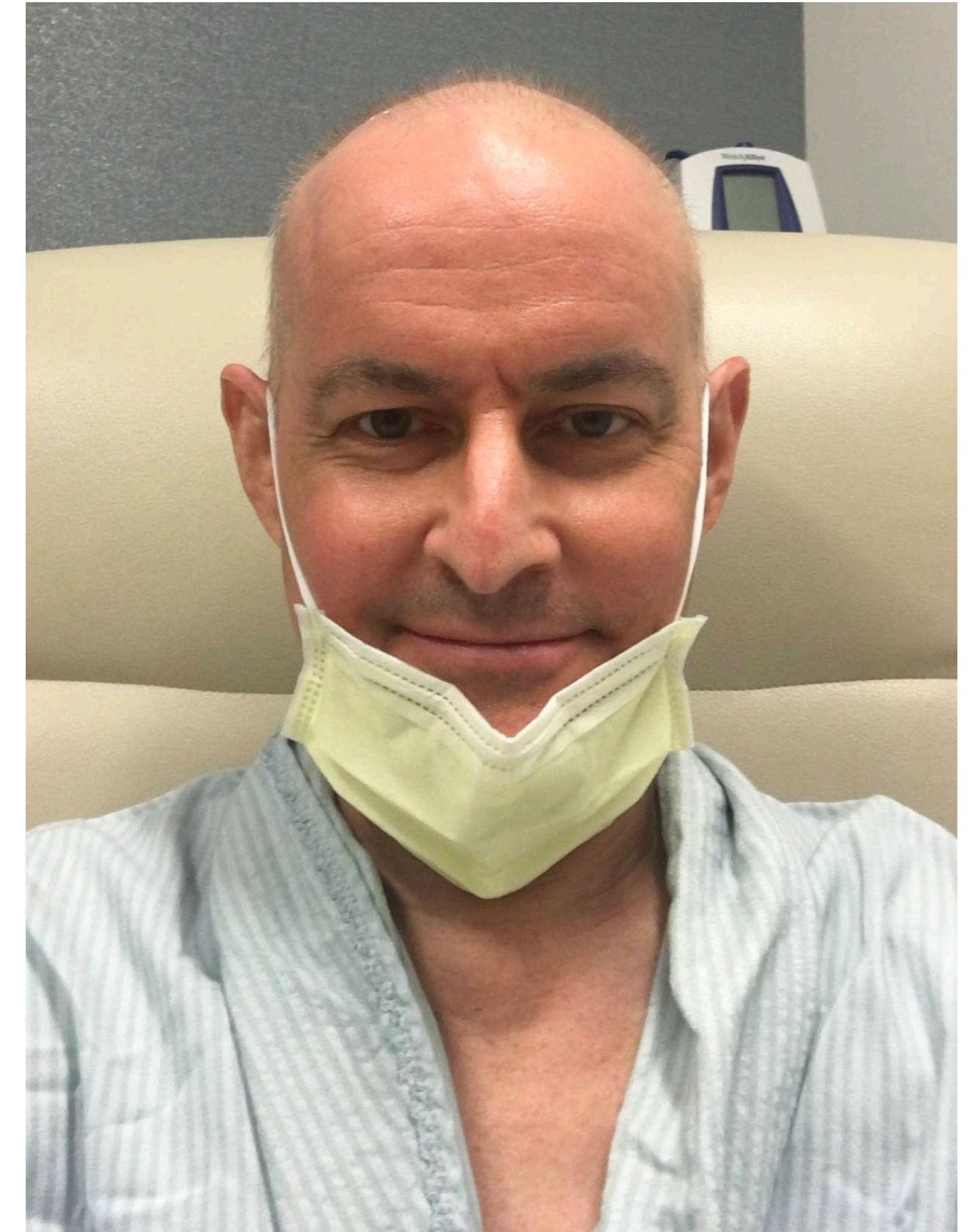
# Methotrexate 1, Cancer 0



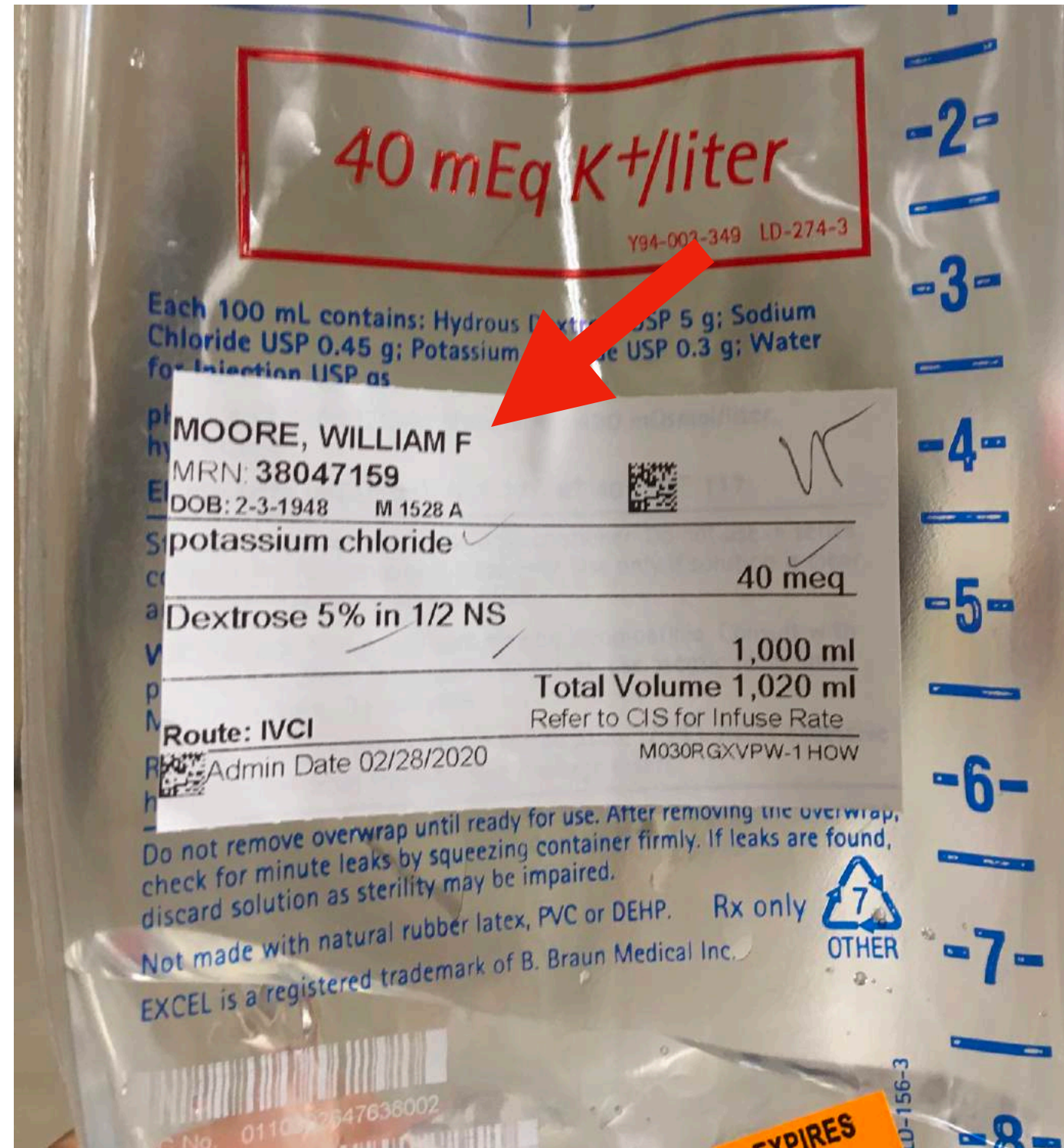
# May-June 2020: Hi Dose Chemo + Stem Cell Transplant



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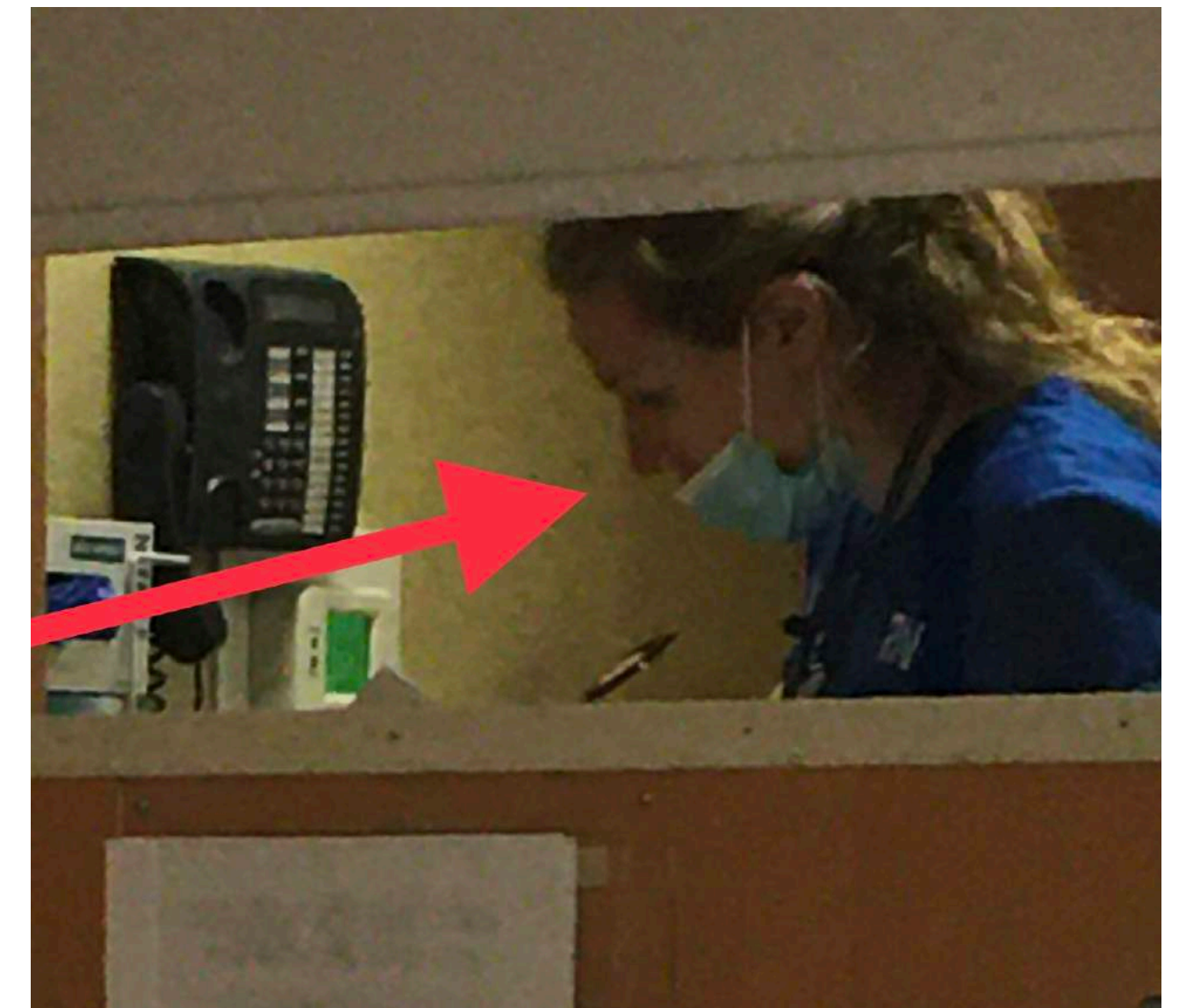
# Curveballs



Nurse Hung Wrong Patient's IV



A Trip to the ICU



Staff Not Wearing Masks

# Heroes



# 29. Core Philosophies to Get Through Difficult Times

1. Accept the things you CAN'T control (virus, economy, etc.)
2. Focus on what you CAN control (how you respond)
3. Exercise gratitude for what you do have.
4. Lean on others when you need to. Help others when you can.

Questions?