

DIVINE INTERVENTION MEETS A WISHED UPON STAR

by Lyn Odom ©2017

If your horse has ever had a serious hoof injury you understand that sick feeling when suddenly that life or death decision-making slams into your world. It's unapologetically tragic, demanding minutes to decide whether or not to euthanize your horse, while kicking your heart and guts to the curb.

That happened to me and my Doc-horse nearly three months ago. My 14-year-old golden boy, (that I've had since he was four months old and still in his mama's belly at Epperson Ranch in Rock Springs, Texas), nearly tore his right, front hoof clean off.

Enter Dr. David Fry, a mobile veterinarian I've trusted for the last decade.

Fry said the deter-

mining life or death factor came down to whether or not Doc had ruptured the membrane that encapsulated his coffin, navicular, and lower pastern bones.

"If any of those joints were exposed, bacteria would eat those bones away over time," Fry said. "Though I could see the side bone and joint, which was really alarming, the membrane capsule seemed to be intact."

Fry injected several CC's of sterile saline solution into the membrane and determined it was not torn. Still, it would have been risky to cast the foot before knowing for sure bacteria had not entered the wound. After consulting with Dr. Cliff Honnas, a board certified veterinary surgeon, "the

best in the country," said Fry, and a friend from his vet school days, Fry decided to stitch and wrap Doc's foot in order to treat the soft tissue with antibiotics.

"The whole back third of Doc's hoof was held on by the sole of his hoof," Fry said. "I could see tendons, bones and ligaments."

Fry also saw that Doc's coronary band and heel bulb were cut through. "Only some 'Divine Intervention' kept that coronary band from rotting off," he said. "There was no blood supply to it, but suturing it... well, it is amazing that it healed."

Fry had to knock Doc out twice. First for the stitching and wrap, then to cast the hoof. Both times Fry dosed Doc with

5 CC's of Xylazine, then 10 CC's of Ketamine to knock him down. Fry then mixed those two drugs into a couple of syringes and had me "bump" Doc through the port in his neck artery to keep him safely down during the procedures.

"Some horses will jump up real quick when coming up out of Ketamine," Fry said. "They look asleep and then before you know it they are three feet above your head, hooves flying and body's flailing."

With the help of good friends, Salvador Zavala who acted as the surgery nurse; and Larry Frazier, who diligently watched Doc's respiration and twitching, both procedures were safely carried out.

Doc had to stay in

his stall for a long five weeks of recovery. And I had to keep the cast absolutely dry, picking and turning his stall three times a day. I found it easier picking with my hands. Buy hey, when it's your kid, touching their poop is just what you do.

Finally, it was time for the cast to come off. We couldn't believe it. Our efforts had worked!

Fry called in Professional Farrier Robert Hooper who applied an egg bar shoe after beginning the process of floating the hoof wall over the crack in order to take the pressure off the still lengthy hoof crack. Hooper's hoof healing process is depressurizing the weakened hoof wall, while holding the hoof together with

the specialized shoe and nails.

Though it's not over, and Doc probably won't be sound for a year, deciding to give him a chance at surviving this horrific injury has given him back the years as he has left. I can't imagine the pain he endured, but he handled it like a champ. And having friends like I do, including friend Shannon Lowry who demanded I "eat," "sleep," and "come in from the barn," helped me survive this.

"Doc surviving this and starting recovery has made me so happy I can hardly stand it," Fry said. "I love that horse!"

But it was Dr. David Fry's determination and experience that saved Doc's life - the horse that I wished upon a star for as a kid.



The initial wound shows the inner, right heel bulb slice goes through the hoof and all the way to the sole of the foot.



Stitches out and the hoof cleaned up proper to applying a hard cast.



Out cold, but Doc came around slowly and took his time getting up.



Farrier Robert Hooper applied an egg bar shoe so Doc can be turned out with his two sisters, Duni and Minnie, and Doc's donkey pal, Sweatpea.



Dr. Fry stitching it up as I ask about a thousand questions he patiently answered in layman's terms.



Doc was an incredible patient. Dr. Fry cut off the cast, sans sedation. His calm behavior is due in most part to Doc being trick trained by Allen Pogue 13 years ago. He would trim Doc's hooves with a hand-held sander.



Free at last! On February 4, Doc showed little soreness as he explored one of his pastures. He walked, and walked, and walked after his first blast around the pasture.



Dr. Fry stitched and wrapped Doc's foot for two sessions over 10 days time, and this is the result. We were ecstatic. No abscess, no infection, and no proud flesh...yet.

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Success! Though there is now some proud flesh to kill off, the hoof looks fantastic!



And the boss is back in town...

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