

How I reversed cancer and severe illness

Discovering the terrain and our natural human diet

This is my story

Part 1

By Joachim Bartoll

Foreword and disclaimer

This is my story. It's about my journey through the worst years of my life. How I bounced back, reversed tumors, repaired my failing organs, and reclaimed my health. How it changed my view on diet and nutrition, on disease and health, and on life itself. And how I had to unlearn most of what I previously believed in.

This story reflects my experiences and what I uncovered on my journey. It's based on my current beliefs, knowledge, and experiences. Although, what is presented as information is tried and true, and most of it is backed by proper real science, it is not presented as such. Any kind of information within this story is nothing more than my personal opinions.

To better understand my background, my work and passion throughout the years, and the decisions I've made, the first part (the introduction) is a sort of chronological biography. Unless you've followed my work and writings since the 90's and read all my books, please take your time to read this.

This is the free 'unedited' version of my story. It is 'unedited' in the way that I have not had it proofread or edited in any way. It's raw – and probably full of silly spelling and grammatical errors – you'll get them for free too.

Once it has been released in its entirety to the public, I will go over it once again and add some more information, tidbits and whatnot, and then leave it to a professional for some heavy editing, and then have it released as a book.

Please note: this is the first unedited part of my story, released on April 2, 2020. The second part will be released before the end of May, 2020.

The author of this book does not give out medical advice or prescribe the use of any technique, diet, or such as a form of treatment for physical, emotional, or medical problems. In the event you use any of the information in this story for yourself, the author assumes no responsibility for your actions.

Introduction, a view in the rear mirror

I was born on April 7, 1974, at 1.47 am. My middle names are 'Mathias' (71-26-118-46) and 'Emanuel' (71-26-118-37), and my last name is 'Bartoll' (80-26-109-46). And Joachim totals 261 when adding the four most common ciphers, and so does Mathias and Bartoll. For those familiar with gematria (coding numbers into words), that's a lot of interesting "organic coincidences". That's either how our 'reality' works and weaves numbers into everything that is meaningful, or 'someone' had a little too much fun playing with numbers.

Yes, I'm an explorer, student, and truther at heart, and we will get to that later in the story. As for now, let us start at the beginning.



Circa 1976, riding the stylish stroller.

I grew up on a big farmstead, 15 km (9 miles) from the little town of Arboga. We had tons of sheep, some chickens, and we grew potatoes, wheat and rye. I was a curious boy. Always running away to explore and play as soon as my mum had to direct her attention elsewhere. Usually she found me in ditches, in the middle of a pasture among the animals, or somewhere in the woods with one of our dogs as company.

When I was five, I got really sick and was diagnosed with asthma and allergies. I was pretty much allergic to everything you could test for – and more. All I could eat was salted meat, potatoes, and home-made fermented bread. We also had to keep our cats and dogs outside, and keep the house meticulously clean. A little dust, or petting a cat, could leave me in respiratory distress.

Between the age of 5 and 10, I spent more time in hospitals than I did at home or in school. Still, I was way ahead of the curriculum and always got an excellent report card. I did have tutoring in the hospital, but I have no memories of that. In fact, most of those years during my childhood are a complete blank. I only remember some images of hospital walls, of hallucinations from running dangerous high fevers, and playing in the hallways just to end up in a corner in fetal position from excruciating pain.

When it was at its worst, when I was about 7 years of age, I had 13 pneumonias and 11 ear infections in just one year. The doctors told my mother that 'she should be happy' if I lived to see my 10th birthday. As faith had it, I did. And at the age of 11, when I hit puberty, most of the allergies began to disappear. But the asthma remained, easily triggered by infections and by any kind of oxygen-demanding effort.

As my health improved a little bit, I got involved in judo, table tennis, and I played some soccer (mostly as a goalie), and field hockey. But because of my asthma, I preferred activities with short bursts of effort. Any kind of running, as I began to get winded, triggered my asthma – and the feeling of being suffocated. Although I slowly got better, my immune system was damaged from the overuse of antibiotics and other useless and harmful medicines, and I got sick almost every month.

During this time, where I spent the majority of my time in hospital beds, or at home being sick, I developed a keen interest for drawing – and I got darn good at it. My grandmother, on my mother's side, was a painter and she gave me books and drawing courses. I studied them all, and at 9 years old I started drawing my own comics.

Drawing and painting later transferred into doing computer graphics on the Commodore 64, the Amiga 500 and finally on PC. This opened up a new world for me. I was very active in several computer 'demo groups' (under the alias Sauron and Thorax) and made a lot of really good friends. I mainly did computer graphics – and a little bit of music. We'll get to that in a bit.

As the food allergies disappeared, I was introduced to sweets, soft drinks and other junk food. Being 11 years old, and suddenly be able to eat everything you've been denied for 6 years of your childhood could only spell disaster. At that age you have no concept of nutrition. You think anything you can put in your mouth is food and it doesn't matter what it is (actually a lot of adults still seem to believe this, but I regress).

And as a result, my weight skyrocketed. Fortunately, my health problems got me interested in bodybuilding and martial arts. After two years I quit judo and later picked up karate instead. When I was 13, I started lifting weights and reading

everything about weight training I could get my hands on. I was probably the only Swedish kid in 1987 that subscribed to Flex Magazine, Muscle & Fitness, and Muscle Mag International. My parents sponsored the subscriptions with the notion, "at least he's learning English".

Although I grew up with computers (we got our first console in 1979, and the Commodore 64 home computer in 1982), we mostly used it when it was raining outside. Whenever the weather allowed, we were outside playing or doing sports. My best buddies at that time was Bengt Johansson and Fredrik Blomquist. We all lived within a few kilometers of each other and we had similar interests – and we pretty much hanged out daily, year-round. Bengt actually went on and became the Swedish champion in hammer throwing, a title he won 7 times (2000-2006). He also won the Swedish championship in weight throwing 6 times (2002-2007).

So, yeah, our little village 'Järnäs', outside of Arboga, did produce some interesting life stories.

Another good pal and school mate was Tomas Cedvén. At first glance, we seemed to be each other's opposite – not exactly two boys that would become friends, but we bonded through our curiosity for knowledge and ability to question everything – and simply talk and discuss anything from history, independent movies, to politics and technology – all while our class mates discussed the latest episode of Bay Watch. We became very good friends – one of my best friends during junior high and senior high school.

It was also at this time I got into the computer 'demo scene'. Although I've dabbled a bit with 'demos' on the C64, it all got serious when we got the Amiga 500 in 1986. In just a few weeks my friend Martin and I started our first 'demo group'. A few months later I was recruited into another, and so it continued. And in 1987, at 13 years old, I travelled to Motala, Sweden, to help arrange a 'demo scene party', or 'copy party' as we called them back then (since we met up to make friends and copy stuff – competing in programming, graphics and music was secondary).

The year after, my little brother Mathias (11-years-old at the time) started competing in music and he travelled with me to most of the scene parties during 1988 to 1993. All those parties were held in schools, rented and organized by kids between the age of 13 and 15 (High School), sometimes with some older siblings at 16 or 17 years of age. Some parents only showed up when it was over and time to clean up.

It was pretty wild, when you think back about it. We were just kids and travelled all over Sweden to stay at these gatherings for 2 to 3 days. All we had was some travel money, and some random pay-phone-box (usually close to the railway

station) that you could use to call home to say that you arrived safe and sound. Our parents were cool like that. They knew we could look after ourselves. My brother Mathias actually got back to making and producing music a few years ago. And he's very good at it too – those early years taught him well.

In 1989, at 15 years old, I took a year off from school to work at the Defense Materiel Administration; mainly to save up some money, and to ponder on what I wanted to study in Senior High School. As summer approached, I got a 3-month construction job through a friend of the family, and I spent that summer living alone and looking after a house in Lidingö, Stockholm. I loved it; being on my own and with such responsibility at only 15 years old. I explored all over Stockholm and spent the evenings drawing comics. I still remember when I got my first pay check – and I immediately bought a clipper (hair cutter) and learned to cut my own hair. And yes, I still cut my own hair most of the time. It was a good investment.

Once it was time to jump on the High School bandwagon again, I decided to go with electricity, microelectronics, and computers. That was closest to my hobbies and I was convinced that the field of electronics would only grow with plenty of 'job opportunities'. Still, I spent most of my free time reading about weight training, nutrition, exercise science, endocrinology, physiology, and anatomy. At this time, I also began helping class mates and school athletes (especially the wrestlers and hockey players) with their training and nutrition – writing training programs and diets for both "bulking" and dropping weight.

When I was 16 years old, in 1990, I weighted a chubby 84 kg (185lbs). I had just got into cycling and I decided to 'burn off' that tubby. In four months, I lost 24 kg (53lbs) and got down to a fit and lean 60 kg (132lbs). Sure, I lost a little bit of muscle, but having 'washboard abs' were more important in High School than to look buff and being able to bench 220lbs.

After the weight loss, and with new nutritional strategies, my health improved by quite a lot. From being sick every other month or so, now mostly the winter months remained troublesome. Still, I got sick a couple of times a year and I was taking a lot of asthma medications daily. Two long-acting cortisone inhalers and three fast-acting 'ventoline' inhalers daily. This was routine for many years to come.



Summer of 1992, 18 years old.



Me and our Enigma crew at The Light & Phenomena Party in Alingsås, 1992.

I'm in the middle and my brother is to the right in the background.

As most teenagers, I got sucked into music and live performances. Although I was never particular fond of parties or drinking alcoholic beverages, I attended almost every festival and concert, within my preferred genres, held in Sweden during 1991 to 1997. I was mainly into the electronic genre with styles that could be categorized as synth pop, future pop, industrial, and electronic body music. I still favor these independent genres and I never listen to commercial music.

During autumn of 1993, my buddy Mikko (from the 'Amiga demo scene') got me in contact with Magnus of Triton – the leading 'demo group' on PC in Sweden. They had just launched the first version of Fasttracker (music editor for PC) and was working on a revolutionary demo to be released during the winter (and to promote Gravis ultrasound, the best soundcard at that time).

I felt it was time to abandon the Amiga 500 and a few days later I got my first PC – a i486 DX33, which I overclocked to 40Mhz (just because I could) – and thanks mom for sponsoring me with most of that \$1500 investment! And yeah, back then you had no BIOS interface, you adjusted clock speeds and voltage by bridging pins directly on the motherboard.

In late December, we all flew over to Denmark to visit 'The Party' to meet with American game developer Scavenger. The stadium they rented was packed with people, about 1000 nerdy kids and teenagers. It was loud, it was crazy, and it was fun as heck! I didn't sleep for 72 hours, but we secured our first contract as game developers.



1993. Triton at The Party in Denmark. Representative from Scavenger, Fredrik, Magnus (Vogue) and Gustaf (Lizard King).



1994. Visiting at home, playing field hockey, kind of...

In January 1994, at 19 years old, I moved to Linköping to start Triton as a company together with my friends Mikko, Magnus, and Fredrik. We worked on a first-person-shooter for the PC platform (later released as 'Into the Shadows') that would totally destroy the recently released Doom (and Quake as well). We used my living room as our office, and I wanted to work during the day, while the other half still attended the University and wanted to work during evenings and nights. Due to this, some disagreements arose and I left after 7 months. I did have a lot of fun though, and learned a lot about developing games. I still have a lot of the hundreds of 'textures' I draw in 'Deluxe Paint II' backed up on my current PC.

I moved back to Arboga and got an apartment. And, of course, together with my buddy Fredrik Astlid, we visited several music festivals that summer – just relaxing and having fun.

In August I got a call from newly started Funcom in Oslo, Norway. At that time, around 1994, Funcom developed video games for consoles only.

I went to visit them during the autumn, had an interview, and did some drawings for them. In early 1995, I was offered a position as lead graphic artist with a real good salary and a royalty deal for every game I would be involved in. However, I had just got back to school, and if I left again, I would not have a viable education – it would be nullified. If I ever wanted to study again, I would have to start High School all over. That was simply not an option for me. So, I decided to

finish my studies, and then; immediately afterwards, I did 3-years' worth of Natural Science (Naturvetenskapliga programmet) studies in one year. That entailed physics, mathematics, chemistry, and English. It was at that time I decided that I wanted to work within the health industry. And Natural Science was required for any higher education within the field of medicine and nutrition at the Universities.

During my studies, I started my first website dedicated to resistance training and nutrition. In 1995, Internet was slowly taking off and I teamed up with one of the first 'bodybuilding communities' – John Monteiro's Bigboys. In late 1996, Bigboys closed down and I launched Ironmag L.L.C; the first Internet-magazine of its kind. At the launch, my former Canadian colleagues from Bigboys; Eric Hesse and Christian Thibaudeau, joined the team. Those guys were invaluable and the three of us used Ironmag as a platform to get us into the 'fitness' industry. This non-profit magazine launched our careers. During the following years Ironmag was the biggest training- and nutrition web magazine on the Internet with more than 15 active writers worldwide and hundreds of guest writers. Ironmag stayed on top until early 2001 when other projects took priority and the website was closed down in 2002.

During the first half of 1996, I worked at ABB in Västerås with circuit boards as a quality technician. After that I studied computer science and IT-technology for a year – as I could easily combine that with growing Ironmag and my internet presence. I also did some part-time work as a teacher to save some money – as I wanted to continue my studies within health and nutrition within the next year or so. Still, Ironmag was very important to me, as it was the best way to get in contact with the biggest names in the industry – and to learn a lot from them. It was also in early 1997 that I tried a ketogenic diet for the first time. A 'keto diet' is where you consume mostly fats and some protein (and on some variants, you 'carb-up' once a week or so for the 'anabolic effect'). The choice fell on Dan Duchaine's 'Body Opus', and I documented everything on Ironmag. I got pretty darn ripped and managed to keep all the muscle I had. Since then, I've always gravitated towards ketogenic diets for fat loss and general health.

During the spring of 1997, I was once again offered a job at ABB, and I stepped in for a couple of months. Once summer had passed, they offered me a supervisor position, but I declined. That was nothing I could see myself doing long-term. Training and Nutrition was my passion. So, since I had enough money saved, I moved back to Linköping to study chemistry and biology at a higher level and to apply to medical school.

But after visiting the campus, speaking with other medical students, and seeing first hand that it was all about Big Pharma and profits, pushing medicines to

cover symptoms instead of healing the underlying problem, and teaching false outdated information, I simply walked away.

That was in early 1998 and I felt a bit discouraged – not sure what to do next. Then, a few days later, my old school buddy Magnus called me and asked if I wanted to come to Stockholm and work on a big project involving computer and network installations. I called the project manager, we talked for 30 minutes, and I was hired before the call ended. In March of 1998 I moved to Stockholm and started as a computer field technician for Siemens. We travelled all over Sweden, installing new computers and a whole new network system for the Swedish National Labor Board. We visited new cities every day and was on the road for 5 to 6 days a week. When I had time, I visited the local gyms in each town and then worked an hour or two in the evenings with Ironmag on a very slow and awkward laptop. But it got the job done.

A few months later I got the opportunity to manage the five field teams – which simply meant spending a lot of time on the phone and making sure everyone was on route and on time. And when the project was finished in early 1999, the National Labor Board (AMS) offered me a job as a project manager and as a part of their IT-developing team.

It was at this time, in the late 90's, that I stopped watching TV and reading any news-papers. The news rarely reflected what I heard and discussed with all the friends all over the world I've made through Ironmag. I started to notice the propaganda, the symbolism and signs used by the elite, and the scripts they all shared and seemed to be running. I had much better things to do than to waste time and energy on government agendas and hoaxes – and I haven't bought a single newspaper or watched TV since.

In late 1998 and early 1999, I had also begun to work with some Strongman competitors, as I had covered some shows as a reporter for Ironmag. I mainly helped them with nutrition and supplements, but also with injury prevention. I quickly became friends with the Swedish elite at that time, and we had a lot of fun. Those Strongman competitions are crazy fun, especially backstage – with tons of pranks and jokes. Big guys with big hearts.



Me in 1998, 24 years old, at one of many hotel rooms.



And in 1999, doing Animalbolics – the first Intermittent fasting diet while training in the cellar-gym beneath AMS in Solna, Stockholm.

While I lived in Stockholm, working for the National Labor Board, I spent a lot of time with my friends at B&K Sports Magazine, and especially my long-time friend Magnus Branzén. B&K was the only 'bodybuilding' magazine in Sweden at that time. While I was running Ironmag and had a lot of contacts all over the world, spending a lot of time with the editorial staff gave me new contacts in Scandinavia and introduced me to the process of making a magazine instead of only publishing stuff on the internet. I learned a lot and I'm ever grateful to all of them for letting me hang around as much as I did. In return, I worked for them at every expo, which for me, simply meant even more opportunities to meet interesting people and gain new contacts.

In 1999, Magnus and I launched the first real Swedish 'bodybuilding' discussion board and it became widely popular. I was also involved, with some good friends, in the 'underground' discussion board known as 'Powerboard'. I helped out (making sure people didn't do stupid sh*t) by writing under the alias 'AcesHigh' – if anyone still remembers the good ol' days.

During this time in Stockholm, I took a couple of Personal Trainer-, Nutrition- and Weight Lifting Instructional courses. To be honest, that was mostly a waste of time. The only useful thing was learning some lifting techniques and how to operate the Harpenden skin-fold caliper for testing body fat. In early 2000 I also studied deep-tissue massage, which I still practice now and then on my

competing clients. Separating the muscle bellies can really help with posing and making your muscles 'pop' on stage.

It was also in mid-1999 that I met Fredrik Paulún for the first time. We've had some previous contact and he asked me to meet him at home to look at an interesting project. Fredrik was loosely involved in a PC-software for logging exercise, meals and nutrition. The software was developed by Björn Morén and most of the text and the exercise database was made by Swedish bodybuilder profile Fredrik Age. I helped out with some of the concepts, and in late 1999, the first version of 'Din Personliga Tränare' was released on CD-ROM. A few years later, it was updated and re-released as 'TrainersLab'.

In late summer of 1999, we wrote about Animalbolics in Ironmag – the first Intermittent Fasting protocol for bodybuilding. We also published the original article written by 'Animal' himself (that was posted on Usenet). It got a lot of recognition and it has been copied multiple times since. In short, it was a small pre-workout meal before your training, and then one or two large meals after. I also became good friends with Lars Fairing of Fairing Nutrition and helped him develop Complete Protein, one of the most advanced protein powders on the market back in the late 90's.

In 2000, I moved from Solna, within Stockholm, to Haninge at the outskirts of Stockholm. I started training at Haninge Hälsostudio and quickly became friends with the owners, helping them with some internet-related stuff – and their webpage. And whenever I had time, I trained with my workout-buddy Mikael Gustafsson (of whom I actually share the same birth-date).



Alan Bergström, Andreas Cahling, and me at "The Evening of Legends" night event during the Scandinavian Fitness Expo in Älvsjö, 2000.

During 2000, I worked fulltime at AMS, and in the evenings I mostly worked on Ironmag. I didn't take one single vacation day that year. In early 2001 I was once again in contact with Björn Morén and Fredrik Age, as they worked on TrainersLab – an updated version of 'Din Personlig Tränare'. I helped out with the beta-testing and was very impressed, as it blew any competition on the market for training and nutrition software out of the water.

I also spent a lot of time writing and helping out on B&K Sport Magazine's discussion board in my spare time, and in February of 2001, Henrik Eiselt of Eiselt Nutrition reached out to me with an interesting proposal. He had just started the Swedish edition of Ironman Magazine and needed an editor-in-chief. At that time, bodybuilding and strength training was one of my biggest passions, so in March of 2001, I accepted the position and resigned from the National Labor Board.

Working with Ironman Magazine put me in competition with my friends at Body Magazine (B&K). However, it was a friendly competition and the owner, Ove Rytter, encouraged me to take the position and try my wings. Ove is a great friend. Even back then, he was crazy-busy with tons of projects, but always had time for a chat.

Since Eiselt was first and foremost a nutritional supplement company, Henrik and I founded Kolozeum – a web shop and information platform where I built a new discussion board. The idea was to promote Ironman and a new supplement line all under the same roof, while pulling in people with the discussion board and my knowledge. While the web shop did okay, the discussion board exploded in popularity. Kolozeum was without a doubt the biggest forum in Scandinavia for more than 15 years. It was a success story of its own.

During the time I worked with Ironman Magazine, my online magazine Ironmag was closed down. I had no time to run it and my Canadian buddies had just got new career opportunities. Christian Thibaudeau had been offered a contract with T-mag/Testosterone Nation and Eric had started working for Iovate (owner of Muscletech).

In early 2002, I travelled to Linköping to cover a Strongman event. My good friend Anders Axklo, commentator for Eurosport and Tv 3, saw me and called me on stage to do an arm-wrestle exhibition against world champion Andreas Rundström. Little did I know that my asthma medication put my 'stretch reflex' out of commission. So, as we went back and forth, I put everything I had on one push and by sheer muscle strength, I snapped my upper-arm bone in half. I still remember that my friend, and World Champion strongman, Magnus Samuelsson helped me off stage and held my arm in place – so not to cause more damage. It was a nasty spiral fracture and I had a hard time sleeping for a month. Although I tried my best to work from home, it put some strain on our

Ironman magazine. And at the same time, we had a hard time signing advertisers since most had sign-up a year in advance with Body Magazine. So, in June 2002, the Swedish edition of Ironman Magazine was cancelled. And even now, 18 years later, I still get compliments from people who remember and loved the magazine. I did continue to write a little at Kolozzeum for about a year, and later on, Lars Fairing bought the discussion board, which was a very smart business move – as it gave Fairing Nutrition a ton of exposure among those interested in training and nutrition.

A couple of weeks after Ironman was cancelled, in July of 2002, I started a web-developing studio with Jessica, one of my former co-workers from Siemens back in 1999. While working on a couple of web projects, I was approached by Roger Skoglund of Nutrition Outlet. He had just launched a project called the 'Talent Hunt' (Talangjakten). The premise was to pick out 8 talented amateurs and to sponsor and help them with everything needed during 6 months to get them ready to enter the stage and compete in bodybuilding or fitness. It was the perfect marketing strategy and reminded me a little of my old friends Bill and Shawn Phillips 'Body of Work' (later called 'Body for Life') when Bill pushed EAS supplements through a transformation contest – but this idea was more niched and a great marketing platform for both supplements and the coaches involved. I developed a website, did some marketing, and helped a bit with the coaching. Swedish bodybuilder Fredrik Carlsson (now Fredrik Boson) was called in as head-coach and we immediately became good friends. In late 2002, Nutrition Outlet moved their headquarters to Västerås and Roger wanted to start an extreme sports magazine (Exhale All Sports Magazine). I accepted the position as Editor-in-Chief, and in January of 2013 I moved from Haninge, Stockholm, to Västerås, while Fredrik moved there from Gothenburg to work with the supplement-side of the company.

2003 was a year of wildly varied experiences while working more or less around the clock. I ran the magazine with help from Magda Gad. I wrote three to four articles for each edition, did some coverages, proofreading, and so on. I also did the whole process of putting the magazine together in Adobe InDesign by myself, and delivering it to the printing office. But that was only the tip of the iceberg. I got involved in their supplement line, putting together labels, ads and catalogues, and also had to manage communications with Nature's Best in Belgium. We also built two gyms in Västerås (and one in Gothenburg and another one in Linköping). We opened stores in Västerås, Stockholm, Gothenburg, Linköping and Uppsala. We arranged the health- and sport exhibition known as 'The Exhale Athletic Fitness Weekend' and the Swedish National Bodybuilding and Fitness Championships, as we moved it from Stockholm to Västerås. I actually did voluntary work for the Swedish

Bodybuilding and Fitness Federation (SKKF) during 2003 to 2009, where I helped with the website, competition coverage, and photography.

I had one week off that summer, which I spent with my good friend Pia Jansson in Norway. She had previously operated the Nutrition Outlet store in Västerås, but got fed up and quit. During autumn and early winter, I worked about 120 hours a week for four months straight. I actually started preparations to compete in bodybuilding that year, but all the work came in the way and my body simply said no. Then, in December, I have had enough and quit.

A few days later the stress caught up with me and my health collapsed.

I suffered from a double-sided pneumonia and sinusitis for three months.

Still, considering all the different experiences gained, all the contacts and friends I made, I would have done that year all over again. No regrets, ever.



Late summer 2003, first training session at our new built gym in Hälla, Västerås.

I'd just started a diet to compete in bodybuilding that winter, but with the insane workload, it never happened.

When I was back on my feet in spring of 2004, I moved to Eskilstuna and worked full-time as a trainer and coach. Instead on working with one client at a time in the gym, I trained 3 to 4 people simultaneously. This was simply more efficient, I made a lot more money per hour, and the clients could also motivate each other and they had more fun. I only worked one-on-one with competing athletes.

I also helped out a little with Power Gym, as I quickly became good friends with the owner Mikael. And I had a blast training with my friends Fredrik Spång, Lars Forss, and Hillary Nambwaya.

During 2004 and 2005 when I lived in Eskilstuna, I kept in touch with my previous colleague and good friend Fredrik Boson (former Carlsson). He quit his position at Nutrition Outlet about a year after I left, and during 2005 he opened his own

supplement store and started a competition team for bodybuilding- and fitness competitors. He named his company 'reFORM' and I helped him with the logotype (oh, the memories!).

As his competition team grew, we started to discuss the possibility of teaming up. And the rest is history.

In early 2006, I remodeled my company and moved to Västerås (for the third time). While Fredrik operated his supplement store, I rented a part of the cellar, and we worked together managing his competition team, which quickly became the largest team for competing bodybuilders and fitness athletes in Sweden. While I still had my own clients, I also wrote articles on a monthly basis for Body Magazine (during 2006 to 2010). A few months later Stadium, which is Scandinavia's largest sporting goods retail chain with more than 150 stores in Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Germany, contacted me as they had recently started a customer magazine and also wanted a bigger presence online. So, during 2007 to 2011, I wrote sport-specific articles for their magazine and website, and I was also part of the Q&A expert panel – answering 5 to 6 sport-specific questions every month.



Me and Fredrik in early 2006 at the reFORM store.

During 2006, Fredrik and I developed the first 4:1:1 BCAA powder in Sweden (four parts leucine to one-part iso-leucine and valine), where we did trials with different dosages before and during workouts. We also played around with pure

leucine to stimulate muscle protein synthesis. These early experiments led to my continuous work, and several field studies, around 'para-workout nutrition' – that is, consuming specific nutrients before, during, and after a training session. It also laid the foundation to the first version of 'The Anabolic Pulse Protocol' (stimulating protein synthesis with “pulses” of amino acids throughout the day – based on the studies of Julien Bohé [2001] and Paddon-Jones [2005]). This protocol, that we used on most clients from late 2006 and onwards, as well as the more complex workout nutrition strategies, was later included in my second book, 'The Maximum Muscle Guide' (released in early summer of 2009) and revised for most diets and scenarios in my book 'Träningsnutrition', released in 2015.

As winter hit Sweden, I got sick with the usual sinusitis; and in March of 2007, after I just had recuperated, I was struck with high fever, swollen lymph nodes, edema, rashes and blisters. The doctors dismissed it as erysipelas (wildfire disease) and told me to wait it out. And eventually it did pass – after three months! I started training again in late May, and as I attended my brother's wedding on June 2nd and looked at the photos the day after, I realized that I've become a fat slob. This led me to start a diet in late June, known as 'Operation Lean Bastard'. It was a 'ketogenic diet' based mostly on meat, heavy cream protein shakes, very little veggies, and my “Anabolic Pulse Protocol”. I lost 7 kg (15.5lbs) of fat and gained 3.2 kg (7.1lbs) muscle mass in 11 weeks. With a short break during December, it turned into a bodybuilding 'competition diet' in early 2008. I more or less walked around 'competition ready' most of that year – and that kind of became my trademark – the guy who always is ripped to the bone.



December 2007, as most years, working for Ove and BODY Magazine at the Scandinavian Fitness Expo.



Conditioning during 2008. 1, January 23, 2008. 2, April 28, 2008.

The data from 'operation lean bastard' and 'operation get ripped' combined with all the experience with helping hundreds of clients in bodybuilding led to my first book, 'The Body Transformation Guide', that was released in April of 2009.

My body fat percentage measured between 3.2 and 3.4 % measured by the 9-point Parrillo skin fold formula. Pictures from the transformation was used in my books. My second book, 'The Maximum Muscle Guide', was written during the development of TBTG and was released in June 2009.

As I finished my experiment, Fredrik hinted the idea that we should start-up the Talent Hunt Project (Talangjakten) once again. I posted an application on the major Swedish discussion boards, and Body Magazine posted it on their website. It was an immediate success, and we ran the Talent Hunt Project in 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011. The rules were simple. It had to be your first competition and you had to sign a contract and admit to being tested for drugs.

We had more than 3000 applicants in total, which was surprisingly considering that the end goal was to step on stage in such minor 'sports' as bodybuilding or fitness.



Me on the left, Fredrik on the right – and our Talent Hunt gang 2008.

8 to 12 people were picked each year based on their current physique, personality, and desire to do their best. Each individual was fully sponsored with supplements, training clothes and training gear, competition license, spray tan, and everything needed to step on stage. We also provided individualized training routines, diet and supplement plans, body fat testing, and we arranged team meetings and other activities.

In June of 2009, just a week after we launched that year's edition of the Talent Hunt, I once again came down with some weird sickness. It started with a very sore throat, and a couple of days later I got big spots of swelling from leaking blood plasma. It turned out to be some kind of streptococcus infection and a severe allergic reaction to it. While fighting that illness and coaching our participants, I still managed to release my second book, 'The Maximum Muscle Guide' on July 9th.

In 2010, the Nutrition Outlet Gym we built in 2003, was bought, rebuilt, and renamed to Ironsport Gym. Our Talent Hunt gang were among the first to check it out as we gathered them for the Swedish Championships; where they had an opportunity to visit the backstage area and observe how everything around a competition was handled.

During 2010 I experimented a lot with different training concepts. I did four different evaluations where more than 120 people applied and got free training programs in exchange for bi-weekly feedback.

I refined some of the programs and tried some new ideas during 2011, 2012, and 2013 with an additional 200 participants in total. Those programs later evolved into the 12-week muscle building program published in my book 'The Maximum Muscle Guide 2016'.

In late 2010, Fredrik moved most of his business to Ironsport Gym and I mostly worked from my home office. In May of 2011, the owners of MM Sports in Gothenburg reached out to me. Previously, we had met and had long interesting conversations at various expos and competitions, and now they invited me to their second anniversary of their new store. My good friend and former Talent Hunt competitor Michaela joined me. We spent a couple of days in Gothenburg and I began a co-operation with them. I started working with Tim Nygren to launch a new competition team, and a few months later I started working at their headquarters. I still lived in Västerås, so I took the train to Gothenburg, stayed there for a week or two and pretty much worked around the clock. Then I spent a week at home tending to my own projects and commitments. This went on until May 2012 when I decided to start full-time at MM sports and I moved to Gothenburg on June 1st.

At this time, in 2011 and 2012, Gymgrossisten (GG) was by far the largest supplement and clothing company in Sweden (as a part of a big corporative group), but MM Sports were an upcoming company and we grew really fast – challenging GG in many ways.

When I started at MM Sports, I worked closely with Tim and we were involved in everything. We worked on the web shop, several websites and forums, a new fitness/strength competition (called Rep-Power), our bodybuilding-, fitness- and martial arts competition teams, on several supplement lines and new products, on new clothing and on opening more stores all over Sweden. I also tended to IT-related questions and support, both for the office, the warehouse, and the stores. It was a lot of fun – much more like a family business than a large corporation.

During 2012 and 2013, I developed several new supplements, including 'vitamin D3 + K2', 'Jacked T3' (iodine, l-tyrosine, selenium), and a B-vitamin complex – and I helped with a lot of other products.

Michaela (my client during 2010 to 2014) went on to be an important part of our competition team and later on won the Swedish Championship in Athletic Fitness several times.

In 2013, as MM Sports grew enormously, several firms were brought in for the web shop, marketing and such. My role switched from 'doing everything' to being in charge for communication. I re-wrote all supplement information texts and went through all current labels; to make sure everything was coherent with the new European laws (more than 150 supplements). I was still involved with the competition teams and wrote monthly articles for the website and a newly started magazine.



May 28, 2011. Tim and me.

During this growth of the company, a lot of people come and went, and some promises were made. Unfortunately, not much came to fruition, and in early 2014 I decided to start up my old companies again and work as a consultant. Although I had a lot of time for my own projects and clients, I still worked with MM Sports for most of 2014.

And this is where my prologue ends and my main story begins.

1. Gothenburg and the sudden move

If you skipped my prologue, I'll start off with a little recapitulation. I moved to Gothenburg in June of 2012. At that time, I worked at MM Sports, mainly with sport- and health supplements, their websites, and with their sponsored athletes (diet and training).

At the start of 2014 I decided to become a consultant again and I continued to do some work for MM Sports for most of 2014. It was at this time I started the 'Classic Muscle Newsletter', where I posted four to six articles every month about nutrition, resistance training, new studies, and health in general (at bi-weekly intervals). I ran this newsletter until I got too sick to keep up (in the late summer of 2017 – after 32 editions).

In early May of 2014, I travelled to the Czech Republic to get a little Czechoslovakian Wolfdog pup from the renowned Od Úhoště kennel. I've been working on and off with dogs on my spare time most of my life, and I felt it was finally time to get my own little pup. Since I once again was running my own businesses and could have him with me around the clock, it was the perfect time.

Getting a wolfdog changed my schedule quite a bit. As a pup, we went outside for short walks (not to tax his growing skeleton) six to seven times a day. As he reached sexual maturity and approached his young-adult size, we spent about two hours a day at various dog yards, and another hour or two exercising, tracking or hiking around any green area in Gothenburg and its vicinity. I posted a lot of videos on YouTube that became quite popular. Most people didn't even know of the Czechoslovakian Wolfdog and they were intrigued.

During mid-spring in 2015 I met Isabella. She had three dogs and a dog care business. We spent a lot of time walking our pack in the woods – sometimes up to 6 hours a day or more. I did most of my writing and work with clients early in the morning and forenoon to have the latter part of the day off. And for sake of convenience, I fasted during the day (with some amino-acids during long walks), and then had two meals in the evening – pretty much what I've done since 2009. Unfortunately, we broke up, and in mid-2016 I learned that the family I was renting my apartment from was doing so illegally. This came as quite a shock. I had to find a new place to live within two months – something that is very difficult in Gothenburg on such short notice – especially when you have a big wolfdog to care for. As time ran out, I had no other choice than to move back to where I grew up and still had family – the little town of Arboga – and where it still was easy to find apartments.

During all this 'turbulence', in early autumn of 2016, I noticed a small hard lump on my right upper leg. I didn't think much of it at first, since you get bruises, small wounds, and bumps from spending hours a day with large dogs – especially walking the woods and getting hit by stuff. Not to mention hitting the gym and doing exercises such as high pulls from hang and power cleans, as you 'bump' the bar of your thighs with a powerful hip drive. I was also busy working on a new business idea, as I wanted to re-invent my coaching business and getting into the educational field.



Me in June 2016 at 42 years of age.

However, the lump continued to grow. And in late 2016, it was clearly visible and you could move it around a little with your fingers. It was hard as rock in one end, and a bit firm in the other where it was expanding. It was growing alongside the Iliotibial band (IT) on the side of the upper leg. At that time, I contacted a doctor about a remittance to get it removed and analyzed. In January of 2017, I underwent surgery and had a large stringy mass removed that was semi-attached to my IT-band. The surgeon had a difficult time removing it, and the operation took 35 minutes. The mass itself had a little fibrous black-blueish glittering center with small scattered elements of scar tissue and long black string-like growths, making it about 5 to 6 cm (2.3 inches) all stretched out.

It took almost 10 weeks for six different 'experts' to study it, and none of them could identify the black spiderweb-like strings. The 'material/tissue' was not in any of their databases. They were dumbfounded, and the final statement from the surgeon and the experts simply stated; "a lipoma cancerous growth with unknown and unidentifiable mass". They also added that they 'thought' it was benign and not 'threatening' (we'll get into these statements later and the fundamental misunderstanding of cancer and tumors).



January 11, 2017. The day after the operation.

January 15, 2017.

'Official' statement after the surgery:

Diagnos	D179X-Opsecificerat lipom med icke specificerad lokalisation-Huvuddiagnos
Op-/åtgärds kod	TQW99-Annat mindre ingrepp på hud eller subkutan vävnad-Åtgärd
Kontaktorsak	Remiss från doktor Chwojnicky, Grindberga Familjeläkarmott, Arboga. 42-årig man, väsentligen frisk. Inga mediciner.
Aktuellt	Har sedan i sept noterat en spolformad relativt rörlig resistens på utsidan av höger lår proximalt. Den har långsamt ökat i storlek och möjligen blivit mer konsistensökad. Önskar exstirpation. Tål l.a. L.a. Carbocain/Adrenalin. Incision över den palp resistensen. Det visar sig vara ett delvis fibrotiserat lipom tum, flerloberat, sträcker sig ut åt olika håll i subcutis men inte ner i muskelfascian. Exstirperas. Intracutan Monocryl. Prep till PAD. Telefonsvar.
Operationsberättelse	

"Has since September noted a coil-shaped relatively variable resistance on the outside of the right thigh, proximally. It has slowly increased in size and possibly increased consistency."

"Incision over palp resistance. It turns out to be a partially fibrotized lipoma, multi-lobed, extending in different directions in the subcutis but not down the muscle fascia."

'Official' statement 10 weeks later:

Besöksanteckning

Antecknad av [REDACTED] (Läkare) på CLG Kirurgmottagningen,
Capio Läkargruppen, CLG Kirurgmottagningen
2017-03-27 13:51

Aktuellt

PAD svar har kommit på den bortopererade knöl från utsidan av höger lår. Prep har varit föremål för en hel del extra undersökningar och också diskuterats med sex andra patologer. Vissa delar och trådigheter kunde inte identifieras. Man har kommit fram till att det i grunden är ett lipom med en omfattande reaktiv process, möjligen resttillstånd efter trauma. Man har inte kunnat påvisa något som inger misstanke om malignitet. Ingen ytterligare åtgärd. Brev till patienten.

"PAD's response has come on the removed mass from the outside of the right thigh. It has been the subject of a lot of extra examinations and has also been discussed with six other pathologists. Some parts and threads could not be identified. It has been concluded that it is basically a lipoma with an extensive reactive process, possibly residual state after trauma. There has been no evidence of any suspicion of malignancy. No further action. Letter to the patient."

At the time when this mass was removed, I noticed a new 'hardness' on my other leg – also along the IT-band near the hip. As I did some prolonged fasting (7-day water/mineral fast) and then followed a ketogenic diet, it didn't change in size and I started feeling better. During April to June of 2017 I felt somewhat okay and I was working hard on the new company and business idea.

Then in July of 2017, I began to experience cold/flu-like symptoms in the morning when waking up, then it went away after a few hours. I didn't give it much thought until I noticed that my energy levels began to plummet in the afternoon. In September I began to have trouble focusing on tasks and remembering things. Writing, for example, has always been fluid for me, but now I had to really focus on what to write repeatedly, and I also had to re-read what I wrote to remember what to write next. My eyesight also started to blur in the afternoon or after longer periods of focusing on something. My thinking started to feel sluggish and later in the day I couldn't even read or watch a short video-clip on YouTube without losing focus and interest (extreme brain fog). I also lost a lot of weight. And let me tell you, my body fat is always in the single digits, so it was all muscle mass.



Late summer 2017 when I began to lose bodyweight (mostly muscle mass).
As I said, my bodyfat was already pretty low to begin with.

In October I visited my doctor, got some basic blood- and stool tests done and received a long-term sick-leave. I had to drop everything. Close my businesses and just focus on getting through the day. I could hardly focus for more than a few minutes at a time. Reading or writing was almost impossible, and talking for more than a few minutes was exhausting as I had to really concentrate to find the right words (and sometimes I could flip them, or say another totally different word).

In early December 2017, I had lost about 12 kg (27lbs) of body weight (since August). And on December 21st, after waiting for 6 weeks, I finally got an MRI of my left leg. The results of that MRI however, did not show up until late March of 2018...

The symptoms at my worst

I hit rock-bottom in late 2017 and early 2018. I would feel somewhat fine early in the morning. Although my energy levels were low, I could still function at a small capacity. However, my mental energy and focus rapidly declined as the hours passed. At about 9 or 10 AM I would begin to struggle with anything I was doing, whether it be writing, reading, studying or doing anything else that needed some kind of cognitive ability. At 11 or 12 AM I felt really sluggish (couldn't focus or think clearly), and a few hours later my senses would feel dulled; like moving through fog and wearing earplugs. My eyesight was reduced and slightly blurred, my motions when moving around felt like they were lagging behind – like a movie that is out-of-sync. I could easily lose my balance and tumble into things. It felt kind of like a dream, as you were outside of your body, trying to control it through strings, like a puppet. Very weird and hard to describe.



November 2017, my first pencil-neck ever.



Late January 2018, edema from organs failing.

At this time, I still believed that I needed a “balanced diet” to provide my body with energy – especially since I was losing weight. However, I knew that I had high levels of chronic inflammation – and if I did anything that increased inflammation or taxed my organs, my symptoms worsened and new health issues appeared.

If I consumed grains, such as bread or pasta, I got severe flares of skin rashes that looked like psoriasis, I got cold-like symptoms, and edema (fluid retention). If I consumed too much carbohydrates in one sitting (more than 50 grams), I got

sugar in my urine, blurred vision, buzzing in my ears, and I could almost fall asleep standing (symptoms similar to diabetes). And for protein, if I consumed more than 20 grams of protein in a sitting, I got noticeable amounts of albumin in the urine – to such a degree that it turned white – and that at only 20 grams! I also experienced some swelling around my eyes and lower legs that could come and go.

Yes, my kidneys were failing. My liver was struggling, and my thyroid was almost shut. My blood-tests confirmed this, as we will get into in a moment.

Because of my extreme fatigue and brain fog, I had a hard time managing my nutrition. To prepare and cook a meal was a real struggle.

I tried to switch back to a strict ketogenic diet, only to discover that my body struggled with larger quantities of fat. I guess my gallbladder was taxed as well. And I never consume fats and carbohydrates together because of the Randle Cycle. Sabotaging your metabolism and adding more stress to the body would be very stupid. Actually, I wrote about the risks of consuming a lot of fat and carbohydrates in the same meal as early as 2003 (Exhale All Sports Magazine, issue 2).

So, the best I could do at that time was to consume ‘ketogenic-like’ meals (fats and protein) early in the day when I still had some mental clarity. And then I had mostly carbohydrates and little protein later in the day when I was tired anyway, just to get more calories to try and gain weight. By doing this it didn’t really matter that carbohydrates made me more tired. I couldn’t do anything after midday anyway. And yes, at this time I still believed that some vegetables and fruits could be beneficial – and I forced myself to eat them.

Still, I didn’t get any better. All I managed to do was to push down on the brakes, although very so lightly. My health was still declining. In January of 2018, I had lost 14kg (31 lbs.). A few weeks later, I started to experience edema (bloating) all over my body, but especially in my face.

The bloodwork and other tests

I did some bloodwork in October of 2017, which I never received. Then my doctor, at that time, realized that half of the tests were missing; so, I went in for new tests in early December. And of course, they only tested for the ones that were missing – instead of taking a whole new panel so we could compare the few he had to the new ones. A lot can change in two months – and that could give some clues.

From the few tests done, what I could read was that my thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH) dropped from 3.6 in early 2017 to 1.2 at early 2018. This should indicate that my thyroid is overactive (hyperthyroidism), producing too much thyroid hormone, which in turn would force the pituitary to lower TSH. However, my T3 and T4 was at the lower end, I was always freezing 'in my bones' (no heat sensitivity), I had no mood swings, no tremors or muscle weakness, no skin dryness, no sleep problems, and no heart palpitations or irregular heartbeat. So, it just seemed like the whole hormonal system was out of whack.

My blood albumin levels were at the higher end (55 g/L), still I only consumed a total of 60 to 80 grams of protein a day (otherwise my urine would turn white). So, that is a sign of chronic inflammation and possibly kidney disease and cancer.

Lactate dehydrogenase (LD) was also highly elevated at 3.9 $\mu\text{kat/L}$ (normal range is somewhere between 1.8 and 3.4), and I've never been above 2.0 at any previous test. Elevated LD/LDH is a sign of tissue damage, mainly from organs. Alkaline phosphatase (ALP) was elevated at 2.1 $\mu\text{kat/L}$ (normal range is somewhere between 0.6 and 1.8). Elevated ALP can be a sign of liver infection, rheumatism, diabetes, or other problems with your organs. Also, all stool tests were fine, so my weight loss was not related to any digestive or nutritional problems.

After reviewing all my symptoms and tests, the Swedish medical establishment ('health care') could not offer any help or even ideas. The only suggestion that came up was amphetamines to help with my mental fatigue – something that was totally out of the question and would probably had caused even more damage.

My doctor actually agreed, and then I was left to my own devices.

Some of the tests from December 2017 and January 2018:

Test for:	Result:	Normal range:		
S-Albumin	55 g/L	36-45	Vidimerat: Isayas Tecele Mariam 2017-12-08	S-Albumin Resultat: 55 g/L Referensintervall: 36-45 Vidimerat: Isayas Tecele Mariam 2017-12-08
				
S-ALP	2.1 µkat/L *	0.6-1.8	Vidimerat: Isayas Tecele Mariam 2017-12-08	S-ALP Resultat: 2.1 µkat/L * Referensintervall: 0.6-1.8 Vidimerat: Isayas Tecele Mariam 2017-12-08
				
S-LD	3.9 µkat/L	1.8-3.4	Vidimerat: Isayas Tecele Mariam 2017-12-08	S-LD Resultat: 3.9 µkat/L Referensintervall: 1.8-3.4 Vidimerat: Isayas Tecele Mariam 2017-12-08
S-TSH	1.2 mU/L	0.4-4.0	Vidimerat: Sven Peter Johan Linde 2018-01-17	S-TSH Resultat: 1.2 mU/L Referensintervall: 0.4-4.0 Vidimerat: Sven Peter Johan Linde 2018-01-17
				
S-T4, fritt	7 pmol/L	8-16	Vidimerat: Sven Peter Johan Linde 2018-01-17	S-T4, fritt Resultat: 7 pmol/L Referensintervall: 8-16 Vidimerat: Sven Peter Johan Linde 2018-01-17

To be continued. Part 2 will be released around May 2020.