

My Father, My Brother, and Me

1 x 60 HD



International

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CONTACT

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In 2002, Dave Iverson received the same news that had been delivered to his father and older brother years earlier: he had Parkinson's disease, a degenerative neurological disorder that affects millions around the world.

In *My Father, Brother, and Me*, Iverson sets off on a personal journey to understand the disease that scientists believe could hold important clues to solving a number of major neurological conditions like Alzheimer's, multiple sclerosis, and ALS. Along the way, he meets some remarkable people—a leading Parkinson's researcher whose encounter with "frozen" heroin addicts led to a major breakthrough, a Parkinson's sufferer given a new lease on life by an experimental brain surgery, a geneticist who identified some of the faulty genes responsible for Parkinson's and is now working on drugs to fix them.

Iverson also has intimate conversations with fellow Parkinson's sufferers like actor Michael J. Fox and writer Michael Kinsley, who describe how they became caught up in the politics of Parkinson's research after the Bush administration greatly restricted promising stem cell research in 2001, just before Iverson got his diagnosis.

"When you're talking about the potential to heal and cure, and it's not going forward because of its value as a political wedge issue," Fox said of his reaction to the Bush stem cell restrictions. "It pissed me off and I wanted to do something." Despite the political campaigning of Fox and others, the restrictions remained in place, pleasing some who felt a moral line in the sand needed to be drawn when human embryonic tissue was involved, but deeply disappointing many scientists and disease sufferers. As Michael Kinsley tells Iverson: "Six years have gone by [since the stem cell restrictions were imposed] and those are pretty important years for people like me."

Toward the end of this film, Iverson finds a new source of hope in a very unlikely place: new research which indicates that regular exercise can help delay or prevent the onset of Parkinson's in people likely to develop the disease. One leading researcher tells Iverson: "It's not at all hard for me to imagine that the results of a properly designed exercise program are going to be more effective than many of the medications and surgeries we have now."

My Father, My Brother, and Me is a story that combines longstanding medical mysteries, remarkable scientific breakthroughs, ethical dilemmas, and political debate. It's a story that poses important questions, one that can spark a dialogue about issues of growing significance for science and for society.

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CREDITS

FRONTLINE Executive Producer: David Fanning

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