

KILROY WAS HERE

How WWII advanced medicine and fractured our body sense

By Eustacia Cutler ©

In 1942 penicillin came into use, more wounded G.I.s were surviving the battlefield. But in order to stitch them up, doctors had focus on the amputation, ignoring the soldier whose leg they were sawing off. It was hard boiled, but—as we all know from watching MASH-- it was the only way the doctors themselves could stay intact. Let penicillin and nurses heal the man.

In the post war 50's, the WWII medical habit of separating out had become so entrenched that returning doctors continued to address healing in terms of isolated body parts-- heart, liver, kidney-- forgetting the human who housed them.

And 60 years later we will still be accepting this dehumanization, visiting one “specialist” for one body part, another for another. Each of our visits will then be reported to what will be termed an “internist”: a catch-all title for a doctor we once would have called “our family physician.” Somehow the medical world will have convinced us that we will not deserve better and we, in turn, will not know how to achieve better. Doctors, hand in glove with drug companies, (who's the villain here?) will have programmed us into accepting “specialized” medicine. And the “specialists”, while listening to our tale of woe, will be keeping their multi-task eye on the computer, that great new gadget containing the “virtual” specialist.

All of the above will apply to autism. Our “special” child, as we'll euphemistically call him, will be handed about from pediatrician, to bio-neurologist, to ABA therapist, to speech pathologist, to special ed. teacher— and on and on. And for this expensive parade of cottage industry specialists, parents will mortgage their house.

Will there be any specialists left from WWII who will remember Kilroy?



Kilroy was the WWII symbol chalked by G.I's on the cracked cement of bombed enemy bridges, scrawled in the dirt tracks left by our advancing tanks. A sign

that announced to the enemy that one particular, peculiar G.I. was watching them and was going to win whether they liked it or not. It was a face that laughed off stupid decisions and thumbed its nose at death.

Neurologists please note. That Asperger lad whose DNA you're taking may be Kilroy