

Patrick McCathern

“How is depression different from the blues?”

Everybody gets the blues. I call depression the super blues. The ultimate blues because when you get the blues, you sometimes can figure your way out of the them. Say I have the blues, that happens to people. But when you have the super blues, you can't find you're way back cause you've gotten so far in. It's like a hole that closes up behind you and you just get lost in your own mind. You literally get lost.

“Why didn't you talk to people about your depression?”

Here I am in the Air Force and I'm one of the senior leaders in the enlisted ranks. And that would be a sign that well maybe I'm not a leader. And then my career's derailed or maybe I'll lose my security clearance. I can't let anybody know, I've got to gut it out, I've got to fake my way through it...You don't want to be perceived as weak, you finally get to a point where you say, let all that be damned, you don't care how you're perceived, because you are barely breathing, you're barely getting up.

“Can you describe the pain?”

Think of, if you cut your arm off or got shot or you broke something or tore up a knee and think about how excruciating that pain is, that's mild and can be taken care of with an aspirin compared to mental anguish.

“What did you do to relieve the pain?”

I'd drink and I'd just get numb. I'd get numb to try to numb my head, and that would take a lot of beer, I'm telling you. I mean, we're talking many, many beers to get to that state where you could shut your head off, but then you wake up the next day and it's still there. Because you have to deal with it, it doesn't just go away.

“Can you describe the recovery?”

It's just gradual. You don't even really notice it. You just kind of come back and then you're back to normal and then you go, where the hell have I been?