

Never had I ever:

Had my jaw bone cyborg-erized

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STAFF CONTRIBUTOR

I have had a lot of work done on my mouth, jaw and teeth. My family is plagued with dental issues and it is a curse I cannot escape. Recently, I have reached a new pinnacle in my orthodontic achievement, because never before had I ever had a titanium plate and thread bolted and imbedded in my jaw.

I had to get a fake tooth but my jaw, from previous abuses to it, wasn't solid enough for the titanium thread. So it needed a plate. Due to the dental work that has been performed on me, I am much closer to fulfilling my lifelong dream of becoming a cyborg.

My aunt works in the field of dentistry and has been my dental Moses through all of my procedures. I was pretty nervous about this one, but she assured me it was "completely routine and casual, like having a filling done." I wasn't even going to be knocked out for it – just frozen up.

"Oh," I thought. "That's not too bad. They must have some new space-age way of doing things with lasers and such."

I am not really all that fond of needles, or of them being jabbed into my mouth. I asked my aunt just before the appointment what the needle situation was going to be and she said it would be seven or eight small ones.

"Excuse me," I said. "Seven, or

eight?" Pause. "SMALL needles?"

I thought she said it was casual, like getting a filling. I have had a few fillings done in my time, and I do not remember getting seven or eight casual needles. In fact, I remember I used to forgo needles completely when getting anything done to my teeth, short of getting them pulled.

My aunt assured me it was casual – that the needles were just for comfort. Seven or eight needles for comfort? That makes about as much sense as sleeping with a snapping turtle because you don't want to put him in the bathtub.

I asked her if I could forgo the needles or if she thought the intensity of the procedure required them. She said if I was 'tough,' I could do without.

Now, the periodontist performing the 'casual surgery' did seem a little astounded at my insistence on forgoing the freezing. I figured it was because people rarely forgo anesthetic. He told me to moan or grunt if it hurt and he would hit me immediately with Novocain.

It really isn't that bad getting cut with a scalpel; it's so sharp that you feel little more than a scrape – in my case, against the front part of my jaw bone. In fact, because I keep my eyes closed during all procedures done to my mouth, I didn't even realize he had cut me until I tasted the blood. That's when the adrenaline slowed down and I felt the increasingly hot-

ter, pulsating pain my jaw, like a red-hot ninja star had brushed across my upper lip.

Before I could react, he began scraping something that must have been my jawbone, probably clearing the way for his jackhammer. It sounded like a kid pulling a wooden rack across the pavement. It rattled my eyes and my temple.

Out of nowhere, the drill hit. It felt like an earthquake and a tsunami inside my brain at once. The pain was quick and direct – it travelled right up my jawbone, through my nasal passage, over my eye and into my temporal lobe.

I nearly had a white-out, but managed remain conscious as I heard what sounded like the muffled groan of a man hitting the bottom of a deep well.

The doctor heard me and his assistant noticed my breathing pattern was, to say, a bit inconsistent. They blasted me with the Novocain. I was too delirious from pain to notice how many needles they gave me.

After that, the 'casual' surgery was more casual, but still incredibly uncomfortable. My face swelled up to beastly proportions afterward and I had a badass black eye. I couldn't eat hard food up until a few days ago and just recently got the stitches taken out of the gaping hole in my mouth.

Next time I'll bring my own painkillers.