

## NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **NEWLYWED MAN PARALYZED AFTER BEING SENT HOME FROM THE HOSPITAL WITH ONLY PAINKILLERS**

Modesto, CA – 40-year-old Jason Lee was looking forward to many dreams. Recently married, finishing up his apprenticeship as an electrician, and watching his children complete high school. There was so much to look forward to. He did not know that when he woke up with severe back pain that everything was about to change.

Not one to complain about life's daily aches and pains, Jason woke up on a Saturday in February 2020 with such severe back pain that his wife had to call 911. An ambulance rushed him to the nearest hospital, which was Kaiser Modesto. They were met by the emergency room medical staff and a short examination by the emergency doctor followed. The diagnosis was sciatica pain with a prescription for painkillers and rest.

Jason went home and spent the weekend in bed taking the painkillers as the doctor directed. Monday came though and Jason could not get out of bed and he could no longer feel his legs. Another call to 911 and a ride to the hospital but this time a more complete exam with an MRI showed the worst – spinal damage. A complete examination by the medical team at Kaiser on Saturday and Jason would most likely be at the tail end of the recovery process from back surgery and ready to enjoy the rest of his life. Instead, he is learning to use a wheelchair and discovering the difficulties he now faces with complete paralysis from the waist down. He and his wife will no longer be able to enjoy the life they imagined or the children they wanted when they were married. His career as an electrician that he had worked so hard for was over. He will not be able to participate in his children's lives the way he had wanted to. Too quick of an exam and not enough tests on that Saturday changed his life. Perhaps because Jason was 6'4" and 300 lbs. the doctor felt this was typical back pain of a larger overweight man. Perhaps Kaiser did not feel an expensive MRI for an out-of-network patient was a good use of funds.

Nothing will bring back Jason's mobility and lifestyle that he and his family enjoyed. How could Jason, his wife, or an average Californian advocate for the correct medical care and treatment without knowing what that might be? How can we know that our doctors are choosing the best course of care or are they having to choose the most cost-efficient? How can we protect ourselves and our loved ones from healthcare that is profit driven and not patient-centric focused? We all need to be our best advocates for care, and we can't wait until we are in the back of an ambulance to consider it.

*Ms. Kristopher is open to interviews to answer what facts she and the family know about what happened to Jason Lee. Please contact Raquel Jurado at the Harrison | Kristopher office at 866-988-4924 to coordinate an interview.*

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