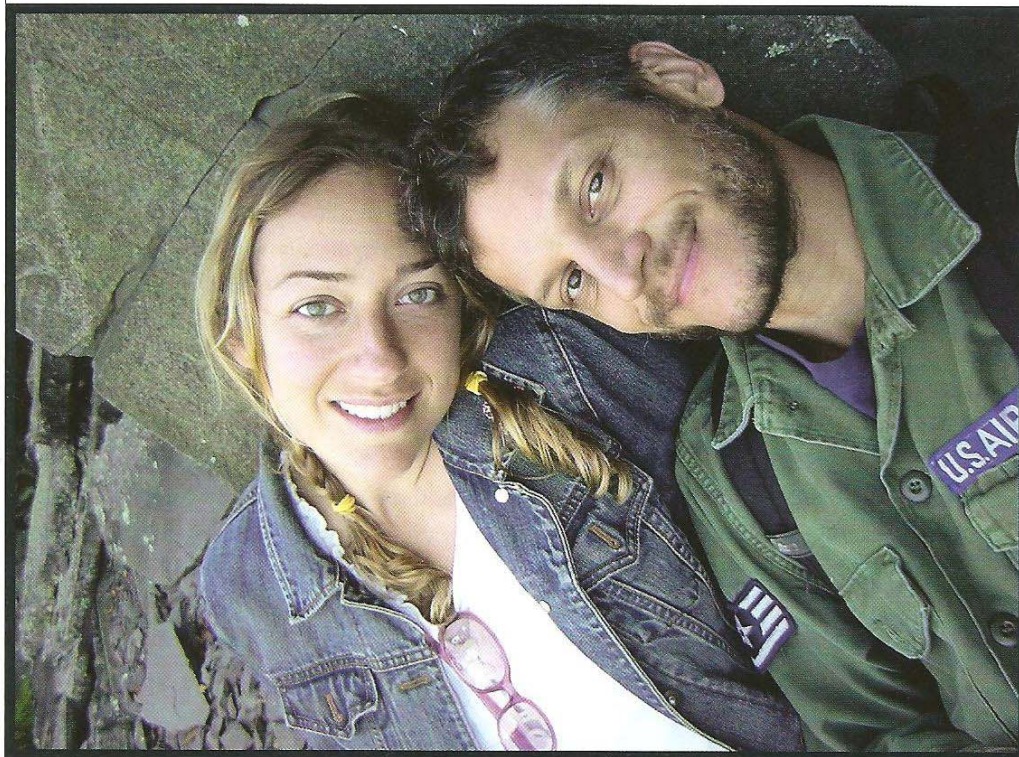


Scenes From a Cancer Quest

By Jean Nash Johnson

FILMMAKER WITH RARE vascular cancer turns lens on herself



Filmmaker Kris Carr with her husband (and film editor and producer), Brian Fassett

Early scene, tight camera shot from a busy New York street. Tall, pretty, blue-eyed Kris Carr convincingly delivers her lines with kick-butt aplomb. "I'm not sick! ... I'm NOT sick! ... I am NOT sick!"

VALENTINE'S DAY 2003, several days before the utterances, Kris Carr learned she was sick. That day the New York actress/filmmaker was diagnosed with epithelioid hemangioendothelioma, a cancer of the vascular system that was found to involve both of her lungs and her liver.

Epithelioid hemangioendothelioma: a long label for a rare, incurable cancer.

There's no widely used abbreviation for the disease, though insider docs refer to it as EHE.

In Carr's case, the disease has metastasized and become stage 4.

But don't tell Carr, 35, her illness can be terminal.

Armed with a camcorder and laptop, days after the diagnosis she began a video journal chronicling her story and the experiences of four other women with cancer.

What began as an instinctive exercise ("It's what I knew to do") ended up being a unique story of her battle not only to survive, but to live. >

Fast Facts

NAME >>

Kris Carr

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OCCUPATION >>

Actress/filmmaker

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DIAGNOSIS >>

Stage 4 epithelioid hemangioendothelioma in both lungs and the liver (Feb. 14, 2003).

EHE is a rare, incurable cancer of the vascular system.

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AGE AT DIAGNOSIS >>

31

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TREATMENT >>

Her oncologist has used a watch-and-wait approach. Kris has adopted a healthier lifestyle and has pursued alternative health strategies but has not received radiation or chemotherapy.

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CURRENT STATUS >>

The cancer is stable, and Carr says she feels very healthy.

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HOW CANCER HAS AFFECTED HER LIFE >>

"Making a documentary film will help remove the stigma around young people living with cancer. For me, cancer is a chronic disease. Look, here's the thing. Life is terminal. Elizabeth Edwards said it best: 'We're all going to die.' Cancer patients just have more information. My career was just getting started. I had everything ahead of me. The last thing you expect is stage 4 cancer. But there it was. I had to make some choices. And the choice I made was to use cancer as a catalyst for change."

BRIAN FASSETT