

## CHAPTER 21

Living with epilepsy will unfortunately throw hazards at you when you are having a seizure that you cannot take any precautionary measures to protect yourself against purely because of the nature of the seizure. As consciousness is not lost, but is instead impaired to a state which could be described as a blackout, you are prone to behaving in bizarre ways due to loss of awareness and orientation, and therefore cannot risk assess your behaviours before carrying them out, nor do your behaviours have motives or purposes. You neither have any knowledge of past, awareness of present, or concept of future; and your behaviour has become meaningless and purposeless, with you having no awareness of anything that you are saying or doing. As a consequence of this, you can be in a night club, where upon experiencing the blackout phase of a complex partial epileptic seizure you go up to a table and sit on it, pick up a bottle of beer, pour all the beer out of it and then throw the bottle like a bowling ball onto the dance floor. A doorman or those sitting at the table are more likely to think that you have taken an illegal substance as opposed to being drunk and certainly would never consider a seizure being the cause of the bizarre behaviour. This can inevitably result in the doorman being very rough with you or you ending up being assaulted by those sitting at the table. This assault could be anything from someone pushing you to the floor, to a serious head injury, or even worse; being murdered. Living in a society where there is a knife culture, this can be a very likely outcome. This could result in a person with epilepsy developing social anxiety disorder. It is not the cause of my social anxiety disorder, which was school, but it could be the cause of someone else's social anxiety disorder who lives with complex partial epilepsy, or any other type of epilepsy that can make you centre of attention, and result in personal injury/loss; or even death. One epilepsy charity in Glasgow does offer befriending services, and one of the reasons why this service exists is because so many people with epilepsy will have social anxiety disorder, or at least a fear of being out and about in public places, but do not want to rely on social work services for a support worker to take them out. The problem is this befriending service was only one day a fortnight for a couple of hours, just taking them for a pub meal in the afternoon and then home again. Completely inadequate. This was back in 2003, I don't know what the service is today, but I certainly know how this charity treat staff with epilepsy, which you will learn about later in the book.

Epilepsy cannot only get you seriously assaulted/murdered by a member of the public but if you are a woman with epilepsy, having a complex partial epileptic seizure, where you are suffering from serious confusion while being out and about on your own, then it is an invitation for a passer-by to sexually assault you. It is also an opportunity for a passer-by to rob you of your possessions. You could come round from the amnesia phase to find yourself without your wallet, jacket, watch, jewellery etc. As well as getting yourself sexually assaulted or robbed from during a seizure. A seizure can also make you look like the sexual assaulter or the robber, where you could find yourself in a public place during the loss of awareness and orientation stage of the seizure; and find yourself going up to, and putting your hand on a women's breast inside a pub/bar in front of her boyfriend or in front of her friends, and the doorman then detains you until the police come. I must emphasise that the touching of one's breast would have no sexual motive behind it. Remember what I said in the first paragraph of this chapter, and that is the bizarre behaviour has no motive or purpose behind it. As well as the prospect of being falsely alleged to have sexually harassed or assaulted someone, you can also be set up by a seizure to look like you have taken something that does not belong to you. During a seizure you could very easily pick someone's laptop up and walk off with it when the owner is at the toilet, or even worse take a child's hand and walk off with it, thus, resulting

in any charge from theft to attempting to abduct a child. A shop is a very vulnerable place to have a complex partial seizure and shoplifting is very often a charge that one experiencing a seizure finds themselves being landed with. What can start off as a warning to a seizure in a café, ends with one finding themselves outside a clothes shop in handcuffs.

These previous two paragraphs have only mentioned a few examples of risk you are exposed to when having a seizure in public; but the list of things that a person with epilepsy could be seriously assaulted for doing, charged with by the police (remember 1 in 50 people in prison have epilepsy), left badly injured; or experience loss of life, is endless. What makes a person with complex partial seizures even more vulnerable is the fact that neurologists often advise those who have been arrested during a complex partial seizure for behaviours mistaken for being criminal in nature to plead guilty at the sheriff court and be let off with a caution, as they find it difficult finding a lawyer who will take on their case, since the lawyer does not think the pay cheque is large enough to make it worth their time defending such a client. I've been told that a lawyer gets paid £200 to provide medical legal representation in the case of someone being charged under the influence of a seizure; and they do not see this as being a large enough sum of money to make it worth their while. As a result of this, those with partial seizures who plead guilty and get a caution often find themselves back in the sheriff court on a later date over another incident they were arrested for, and this time they either go to prison, get a community payback order or a large fine. They also end up with a criminal record that further jeopardises their prospects of getting a job as well as causes them to lose a job, if they are in a job that requires them to have a clean criminal disclosure. If they are training to become a health or social care professional or some other vocational position that requires a clean criminal disclosure then they could find themselves being put off the course.

I have had my two experiences of having a potential run in with the civilian as well as my brush with the law. My first of the two experiences was back in 1990 on the island of Rhodes where me and my family were having our annual summer holiday. During this stay in Rhodes we stayed in a hotel where I had my own hotel room. My hotel room was six floors up and had a veranda. The room next door to mine had a veranda as well where there was quite a gap between both verandas. I was sleeping in the humid hotel room one evening and it must have been around 2am. I woke up in my bed and suddenly felt the feeling of strong fear coming on, rising from my gut to my head and the blood leaving my face giving me that draining/tingling feeling in the nose and cheeks as well as that constricting feeling in the gut. I felt "White". Suddenly the world I went to bed in started to become fainter and fainter, and the seizure world became more and more prominent, where I started to feel the room becoming crowded discrediting any theory of being in a previous world i.e. the Real World. The bedroom had become Vatican like in atmosphere "with other people there" that weren't there. Throughout this full blown psycho-hallucination I was in a state of panic as the world was so alien and there was no previous world that I had come from and there was no future world I was going back to and that this alienation was for ever and had been the only thing I had ever known with full blown anxiety and fear. Then it was the fogging out of alertness and orientation. During this stage of the attack I got out of my bed and went out onto the veranda and climbed from my veranda onto the other veranda. I could have fallen sixty feet as it was five floors up possibly resulting in spinal injury, serious head injury or probably not worse; death, as I would rather be dead than seriously head injured or spinal injured. I've seen it in homes where support staff have been trying to feed fully grown men with baby bibs, rocking their head violently from side to side, with the support worker with one hand, feeding the client with a plastic spoon, and with the other hand, they are wiping away food running down the side of the client's face.

Once I was over my veranda and onto the next veranda, I opened the sliding door of the hotel room next door to mine. I walked into the room, which was the bedroom of a young girl. During this visit I climbed into the same bed as this girl, and she woke up and became very distressed. The girl had got a fright and panicked and her father came running into the room.....