Diagnosed at 39: Living with ALK-Positive Lung Cancer 9 Years Later

Brief Episode Summary

Brandi Bryant was 39, a mom of four, and thought she might have adult-onset asthma. Instead, she was diagnosed with non-small cell lung cancer, and biomarker testing showed it was ALK-positive. Now nearly nine years into living with the disease, Brandi joins host James Hiter to talk about what long-term life on targeted therapy really looks like: building a care team that talks to each other, facing the fear of progression and brain metastases, rethinking clinical trials, and shifting the conversation about lung cancer from blame to biology.

What You'll Learn in this Episode

- What it's like to live long-term with ALK-positive lung cancer as a chronic illness, and why a connected care team (including a cardio-oncologist) matters
- How Brandi manages fear of progression and brain metastases by staying informed, connected to other survivors, and ready with a plan
- Practical self-advocacy advice for the exam room, a fresh look at clinical trials, and why every person with lung cancer deserves treatment that works, no matter their history

Guests

James Hiter – Patient Advocate, LCFA Speakers Bureau. James is living with lung cancer and is the founder of Streak For a Cure, a non-profit raising awareness and funding for lung cancer research.

Brandi Bryant – ALK-positive lung cancer survivor, LCFA Speakers Bureau member, and patient advocate. Diagnosed with non-small cell lung cancer in 2018 at age 39 while raising four children, Brandi has been on the same targeted therapy for about eight years. She mentors newly diagnosed patients, has advocated for lung cancer research funding on Capitol Hill, and works to end lung cancer stigma.

Links and Resources

- ALK-Positive Lung Cancer: lcfamerica.org/about-lung-cancer/diagnosis/biomarkers/alk/
- Biomarker Testing Overview: lcfamerica.org/about-lung-cancer/diagnosis/biomarkers/
- The First 7 Days — Newly Diagnosed Roadmap: lcfamerica.org/living-with-lung-cancer/first-diagnosed/
- Find a Clinical Trial: lcfamerica.org/resources/find-clinical-trial/
- Get a Second Opinion: lcfamerica.org/resources/second-opinion/
- LCFA Speakers Bureau - lcfamerica.org/speakers-bureau/

Find Specialized Care

- Elevate Lung Cancer Care – Learn about your advanced ROS1+ or ALK+ non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) diagnosis and ways to navigate care plan discussions: elevatelungcancercare.com

Patient Advocacy & Support Communities

- ALK Positive – Patient community for ALK+ lung cancer: alkpositive.org

Stay Connected

- Join our community @LCFAmerica on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter/X, TikTok, YouTube, and LinkedIn.
- Subscribe to Living With Lung Cancer AMA wherever you listen to podcasts

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