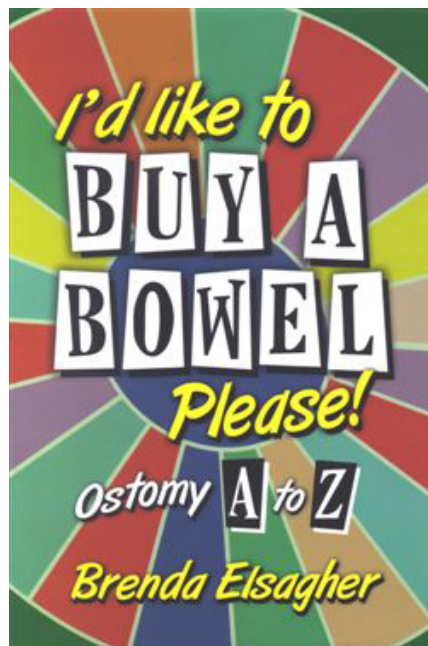




## ***I'd Like to Buy a Bowel Please***

A compilation of stories of over eighty people who all have ostomy in common in some form or another. These stories written by caregivers, ostomates, and medical staff, are filled with humor, hope, and a slice of the ordinary of life living with an ostomy. You will also get educated on the various reasons people need an ostomy and how this drastic surgery has been not only a life saver, but a life-enhancer for many.

**By Brenda Elsagher CHP**, President Living and Laughing & Associates



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Find all the past issues of the MailBag at <http://ostomymcp.com/id6.html>

### **Jacksonville Contact Information:**

Patti Langenbach  
 (800) 741-0110  
 (904) 733-8500

[patti@ostomymcp.com](mailto:patti@ostomymcp.com)

Support group meets the 3rd Sunday  
 of each month 3 p.m.  
 4836 Victor Street  
 Next Meeting: **Feb 16th**

### **Gainesville Support Group Contact info:**

JoAnne Bell at 352-284-4214  
 Meets the 1st Sunday of each month  
 (except Holidays)  
 at Hope Lodge 2121 SW 16th St  
 Gainesville, FL  
 Next meeting: **Feb 2nd**

### **Ocala Support Contact info:**

Lynn Parsons 252 337-5097  
[www.ostomyocala.com](http://www.ostomyocala.com)

Meets the 2nd Sunday of each month  
 (except July & Aug) at 2 p.m. at the  
 Sheriff's Station 3260 SE 80th Street  
 between Ocala and Belleview.  
 Next Meeting: **Feb 9th**

### **Citrus County Support Group**

Meets third Sunday of each month at  
 2:00 PM in the Seven Rivers Regional  
 Medical Center, 6201 N. Suncoast  
 Blvd., Crystal River, FL 34428, in the  
 Community Room of the Medical  
 Office Building **Feb 16th**

### **Amelia Island Area Ostomy Support Group**

(904) 310-9054

Meets second Monday of each month  
 at 6:30pm UF North Campus  
 UF Health North 15255 Max Leggett  
 Parkway Jacksonville, FL 32218  
 (Meeting Room 3-4)  
 Free parking  
 Next Meeting: **Feb 10th**

### **The Villages Ostomy Support**

Group We meet on the 2nd Tuesday  
 evening of each month at 6:00 PM at  
 (except July & August)  
 Saddlebrook Recreation Center  
 3010 Saddlebrook Lane  
 The Villages, Florida  
 Linda Manson  
[tvostomy@gmail.com](mailto:tvostomy@gmail.com)  
 865-335-6330  
 Next Meeting: **Feb 11th**

## HOLLYWOOD'S FIRST OSTOMY



### SUBJECT OF THE MOVIE *WHITE BOY RICK* REVEALS WHY DEPICTING HIS OSTOMY WAS CRITICAL TO THE STORY.

By R.S. Elvey

Hollywood movies, both fictional and nonfictional, thrive on melodramas depicting romance and violence. Car crashes, explosions, shootings, and all kinds of mayhem deliver gruesome injuries to victims and survivors. The 2018 film *White Boy Rick*, starring Matthew McConaughey and Richie Merritt, has all these components but is unique in showing the personal aftermath of a violent act – in this case scenes depicting an ostomy.

The film, set in the 1980s on Detroit's eastside, tells the true story of Rick Wershe, Jr., called by the local newspapers "White Boy Rick" and his father Richard Wershe, Sr. During that decade, Ronald Reagan's War on Drugs is in full swing and the FBI is anxious to break up drug dealing and crooked police in Detroit. Agents observe 14-year-old Rick mingling with a local drug lord and his father selling illegal guns to drug gangs. They meet with Rick and his father and offer them a deal. To prevent his father from going to jail, Rick, at 14, would become an informant working for the FBI. His father agrees to the deal and Rick becomes the youngest informant ever undercover for the FBI.

While working for the FBI, Rick becomes more and more involved in the daily activities of a leading Detroit drug lord and his gang. They become suspicious of Rick and he is shot in the stomach by a .357 magnum. The bullet enters and goes clean through, severely damaging his large intestine. He is rushed to Ascension St. John's Hospital, Detroit, where lead surgeon Dr. Norman Bolz and others save his life. He awakes with a lifesaving ostomy.

The first time the ostomy pouch appears in the film is when Rick and his father are coming home from the hospital. Rick has his left hand over his stomach and the pouch is overlapping his pants. He is also depicted

emptying his pouch. In a recent correspondence with Rick from prison he said, “When I woke up, I didn’t realize that I had it. I think I touched my stomach and then first felt the bag. I didn’t know what the bag was. Dr. Bolz came in and explained to me what the bag was and how it worked. The bullet had torn through my intestines and the doctors were hoping the intestines would heal and that it could be reversed, but that it would take a while.”



*Rick Wershe, Jr. “White Boy Rick” when he was convicted in the 1980’s and today behind bars over 30 years later.  
Top photo credit: Sony Pictures*

While in the hospital the staff showed him how to empty and change his pouch. At home he was never seen by an ostomy nurse or received any other ostomy maintenance training. He said, “I basically had to learn on my own. Fortunately, I really didn’t have any skin problems. I had to keep the bag clean and was able to do a pretty good job. I had skin irritations but it was not too bad. I was lucky.” His friends were young and they were shocked when they saw his bag. But he said, “My family, especially my dad and grandparents, tried to be as helpful and supportive as they could.” He also met others who had ostomies. Rick had to pay for his own supplies at a local pharmacy which proved very expensive. His father wanted him to wash and reuse the pouches but Rick wouldn’t do that. He would use 2-3 new pouches a day.

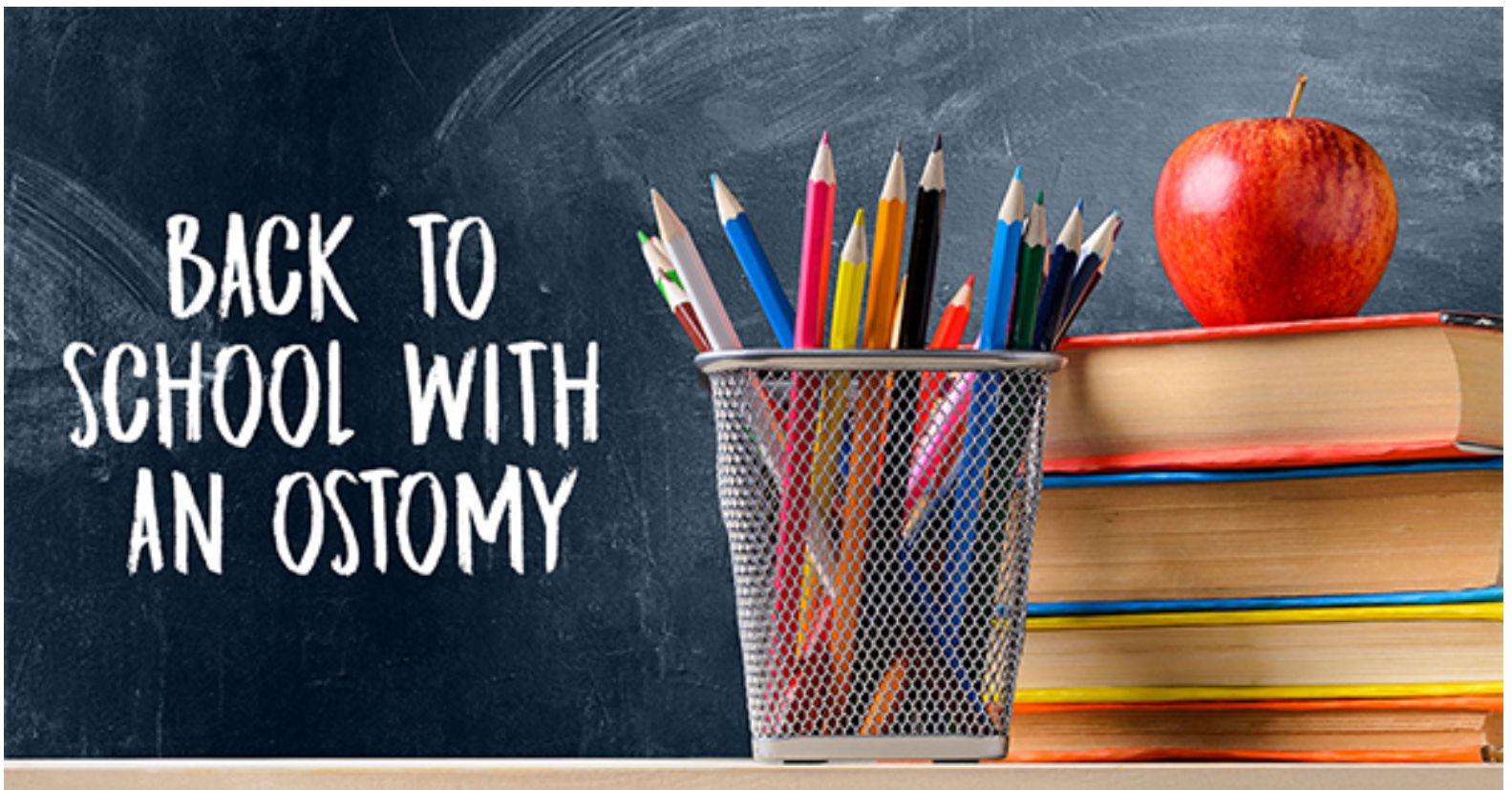
Andy Weiss, one of the movie’s screenwriters, spoke numerous times with Rick while working on the screenplay. When asked why the ostomy scenes were included he said, “The ostomy scenes are the core of showing Rick’s vulnerability and what I was hoping to get from it was the sympathy and empathy that he deserved but never received from law enforcement or the people around him at that time.” Rick insisted that his ostomy should be part of the movie saying, “We included the ostomy scenes because I thought it was important to show young kids and adults that you can go through this and still be ok.” And get through it he did. Rick says that the ostomy proved to be no hindrance either socially or in his daily dealings. A year and a half after his original surgery, Dr. Bolz performed a successful revision.

Rick soon faced even greater challenges. Abandoned by the FBI and his family needing money, Rick and his father turned to the only way they knew how to make money, dealing drugs. Eventually, Rick was arrested and sentenced to 30 years for drug dealing. Now 49-years-old, he is scheduled to be paroled in 2020.

When ostomates watch the movie, the ostomy is immediately recognizable. But numerous reviewers of the movie never mention the ostomy scene. Ostomate, Robin Glover on [ostomyconnection.com](http://ostomyconnection.com), wrote after viewing the film, “There were some inaccuracies, but it will definitely raise awareness and change what the word “ostomy” conjures up in the mind of anyone that sees it.” Joy Hooper, United Ostomy Associations of America’s 2019 WOCN of the Year was enthusiastic in her response to the film and said of the screenwriter, “I appreciate his way of displaying life with an ostomy. He did a superb job. He was able to show what many consider a negative aspect of life respectfully.”

*White Boy Rick is now available on streaming services.*





## Back to School with an Ostomy

For many parents, the hardest part of your child having ostomy surgery is feeling fearful or anxious about your child's day-to-day needs in the weeks and months following surgery. Here are some tips that may help reduce anxiety about returning to school following ostomy surgery.

- Schedule a meeting with teachers, administrators and the school nurse. Educate those that will be in communication with your child daily on what ostomy surgery entails and how your child's needs may have changed since last attending school.
- If dietary needs have changed, it is a good idea to investigate nutritional options available at school so you know what to pack for meals and snacks. You may need special permission for your student to carry a water bottle with them throughout the day to stay hydrated. Ensure that your child has permission to use the restroom whenever needed. If they are restricted, they will not be likely to drink as much as necessary to stay hydrated.
- Ask to tour the restrooms. Check out the privacy offered by stalls, sink layout, and proximity to classrooms. You may determine that a staff restroom or another non-student restroom may be more comfortable for pouch emptying or changes. If so, establish permissions in advance for your child to use these restrooms as needed. Most schools have a private restroom at the nurse's station and extra supplies can be kept there as well. Closed-end pouches may be more convenient.
- Create an emergency change pack and leave it in the nurse's office. Be sure to include all the supplies needed for 2-3 full pouch changes including pouch and wafers, bathing wipes, necessary accessories, and a change of clothes. Even if your child can empty or change their pouch themselves, consider training a school nurse to assist if needed. If there is not a school nurse available, have a contact list on hand who can quickly get to the school to help.

- Teenage drivers shouldn't leave supplies in their cars. Teenagers may prefer to leave supplies in his or her locker or backpack. Remind your teen not to leave extra supplies in the car to avoid temperature extremes affecting supplies.
- If you are testing new supplies out, do so on a weekend or over breaks versus during the school week.
- Confirm with the student's physician what types of activity are appropriate after surgery. Resuming activity following surgery is encouraged, but full contact sports like football and wrestling may require a slightly longer recovery window following surgery. Please consult with your physician before resuming any activity or exercise. Ask if during PE they will be changing clothes in a shared locker room and see if accommodations can be made.
- No need to buy a new wardrobe. People living with an ostomy can wear almost everything they wore before surgery.
- Over communicate what to expect before returning to school. Whether talking with teachers with your student, communicating about needs will help your child have a smooth return to school.
- Discuss with your child how to handle inquiries from classmates. Although classmates do not need to know about your child's ostomy it is good to discuss with your child how to handle instances should a classmate ask. You may consider opaque pouches in case a shirt rides up. Always remind your child that an ostomy is nothing to be ashamed of.
- Be respectful of your child's wishes as to who is informed of his or her ostomy. Some children may only want minimal staff to know about their ostomy.

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