

Los Angeles Times

Watch Charlie Sheen talk about having HIV, 'a hard three letters to absorb'

By Stephen Battaglio | November 17, 2015

Actor [Charlie Sheen](#) is publicly acknowledging that he has been [HIV-positive](#) for four years.

Sheen told Matt Lauer during a [live interview Tuesday on NBC's "Today"](#) show that he is revealing his condition in order to end extortion threats that have cost him millions of dollars.

The "Two and a Half Men" star said he was given the HIV diagnosis four years ago when he entered the hospital concerned about migraines and night sweats. "I thought I had a brain tumor," he said.

Nervous and stuttering throughout the interview, held live in the "Today" studio, Sheen said, "It's a hard three letters to absorb. It's a turning point of one's life."



CDC: More than 1 in 8 Americans infected with HIV don't know it

Sheen confided his condition to several people in his inner circle, some of whom demanded payment to remain silent.

“We’re talking about shakedowns,” he said.

He confirmed a story of a prostitute who took a cellphone picture of his anti-retroviral medications and threatened to sell it to the tabloids.

Sheen said he is no longer going to pay the extortion demands.

“I release myself from this prison today,” he said.

Sheen said it was “impossible” for him to have transmitted the virus to a partner even though he has had unprotected sex.



Quick start to HIV drug treatment can cut risk of illness, death in half

Sheen’s physician, **Dr. Robert Huizenga**, appeared on “Today” and said the drugs have suppressed the virus. He said Sheen has an “undetectable level” of the virus in his blood.

“He does not have AIDS,” Huizenga declared.

The doctor said he is more concerned about depression and substance abuse related to Sheen’s response to learning he has HIV.

Sheen said he was not “entirely sure” how he had contracted the virus.

Sheen, 50, is a Hollywood star whose resume includes such hits as “Wall Street” and “Platoon.” But his best-known role is as the lothario on the long-running situation comedy “Two and a Half Men,” which for years made him the highest paid star on television.



San Diego man sentenced to jail for not telling partner he is HIV positive

Sheen left the series in 2011 after a dispute with the show’s creator, [Chuck Lorre](#), and for a short time became a media folk hero who celebrated a debauched lifestyle. He told Lauer he did not connect his public meltdown to

learning of his diagnosis.

Sheen’s last TV series, “Anger Management,” was canceled in 2014. He said he plans to work again and has made his HIV-positive condition known to the studios and producers whom he has discussed working with.

"I have a couple of films lined up that I can put start dates on," he said. "Thus far there has been no resistance."

Both of Sheen's ex-wives, Denise Richards and Brooke Mueller, have also been aware of his diagnosis for some time, the actor said.

<http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/tv/showtracker/la-et-st-charlie-sheen-hiv-positive-20151117-story.html>