In 2006, my life took an unexpected turn when I suffered a brain aneurysm. I was working at a health insurance company, building a stable career, when everything changed.

It began with symptoms I didn’t immediately recognize — a sudden and severe headache, nausea, blurred vision, sensitivity to light, and confusion. At first, I thought it might be a migraine or just stress. But as the pain worsened and I became disoriented, I was taken to the emergency room.

Doctors performed a CT scan that came back negative. However, based on my symptoms, the physician suspected possible meningitis. With my family’s consent, he performed a spinal tap. It was then that he discovered blood in my spinal fluid — a clear sign of bleeding in the brain.

I was immediately transported to a larger, more equipped facility. There, I underwent an angiogram, but the initial image was blurry and inconclusive. Days later, a second scan provided a much clearer picture and confirmed the location of the bleed.

The following morning, I underwent an 8+ hour brain surgery called a craniotomy. During this procedure, surgeons inserted a clip to secure the aneurysm and stop the bleeding.

The recovery was long and incredibly challenging. It affected my health, career, and daily life. But it also gave me a new sense of purpose — to raise awareness about brain aneurysms and help others recognize the warning signs. This project is not just academic; it’s deeply personal.

If sharing my story can help even one person get help sooner or feel less alone, then this project will have fulfilled its purpose.