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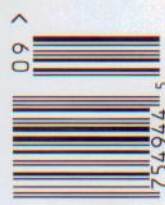
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# Crazy, sexy... cancer?

It's quite the feat to laugh in the face of a deadly disease, but that's what Kris Carr—the woman behind the new documentary *Crazy Sexy Cancer*—does every day. She sat down for some soul-searching and black humor with *Glamour* staffer and leukemia patient Erin Zammett Ruddy.



My coolest, craziest cancer pal, Kris Carr, left

In 2001 Erin Zammett Ruddy, now 29, was diagnosed with chronic myelogenous leukemia (CML), a cancer that until recently proved fatal for many patients. For five years, she's chronicled her experiences in these pages. Now she's in remission, very pregnant and eager to give props to a woman who keeps her going.

As you read this, I may have already had my baby; the little guy is due to arrive any day now! I could easily fill this column with all the ups and downs of my last trimester. The ups: Number one, my cancer miraculously hasn't returned, even though I've been off Gleevec—the drug that put me into remission—for seven months. I also loved my pre-parenthood “babymoon” in the Bahamas, the guiltless ice-cream eating and nightly foot rubs from my husband, Nick. The downs: stretch marks, heartburn, people telling me I look like I'm “ready to pop.”

But enough about me. There's someone I really want you to meet: Kris Carr, one of my favorite fellow cancer survivors, whose autobiographical documentary, *Crazy Sexy Cancer*, airs August 29 on The Learning Channel. We met three years ago through Kris' cousin Suzanne, *Glamour*'s photo director. Kris, who's 36, has epithelioid hemangioendothelioma (EHE), an extremely rare vascu-

“Like my cancer, hers struck out of the blue.”

lar cancer that's invaded her lungs and liver. Like my cancer, hers struck out of the blue: Four years ago she was coming out of a yoga class and felt a searing pain in her side. Unlike me, though, there is no proven treatment or cure for Kris. And doctors can't say how long she has to live.

Kris' disease is slow moving, but she wasn't going to wait around for the worst. She went looking for a cancer specialist, and told everyone she was treating it as if she were hiring someone for a Fortune 500 company—“Save My Ass Technologies, Inc.,” she called it. Can you see why I love her? She also sold her apartment in New York City and hit the road to educate herself on alternative healing. As she traveled the country and met with nutritionists, researchers and spiritual gurus, Kris, a photographer and former actress (she's done Budweiser Super Bowl spots), documented everything with her video camera. She also interviewed other cancer patients she met along the way, which is how I got to be in the film along with my sister, Melissa, who is still in remission from Hodgkin's lymphoma.

Now Kris has finished her movie and a book, *Crazy Sexy Cancer Tips* (a nitty-gritty guide to facing cancer head-on—Sheryl Crow wrote the foreword!), so she had plenty of time to catch up with me. (continued on page 287)



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**ME:** When I tell people I'm in a movie called *Crazy Sexy Cancer*, I usually get a laugh or a puzzled look. How the heck did you come up with that title?

**KRIS:** When I was first diagnosed, I'd e-mail updates to friends, and the subject line was always "Crazy Sexy Cancer." It was shorthand for saying that even though something really bad had happened, I was still me—and still sexy! If I didn't poke fun, life would get way too serious.

**ME:** I was lucky I had Nick around when I was diagnosed, though you were single when you found out. I've never asked you this before, but what was that like?

**KRIS:** I felt like damaged goods, branded with a scarlet letter *c*. But my first post-cancer date was with one of my doctors, so it was easy because he already knew! The day I met him, the only thing on my mind was, I may die. And then in walks this cute doctor and I thought, Damn, he's hot, why did I wear granny panties today? We hit it off, but nothing happened until I fired him. We dated for a few months, then I freaked out and took off. There was only room for one serious thing in my life, and back then, cancer was it.

**ME:** Good thing it didn't work out with the hot doc or you might have never hooked up with the hot hubby!

**KRIS:** Totally. Brian and I started dating after I hired him to edit and produce the film. At first I'd say stuff like, "Dude, I have cancer; are you nuts? Go find a healthy chick." He'd tell me, "I don't want a healthy chick. I want you."

**ME:** Do you think if the tables were turned, you would have married someone who had stage-four cancer?

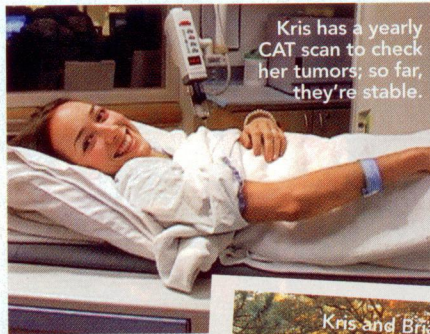
**KRIS:** I don't know; I'm pretty high maintenance! Seriously, I think it's definitely hard and I'm in awe of him, but ultimately you can't choose who you fall in love with. So yeah, if he had cancer I would sign up. Especially if he had a lot of money I could inherit. Kidding!

**ME:** Are doctors amazed that your cancer is stable?

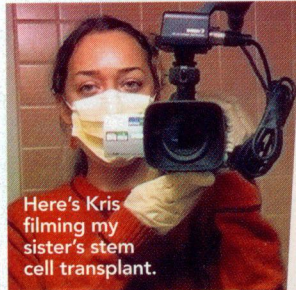
**KRIS:** Yes and no. In some cases EHE moves slowly; in others it's pretty quick. The "watch and wait" approach my doctors have means they assume one day it will progress. But for now, my tumors and I are getting along just fine.

**ME:** Have you ever just lost it? In the beginning I definitely had a lot of tearful meltdowns.

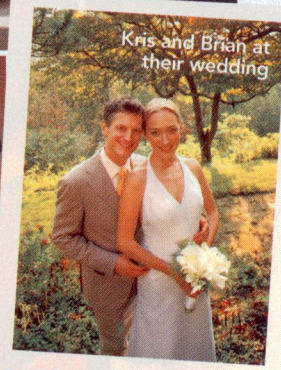
**KRIS:** Once my mom came to take me and my cat, Crystal, away for a weekend of TLC. We got stuck in traffic and my usually mellow kitty kept howling her head off. Finally I let out a shriek that should have shattered the car windows. The pressure of it all got to me: I have cancer, this is so un-



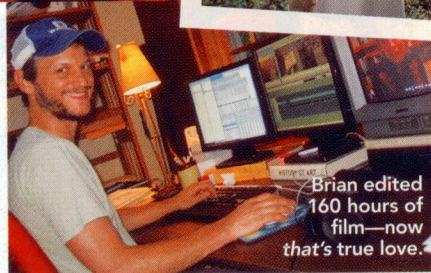
Kris has a yearly CAT scan to check her tumors; so far, they're stable.



Here's Kris filming my sister's stem cell transplant.



Kris and Brian at their wedding



Brian edited 160 hours of film—now that's true love.

“I told him to go find a healthy chick, but he wanted me.”

fair and I'm scared! My mom just waited for me to calm down. My cat gave me a dirty look, then started yowling again.

**ME:** What do you do now when cancer gets to you? Buying things I don't need and can't exactly afford, like a third pair of Bruno Magli sandals, always helps me.

**KRIS:** Shopping is often my cure, too! Or I dust glittery powder on my face and dance to hippie music. I also pray, do yoga or dive into an inspirational book. If I let a blue mood run rampant, before I know it I'm obsessing about the color of the satin lining in my coffin—will it match my dress? That's when I feel like Alice in Cancerland falling down the rabbit hole and just have to stop. Seriously, you should try glitter; it's incredibly healing.

**ME:** I'll add it to my to-do list. Speaking of healing, I don't know

how you manage to live so healthy.

**KRIS:** Well, the only thing I could control was what went in my mouth. There's a great metaphor that one of my doctors uses: If a fish is swimming in a dirty tank and it gets sick, do you take it to the vet and amputate the fin? No, you clean the water. So, I cleaned up my system. By eating organic raw greens, nuts and healthy fats I am flooding my body with enzymes, vitamins and oxygen. I'm a healing junkie. You name it, I've tried it: fasting, macrobiotics. I even lived in a Zen monastery.

**ME:** Ever get tired of eating all that good-for-you food?

**KRIS:** No way; I adore veggies. When I have a dinner party I never mention that the lasagna noodles are actually zucchini! Wine is another story. Everyone needs a little vino now and then. It's a balance—a little detoxing, a little retoxing. You can't get too crazy.

**ME:** Writing my column and blog is a great coping tool for me. Did you find making the movie therapeutic?

**KRIS:** The camera became my shield when things got scary. A doctor would say, "You're going to die," and I'd ask the cameraman next to me, "Did you get the shot? Was it well lit?" Also, once I met you and Melissa and the other women in the film, I realized it wasn't just about me. Cancer affects more young women every year, and we need to see other great chicks transforming and transcending the disease. I hope people walk away from the film and the book knowing that they have the strength to head-butt adversity. If that happens, then I'll have done my job. Kris: 1. Cancer: 0.

**ME:** You're such an optimist!

**KRIS:** Eventually cancer becomes just another annoying thing that you deal with, you know, like cellulite. People ask me if I live each day like it's my last, and I don't. I live each day like it's my first, and I can't wait for the next one. ☺