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HST 643

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**Smell of Covid in Carolina**

When Covid first made its way to South Carolina, I worked as a campus security officer at a small college in the upstate of South Carolina. While there, I spent most of my days patrolling the campus on foot and by vehicle. I let students into their rooms if they locked themselves out, wrote parking tickets, did traffic duty, and occasionally performed searches if we thought a student had a weapon or some other contraband. As Covid began to spread on campus, none of this changed but more tasks were added on.

One doesn’t usually think of meal delivery in association with campus security but that is what we were expected to do beginning in the Spring of 2020. At any given time, there were no more than four officers performing meal delivery and we were delivering over ninety meals, three times a day, when cases were at their highest on campus. We delivered to students who had the virus and to those who were exposed. The students were spread all over campus and not in one central location. This meant that it took a considerable amount of time to deliver all of the meals.

I never was a huge fan of breakfast food, and Covid did nothing to endear me to the most important meal of the day. Scrambled eggs were the standard fare for breakfast and no matter how fast you delivered them, the smell of eggs never really left the patrol vehicle. If the day was especially hot, which is usually the case in the Spring and Summer months in South Carolina, the smell was especially strong. To make matters worse, the meals were usually placed in styrofoam containers which inevitably tipped over from time to time. The spilled food would end up in the bottom of our bags, which over time mingled with the egg smell.

Housekeeping was expected to sanitize the dorms every day. This led to another aromatic disaster. One day while cleaning, a large garbage bag burst in the elevator of one of the dormitories. The liquid contents spilled all over the first floor lobby and no matter how much they cleaned, housekeeping never could completely get rid of the stench. Many of the quarantined students lived in this building and the smell was the first thing you noticed when entering the building.

Like most, I was worried about contracting the virus while working on campus. I sanitized my hands regularly. I also wore a mask and would occasionally spray it with different scents to make it smell nicely. Smell, above all other senses reminds me of the time I dealt with Covid while working as a security officer.