

For Marc, Yet Another Needless Covid Fatality

Out of all my mom's "friends," or what she calls her boyfriends since her fourth divorce, you were by far my favorite. Extra tall, skinhead bald, with a moustache the same size of your attitude, you were definitely her type: a projection of masculine strength cut with roguish charm. Everyone in our family found your particular flavor of arrogance entertaining, even though I was frustrated when you covered your ears and stuck your tongue out at me like a five-year-old when I explained the racist subtext of your "All Lives Matter" argument at the Fourth of July barbecue last year. But at the same time, it was impossible not to laugh when you transformed a Bic lighter and a can of nonstick cooking spray into a makeshift flamethrower and torched a swarm of mosquitoes, even if you almost caught our house on fire. And I'll never forget the beginning of the pandemic, the time my mom told me that you wore a torn Arby's sack over your face when your mutual place of work required masks. I still find myself grinning when I imagine your alert, mischievous eyes sparkling just above the bag's crinkled, oil-splotched paper.

Simply put, you were my favorite kind of republican asshole—one who doesn't take himself too seriously. Unfortunately, we won't be arguing again this summer.

You bought full-bore into the hoax rhetoric and never got the *jab*, even though your heart condition made you part of the most vulnerable population, and despite what they told you on the "news" channels you listened to every morning on the way to work, the virus didn't have any political affiliations. A disease doesn't lean left or right—the only direction it took you was in a downward spiral of sickness and fear, and after ten days, you were just as still as the people you thought were voting in the "stolen" election. Your co-workers said it was like a bad joke that you happened to die as a direct result of Covid, especially considering you were a very vocal

opponent regarding the vaccine, mask mandates, and all the other “propaganda,” but I don’t think you’re laughing wherever you are beyond the grave.

I think you’d rather be stretched out in a lawn chair in our backyard, your cowboy boots propped up on a picnic table as we split a fresh joint and you chide me for drinking one of my “cat pee” IPAs.

Marc...I didn’t want you to win the Herman Cain Award.

I want you to be able to feel the breeze on your scalp as you cruise in your Harley Davidson. I want to watch again as you point out those three seconds of fame you had in that Kevin Costner movie, *The Postman*, where you’re featured as one of the horseback riders in the film’s climactic battle scene. I want to argue with you more about racial politics and police reform, even if we get nowhere and end up agreeing that great beer is more important than who we will ever vote for.

But mostly...I want my mom to be able to look up from her desk at work and see your intelligent eyes looking back at her, instead of staring at the empty space you used to occupy.

About the Author:

The author’s proceeds from this piece will be donated to a charity in Marc’s honor.