

A letter of interest to the motorcycle community (Something to think about)

William, "Stay Puff" Hutchinson, 52, was westbound on a 2002 Yamaha motorcycle on Ky. 80 near the Windsor community about 3:50 p.m. when an eastbound 2002 Chevrolet pickup truck turned into the path of the motorcycle, police said. The driver of the pickup, Jimmy R. Sandusky, 24, of Windsor, was attempting to turn into a private driveway when the accident occurred. Sandusky and a passenger in the truck, Jessica Dilsaver, 23, of Bowling Green were belted and not injured in the collision. Hutchinson, who was not wearing a helmet, was pronounced dead at Russell County Hospital, state police said.

6 1/2 lines on Kentucky Connect described the end of a man's life in south central Kentucky last Friday. One full line indicated that somehow he was partially to blame because he was not wearing a helmet. No one mentioned that virtually every bone in his body was broken. He had massive internal injuries. William "Stay Puff" Hutchinson died tragically. His story deserved better coverage. The killer was interviewed but not the victims family. Blame was placed on the victim for not wearing a helmet and there was no reference for drivers to be more aware of motorcycles.

If I sound a bit bitter, I am. You see, this man was my brother and my friend. He had a family that relied on him. Am I angry with the driver of the truck? Of course, he should have been paying better attention. He should have seen my friend. He should not have been in such a hurry to pull in the driveway. There is nothing that is that important. However, hating them will not bring back my brother Stay Puff. I feel they will be punished; unfortunately it will likely not be in the criminal courts. He was just an old biker. I am sure there will be some punishment in the civil court system. My real frustration is with the media... both print and broadcast.

Stay Puff was my brother. Not by blood, but by choice. He watched over me and me over him. We have a large family in the state and around the country and we all mourned his passing yesterday. His life was important. His death was tragic. He got a few lines, 30 seconds of coverage. Most of his friends around the state did not find out, and likely still do not know. There are just too many calls to make for friends and family to communicate that kind of information. That was what the news used to do, especially when something tragic happened.

This morning a young man was killed in a car accident. It was as tragic as Stay Puff's accident. They had his picture on the TV. They described the accident. They made no inference as to what might have caused the accident. It was a single car fatality where the driver appeared to lose control and the car rolled several times ejecting the driver. That was it. Clear and concise with no moral judgments, not even the slightest reference to any negligence on the part of the victim.

I cannot understand why that does not happen with motorcycle accidents. That is not really true. I do believe I know, or at least it appears to me that most news organizations, either actively or unwittingly, support helmet laws.

Instead of a complete story that would have notified the public of a tragic death readers are given a snippet of information that explains a biker was killed and had he been wearing a helmet he would likely have survived. There is little mention of running broadside into a car at highway speed. After all, the occupants of the pickup truck were fine because they were using their government mandated seat belts, they were uninjured. No mention was made of his injuries. Only the fact that he was not wearing a helmet

Freedom of the press is fundamental. Our right to express political and cultural opinion is paramount to our continued freedom, but there is such a thing as good judgment but using a man's death to push helmet laws is immoral. I know that the rebuttal to this will be that "we were simply reporting the facts", unfortunately in this case, as in many, it was not all the facts.

Stay Puff would not have survived this accident had he been wearing the most modern and sophisticated helmet available on the market today. His entire body was broken... I was at the funeral... I saw what was left of my brother... Every bone in his body was broken and twisted. He had massive internal injuries. The driver killed my brother when he turned in front of him. He did not see him... how often do you here that? My brother could not stop and hit the side of a pick of truck at highway speed. It might as well have been a house. The impact killed him, not the lack of a helmet. The lack of attention killed him... not the lack of a helmet.

This world is filled with what I call the "know betters", I didn't coin the name but I find it fitting. They tell us how to live better and safer lives. They all feel that they know what is best for us. Most of them came from my generation. I believe it was the acid or the mushrooms that did the damage. They became so "enlightened" that they feel much wiser than the rest of us.

After all, my generation of the 60s and 70s was the first generation to experience freedom from responsibility and consequence... Now many of those same individuals think no one is smart enough to take care of themselves and the government should do it. When people want to take back some of that personal responsibility they feel threatened and try to manipulate information to squelch it.

But I am rambling as I often do when I get started with this so I will stop... I lost a great bother Friday. I mourn his loss with my other brothers and sisters. As for the media and the no or know betters... I would say you should be ashamed, but I think the majority of our major media outlets have forgotten the concept of shame.

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