



Danny, We Hardly Knew You

Danny Faulkner was the kind of young man every father and mother wants for a son, every child wants for a brother and every person wants for a friend. He was easygoing and friendly, yet organized and focused. He was a hard worker who always had time for his friends.

Danny was the youngest of seven children, born to an Irish-Catholic family from the southwest side of Philadelphia. His father, who was a railroad worker, died of a sudden heart attack when Danny was only five years old. Danny was raised by a working mother and his older siblings. After school, he would walk to the home of Tom and Trish Faulkner. Tom was Danny's big brother. There, Danny would play with neighborhood kids and do his homework. He loved to run around the corner to a neighborhood clothier and pretend he worked there. He would dress up in a tie, then pick up a broom and sweep their walks.

Danny left high school prior to graduation and joined the U.S. Army. It wasn't that he didn't like school, but this was a kid who had matured beyond many of his classmates. He just needed to get his life started. While serving in the armed forces, Danny continued his studies, earning his high school diploma as well as an Associates Degree in Criminal Justice.

Upon fulfilling his military service, Danny went home to Philadelphia to begin his law enforcement career. His first position was that of a corrections officer. In 1975, he was able to make the career move he hoped and worked for and became an officer of the Philadelphia Police Department.

Being the organized and focused young man he was, it wasn't long before he had purchased a home of his own in his old neighborhood in southwest Philly. Not long after, he began dating the young woman that would become his wife. Danny and Maureen dated about a year, were engaged for another six months and were married in the fall of 1979.

Maureen remembers Danny as easy going, while she was the one who always worried. He was the extrovert. Once a month, the couple would host a get-together of all their friends and the group would play cards in the Faulkner home until the wee hours of the morning. Danny was the neighborhood leader for the Muscular Dystrophy Association and the organizer of the Annual Softball Marathon to benefit that charity. One of his childhood friends had suffered from the disease and Danny felt strongly about helping in the fight against it.

Danny loved the outdoors and when deer season opened in Pennsylvania, you would find him stalking the forests of the Pocono Mountains. Maureen, too, loved beauty and the freshness of the Poconos. The couple were saving their money with dreams of purchasing a vacation home there.

BIOGRAPHY



Links and Gallery

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Danny loved being a police officer and planned to spend the rest of his working life advancing his career in law enforcement. He had enrolled in community college and was working toward his Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice Administration. He also had plans to go on to law school, hoping to ultimately become a prosecutor in the District Attorney's Office.

Danny Faulkner was a young man with clear goals and dreams. He truly represents an American Story and the best traditions of our nation. He was raised in a loving family and was building his own family with the same love and determination with which he had grown up. He took time to serve his country. He was bright and energetic -- caring and giving to his neighborhood, to his friends and to his profession. Mumia Abu-Jamal did not just kill a cop. He murdered a loving husband, a caring son, a brother to all around him and a friend to those he served. Mumia shot and killed a piece of America, a piece of America we would all like to see more of today.

A Symbol for Many

An unfortunate truth is that law enforcement officers lose their lives in the line of duty almost daily. All across our country their killers sit in prison -- waiting out their sentences, planning their death penalty appeals, or pleading to be paroled. The friends, family and co-workers of Danny Faulkner are among many who must fight to see that justice is done and that their fallen loved one is not forgotten. How has the murder of Danny Faulkner taken on such national prominence? Why is it important for officers across our country to be heard on this matter? Danny Faulkner has become a symbol for all our fallen brothers and sisters and the struggle of their loved ones to see that justice prevails.

By all official accounts, the murder of Officer Danny Faulkner was a clear cut case. The murderer was caught at the scene and readily identified by witnesses to the whole incident. Mumia Abu-Jamal should have shared the same fate as that of other cop killers -- living out his life in prison in anonymity, filing numerous appeals and waiting for his sentence to be carried out. Danny's killer, however, is not your typical killer.

Mumia Abu-Jamal was raised in the projects of Philadelphia. At 15, he helped found a local chapter of the Black Panthers. He became an ideologue, joining radical fringe groups like MOVE. He saw himself as a soldier in the fight against minority oppression. He became a local radio personality doing stories on the disadvantaged. He learned how to mold public opinion and how to take full advantage of the politics of race. Mumia, working with his lead attorney, Leonard Weinglass (Weinglass is also known for his work with attorney William Kunstler and their controversial defense of the Chicago Seven), has been able to bring together a diverse coalition of anti-death penalty groups, left-wing extremists, academics, fools and the misinformed. They have made Mumia their cause célèbre.

Such high profile personalities as Spike Lee, Susan Sarandon, Paul Newman, Maya Angelou and Alec Baldwin, to name a few, have lent their names to advertisements claiming Mumia's trial had been unfair and calling for a new trial. Danny's killer has also become a symbol for international organizations in places such as France and Denmark that oppose the death penalty. They have turned this murderer into a "political prisoner." Alternative rock bands like Rage Against the Machine and the Beastie Boys have done benefit concerts to raise money for Mumia's defense. Students at the University of California wear "Free Mumia" t-shirts. This culmination of politicians and personalities, regardless of their motivations, have turned Danny's murderer into a mythic figure. Truth has been damned and fantasy has become fact.

It is the weight of this coalition, built by the supporters of this killer, that demands that organizations such the Grand Lodge of the Fraternal Order of Police also weigh into this fight in an effective and substantial way. It is our responsibility to Danny, and all the fallen officers he represents, to assure that the public knows the truth about this incident and that substance will prevail

over celebrity. Maureen Faulkner, Danny's widow, cannot do it alone. The Philadelphia and Pennsylvania FOP Lodges cannot do it alone. The financial and public relations resources that have come together to render aid to this common killer with the uncommon knack for propoganda, are too much for any one group to face alone. It will take the effort of all the members of the FOP from across our country. We must all become aware of the facts of this case. We must speak out so that the truth is heard. Danny Faulkner was a good and decent man and an honorable police officer. He was brutally murdered and his killer is Mumia Abul-Jamal. This is a time when justice demands that no honest man sit silent.

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