

## Captain America Is Dead

In 1941, against the backdrop of a world in turmoil, a new fictional character was introduced to the American public. A puny weakling in poor health but wishing to do his patriotic duty, Steve Rogers allowed himself to be injected with a serum intended to create a super soldier. Thus was born the hero in red, white, and blue...the shield wielding Captain America. Sadly, in the latest edition of his long-running comic, he is downed by a sniper's shot. It's sad when heroes die, especially if they are someone you have known since childhood. Though no longer a comic book fan; I gave 'em up about 47 years ago, simply remembering the old days of sitting in front of the comic book rack at Woodrow Moulton's pharmacy in Warrington, Florida brings back so many other memories. The reference to Captain America, leads to the comic books...Superman, Batman, Ghost Rider (the old cowboy one, not the flaming skull guy on the motorcycle), Roy Rogers, Gene Autry, Lash LaRue, Tim Holt as Red Mask, and of course, Hopalong Cassidy and the Durango Kid. It brings another memory as well. I remember when, a few years ago, my mother told me that Mr. Moulton (I never thought of him as anything but Mister Moulton...never Woodrow. He was too dignified a gentleman for that.) had been shot dead during a robbery on June 7, 1978 by one Marvin Edwin Johnson. She thought it had something to do with drugs although it might have simply been a robbery. Apparently the kind old pharmacist in his landmark pharmacy who had helped so many people over so many years tried to defend himself and his property. For this, he died. You know, when my father and mother moved to Warrington, Florida, then a nearby community between Pensacola and the Naval air base, from Atlanta in 1945 right after I was born, they were happy to learn that they could buy the Sunday Atlanta Journal and Constitution at Mr. Moulton's "Warrington Pharmacy", and thus was born a ritual that lasted over three decades. After Mass on Sunday, there would be the trip to Warrington Pharmacy to pick up the Sunday Atlanta Journal and Constitution. In fact, after I got my driver's license, my first trip in my father's car, on my own, was on a Sunday morning when he handed me the keys to his 1956 Chevy with the missing accelerator pedal (you had to step on the bar that would have been underneath the pedal) and told me to go get the paper. Backing the Chevy out of the driveway and driving the two miles down and two miles back is something I still remember. Mr. Moulton was there and I wanted to brag about driving down by myself, but I sort of felt you just didn't brag to Mr. Moulton. Not that he would put you down, he would have simply expected it as something that had been bound to come about. It's hard to believe Mr. Moulton's dead. Shortly after they started getting the paper every Sunday, my dad went in one Sunday and they had sold them out. Mr. Moulton heard about it and told my father that from that day on, he would order one extra paper and put it under the counter for him. For years, it was not uncommon for one of the ladies to see my dad coming in the door and sing out, "I've got your paper over here, Mr. Baldwin!" When it was time to buy my mother's birthday and Christmas gifts, I could count on Mr. Moulton or his staff of older ladies to steer me towards an inexpensive perfume, earrings, or fake strand of pearls. It wasn't until years later that I learned that they often cut the price for "Mr. Baldwin's boy" at a nod from Mr. Moulton. What a great example of what a simple American citizen could be, and the influence he could have on the life of a youngster growing up in his community. What a sad thing that Mr. Moulton had to die because of someone else's desire to escape from a life which could offer so much. However, from time to time, I find the mechanic, the clerk, the cop, or the teacher who shows a sense of value such as his and I feel that although Mr. Moulton is dead, his quiet example of another, less flashy, American hero and guardian can still be found. This is a time in our nation's history when heroes are plenty. It's just that they are dressed in camouflage and some don't shave regularly yet...or don't have to shave because they are female. They don't always hit us between the eyes like Cap's shield, but they are there though sometimes hard to find for all the rhetoric their heroism gets wrapped in. Sometimes it is hard to see them for the row of politicians standing in front of them claiming the glory or exonerating themselves from blame, but they are still there. Sometimes, if you look closely, you can see that many of them are a little confused at their own heroism. They just see it as doing what they were supposed to do. What a concept! You know something? Though Mr. Moulton and Captain America are dead, their spirits live on. They may be gone, but there are others with their spirit and attitude to take up the slack.

## About the Author

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