

E1 Tanya McFall-Major

Speaker1: Ring, ring, ring. The office phone interrupted the thoughts that consumed my mind. The mean words, the jeers, and the disrespect towards health care. Officials seen in the media played over in my mind. I began to feel overwhelmed because this infodemic has taken misinformation to another level. I turned off my phone, my television, and had to force myself into a state of relaxation and to gain some peace of mind. The constant negativity from anti-vaxxers resulted in a bottle of us versus them. Covid 19 vaccines don't make sense you'll hear. They are ploys by the government for population control. They have microchips in them. All of you all are going to die in five years if you get that vaccine. Hearing this was disheartening. Story after story came in about individuals and families who lost their lives because they refused to get the jab. People didn't care about the science behind it or it didn't matter who advocated for it. Jab bad immunity good. Death was all around and people resisted anything that looked like the vaccine until COVID-19 visited their doorsteps. The thought of a jubilant family of nine being reduced to mere memory because COVID-19 swept the entire family away in one week. Healthcare officials and first responders dropped like flies as they didn't remember to make their vaccine appointments, but sacrificed their health to help a dying patient.

Speaker1: People cried and people fought to protect this country. To a sometimes ungrateful people. But again, they did not arm themselves. Grocery lines were long, ATMs were social spots, and the streets looked like ghost towns. Provoking statements were common, like why get the jab COVID-19, just like the flu? Why go through all of those side effects and still catch COVID afterward? Working in public health is not for the weak. Our team shared our experiences with each other. We worked constantly. We supported each other, said colleagues. But at times it didn't make things easier. Our manager walked into the office with a smile, as she always did, and attempted a few mental health activities for us. She knew we all carry the burden of our nation. Starting to feel a little more relieved after the session, I got a message on my mobile. My makeup artist, Kesha, had lost her mom, another victim of COVID. He had a vibrant personality. No topic was taboo to her, but she was an anti-vaxxer proponent. She constantly shared anti-vax sentiments on social media and scorned those who got the vaccine. She and her mom refused to get vaccinated. Being so busy with work, I didn't get the chance to speak with her, particularly as I avoided any vaccine debates.

Speaker1: Her mom was excited to visit her home island for a birthday and to pay respects for her brother's funeral. What she didn't know was that the trip to the airport would be her mother's last. Keisha's mom caught COVID-19 and died hours before her brother's funeral. She carries the guilt and regret of not taking her mom to be vaccinated every day. The night her mom died, Keisha's mom visited her in a dream and warned her to get vaccinated. Obedient to her mother. She registered and received her vaccine the next day. I was happy to find out that she was finally vaccinated but saddened because it was too late for her mom. No longer will their sons enjoy the time with their grandmother. No more motherly words of wisdom for Kisha. Another life was lost, another family destroyed, all because of the false information circulating in the media. Over and over and over again. We hear these messages. We see the faces in the obituary. But the solution is rejected. Maybe I am from another planet. A science utopia. I want to keep up the fight and to help the anti-vaxxers. But honestly, I'm tired. When will it end?