

# Fascist podcaster manipulates tragic case of Minnesota COVID patient to attack health care providers

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Scott Quiner, a COVID-19 patient who was moved from a Minnesota hospital to a hospital in Texas, died on January 22, following a legal struggle over his removal from a ventilator.

The patient's wife, Anne Quiner, opposed the conclusion reached by doctors at Allina Health's Mercy Hospital in Coon Rapids, Minnesota, that Scott could not recover from his nearly four-month struggle against COVID-19 and therefore that they planned to remove him from a ventilator on January 13.

Anne Quiner was granted a temporary restraining order by a Minnesota judge to block her husband's removal from the ventilator and move him to a hospital in Houston. The case was inflamed by far-right forces that intervened on the side of the patient's wife, provided her with lawyers, and equated the removal of Quiner from the ventilator with murder. Far-right podcaster Stew Peters presented this tragic case as part of a left-wing "coronavirus death cult" that is targeting unvaccinated people.

Scott Quiner, 55 years old, lived in Buffalo, Minnesota with his wife Anne and their three children. After an eight-year career in the Air Force, he utilized his logistics training and went to work for GW Transportation, a Minnesota company.

Quiner contracted COVID-19 last October. He was unvaccinated and developed critically low oxygen levels. When there was no improvement, he was placed on a ventilator at a hospital in Waconia, Minnesota. On November 6, he was moved to Allina's Mercy Hospital in Coon Rapids, a northwestern suburb of Minneapolis.

Two months later, with no improvement and Quiner's lungs having been severely damaged by COVID pneumonia, Allina prepared to remove him from the ventilator. The hospital asked Anne Quiner, who held medical power of attorney over her husband, to sign a "Do Not Resuscitate" document or allow the hospital to put him on comfort care.

Quiner refused and, in desperation, began to request drugs and procedures, including an ECMO (extracorporeal membrane oxygenation) lung machine, which Allina said were "not supported by medical science."

In a surreptitious recording made by Anne Quiner, a Mercy doctor told her, "We do not have an ECMO machine at Mercy and at this point his lungs are so destroyed, unfortunately, from the COVID pneumonia, all of our experts do not believe that there is any chance that he will have any lung recovery from this."

Anne Quiner finally obtained admission for her husband to a hospital in Houston, Texas, where he was flown over the weekend of January 15-16.

Anne Quiner's lawyer, Marjorie Holsten, appeared on Glenn Beck's show after the patient's arrival in Houston, and said, "What we are showing the world is that Scott was near death because of the protocols used in that hospital. But now he is recovering. He is getting better. We're not planning a funeral. We're planning for his release at some point."

*Star-Tribune* reported, "The fight between the Quiners and Mercy had been raging under the radar" when the conflict was seized upon by Stew Peters and other far-right elements, not only to promote opposition to vaccines and other public health measures, but also to incite potential violence against Scott Quiner's caregivers.

Allina, for its part, is bound by patient privacy rights and will not provide details on the case. In a statement, it defended the "evidence-based care provided to our patients..."

On January 12, one day before her husband was to be taken off the ventilator, Anne Quiner appeared on the Stew Peters Show, a daily podcast that features right-wing and fascist pro-Trump guests. On January 13, Peters interviewed Anne Quiner's lawyer after the lawyer had secured a restraining order ahead of the 12 noon time set to remove Quiner from the ventilator. The following day, the mainstream media reported on the case for the first time.

Judge Jennifer Stanfield set a hearing for February 11 and informed Anne Quiner that she had to obtain a temporary injunction or the temporary restraining order would be dissolved. It was at this point the Texas doctor agreed to accept Scott Quiner as a patient.

The interviews conducted by Peters with Anne Quiner and her lawyers were saturated with rants aimed at manufacturing a lynch-mob atmosphere against the Mercy Hospital staff that cared for Scott Quiner.

Here are two examples of the multiple tirades against the doctors:

They are zombies with stethoscopes. They're committing premeditated murder for money in these hospitals.

The doctors there are trying to kill him. Basically, what's happening here is the coronavirus death cult has put Scott Quiner in their progressive death camp court and they have found him guilty of being unvaccinated. And that is punishable by execution.

Stew Peters highlighted another recording made by Anne Quiner with the doctor who oversaw her husband's care during his last week at Mercy Hospital. The doctor is heard saying, "Unfortunately, if we could turn back time, and he had gotten a vaccine, then he wouldn't be..." Quiner cut the speaker off at this point.

This was raw meat for Peters, who cast this medically valid statement as proof of a demonic conspiracy against those who resist vaccination. There was no apparent sarcasm in the doctor's voice when she was recorded saying this. Instead, one gets the impression that she, like hundreds of thousands of other health care providers, has been worn down to the breaking point by the pandemic.

At one point in his podcast interview, Peters asked Anne Quiner:

“Who is the doctor whose care Scott is under? Who is the doctor who is making this decision to arbitrarily kill your husband against your wishes?” Quiner then gave the names of two doctors and an Allina employee.

This can only be interpreted as incitement to violence on the part of Peters against these health care providers.

An examination of Peters’ podcast guests reveals the whole galaxy of right-wing and neo-fascist elements. Among them is Republican Congressman Paul Gosar of Arizona, who played a key role in Trump’s plot to overthrow the 2020 election. Last November, he tweeted an altered animated video showing him killing Democratic Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and President Joe Biden.

Alongside the Scott Quiner tragedy, Peters has delved into other cases. He publicly named a doctor involved in the case of Burt Kroon, an 81-year-old unvaccinated patient who was admitted to Mercy Hospital last November 26 for COVID-19 and died on December 9.

That there are issues of hospital quality of care is not to be denied. They are bound up with the policy of the ruling class and both establishment parties of removing all public health measures to contain the spread of the virus, declaring that the Omicron variant means the pandemic can never be ended, and insisting that the world has to learn to “live with” the deadly pathogen, regardless of the cost in lives.

On this false basis, the Biden administration and state and local governments of both parties are forcing teachers and children into infected schools and compelling workers to remain on the job in unsafe factories, resulting in an explosion of infections and hospitalizations that is bringing hospitals to the breaking point and increasing the already soaring death toll—all for the benefit of corporate profits and the wealth of the financial oligarchy.

Doctors and health care workers are being forced to work inhuman hours due to the flood of COVID patients and resignations of exhausted and traumatized staff. They are being put in the impossible position of having to make decisions as to which patients will be treated and which left to die.

On January 13, the day set for Quiner to be removed from the ventilator, there were only three ICU beds available out of 526 in the greater Minneapolis-St. Paul metro region. At the beginning of January, the COVID-19 seven-day average case count was 4,089. By January 13, case counts had risen to 10,066. They hit their highest point to date on January 25, at 16,578.

Peters and his allies are seeking to exploit the confusion and disorientation fueled by lies and misinformation from the government and the corporate media, and decades of attacks by the ruling class on science and reason, to attack health care workers and doctors and conceal the real source of the COVID catastrophe—the capitalist profit system.

In the wake of Quiner’s death, Peters declared in a recent podcast: “If you read a headline online, it will probably tell you Scott Quiner died from COVID-19. That is an out-and-out lie, perpetuated by a dishonest media. Scott Quiner was killed by the misconduct of the doctors and nurses at Mercy Hospital.”

Peters has stated that no deaths are attributable to COVID-19. He recently declared: “Nobody dies from COVID, nobody... These patients are being intentionally malnourished and not given the appropriate treatment and then intentionally killed...”

He has gone on to spin conspiracy theories about hospitals identifying COVID-19 patients who are organ donors and intentionally killing them to profit from organ transplants.

For decades, corporations, with the connivance of the trade union bureaucracy, have sought to force workers to bear the ever-increasing burden of health care costs in order to raise profitability for the capitalist class. This, combined with other trade union-imposed concessions, now compounded by soaring inflation and the role of the unions in enforcing the reopening of unsafe schools and factories in the midst of the

pandemic, has ignited a wave of struggles by educators, students, nurses, autoworkers, supermarket workers and other workers.

The working class is assuming the lead in the struggle to stop the pandemic, as evidenced by the recent teacher and student strikes against in-person instruction.

The recent 301-day strike by Massachusetts nurses over safe staffing ratios unnerved the ruling class and demonstrated that the working class is determined to fight to defend and improve the quality of health care.

Allina nurses, along with other sections of Minnesota nurses, have waged more than a decade of strikes and contract struggles over safe staffing ratios. In 2010 12,000 nurses at Minneapolis-St. Paul metro hospitals held a one-day strike to demand safe staffing. When the hospital systems refused to accommodate their demands, they prepared for an open-ended strike, only to have the Minnesota Nurses Association (MNA) sabotage the effort and call off the strike.

In 2016, the MNA, not wanting to allow a joint struggle by all nurses, settled contracts with all of the health care systems except Allina. Nearly 5,000 Allina nurses rejected four sellout contracts and conducted two strikes, but were again betrayed by the MNA.

Now, the emerging movement of the working class against the mass infection and mass death policy of the ruling class is taking the form of a rebellion against the corporatist labor unions. This movement must be broadened and linked up with struggles of workers across the US and internationally, and it must be armed with a revolutionary socialist strategy.

The vast majority of workers are repulsed and disgusted by the fascistic, anti-worker ravings of Stew Peters and company. But Peters is not an isolated windbag. He is a cog in the wheel of fascistic elements being promoted by the corporate elite to be thrown against the working class.

Workers must take this as a warning. They have immense social power and will not accept the ruling class policy of mass death and virtual slave labor conditions. But this strength must be mobilized independently of the pro-corporate unions and the capitalist parties, in the fight for socialism in order to end the pandemic and halt the rise of fascism.



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