



Peter Thornton Crews

December 3, 1960 - February 2, 2023

On February 2nd, 2023, Peter Thornton Crews, a man known for his magnetic smile, glacier blue eyes, and unbelievable stories, passed from this earth and found new wings.

The events surrounding Peter's birth prove to be as fascinating and otherworldly as his life. After decades of searching for his birth parents, Peter discovered himself to be the illegitimate son of Vasia Constantine Gmirkin, a man who has been described as "in his time the closest thing the CIA had to James Bond" (Cold Warrior: [New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991] page 261), and Nancy Baker, a colleague of Vasia's during the time of her pregnancy. During his career, Vasia "recruited Soviet defectors and was responsible for the US acquiring night vision technology, among other intelligence coups." Among his many adventures, Vasia's time "in the CIA included being kidnapped by his KGB counterpart in Baghdad and infiltrating a terrorist cell in Italy (Russell Gmirkin: General Biography)." It is rumored that Nancy was able to keep Peter's birth a secret by telling loved ones that she was recruited for an overseas mission in India.

Born into a body that was already fighting, Peter arrived in Washington, DC on December 3, 1960. Diagnosed with a severe stomach disease and Esophageal Atresia,

Peter was forced to spend the first of his year in an incubator with minimal human contact. During this time, the nurses adoringly referred to him as Baby Baker, the surname of his biological mother. Peter made a full recovery in 1961 and was finally allowed to come home to Arlington, Virginia with his loving parents, Grasty Crews II, and Pauline Heermance Crews.

Peter was raised within a home that valued hard work, thoughtful discourse, and captivating narratives. Among his father's many accomplishments, Grasty Crews spent four years as general counsel of the Special Action Office for Drug Abuse Prevention of the Executive Office of the President. In the early 1970s, he was counsel to the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve. Many believe that Grasty helped sharpen Peter's mind by introducing complex topics into daily conversation. His mother Pauline, who had enjoyed many years of work as a librarian, helped inspire a lifelong passion for historical literature and inventive storytelling.

From a young age, Peter stood out for his keen intellect and many talents. In his youth, he was known for his mathematical prowess, freehand drawing ability, and beautiful singing voice. Regarded as a stand-out member of the national boys choir, community members often proclaimed that when he sang, he sounded like "a real angel." As a young adult, his fierce pitching abilities earned him status as a celebrated baseball player within his hometown community. When a rotator cuff injury ended the possibility of a baseball career, he directed his attention towards a love that he would carry his entire life...

motorcycles.

From working on engines to driving cross-country, he found passion and excitement in the world surrounding his Harleys. Many considered his classic ape hanger Panhead to be an extension of himself.

Peter embodied an incredible work ethic, as exemplified by his status as one of the youngest men to become a foreman for the sheet metal union. He found passion in the rigorous work and intricate detailing of his trade. Unfortunately, his sheet metal career came to an abrupt end in 1993 when he experienced a severe hand injury. Despite this nearly fatal experience, his taste for life and thirst for adventure kept him catapulting through the world at high velocity.

Peter was known and loved as a storyteller. He told the kind of stories that kept you inching towards the edge of your seat and thirsting for more details. He punctuated plot points with contagious laughter, speaking in hushed whispers and uproarious exclamation. The attention he gave to listeners was both piercing and enthralling. Although his tales of bar room brawls and run ins with danger are not particularly appropriate for this medium, those that had the pleasure of knowing "Ol' Petie" will surely smile knowing that they get to carry their favorite stories with them. The tales of Peter's struggles, triumphs, and exploits were nothing short of unbelievable, and one of Pete's greatest accomplishments was the ability to weave folklore into everyday life.

In many ways, Peter lived his life as a miracle with a very keen sense of

humor. If

anything was consistent about his life's story, it was Peter's unparalleled ability to brush

off death on a regular basis. He lived many days less like an ordinary man, and more like what you'd imagine of a hyperbolic fictional character. And yet, in his family's eyes, Peter's greatest accomplishment was his ability to love despite his wounds and lean into life despite his many years of illness. Friends who knew the words of Hunter S. Thompson extended them lovingly towards Peter... he was simply "too weird to live, and too rare to die."

And yet, on February 2nd, 2023, Peter did take his final breath. He passed within the comfort of his home, from complications linked to diabetes and kidney failure. Peter is predeceased by his father, Grasty Crews II and his mother, Pauline Heermance Crews.

He is survived by his former wife, Cheryl Crews, and three children, Cameron Crews,

Tyler Crews, and Tessa Crews, of whom he spared no chance to celebrate their personal, academic, and professional accomplishments.

In the end, Peter Crews will be remembered as a man of unwavering courage and

moral fortitude. He upheld the belief that far beyond one's personal accomplishments

and societal accolades, it is loyalty and ethics upon which we act that defines our

character. He carried this sentiment into his role as a father, finding meaning and purpose in his children's own happiness. His love for them was deep and unwavering, setting the ultimate example that love is given, not earned.

Words from Peter's son, Tyler Crews: "Dad never wanted anybody to follow his own path, and instead encouraged everyone around him to blaze their

own trail, knowing that they would find the most success in whatever walk of life they chose for themselves.

He was a man who believed that regardless of what you did in life, it was the morals you acted on that made you who you were as a person. The ultimate truth he lived by was to never betray your friends and family, even at great personal cost. He always did his best to give back to the people around him, treated the lowliest of strangers with the utmost respect, and did his best to lift up the people around him.”

Words from Peter’s daughter, Tessa Crews: “I will remember my father as the person whose laughter could fill a room like morning light and would call me in quiet moments just to hear my voice. I will remember him as the man who reminded me to believe in myself and my own strength, even at times when he questioned his own. I will remember him as the man who told me to hold my brothers so dear and so very close... because there are some things in life that only your siblings can fully understand. And I will always remember him as the man who taught me that life could be so complicated, and still love is simple.

Beyond everything, my father lived with enormous passion and loved with unparalleled depth. Even when we were miles away and months apart, we had this funny way of feeling each other’s joy in our own bodies... and holding each other’s heartaches as well. I know without a shadow of a doubt that he would have given his life for the sake of my happiness... Dad, may you find everything you’ve been seeking in the great big sky. I love you there and back again.”

Peter Crews was a devoted father, faithful son, and force of nature to the very

end. He
will be deeply, heart wrenchingly missed.