

What Killed Christine Maggiore? *by Celia Farber*

I got the devastating news yesterday that my very good friend Christine Maggiore died at home on December 27th, from a bout of bilateral bronchial pneumonia, that afflicted her in recent weeks, and which she was unable to overcome.

The news has been shattering to all who loved her around the world. Speaking for myself, I can say that Christine Maggiore was one of the strongest, most ethical, compassionate, intelligent, brave, funny, and decent human beings I have ever had the honor to know. I spoke to her in great depth about all aspects of life, death, love, and this battle we both found ourselves mired in, and I will be writing about her and about those conversations here, in the future. No matter what she was going through, and it was always, frankly, sheer hell—every day of her life, since 2005, she faced, acute grief, sadistic persecution, wild injustice, relentless battle, and deep betrayal—she was always there for her friends, and she never descended to human ugliness. She always tried to take the high road. She always tried to be stronger than any human being could ever be asked to be. I feared for her life, always. I feared the battle would kill her, as I have felt it could kill me, if I couldn't find enough beauty to offset the malevolence. This is a deeply occult battle, and Christine got caught in its darkest shadows.

She had apparently been on a radical cleansing and detox regimen that had sickened her and left her very weak, dehydrated, and unable to breathe. She was shortly thereafter diagnosed with pneumonia and placed on IV antibiotics and rehydration. But she didn't make it.

Those who loved her, as I did, have our own interpretations of what ultimately killed her—a combination of unrelenting heartbreak and the effect of being subject to a constant, unrelenting media driven hate campaign, despite the complete legal clearing of her name in the death of her daughter Eliza Jane in 2005, who died after taking an antibiotic, and whose cause of death has been tortuously debated. Christine and her husband Robin were denied the right to adopt a child, or foster a child, due to a single article in the L.A. Times which cast her as a murderer.

Here below is the letter that Robin Scovill sent out. I ask that people try to respect this family's agony, and refrain from hurtful speculation in whatever they choose to comment. We all agree that it is imperative that an impartial and thorough autopsy bring to light all facts about Christine's cause of death, and the state of her immune system, and how these facts might bring us all closer to the ultimate truth we all seek. She had been HIV positive since 1992, and never had an AIDS defining illness. Her foes have predictably begun their attacks, and there is already a misleading statement from the LA County Coroner's office, against whom Christine was scheduled to testify two days from when she died, stating that she had had pneumonia for six months. This is incorrect, but helps foster the impression that it was an AIDS related pneumonia (PCP) which is a longer term illness.

Here's Robin Scovill:

Dear Friends,

It is with deep sorrow that I tell you my wife, Christine Maggiore died unexpectedly on December 27th. She leaves behind our son, Charlie and the memory of our daughter, Eliza Jane.

Christine was a beacon of hope for many people whose lives, like her own, had been turned upside down by an HIV positive diagnosis. When she received this devastating label in 1992, Christine—in spite of predictions that she had five years to live—did not give up, but devoted her life to helping others. For several years she was a public speaker for AIDS Project Los Angeles, LA Shanti Foundation and was a founding board member of Women At Risk. It was in the process of trying to find a doctor that she felt comfortable dying with that Christine starting getting conflicting information from AIDS experts, particularly troubling in the search to save her own life. One doctor in particular suggested that Christine retest and she finally did, testing HIV negative, positive and indeterminate over a dozen times in subsequent months. She was shocked. Christine took her questions and confusion to the very AIDS organizations that she was helping to build and their unanimous dismissal of her inquiries forced Christine to look outward. This series of events profoundly shook her faith in mainstream AIDS beliefs and sent her down a rabbit hole of exploration that would challenge everything that she had been lead to believe.

Over the subsequent years, Christine's research put her in touch with people all over the world whose work and commitment to open dialog and debate caused her to rethink everything she had been taught to teach others about HIV and AIDS. Most importantly, it led her to question the absolute assertion that an HIV positive diagnosis meant she had to die.

In 1995, Christine set out to assemble a three-fold brochure outlining a series of facts that had been most compelling in her search for truth. That brochure turned into the first incarnation of her seminal book, *What If Everything You Thought You Knew About AIDS Was Wrong?* It took Christine years to unearth the many studies, writings and facts that began to alleviate the shame and terror of her HIV diagnosis. Her desire was to create something concise and informative and empowering that she could give to others who had received a similar diagnosis and who were ashamed and terrified and alone.

Christine's book—now in it's 4th edition— has been translated into seven languages; her monumental work with her non-profit organization, *Alive and Well AIDS Alternatives*, has redefined what we think about AIDS; and her tireless communications, writings and pod casts have touched thousands of lives around the world and continue to provide a beacon of hope for anyone who lives in fear of AIDS.

In spite of Christine's strength, she was also under tremendous pressure and scrutiny. She often felt that she wasn't allowed to get sick like other people. After her daughter died in 2005 of an allergic reaction to an antibiotic for an ear infection, the LA County Coroner—ignoring evidence to the contrary—declared it a death from AIDS and Christine's suffering increased horribly. She was vilified in the world media and harassed by outspoken opponents of her work who openly gloated that this was her just comeuppance. She and her family endured a yearlong criminal investigation that not only terrorized them, but also robbed them of an opportunity to mourn the loss of their daughter. That loss was twisted into sensationalized and mean spirited television episodes that portrayed Christine as a quack and a murderer and ultimately as dead. Christine never fully recovered from the unjust treatment that she received around the loss of Eliza Jane and that treatment ultimately exhausted her.

A week and a half ago, Christine was diagnosed with bilateral pneumonia and did not conjure the strength to overcome it. She died unexpectedly in her home with her husband and a dear friend. Christine Maggiore's death is a shock and devastating blow to her family and to the thousands of people around the world who loved and respected her.

For anyone who lives in fear of an HIV or AIDS diagnosis, Christine's legacy will live on. She was committed to sharing vital facts and essential dialog that would give HIV positive people everywhere the chance to consider a destiny that differs from the one of death and despair that they are taught to expect. For that she was loved.

Christine will be deeply missed.