

Eulogy for Byron Jamarr Dixon Celebration of Life Service

- By Brian Jamel Dixon, MD

What greeting would Byron lead with? (crowd responds with:
Aaaaayyyyyy!!!!)

I have been connected to Byron before we knew we were Byron and Brian. Rumor has it, Momma didnt know she was having twins and our name was supposed to be O'Banion. Black folks and their apostrophes :) It didn't help that our names were so similar or that our initials were the same.

By raise of hands, who in here heard him joke that "Brian got all the brains and I got all the brawn?" (take off shirt and show the guns).

I have brawn which means he got brains. Social connection brains. Coaching brains. Byron's brain, his purpose, was social nurturing. His spiritual gift brings us all here today. When Momma died 10 years ago, I wanted to stand in front of the congregation and remind them to be joyful in their mourning because she fulfilled her purpose: nurturing others through sustenance.

I ask you to be joyful in your mourning. Byron's purpose is literally in this room. If you're hurting, you know what to do because Byron showed you: take a moment to shake your neighbors hand. Yes, even family. :-). Nurture one another; give them dap, a hug, a smile. Take 10 seconds and do that now. [PAUSE]

Byron would poke fun at me, repeatedly saying "you so smart, you're dumb." It took me getting through med school to realize he was right.

Doctors have not made care available and customized to Black and Brown bodies. The remainder of my life and career will be devoted to fixing how doctors communicate care for us. While we await the findings of what ended his life, I've shared my best guess on my page of his new website: byrondixon45.com Don't pull it up now cuz I ain't done talking. :D

Byron was the sort of dude who would LITERALLY give you the shirt off his back. Recently, he learned that Black folks can sunburn. "Nah, man, I'm good, Black don't crack." But until he got to Cancun and sat on that beach, he didn't realize the sun doesn't care about color. The touching thing was that he burned his bald head because he gave his wife his sunhat to protect herself. He was always trying to be better, even when he didn't always know how.

There were lots to love about Byron, so I'll focus on 3 things:

- Terrible Dad jokes. Byron was already goofy but when Byron had kids, it was like every rule we grew up with went right out the window. We grew up with "kids should be seen, not heard." He made sure that Kaylor was seen AND heard. Kaylor, your Daddy knew the world was a stage and so I hope you take that and run with it. Luckily, you got my singing and his presence. He was best known for his Dad jokes and since I'm half of your Dad's energy, I'm gonna try. Ready?

- There are two muffins in an oven. One muffin says to the other muffin "whew! It's HOT in here. What does the other muffin say in response? [OH MY GOD, A TALKING MUFFIN!]"

- His whoopings: Y'all, growing up, Byron got whooped. Like whooped so bad that if I knew what CPS was back in the day, I might have asked them to come interview our family. As a child psychiatrist now, I look back at Byron and commend him for his resolve. He was

stubborn and rare: he weighed his options of the fun he'd have versus the pain of that strap or switch and chose fun every time. He taught me to take risks with loving friends and it pays off, every single time.

- His loyalty: Growing up was not exactly easy for me. I was geeky, not into sports...or girls. I was quiet and worried about what the world would think of me. I didn't truly date until medical school and eventually I found love of my life. Byron fiercely protected and advocated for my right to love whomever I wanted. He toasted my marriage to Ahmade and I knew that Byron was loyal to a fault.

I'll finish my eulogy for my twin with a lesson I learned from my doctor friend who treats cancer.

She said quality relationships follow the 90/10 rule. 10 percent of a person you just aint gonna like and that will never change. It 10 percent literally ticks you off: farting in the car when the windows' up, making jokes at all the wrong time, putting his crusty feet on folks. Carrying that pillow EVERYWHERE. Y'all, he still paid his cell phone bill by calling.it.in.every.month.

He was perfectly, imperfect. The Bible says that all of sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. For all his flaws, for all his inconsistencies, he loved his family and his family loved him. KK stood by the man through thick and thin. Through the death of his Mother. Through times when his decisions were questionable by everybody, including Daddy.

What did we learn from Byron? If the remaining 90 percent is wondrous, go for it. When I learned to ignore Momma's 10% and appreciate the 90%, our relationship was so much better. Byron lived his full 90 percent and this memorial and the outpouring of grief,

anguish, support and joy is a testament to his 90%. I've catalogued his life on his new website: www.ByronDixon45.com and I welcome all of you send me stuff so that his legacy and spirit live forever. I leave you with this question: are you living YOUR full 90%?

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