

How Cold Heart and Zeal for Rules at Pharmacy Killed Young Brazilian Mother

Contributed by Max Bono
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Salvador, beautiful city, what happened to you? Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, December 14, 2007. Viviane Brito Barbosa was feeling very sick. She had asthma. She could not breath properly. With her stepfather she ran to the pharmacy to buy the little pump needed to facilitate the breathing during an asthma crisis.

It cost 22 Brazilian reais (a bit more than US\$ 12). She had only 12 reais. Her stepfather in the rush to the pharmacy had forgotten the wallet. There were 10 reais (US\$ 6) missing.

Viviane, 29-years-old, mother of two kids, student of pedagogy was getting worse and worse. Her stepfather, totally desperate, offered to leave the documents of his car to prove he was getting back to the pharmacy to pay the 10 reais missing. It was so little money.

Sorry we cannot do that, this is not the procedure. You have to pay the difference. Viviane's lips became very red. She was undergoing a violent and devastating crisis. The salesmen at the pharmacy could see she was not kidding. She was dying. But they did nothing.

Healthline defines asthma attack this way: "When they occur the muscles surrounding the airways become tight and the lining of the air passages swell. This reduces the amount of air that can pass by, and can lead to wheezing sounds. Asthma attacks can last minutes to days and can become dangerous if the airflow becomes severely restricted."

It is a terrible way of dying and terrible thing to watch too.

Viviane's stepfather took her to the closest municipal health post. She did not make it. She died while getting there. Her heart stopped beating on the way to the health center.

Any comment is useless. Viviane is dead. The pharmacy replaced its employees with some others.

Just a few questions come to our minds: what happened to today's humans to get to this point? A woman is dying in front of our eyes, for such a ridiculous amount of money, and still we are there watching but we stick to the rules, sorry there is an amount missing, small but still missing.

Is this today's world? A world in which only money and rules account, where a life is not worth not even US\$ 6? Have we lost any human feeling, how did we become like that?

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