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MICHAEL: An Obit for Health Care Reform

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Health Care Reform (HCR) died Jan. 19 in Massachusetts, shortly before his 19th birthday. He was a victim of a mass suicide pact by economic left-liberals swilling Kool-Aid they've been drinking for years to satisfy a thirsty obsession for replacing marketplace accountability with government mandates.

Though he lived a short and troubled life, HCR captured the imagination of the Media and Democratic Political Consultants throughout the land for almost two decades.

"Reform," as he was known in the popular press - usually without the quotes - was born in 1991, the son of Medicare and Medicaid, who survive (barely), both children of the '60s. Also surviving (and sucking up tax dollars like mother's milk) is Reform's baby sister, DOPE (Drugs for Old People Everywhere), the one-night-stand, 2003 love child of a menage a trois that included Medicare, Medicaid and the oxymoronic hustler Big Government Conservative Republican Karl "W." Rove.

The unfortunate victim of Democratic hubris was pre-deceased by his grandfather, Mr. Tax Exempt Health Insurance, born around 1947, the bastard child of Wage Price Controls and Big Labor Unions. (Though both great-grandparents are dead, their ghosts haunt the fruited plains, from sea to shining sea, leading the gullible to believe you can have a free health care lunch if you divorce Mr. Price from Mrs. Choice.)

Reform was reared in Pennsylvania during the 1991 special election for the U.S. Senate seat that opened when Sen. John Heinz died in a helicopter crash. The appointed Sen. Harris Wofford, a liberal Democrat, adopted Reform on the advice of his consultants, skilled politicized medicine practitioners, James Carville and Paul Begala. Dressing little Reform in

populist clothes, the pair had Mr. Wofford kiss baby Reform at every whistle-stop while railing against the evil insurance companies and Big Pharma firms who stood in Reform's way.

Mr. Wofford went from 30 points down to a 10-point victory, which made the baby Reform famous throughout the Democratic populist land. Overnight, Reform became a sensation and was readopted by William Jefferson Clinton and his bride, Hillary, when Professor Carville and Dr. Begala took their populist protege to the 1992 Clinton campaign, in which the child competed with his cousin Welfare Reform for national attention.

To make a long story short, Hillary loved that child Reform so much that she persuaded Bill to let her bring him to the White House. But after an awful first year, Reform became ill in 1993. A tough little guy, he survived on life support for years, while cousin Welfare was embraced by Bill as the new-and-improved Reform after a little political unhappiness for the nation's First Political Couple occurred in 1994.

But Reform, by then a teenager, got his second big break. The presumptive presidential nominee for 2008, Ms. HillaryCare, trotted out her stepchild and made him the centerpiece of her campaign for Leader of the Free Health Care World! That left the self-appointed trial lawyer to the underclass, John Edwards, and the upstart from Illinois, Barack Obama, no choice. They had to produce their own Health Care Reform babies (which Mr. Edwards took a little too literally, it was later learned).

Hope prevailed, and Mr. Obama won the race. And Reform got a new daddy, who declared he loved Reform so much, he would stake his political life on the boy.

Alas, the rest is history. Crazy Tea-Partiers all but smothered the teenager in the summer of his 18th year, and then some Cosmo centerfold came out of nowhere to seal Reform's fate shortly before his 19th birthday, when angry voters in a state made famous by a tea party dumped the Democrats overboard. Reform drowned in a sea of left-liberal Kool-Aid.

Funeral services will be private, as the family now wishes to keep Reform to itself. In lieu of flowers, they request donations be made to the Democratic House and Senatorial campaign committees.

Terry Michael is a former press secretary for the Democratic National Committee; his "thoughts from a libertarian Democrat" are collected at www.terrymichael.net.