

This column is from Fast Forward, the advance daily email from the Boston Globe.

“Not ut first, I keep getting e-mails from a handful of readers who can't seem to grasp why comparing the seasonal flu to the coronavirus is absurd. They apparently believe that since we don't stay apart and shut down businesses for the flu, we shouldn't be doing so for this virus.

Good grief.

Trump supporters and pundits on the right are doing the same thing to score political points. It's not just a colossal waste of everyone's time; it's deadly.

You may remember that a couple of weeks ago, I explained that the numbers of deaths from the seasonal flu is an estimate of the total flu burden, extrapolated using modeling after the flu season is over. In other words, the death numbers you see for the flu are confirmed cases PLUS estimates. That's because many flu cases are not confirmed via a test, so the total number has to be estimated using scientific models.

In contrast, the number of deaths from COVID-19, the respiratory illness caused by the coronavirus, are all confirmed cases, with no modeling estimates added. And like the flu, many COVID-19 deaths are not confirmed via a test.

Dr. Jeremy Samuel Faust, an emergency room physician at Brigham and Women's Hospital and an instructor at Harvard Medical School in Boston, was as frustrated by the bogus comparisons by Trump and his minions as I am.

So he decided to simplify it for those people: Make an apples-to-apples comparison by measuring flu mortality the same way we count covid-19 deaths: Look at *confirmed* flu cases and *confirmed* coronavirus cases. No modeling estimates included.

The results were shocking.

The Washington Post [put his numbers on a chart](#).

Keep in mind that the current flu season isn't quite over yet, although it's pretty close, and of course, the current number of COVID-19 deaths is much higher

than shown on this chart, which was done May 2, and will continue to grow for a long time.

In fact, we've hit more than 70,000 deaths in the US, which was the number we weren't supposed to reach for another three months.

As Faust, who will not make a pact with the denial devil, wrote, "the coronavirus is not anything like the flu: It is much, much worse."

I'm also stunned by the number of Americans who are really anxious to get infected, and quite happy to pass that infection along to spouses, children, parents, grandparents, or anybody, really.

The tens of thousands of people -- maybe even hundreds of thousands -- who are openly flouting physical distancing and mask guidelines makes me really worried about the state of public education in this country. Or if some states even have any public education. Or how many of these people made it out of third grade.

And then there's the violence all too typical of the rightwing: The rallies by militia groups armed to the teeth as an intimidation tactic, the death threats made to Democratic governors trying to stop the spread of the deadly virus, and now, murder.

When a woman and her adult daughter entered a Family Dollar store in Detroit Friday afternoon, the security guard informed the mask-less daughter that she would have to cover up, per Governor Gretchen Whitmer's order. The daughter left the store, but her mother started yelling at the guard and haranguing him, so he told her to leave. She did, and returned with her husband and adult son. They entered the store and shot the guard in the head, killing him.

The security guard's name is **Calvin Munerlyn**. He was married, the father of six kids and three stepchildren. The woman has been arrested and charged with first-degree premeditated murder; the two cowards who killed Munerlyn ran away and are hiding.

I must admit, I'm glad that most of The Greatest Generation is gone, because after the sacrifices they made, they would be ashamed if they saw that today, some of us are so soft we can't bear to wear a mask.

