

# At Peace with His Hair

Larry Britt

**BEFORE YOU READ:** Learn the terms comb-over, hair dye, toupée, and hair plugs. See images below.

He looked thirty years younger in his coffin. A retired police officer and military veteran, he was dressed in his police uniform and his coffin was decorated with U.S. flags and U.S. Navy memorabilia. But it was more than just the uniform and decorations. His hair and moustache were a natural shade of brown. He looked much younger than his 73-year-old broken body.

His name was Lonnie. We didn't call him dad. He was always self-conscious about aging, especially the graying and loss of his hair.

## He looked thirty years younger in his coffin.

He wasn't wealthy, so he dyed his comb-over hair black.

However, the color

was always uneven, and the dye got on his collars, neck, headrests, and pillow cases. He knew it wasn't perfect, but at least it wasn't gray. And with the comb-over, he didn't look quite as bald.

In his mid-30s, when he got sick of hiding his baldness with a comb-over, Lonnie took out a loan to get a toupée. He didn't look bald, but the replacement hair was obvious. After about six months, he threw the rug out.

In his late 40s, Lonnie tried "hair plugs." They

were small bits of hair that were placed in rows across his head. The hope was that these little plugs would fill in to create a more natural look. Unfortunately, the treatment didn't work well for Lonnie, and he was left with rows of plugs.

When I was a teenager, Lonnie hated it when my brother and I grew our hair long. We both thought he was just jealous because we had a lot of hair. Now, my brother is going bald, and I am the lucky one. As my old aunts in Texas would say to me: "Boy, I dunno where y'all got that hair. Ain't no man on either side got hair but you." I guess some random gene made its way into my body, and I'm thankful for it.

As for Lonnie, I know for sure that he's at peace with his hair for eternity.

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## AFTER YOU READ:

1. What is the feeling of this story? Explain your answer.
2. Why does the author *start* with the image of his father in the coffin? Try writing a story where you follow Larry's model and start with the ending.
3. "He threw the rug out" is an example of figurative language. What does it mean?

## Strategies for Covering Up Aging

**Lonnie tried a lot of strategies** to deal with aging hair. Write a few sentences explaining what went wrong with each of them.



Comb-over



Hair dye



Toupée



Hair plugs