

The news media had said he would never stand a chance. From the moment he announced that he was coming out of retirement, the media did nothing but talk about how impossible a comeback would be – especially at the age of 78. Sure, he was in fantastic shape for his age, perhaps in even better shape than most people 50 years younger than him; but regardless, nobody gave him a chance and honestly, he absolutely loved it.

It was the final day of the 136th Le Tour de France and Mr. Arm Strong was leading the pack like he had done in every Tour except one. Mr. Arm Strong was on the flat territory that comes expected for every rider on the final stage as they ride into Paris on their shiny bicycles in every color of the rainbow. Mr. Arm Strong had come in and out of retirement for the last 40 years of his life and surprisingly, he competed much better in the Tour at 78 than he did at 54. The competition was no less skilled – or competitive for that matter. In fact, it was agreed upon by all major media outlets that it was probably the toughest Tour he had competed in. When asked how he is doing better than ever before, Mr. Arm Strong would usually say something along the lines of “I suppose it is the cancer survivor in me. Once a fighter always a fighter, that’s what I say.”

He was every boy’s hero and every girl wished he were her grandpa. He was the Sean Connery of his day and the photos from his early days in the Tour held significance like those of James Dean did back in the day some 40-50 years ago. He was the only “American idol” to actually reign as king for more than 5-10 years. He was more than just a fad, he was a legend.

As Mr. Armstrong led the pack with the closest rider well over 6 minutes behind him, he could not help but think about his life. He thought about how lucky he was to survive cancer. He thought of the 14 Tours he had won over the last many years. He thought of how his organization was actually the detrimental factor in curing cancer those 16 years ago. “I’ve had a pretty ballin’ life” he said in between the deep inhales and exhales.

Riding alone at the front of the pack for most of the Tour often made him lonely and willing to talk to aloud even though nobody was there to listen. “I’m not sure what else I can do to make this world a better place”, Mr. Arm Strong said to himself. The number one podium spot was his and he knew it. It would be the same ceremony as always. He would hold his trophy and flowers, kiss the girls, and then go dining with his sponsors. “I don’t much feel like doing all that, its such a drag” he said, tempted to quit the race to avoid the hassles that go with winning the Tour.

“Scratch that idea” he said aloud as he passed a few fans who had camped out in their hover cars to watch the riders go by on their way to Paris. Mr. Arm Strong knew if he quit, that the reporters would never leave him alone as to why he did so. “Besides that, I’m not a quitter. Never have been. Never will be,” he mumbled in between the deep breaths. He decided to just finish the race, take

his podium spot, and eat the free food with Team Twitter and the rest of his teammates.

The race was nearing completion and Mr. Arm Strong saw the sign telling him that there was only one kilometer remaining in the race. He smiled, and even though he knew the number one podium spot was more than sealed for him, he decided to sprint to the finish like he would do in the old days – for old times sake, if nothing else.

Mr. Arm Strong was moving quickly at speeds around 75 kilometers. His bicycle was moving from side to side at animations that seemed to defy physics. His 78-year-old body behaving better than every other rider out there. Some people thought he was just a miracle from God. Some people thought he always doped for the advantage. And others just thought he was a government test subject with some form of cybernetic experiments in his body. Either way, Mr. Arm Strong was the greatest cyclist to ever peddle down the road.

The sprint was still under way and Mr. Arm Strong could see the finish line ahead. It was in clear view and moving towards him at a steadily increasing rate. Mr. Arm Strong was around 20 feet from crossing the finish line and claiming his title for the 15th Tour victory when he suffered a massive heart attack. He immediately crashed to the ground. His bicycle peddles still attached to his shoes. He went tumbling down the last stretch bouncing all around for that last 20 feet. He crossed the finish line by literally less than the width of a bicycle wheel before his bicycle and body finally came to a rest. The world stopped.

Mr. Arm Strong was dead. It was confirmed by medical experts that it was the heart attack that killed him and not the road wounds that he had accumulated during the final 20 feet of his all-out sprint. Mr. Arm Strong was declared the victor of the Tour and his trophy was sent to his immediate family to put with all of the others. The flowers were placed on his grave. People in countries everywhere, except for Spain, mourned for him. The media of course sympathized with him and made false claims about how they always knew he would win and “never lacked faith” as one reporter said. The funeral was televised and lasted longer than the one of Michael Jackson those 40 years before.

Mr. Arm Strong went down as one of the greatest athletes and human beings to ever grace the world with his presence. And people everywhere all agreed that he “Lived Strong” – both on the road and off.