**1)**

**This is Your Brain. This is Your Brain on Covid.**

In about 30 seconds, you’re going to call me an “alarmist,” or say that I’m “exaggerating.” In about 60 seconds, your stomach is going to lurch, and you’re going to feel slightly ill. Don’t worry about it— I got you.

In the coming weeks and months, a new variant of Covid is going to emer — oh, why bother.

**There are three kinds of people in the world right now.**Those who know it, and accept the basic facts of viral evolution, [that it could very well be worse](https://eand.co/if-you-thought-covid-was-over-congratulations-youre-an-idiot-3ee89501df92?source=your_stories_page----------------------------------------) — that’s a small minority of us, fools who believe in a little thing called “science.” There are those who don’t know it — they’re the hopeless kinds of idiots, given the fact that we’re now years into a pandemic. Then there are those who know it, but deny it — they’re the aggressive kind of idiot, who’ll tell you, flat-out, angrily…

Not to wear a mask.

Not to social distance — they’ll get right up in your face and shout it at you.

Not to worry, not to care…

Because don’t you know —[Covid is like the flu](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwiWxObz0On2AhXIQkEAHXZ6BNUQFnoECAcQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Feand.co%2Fis-omicron-just-covid-evolving-to-become-the-common-cold-15e4ed5e6d8e&usg=AOvVaw3KBk7p-NKnqJxQ6skhzDRB).

This kind of idiot…well, what is there to even say. Have you run into such a person? There you are, minding your own business, wearing a mask, keeping your distance — and before you know it, some enraged buffoon is launching flecks of spittle at you, shouting at you to take it off. What is this, Naked and Afraid?

[Covid is not the flu.](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwiWxObz0On2AhXIQkEAHXZ6BNUQFnoECAcQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Feand.co%2Fis-omicron-just-covid-evolving-to-become-the-common-cold-15e4ed5e6d8e&usg=AOvVaw3KBk7p-NKnqJxQ6skhzDRB) You are quite right to wear a mask and keep your distance. 30 seconds up. Go ahead, call me an alarmist. Get it out of your system.

Done? Good. My turn. Now I’m going to make your stomach lurch.

**Covid isn’t like the flu in one very obvious way — it’s a Coronavirus.**Coronaviruses are [masters of mutation](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwi02cmS0en2AhXUmFwKHQWbC38QFnoECAUQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.nytimes.com%2F2021%2F02%2F05%2Fhealth%2Fcovid-variants-genome-recombination.html&usg=AOvVaw1OvlNOAuR7LMi4ibsjyIva), and some of them, like SARS and MERS, are fantastically deadly. [Recombine Omicron with those](https://eand.co/is-the-pandemic-really-over-130402f7b378?source=your_stories_page----------------------------------------) — and bang, it’s lights out. Forget it — the idiots don’t care and never will. Sorry — one last try, for old time’s sake.

We’re just beginning to understand something even beyond that, though. The effects of Covid over the long term, which aren’t “Long Covid.” “Long Covid” is a set of symptoms which afflict people in whom Covid seems to turn chronic. The long term effects of Covid mean something very, very different: what happens to seemingly normal people who “get it”, “recover”, and then.

Then what, exactly? Well, like I said, that’s what we’re just beginning to understand.

**And the effects are alarming**. Uh oh. I said it! Someone, find a stake, and burn me. Or maybe, I don’t know, prepare yourself, because, like I said, your gut is about go numb.

“[Thanks to a new study from the UK](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwiylqyN2-n2AhVPh1wKHXK9CTAQFnoECAQQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.forbes.com%2Fsites%2Fwilliamhaseltine%2F2022%2F03%2F21%2Fa-case-of-shrunken-brains-how-covid-19-may-damage-brain-cells%2F&usg=AOvVaw2poXM8PYFat_6dtD63pujq) we are now beginning to uncover the effects of SARS-CoV-2 infections in the brain. Comparing brain volume before and after individuals were exposed to SARS-CoV-2, this study documents significant cortical gray matter loss, equivalent to nearly 10 years of aging.“

Did you get that? Let me try that again, for the idiots.

“**Significant cortical gray matter loss, equivalent to nearly 10 years of aging.**“

The bolding’s mine. Alarming is probably an understatement. You probably want to know the methodology of that study. Sure, here you go: “[Douaud et al had unique access to an extensive biomedical database](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34189535/" \t "_blank), called the UK BioBank. The UK BioBank provided pre-pandemic brain scans from 785 individuals that were used as a baseline for normal size and structure relative to each participant. About three years later, in May 2021, the same population of participants returned for new brain scans. From the total cohort, 401 individuals were infected with Covid-19 between scans and the remaining served recruited as controls.”

See that? That’s good experimental design. Pioneering, in fact. They studied brain scans three years apart — pre and post pandemic. And the results are both grim and shocking. Cortical loss equivalent to ten years of aging.

It’s not so bad, maybe, some scientists originally hypothesised. It was probably just the portions of the brain responsible for your sense of smell. And who needs that, amirite? Hey, did someone forget to take the trash out again? Meanwhile, there’s a family of badgers the size of mountain goats living in the garage.

But it didn’t turn out to be that funny at all. “Surprisingly, Douaud et al. also found additional abnormalities in regions not normally associated with the sense of smell. In particular, they observed r**educed gray matter volume in some regions of the limbic system, involving several structures important for producing behavioral and emotional responses**. T**he largest differences, ranging from 0.2% to 2% reductions, were seen in the left parahippocampal gyrus and the entorhinal cortex. These regions play an important role in the hippocampal memory system, so gray matter loss could signify future memory impairments**.”

So here we are. Let me try to sum it all up as concisely as I can.

**The backwards idiots who surround the tiny minority of the rest of us who are left sane, screaming at us to take off our masks, believe the fairy tale peddled by irresponsible leaders, including the very public health agencies designed to protect us, that all this has become “the flu”…and that fairy tale dooms all of us to get a disease…which can take a baseball bat to your brain and age it by ten years…and that’s just getting it once…to get that disease…over and over again…forever.**

Maybe we don’t even need Covid to do us brain damage. Because right about now, we’re acting, as societies, like we never had ones to begin with.

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