

FACING FEAR AT 10,000 FEET, P. 104

# Reader's Digest

APRIL 2020

**BODY FAT  
SECRETS**  
You Need  
to Know

An RD ORIGINAL

An RD EXCLUSIVE

## UNSOLVED MURDERS

*That Still Shock the Nation*

**Why Are Our  
Soldiers on  
Food Stamps?**

From NBC NEWS

**Stop Worrying—  
Do a Jigsaw Puzzle**

An RD ORIGINAL

**He Paid Off a  
Stranger's Taxes**

An EVERYDAY HERO

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**Fast Back  
Pain Fixes**

By SARI HARRAR

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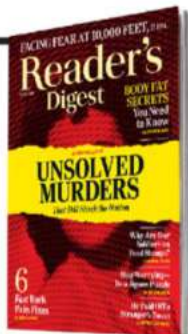
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DEAR READER

# The Evil Truth

A FEW MONTHS AGO, I became enthralled by a podcast series so dark I hesitate to recommend it to you. Every commute for days, *Root of Evil* filled my car with the voices of two sisters, Rasha and Yvette, as they uncovered four generations of terrifying secrets within their clan, the Hodels.

I'll spare you the details here, some of which (only some, thankfully) you will learn from our cover story (page 56). But I won't hold back on my own secret: I can't get enough of well-told stories about unfathomable evil like this.

I was rapt when my catechism class turned to the first Biblical murder, of Abel by Cain. In college, I devoted my senior thesis to *In Cold Blood*, Truman Capote's attempt to make sense of the random murder of the Clutter family in their home on the Kansas plains. Perhaps my favorite film character is FBI trainee Clarice Starling in *The Silence of the Lambs*, the everywoman who hunts for one serial murderer with clues offered by another.

I may be rationalizing,



Bruce Kelley,  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Write to me at  
letters@rd.com.

Regular people caught in frightening situations make for page-turning journalism.

but I believe I devour these kind of stories for a legitimate reason: They concern the search for the hardest truths imaginable. What kept me listening to the Hodel story, for instance, wasn't just ghoulish fascination. It was admiration. The voices of the family members reckoning with the horrors caused by their loved ones carried a searing honesty that can't be faked.

If you, too, are drawn to stories of ordinary people experiencing the worst their fellow humans have to offer and somehow coming out stronger, I do unhesitatingly recommend one recent source. As I read the 41 tales in our new *True Crime* collection, I felt each bringing me closer not only to crime fighters, survivors, and witnesses, but to humanity. The books are available at shop.rd.com/truecrime. I think you'll find them thrilling reading.



FROM TOP: JOLEEN ZUBEK, MATTHEW COHEN



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## LETTERS

NOTES ON THE  
February ISSUE

## What Pets Want You to Know ...

I am hearing-impaired, as are my two children. Almost as soon as our “superdog,” Skippy, came to live with us, she seemed to sense that we could not hear. When someone comes to the door, Skippy nudges me until I follow her. She barks only when my husband, who has perfect hearing, is home.

—BECKY MEYERS *Cedarville, Michigan*

Our dog Missy was so smart, I was able to teach her to read! I made five posters, each with the name of one of her favorite toys. I would hold the poster and name the toy, then ask her to go get it. After several weeks, I stopped naming the toy and just said, “Go get it!” It took a while, but with practice, she would bring the right toy 100 percent of the time.

—MAGGIE ROTH  
*Tyler, Texas*

## Losing Laura

My sympathies to Peter DeMarco and the parents of Laura Levis. Years ago, I did the same thing as Laura and drove myself to the hospital during an asthma attack. The front door was locked. Nowhere was there a sign for the emergency entrance. I found a phone booth down the street, and while I was trying to find the number, a police officer stopped and asked if

I needed help. He was my angel. Two things I want to emphasize: 1) Do not drive yourself to the hospital! 2) Teach the people around you what to do when you have an attack.

—NANCY LANTZ  
*Scandinavia, Wisconsin*

## Life in These United States

I read the excuses for skipping church to my husband, a retired pastor. He especially appreciated the excuse “The pastor is too attractive.” He grinned and said, “Yeah, I always had that problem.”

—NANCY  
PAYNE-OLEWILER  
*Fleming Island, Florida*

## A Safe Home for Women

Great article about Kathrine Lee and Susan Kovaka saving women from trafficking. I would also like to shout out Dedee Lhamon, who started the Covering House in St. Louis for the same reasons. As someone who has supported this

organization for many years, I know what a huge difference this type of place has made in helping women start a new life. Bravo to all! —SUE WALLACE  
*St. Louis, Missouri*

## Kindness: Pass It On!

Please consider making a collection of kind sentiments a monthly feature. If we read about others behaving well, then perhaps more of us will be inspired to do so. Thank you for making this a better day!

—REBECCA KRUG  
*Fond du Lac, Wisconsin*

## What Are the Odds?

I can beat the odds of baby J’Aime Brown

being born at 7:11 p.m. on July 11, weighing 7 pounds 11 ounces. My son was born on January 11, 2000, at 2:11 p.m. He weighed 11 pounds 2 ounces. He was 21 inches long! —CAROL BECKER  
*Bristow, Virginia*

## Correction

“Gifts from Their Hearts,” one of the holiday tales featured in “A Time for Miracles” in the December/January issue, was misattributed. It was written by Rian B. Anderson and originally appeared in the book *A Christmas Prayer*, published by Deseret Book Company.

## WHY READ TODAY WHAT YOU CAN PUT OFF UNTIL ... NEVER!

♦ My wife told me about the very good article “Say Goodbye to Procrastinating.” I told her I would read it tomorrow.

—Kelly C. Niemi  
KELSO, WASHINGTON

♦ I really enjoyed your article on how to stop procrastinating ... or rather, I should say I think I will enjoy it. I haven’t quite gotten around to reading it yet. But I will, any day now.

—M.J. VIA E-MAIL

PHOTO TOP: WESTEND/GETTY IMAGES; COURTESY SHANNON VERMEULEN

## Spook Us!

With the *Reader's Digest* office located just miles from Sleepy Hollow, New York—the setting for the famous Headless Horseman story—we are always in a Halloween mood. Soon enough, it will be your turn. So we want to know: What’s the most memorable Halloween costume you’ve ever worn or seen? Scary, funny, or just strange—all are good. Share your story (and photo if you have one!) and see terms at [RD.COM/COSTUME](http://RD.COM/COSTUME).



## EVERYDAY HEROES

*When a Detroit man heard a woman was about to lose her house, he opened his heart—and his wallet*

# A Very Special Tax Break

BY *Emily Goodman*

**M**ICHAEL EVANS WAS standing in line at the Wayne County Treasurer's Office in Detroit last August, waiting to pay his taxes, when he heard a disturbing sound ahead of him. The elderly woman at the window was crying—and so was the cashier helping her. Then Evans learned why: He heard the cashier inform the woman that her house was in foreclosure and headed for auction. He also heard the woman tell the cashier that her daughter had recently died.

Evans, a businessman who had just buried his father, couldn't stomach

the idea of this woman losing her home right after losing her child. He approached the window. "I don't mean to butt in," he said to the cashier, "but if y'all can get her house back, I'll pay for her taxes." The amount due: \$5,000.

The two women were stunned. Their despair turned to disbelief. The cashier left for a moment to confirm the amount and that it was all right for Evans to pay it. Evans vowed to go straight to the bank and come right back with the money. And he did.

Michael Evans (right) inspires his son (left) to continue his legacy of charity.



But when he returned to the treasurer's office, he asked someone else waiting in line to hand the \$5,000 check to the cashier. Evans was trying to slip away quietly and, preferably, anonymously.

"I didn't want this attention," he explains.

Of course, attention found him—it's not every day that someone pays a stranger's hefty tax bill. That said, Evans often finds himself on the giving end of charitable situations,

## EVANS VOWED TO COME RIGHT BACK WITH THE MONEY. AND HE DID.

though for years he went unrecognized for it. He is the president of M2E Investments—the name is a reference to his son (and namesake), Michael Evans II. The firm owns a variety of businesses, from restaurants to a portable restroom company, most located in the inner city of Detroit and many devoted to improving it. His 1 Premium Driving School gives driving lessons to teenagers, often for free. In 2015, when he saw a story on the news about a local boy with an incurable bone disease, Evans held a fundraiser at his Detroit Shrimp & Fish restaurant to help pay for the boy's wheelchair and van. He also donated


all the money the restaurant made that day to the boy's family.

"We help people, me and my son," Evans says. "We send a check; we walk into funeral homes and just pay for the whole funeral. We try to help our community."

Why does Evans give so much to strangers? It's a question he never fully answers. "To be honest, I don't like putting money in the banks," he says. "Doing things with your money is better." As for paying the elderly woman's taxes, he says he did it "for no other reason but to make sure the lady was in her house."

A few weeks after the tax incident, Evans received the Spirit of Detroit Award for his lifetime of generosity. Again, he didn't want the attention, but his son felt the honor was overdue. "It was good to see my dad finally get the recognition he deserves," the younger Evans says.

Michael Evans Sr. is nearing 60 and will retire soon. Before he does, he hopes to convert some commercial spaces he recently acquired into low-income housing. And he'll continue to sponsor his local youth football league team—he pays for their equipment, uniforms, and out-of-state travel.

His son will carry on with the business, and—no less important—with his dad's penchant for philanthropy. "I model my life after him," Evans II says of his father. "When I have kids, I want them to look at me the way I look at my dad." 

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# The Wolf at the Door

BY *Andy Simmons*

RUSS FEE WAS asleep inside his tent last summer when a series of screams jolted him awake. Throwing on his shoes, he ran out to investigate. Fee and his wife were traveling through Canada's Banff National Park to enjoy its stunning beauty and awesome wildlife. It was the latter he now encountered. Although it was dark, Fee could discern a neighboring tent in shambles. Backing out was a wolf, dragging something in his teeth. That thing was a man.

Moments earlier, Elisa and Matt Rispoli, from New Jersey, were asleep with their two young children when the wolf tore into their tent. "It was like something out of a horror movie," Elisa posted on Facebook. For three minutes, "Matt threw his body in front of me and the boys and fought the wolf." At one point, Matt got the upper hand, pinning the wolf to the ground. But

the wolf clamped its jaw onto Matt's arm, set its powerful legs, and began tugging Matt outside "while I was pulling on his legs trying to get him back," Elisa wrote.

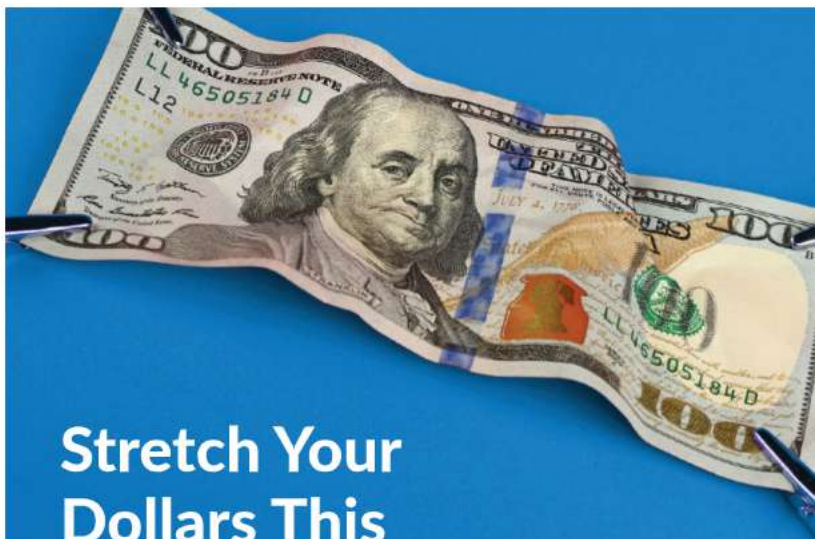
It was then that Russ Fee entered the picture. He ran at the beast, kicking it "like I was kicking in a door," he told ABC New York. The wolf dropped Matt and emerged from the tent. Wolves are large, Fee told the radio show *Calgary Eyeopener*. "I felt like I had punched someone that was way out of my weight class."



Without Russ Fee (above), says Elisa Rispoli, the attack "could have been so, so much worse."

Before the wolf could turn its ire on Fee, Matt, his arms bloodied, flew out of the tent to resume the battle. The men pelted the wolf with rocks, forcing it back, then the Fees and the Rispolis fled to the shelter of the Fees' minivan. An ambulance was called, and Matt was taken to a local hospital suffering puncture wounds and lacerations. He has fully recovered. The wolf was tracked

down by park officials and euthanized. As for Fee, whom Elisa dubbed their guardian angel, he does admit to a fleeting, if less-than-heroic, thought during the heat of battle. The moment the wolf locked eyes with him, Fee says, "I immediately regretted kicking it." **R**



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COURTESY RUSS FEE

## YOUR TRUE STORIES

IN 100 Words\*

### Splitting Hairs

I work with kids, and I'd recently gotten my hair cut. A little boy named Jaiden asked, "Miss Joanne, did you get a haircut?" Trying to be funny, I replied, "I got 'em ALL cut." He looked at me quizzically and asked, "What's a mall cut?"

—Joanne Rivera  
RAMONA, CALIFORNIA

### Truth in Advertising

In front of the grocery store, a bubbly Girl Scout stood beside a table full of cookies. "Please buy some cookies from me!" she begged. "How much are they?" I asked. "They're \$5 a box, except these two kinds over here. They're \$6 a box." Figuring there must be something special about the two \$6 varieties, I asked why. "Well, these are gluten-free," the little girl replied. "What about the others?" She beamed. "Oh, those are overpriced!"

—KATHRYN THAYER Spokane, Washington

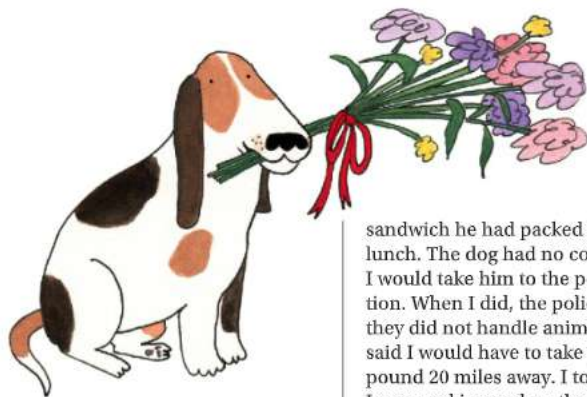


### "Man" of the Cloth

As a church worker, I was sought out by many people for informal counseling. One single mother often stopped by to complain about all the silly things that men do.

After one particularly long tirade, she looked directly into my eyes and sweetly said, "Steve, I hope you know I don't consider you a man."

—Steve Johnson  
OAKLEY, KANSAS



## An Old Dog's New Trick

BY Anna Heaney  
SOUTH YARMOUTH, MASSACHUSETTS

THERE WAS an old dog in the middle of the road who seemed lost. You could tell he had loving owners because he looked well-fed and he had no street sense. The basset hound was blocking a busy street, and everyone was stopped. A man was able to coax the dog out of the road with a ham

\*Sometimes 100 words just aren't enough!

sandwich he had packed for his lunch. The dog had no collar. I said I would take him to the police station. When I did, the police told me they did not handle animals. They said I would have to take him to the pound 20 miles away. I told them I was working and on the clock. I asked whether they could keep the dog until I got off work. If no one claimed him by then, I would take him home. They agreed. I got home at six and called the police station. I was overjoyed to learn that the owners had picked up their dog. The police said the people wanted my name and address to send me a thank-you note. I gave my information, but I never expected to hear from them. Later, I was making dinner and heard a knock on the door. It was the flower man holding a large, beautiful arrangement. The card read, "I may be old, fat, and hard of hearing, but you were a wonderful woman to save my life. My small owners are relieved that I wasn't killed. With much love, Barney the Basset Hound." I got flowers from a dog! They were a perfect centerpiece for my table. 🐕

TO READ MORE true stories or submit one, go to [RD.COM/STORIES](http://RD.COM/STORIES). If we publish yours in the print magazine, it could be worth \$100.

## QUOTABLE QUOTES

I had to take my son's phone from him, which is the worst thing to do to a child. He broke down. He said, "Take my leg instead."

—Kevin Hart, COMEDIAN

**In the spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt.**

—Margaret Atwood, AUTHOR

They always say time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourself.

—Andy Warhol, ARTIST

**The sky isn't the limit—the sky has no limit.**

—Sarah Barker, ASTROPHYSICIST

I used to justify my terrible relationships thinking I could get good songs out of them.

—Kacey Musgraves, SINGER



FROM LEFT: DAVID FISHER, ARTHUR MOLA. AP; STEPHEN LOVERKIN (ALL SHUTTERSTOCK)

**I like to stumble my way into things because that's the only way you can challenge yourself.**

—Colbie Smulders, ACTOR

I stink at meditation. My first two minutes are great, and then I'm like, "Oh crap, I need butter. And almond milk. And eggs."

—Soledad O'Brien, JOURNALIST

**My best ideas come to me when I'm bored. I'd love to be bored more, but there just isn't time.**

—Sam Reich, PRODUCER

FROM LEFT: GEORGE PIMENTEL/GETTY IMAGES; GREG E MATHESON SR/SHUTTERSTOCK; SLAVEN VLASIC/GETTY IMAGES

## POINT TO PONDER

Why do American warriors under fire do what they have done since this nation's inception? It is our love of nation, our way of life, and our love for those with whom we serve, side by side. We defend, we avenge, we sacrifice, and we are willing to die for this unique creation, the United States of America.

—Staff Sgt. David Bellavia, MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENT



HOW TO

# Connect with Strangers

*Sometimes random interactions can be the most meaningful*

BY Elizabeth Bernstein  
FROM THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

in a severe winter storm—when I turned to the woman next to me and said, “Hey, would you mind chatting with me for a few minutes? I’m really nervous.”

We hadn’t spoken much during the flight, other than the usual pleasantries. But my seatmate seemed friendly.

And I suddenly felt desperate for a human connection.

“Sure. My name is Sue,” the woman replied, smiling warmly. “What brings you to Boston?” I started to explain that I was on a business trip. Then the plane lurched violently, and I blurted out, “I might need to hold your hand too.” Sue took my hand in both of hers, patted it, and held on tight.

Sometimes a stranger can significantly improve our day. A pleasant encounter with someone we don’t know, even a nonverbal exchange, can soothe us when no one else is around. It may get us out of our own heads—a proven mood booster—and help broaden our perspective.

“People feel more connected when they talk to strangers, like they are part of something bigger,” says Gillian Sandstrom, a psychologist and senior lecturer at the University of Essex who studies interactions between strangers.

In research studies, Sandstrom has found that people’s moods improve after they have a conversation with a stranger—say, a Starbucks barista, a volunteer at a museum, or the person next to them in line. Overall, people report that they are happier on days when they have more interactions with acquaintances they don’t know well.

And yet most of us resist talking to people we don’t know or barely know. We fret about the mechanics of the conversation—how to start, maintain, or stop it. We think we will blather on and disclose too much, or not talk enough. We worry we will bore the other person.

We’re typically wrong. Sandstrom’s research shows that people underestimate how much another person will like them when they talk for the first time. In a study in which she asked participants to talk to at least one stranger a day for five days, 99 percent said they had found at least one of the exchanges pleasantly surprising, 82 percent said they’d learned something from one of the strangers, 43 percent had exchanged contact information, and 40 percent

WE WERE FIVE minutes into the worst turbulence I’d ever experienced—approaching Boston’s Logan International Airport

TAIJI/SHUTTERSTOCK (2)

had communicated with one of the strangers again.

Scientists believe there may be an ancient reason why humans are able to enjoy interacting with strangers. To survive as a species, we need to mate outside our own gene pool, so we may have evolved to have both the social skills and the motivation to mingle with people who are not in our tribe.

You don't even have to talk to complete strangers to reap the benefits. Multiple studies show that people who interact regularly with passing acquaintances or who engage with others through community groups, religious gatherings, or volunteer opportunities have better emotional and physical health and live longer than those who do not.

While reporting this story, I heard from people who spoke of meaningful connections with strangers that led to all kinds of benefits. One person took up the cello after chatting with a woman on the subway who was carrying one. Another recalled how the smile of a fruit vendor from whom he regularly bought bananas made him feel less lonely after he'd first arrived in a new city. A young woman having trouble conceiving was buoyed by a woman on a plane who talked about the joys of being an older mother.


When Sue Pernick took my hand on that scary flight to Boston, I almost wept with relief. She was so calm, validating, and reassuring—"Yep, this is a little bumpy, but we'll

be on the ground safely soon," she told me—that I asked her what she did for a living. "I'm a retired physical education teacher, and I coached women's volleyball," she said. Immediately, I could see what an awesome coach she must have been.

Sue and I talked—about our families, our vacations, our love of the ocean—until the plane finally landed. Then the businessman sitting on the other side of her, who'd been silent the entire flight, remarked that he'd enjoyed our conversation. "It distracted me," he said. "I was scared too. I wanted to hold Sue's hand!"

When we said goodbye, I gave Sue a big hug and my card. A few days later, I received an e-mail with the subject line "Broken hand on Jet Blue."

"I have to admit that I was just as scared as you were but did not say it," Sue wrote. "I just squeezed your hand as hard as I could. Thank you for helping me through this very scary situation." She added that when she'd told her friends about our conversation, they teased her because they know she loves to talk.

I told my friends about Sue too. I explained how kind she was to me, and what I learned: It's OK to ask for help from a stranger if you need it. Now if I mention to my friends that I am stressed or worried, they respond, "Just think of Sue!" 

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ARTHEIMIDES/SHUTTERSTOCK



## 10 Ways to Connect

**1. Be brave.** We underestimate how much others like us when we first talk to them, according to research. So we're not as boring as we think!

**2. Chat with someone you see regularly,** perhaps at the coffee shop, at the gym, or in the elevator at work. Research shows

that people are happier on days when they interact with more acquaintances.

**3. Ask about the other person.** Everyone loves to talk about themselves.

**4. Bond during a challenging experience,** such as when you're stuck in a long line or on a bad flight. Making a connection can make the experience feel shorter and more positive.

**5. Ask for help.** You'll feel less alone, and the other person will get a boost from doing a good deed.

**6. Focus on what you have in common.** There's always the weather.

**7. Open up.** Mutual disclosure helps make connections.

**8. Use humor.** Everyone can use a smile.

**9. Be sure the interaction is equal.** Is the other person enjoying your exchange? Watch for signs that he or she might prefer to be left alone.

**10. Do it again.** Just like everything else, talking to strangers is easier if you practice. And don't worry if every encounter isn't positive. "You don't expect every book you read to be great," says Sandstrom. "Conversations are the same way." 

### Rejected Game Show Ideas

Whose Brine Is It Anyway?

Let's Wake a Seal

The Hating Game

Family Nude

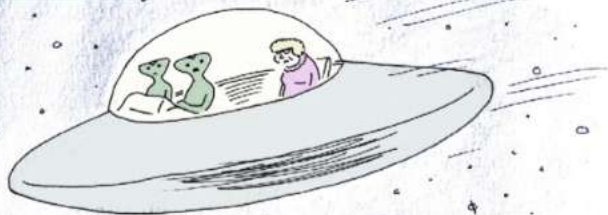
Who Wants to Be a Millionaire's Butler?

The Price Is Unreasonable and  
Not an Accurate Reflection of Actual Market Values

 @SHORTSLEEVESUIT

**LAUGHTER**

THE BEST *Medicine*



"We never would have abducted you if we had known how much you would criticize our driving."

**An elderly couple** had just learned how to send text messages. The wife was a romantic type, and the husband was more of a no-nonsense guy. One afternoon, the wife decided to send her husband a text. She wrote, "If you are laughing, send me your smile. If you are crying, send me your

tears. And if you are sleeping, send me your dreams. I love you." Her husband texted back, "I'm on the toilet, please advise."

—FRIARSLUB.COM

**A market researcher** approached me and said, "Can I ask you ten questions?"

"Go on," I said.  
"Question number

one: Have you ever blacked out?"  
"No."

"And finally, question number ten."  
—LEE MACK, *comedian*

**In the foyer** of a church, a young boy was looking at a plaque with the names of men and women who had died in various wars. He asked the pastor,

**I ate dinner with a chess grandmaster last night. Problem was, we had a checkered tablecloth. It took him two hours to pass the salt!**

—CHESSNINJA.COM

"Who are these people?" The pastor said, "Those are members from our church who died in service." The boy asked, "The early service or the second service?"

—Submitted by  
JAMES POWERS  
*Woodbury, Minnesota*

**Words you'd think** were cool if you didn't know what they mean:

- ♦ atrophy
  - ♦ space bar
  - ♦ supervision
  - ♦ extraction
  - ♦ dogmatic
- [@DANMENTOS](#)

**"Doc, I can't stop** singing 'Green, Green Grass of Home.'" "That sounds like Tom Jones syndrome." "Is it common?" "It's not unusual."

—GRUNTDG.COM

**A scientist who** made contact with aliens said, "They're nothing like us—all they keep saying is 'Err. Err.'" "Why should that

mean they aren't like us?" his colleague replied. "To err is human."

—Submitted by  
STEVE SMITH  
*New York, New York*

**GET A FUNNY JOKE?**  
*It could be worth \$\$\$.*  
For details, go to  
[RD.COM/SUBMIT](#).

**AMERICA'S FAVORITE PAST-LINES**

Grab some peanuts and Cracker Jack—it's baseball season! And these wise old ballplayers may have had their own ideas about who's on first:

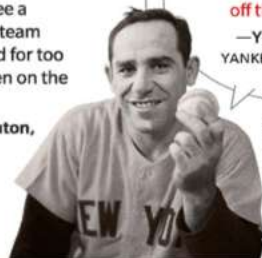
♦ Why does everybody sing "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" when they're already there?  
—Larry Andersen,  
PHILLIES PITCHER

♦ Baseball statistics are like a girl in a bikini—they show a lot, but not everything.  
—Toby Harrah,  
RANGERS SHORTSTOP

♦ You want proof baseball players are smarter than football players? How often do you see a baseball team penalized for too many men on the field?  
—Jim Bouton,  
YANKEES PITCHER

**Little League is a very good thing because it keeps the parents off the streets.**

—Yogi Berra,  
YANKEES CATCHER



SOURCES:  
GOODREADS.COM,  
QUOTABULARY.COM,  
BLEACHERREPORT.COM

MICK STEVENS/EVERETT'S A CRITIC/COURTESY PRINCETON ARCHITECTURAL PRESS

BETTMANN/GETTY IMAGES

The first and only overactive bladder (OAB) treatment in its class.



IS YOUR  
BLADDER  
ALWAYS  
TAKING YOU  
ON A TRIP  
OF ITS OWN?

- ! Urgency
- 🔄 Frequency
- 💧 Leakage

In clinical trials, those taking Myrbetriq made fewer trips to the bathroom and had fewer leaks than those not taking Myrbetriq. Your results may vary.

**TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR  
OAB SYMPTOMS BY TALKING  
TO YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT  
MYRBETRIQ TODAY.**



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#### USE OF MYRBETRIQ (meer-BEH-trick)

Myrbetriq® (mirabegron) is a prescription medicine for adults used to treat overactive bladder (OAB) with symptoms of urgency, frequency and leakage.

#### IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

Myrbetriq is not for everyone. Do not take Myrbetriq if you have an allergy to mirabegron or any ingredients in Myrbetriq. Myrbetriq may cause your blood pressure to increase or make your blood pressure worse if you have a history of high blood pressure. It is recommended that your doctor check your blood pressure while you are taking Myrbetriq. Myrbetriq may increase your chances of not being able to empty your bladder. Tell your doctor right away if you have trouble emptying your bladder or you have a weak urine stream.

#### IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION (continued)

Myrbetriq may cause allergic reactions that may be serious. If you experience swelling of the face, lips, throat or tongue, with or without difficulty breathing, stop taking Myrbetriq and tell your doctor right away.

Tell your doctor about all the medicines you take including medications for overactive bladder or other medicines such as thioridazine (Mellaril™ and Mellaril-S™), flecainide (Tambocor®), propafenone (Rythmol®), digoxin (Lanoxin®) or solifenacin succinate (VESicare®). Myrbetriq may affect the way other medicines work, and other medicines may affect how Myrbetriq works.

Before taking Myrbetriq, tell your doctor if you have liver or kidney problems. The most common side effects of Myrbetriq include

Like us on Facebook   
and visit [Myrbetriq.com](http://Myrbetriq.com)

increased blood pressure, common cold symptoms (nasopharyngitis), dry mouth, flu symptoms, urinary tract infection, back pain, dizziness, joint pain, headache, constipation, sinus irritation, and inflammation of the bladder (cystitis).

**For further information, please talk to your healthcare professional and see Brief Summary of Prescribing Information for Myrbetriq® (mirabegron) on the following pages.**

**You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit [www.fda.gov/medwatch](http://www.fda.gov/medwatch) or call 1-800-FDA-1088.**



**Myrbetriq®**  
(mirabegron)  
extended-release tablets  
25 mg, 50 mg



## Myrbetriq® (mirabegron) extended-release tablets 25 mg, 50 mg

### Brief Summary based on FDA-approved patient labeling

Read the Patient Information that comes with Myrbetriq® (mirabegron) before you start taking it and each time you get a refill. There may be new information. This summary does not take the place of talking with your doctor about your medical condition or treatment.

### What is Myrbetriq (meer-BEE-trick)?

Myrbetriq is a prescription medication for adults used to treat the following symptoms due to a condition called overactive bladder:

- Urge urinary incontinence: a strong need to urinate with leaking or wetting accidents
- Urgency: a strong need to urinate right away
- Frequency: urinating often

It is not known if Myrbetriq is safe and effective in children.

### Who should not use Myrbetriq?

**Do not** take Myrbetriq if you have an allergy to mirabegron or any of the ingredients in Myrbetriq. See the end of this summary for a complete list of ingredients in Myrbetriq.

### What should I tell my doctor before taking Myrbetriq?

**Before you take Myrbetriq, tell your doctor about all of your medical conditions, including if you:**

- have liver problems or kidney problems
- have very high uncontrolled blood pressure
- have trouble emptying your bladder or you have a weak urine stream
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if Myrbetriq will harm your unborn baby. Talk to your doctor if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant.
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. It is not known if Myrbetriq passes into your breast milk. Talk to your doctor about the best way to feed your baby if you take Myrbetriq.

**Tell your doctor about all the medicines you take**, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Myrbetriq may affect the way other medicines work, and other medicines may affect how Myrbetriq works.

Tell your doctor if you take:

- thioridazine (Mellaril™ or Mellaril-STM)
- flecainide (Tambocor®)
- propafenone (Rythmol®)
- digoxin (Lanoxin®)
- solifenacin succinate (VESIcar®)

### How should I take Myrbetriq?

- Take Myrbetriq exactly as your doctor tells you to take it.
- You should take 1 Myrbetriq tablet 1 time a day.
- You should take Myrbetriq with water and swallow the tablet whole.
- Do not chew, break, or crush the tablet.
- You can take Myrbetriq with or without food.
- If you miss a dose of Myrbetriq, begin taking Myrbetriq again the next day. Do not take 2 doses of Myrbetriq the same day.
- If you take too much Myrbetriq, call your doctor or go to the nearest hospital emergency room right away.

### What are the possible side effects of Myrbetriq?

Myrbetriq may cause serious side effects including:

- **increased blood pressure.** Myrbetriq may cause your blood pressure to increase or make your blood pressure worse if you have a history of high blood pressure. It is recommended that your doctor check your blood pressure while you are taking Myrbetriq.
- **inability to empty your bladder (urinary retention).** Myrbetriq may increase your chances of not being able to empty your bladder if you have bladder outlet obstruction or if you are taking

other medicines to treat overactive bladder. Tell your doctor right away if you are unable to empty your bladder.

- **angioedema.** Myrbetriq may cause an allergic reaction with swelling of the lips, face, tongue, throat with or without difficulty breathing. Stop using Myrbetriq and tell your doctor right away.

The most common side effects of Myrbetriq include:

• increased blood pressure	• dizziness
• common cold symptoms (nasopharyngitis)	• joint pain
• dry mouth	• headache
• flu symptoms	• constipation
• urinary tract infection	• sinus (sinus irritation)
• back pain	• inflammation of the bladder (cystitis)

Tell your doctor if you have any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away or if you have swelling of the face, lips, tongue, or throat, hives, skin rash or itching while taking Myrbetriq.

These are not all the possible side effects of Myrbetriq.

**Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.**

### How should I store Myrbetriq?

- Store Myrbetriq between 59°F to 86°F (15°C to 30°C). Keep the bottle closed.
- Safely throw away medicine that is out of date or no longer needed.

### Keep Myrbetriq and all medicines out of the reach of children.

### General information about the safe and effective use of Myrbetriq

Medicines are sometimes prescribed for purposes other than those listed in the Patient Information leaflet. Do not use Myrbetriq for a condition for which it was not prescribed. Do not give Myrbetriq to other people, even if they have the same symptoms you have. It may harm them.

You can ask your doctor or pharmacist for information about Myrbetriq that is written for health professionals.

For more information, visit [www.Myrbetriq.com](http://www.Myrbetriq.com) or call (800) 727-7003.

### What are the ingredients in Myrbetriq?

**Active ingredient:** mirabegron

**Inactive ingredients:** polyethylene oxide, polyethylene glycol, hydroxypropyl cellulose, butylated hydroxytoluene, magnesium stearate, hypromellose, yellow ferric oxide and red ferric oxide (25 mg Myrbetriq tablet only).

### What is overactive bladder?

Overactive bladder occurs when you cannot control your bladder contractions. When these muscle contractions happen too often or cannot be controlled, you can get symptoms of overactive bladder, which are urinary frequency, urinary urgency, and urinary incontinence (leakage).

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Northbrook, Illinois 60062



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206813-MRVS-BRF5  
057-2652-PM



## EVERYDAY MIRACLES



## A Lifesaving Traffic Stop

BY Caroline Fanning

KEMIRA BOYD HAD just jumped in the shower when she heard her stepmother, Tammy Boyd, banging on the door. Kemira's 12-day-old daughter was choking. Having fed and burped baby Ryleigh just 30 minutes earlier, the 24-year-old new mother burst out of the bathroom and began patting her daughter on the back. Ryleigh was usually quick

to cry. Now she didn't make a sound. "I'd been told to raise their arms when babies are choking, so I tried that, but she still was hesitating to breathe," Kemira told *Today*. She knew Ryleigh needed to get to the hospital fast.

The trio had barely made it out of their Summerville, South Carolina, neighborhood when the flashing lights of a police cruiser appeared behind

them. Deputy Will Kimbro figured that the speeding driver was either too distracted to notice him or plain unconcerned. Kimbro soon found out it was a frightening combination of the two.

Once she'd pulled over to the curb, a frantic Tammy jumped out of the car, exclaiming that her granddaughter had stopped breathing. Desperate for help, Kemira handed the baby to Kimbro. He put a hand on her little chest. Ryleigh's heart was barely beating.

Kimbro radioed for an ambulance—it was seven minutes out, and the hospital was even further away. That was seven minutes Ryleigh didn't have, her lips already an ominous shade of blue.

The fact that Kimbro was there was something of a miracle. He is a school resource officer who usually spends his days patrolling the halls of the middle school ten miles away. But he travels farther afield when school is out in the summer. Even luckier: He had recently completed a CPR class and knew exactly how to treat an infant.

"Although I was shocked, my training kicked in, and I went to work to keep that baby alive," says Kimbro.

The deputy gave Ryleigh to Kemira to hold, his hands busy as he checked for a pulse. Then he began tapping and kneading Ryleigh's chest, hoping to massage her heart back into action. Thanks to the CPR class, Kimbro knew the choking infant didn't have a chance if there was a blockage, and he used one finger to clear her airway. That was the magic touch; 20 seconds later, Ryleigh

began to fuss. Then came a whimper.

"If she's crying like that, she's breathing," said Kimbro, the relief palpable in his trembling voice. "As long as she's crying, she's breathing."

But they still had five more minutes until EMS would arrive, and Kimbro worried that Ryleigh would asphyxiate again. He continued with delicate chest compressions and periodically clearing her airway. "The whole time I was thinking, Do not let this baby die in front of her mother and grandmother," he later told *Inside Edition*. "Just don't"

**"DO NOT LET THIS  
BABY DIE IN FRONT OF  
HER MOTHER AND  
GRANDMOTHER."**

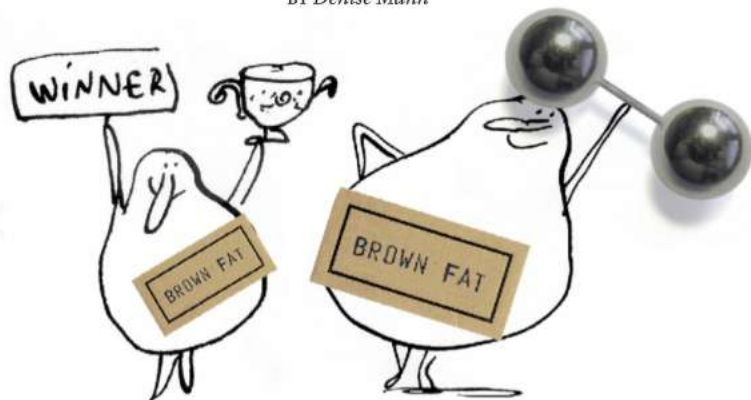
In the body cam footage, Kimbro can be heard reassuring Kemira, the approaching sirens wailing in the background: "I didn't feel a heartbeat earlier, so I started massaging her heart, and now I feel it. It's real strong now."

After transferring Ryleigh to an EMT, Kimbro peeked into the windows of the ambulance until it pulled away. At the hospital, Ryleigh recovered quickly, and she was back to her usual feisty self in no time—thanks to a determined school police officer who was in the right place at the right time. Said Kimbro to the *Washington Post*, "That baby was living no matter what I had to do." **■**

## 13 THINGS

# Body-Fat Secrets You Need to Know

BY Denise Mann



**1** THOSE EXTRA pounds should be avoided at all costs, right? Actually, while being overweight isn't generally good for our health, not all fat is created equal—some may even be beneficial.

**2** THERE ARE TWO major kinds of body fat. White fat, the most abundant type, is what you feel when you "pinch an inch" on your mid-section. Brown fat, found mainly in the

neck region, burns energy rather than storing it the way white fat does, according to Scott Kahan, MD, director of the National Center for Weight and Wellness in Washington, DC.

**3** BROWN FAT may also ward off diabetes. According to a study in *Cell Metabolism*, individuals with higher amounts of brown fat had smaller fluctuations in blood sugar and thus a reduced risk of developing diabetes.

**4** INFANTS HAVE high levels of brown fat, which helps regulate their body temperature. Sadly, we lose it as we age, and adults have only small amounts.

**5** ADULTS CAN rev up brown fat by exposing themselves to cold temperatures. In a recent study, people who slept in a mildly cold room (about 66 degrees F) increased the amount and activity of their brown fat by up to 40 percent. Sleeping in mild warmth (81 degrees F), however, decreased their amount of brown fat. Cold showers don't seem to affect it.

**6** ANOTHER BROWN fat booster: apple peels. Ursolic acid, a substance that is found in high concentrations in apple peels, increases brown fat. Other foods that contain ursolic acid include cranberries, blueberries, plums, and prunes.

**7** BROWN FAT does have its drawbacks. Radiologists don't like it, because the heat it generates makes it harder for body scans to detect tumor-related activity in cancer patients. Although there's no firm evidence that any specific foods or nutrients can activate brown fat, radiologists routinely recommend that patients eat a high-fat, low-carb diet before scans on the grounds that this reduces brown fat activation. (This suggests that a low-fat, high-carb diet could boost brown fat activity.) Radiologists even keep their waiting rooms warm to avoid activating brown fat.

**8** JUST AS brown fat isn't perfect, neither is white fat all bad. Even though people tend to demonize it, white fat delivers important health benefits. It cushions and protects our vital organs. It helps keep us warm. And, of course, it stores calories for later use, keeping us from starving when food is scarce.

**9** WHITE FAT can sometimes be turned into brown—it's then called beige or brite ("brown in white") fat. Like brown fat, beige fat burns calories and can thus help combat obesity. Scientists are still trying to figure out how the conversion happens; one study points to a hormone called irisin, which our muscles produce when we exercise.

**10** FAT CELLS' sensitivity to temperature changes means there's more than one way we can get rid of unwanted

fat. Cooling treatments, such as CoolSculpting, literally freeze fat cells to death, explains Anne Chapas, MD, the director of Union Square Laser Dermatology and an instructor of dermatology at Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York City. The body removes these damaged cells over several months.

**11** HEAT can also be used to eliminate fat cells, says Dr. Chapas. "Several studies have shown that heating fat cells above 104 degrees F for a sustained amount of time can cause the fat cells to undergo programmed cell death," she says, and be eliminated from the body. This is the

mechanism used in popular laser and radio-frequency lipolysis weight-loss treatments. But just because the fat cells are gone doesn't mean the weight won't come back. Remaining fat cells can expand and new fat cells can appear after heating or cooling treatments, so they are not a substitute for healthy diet and exercise.

**12** COLOR ISN'T the only telltale marker of how harmful fat might be. For instance, excess fat stored in the abdomen or around inner organs such as the liver and gut "releases inflammatory chemicals that can increase the

risk of heart disease, liver disease, diabetes, and other health conditions," notes Dr. Kahan. In contrast, fat that is stored in your arms, legs, or hips doesn't typically do much harm.

**13** FAT HAS BEEN linked to brain health. According to a study in *Neurology*, people with higher body mass indices (BMI) and waist-to-hip ratios had less gray matter—the material in the brain that helps process new information—compared with their leaner counterparts. But the study's authors can't say whether body fat is the cause of these differences in the brain or a result of them. **📖**

**Simpler Times**

My ten-year-old daughter: Can I go to my friend's house?

Me: Take your phone and text me every 20 minutes to tell me you're OK.

Me, when I was ten: I'm off to the abandoned quarry with my pals.

Mom: Dinner's at five.

**@JOEHEENAN**

**LAUGH LINES**



To be or not to be a horse rider, that is equestrian.  
—Mark Simmons, COMEDIAN

A chicken just told me her top-three favorite composers of all time: Bach, Bach, Bach.  
—@ericdadourian

Do other animals have signature tranquilizers, or are horses just especially stressed out?  
—@atanenhaus

"No, YOU are a drama queen," said the fainting goat to the opossum.  
—@\_Water\_Baby

Whoever named the ewe really didn't like female sheep.  
—@dawn\_maestas

The laminator is a device that sounds a lot more dangerous to baby sheep than it actually is.  
—@Tups13

LIFE ON WHITE/GETTY IMAGES

**Barnyard Yuks**



THE  
**FOOD  
ON YOUR  
PLATE**

*I Am Citrus ...*  
**The Great  
Illusionist**

BY *Kate Lowenstein*  
AND *Daniel Gritzer*

**G**ATHER ROUND, ONE and all; our show is about to begin. Prepare to be dazzled, prepare to be dazed, but we warn you—we citrus are masters of disguise and experts at sleight of hand. You think you know us, but no, you do not.

Behold this deck of cards. Pictured on each card is a different one of us: yuzu, kumquat, kaffir lime, and Meyer lemon; satsuma, Minneola, tangelo, and Sumo orange. What names! What flamboyant colors and sweet, bright juiciness! Not to boast, but have you ever met one of us you didn't like? OK, there was that bitter orange you had the poor sense to bite into once—we admit, we can be astringent.

But all that variety is just an illusion. Here, pick a card. Ah! You got grapefruit, as large as a softball in your hand and bittersweet on your tongue. So distinctive and yet—what's this? Your grapefruit is nothing but a cross between the pomelo and the sweet orange!

This sleight of hand, you see, is our greatest trick. All the variations, colors, shapes, and flavors of us are nothing more than a shuffling of our four basic building blocks—the spade, club, diamond, and heart of citrus, if you will. And, dear audience, can you guess the fab four? Not a chance, not a chance! They are pomelo, mandarin, citron, and papeda.

They all have their roots in Asia, before nature and humans crossed them over and over again to create citrusy

variety. Love to squeeze lemon on your fish dinner? It is actually a citron crossed with a bitter orange. Like a blast of lime in your guac? Nothing more than a lemon bred with a key lime, itself a papeda-citron hybrid. And that grapefruit-begetting sweet orange? It's merely a combo of mandarin and pomelo.

Truth be told, we simply can't help ourselves, folks. We cross-pollinate all too easily. Grapefruit pollen can fertilize the flowers of an orange tree; lemon pollen can mingle with clementine blossoms. One of our favorite pranks is when an unsuspecting human plants a lemon seed only to get a different kind of citrus tree altogether. Or one adorned with thorns and no fruit at all! We are remarkably unpredictable, in part because our pollen contributes different genes to every seed (similar to how two human parents can create an infinitely varied set of children). Forget pulling a rabbit out of a hat—with me, you have no idea what the hat holds!

You clever humans haven't been completely fooled. To bypass the unpredictability, you learned to graft branches—say, of that desired lemon tree—onto rootstock to breed the exact varieties of us you wanted. Nifty!

You also decoded the mystery of our juice. Our fresh-squeezed nectar actually becomes undrinkably bitter in less than a day's time. This was a persistent problem until World War II. Then some smarty-pants Army scientists, keen to protect troops from

STYLIST: REBECCA SIMPSON STEELE, CITRUS COURTESY PEARSONRANCH.COM

PHOTOGRAPHS BY *Joleen Zubek*

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**WHAT'S BETTER  
THAN A HIGH FIBER  
BREAKFAST?**

**A TASTY, HIGH FIBER  
BREAKFAST  
WITH RAISINS.**

*Kellogg's*  
**Raisin  
Bran**



## CREAMY ORANGE-FENNEL DRESSING

In a small bowl, whisk together 1 very finely minced small shallot, 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard, 1 teaspoon ground fennel seed, the zest of 1 navel orange (about 1 teaspoon), 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar, ¼ cup freshly squeezed navel orange juice, and 1 cup thick plain Greek yogurt (preferably whole milk, but nonfat and low-fat work too). Season with salt and pepper. Serve as a cold or room-temperature sauce with cold poached salmon; cold roast pork loin or tenderloin; or roasted carrots, butternut squash, or beets.

scurvy, offered a contract to anyone who made a portable, potable frozen orange juice rich in vitamin C. (Simply freezing fresh OJ turns it into a foul brownish liquid.) It was the USDA that won the prize, by concentrating the liquid without heating it, then—presto!—adding a touch of fresh juice for flavor before freezing the whole concoction.

By this time the war was ending, so Minute Maid—it was called that even then—was marketed to civilians. But get this, dear audience: No one went for it. The company lost a lot of money in its first two years. That was when that old Hollywood crooner Bing Crosby worked some magic of his own. In exchange for company stock and cash, Crosby agreed to put in a good



word for Minute Maid every morning on his CBS radio show. “Ken, what’s on the shopping list for today?” he’d ask his sidekick. “Well, it’s Minute Maid fresh frozen orange juice, ladies,” Ken would reply, “and your frozen food store has it.” Sales went from \$3 million to \$30 million in three short years!

Your attempts to preserve fresh OJ without freezing also were cunning. As juice loses its freshness, its sweetness does a vanishing act—it literally disappears as the juice turns bitter. But your technologists had something up their own sleeves: additives that approximate the taste of freshly squeezed for that “not from concentrate” stuff in your fridge. Today Coca-Cola, Minute Maid’s current owner, has algorithms that analyze a quintillion variables—that’s a one with 18 zeroes!—to optimize its juice’s flavor.

One last trick to close out the show, friends. This whole time we’ve had you riveted on our juicy segments, distracting you from noticing ... the citrus peels in our palms all along. Now watch as we deftly squeeze them to release a fine spray of oils. Smell that? Those are our scents. Enjoy them by scraping our exterior or squeezing a twist of skin into a cocktail. Honestly, ladies and gents, that’s the zestiest bit of magic there is. **E**

*Kate Lowenstein is a health editor currently at Vice; Daniel Gritzer is the culinary director of the cooking site Serious Eats.*

A GOOD SOURCE OF FIBER AND A GREAT SOURCE OF CRUNCHY DELICIOUSNESS.

Kellogg's  
**Raisin Bran**  
**Crunch**  
Original



NUTS ABOUT FIBER?

CRUNCHY VANILLA ALMOND IS A GOOD SOURCE OF IT.

Kellogg's  
**Raisin Bran**  
**Crunch**  
Vanilla Almond





## MASTERS OF MUSICAL WHISTLING COMPETITION

**BRAD GASSNER**, age 34,  
St. Clair, Missouri

**This was your first major contest. What made you want to enter?**  
I whistled “Danny Boy” in a St. Patrick’s Day talent show, and I won. That was the first indication that I could go on to an actual whistling competition.

**But here you went with the third movement of Mozart’s Horn Concerto no. 4. That’s a lot to take on, isn’t it?**  
I’m a French horn player and I had performed several of Mozart’s horn concerti in the past, so I was pretty familiar with the music.

**Were you nervous?**  
Generally I do pretty



well with stage fright, but I got dry mouth—that’s a common side effect of stage fright. It is extremely difficult to whistle when you don’t have a wet whistle.

**Were you applying lots of lip balm backstage?**  
Oh, absolutely! We all have our favorite brands. I’m a Blistex Medicated guy myself.

**Are you a whistling addict?**  
I do it all the time. I whistle walking to and from the cafeteria at

work. I definitely annoy my wife, whistling while doing the dishes.

**Do you whistle anything written in the past 300 years?**  
I’ve been listening to a lot of Grateful Dead lately, so you’ll hear me whistle that if you hang out around me. 🎸

*Gassner took first place in the Stage 2 Classical Pre-Recorded Accompaniment Division in this biennial contest held in Pasadena, California.*

ILLUSTRATION BY John Cuneo

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9 TRICKS TO  
Improve Your Life\*

### 1 Dry Shampoo Your Dog

**PETS** When you can't give Fido a proper bath with soap and water (in cold weather, for instance), a dry shampooing will at least keep him smelling fresh. Use baking soda or a commercial dry pet shampoo. If you go the baking soda route (it's generally cheaper), massage it into your dog's coat, let it sit for a few minutes, then brush his fur until all the baking soda (plus the oil and odor) is gone. There, now you can scrub away the ground-in dirt later.



\*From RD.COM reporting

LOKIBAHQ/GETTY IMAGES (DOG), JOLEEN ZUBEK (BAKING SODA)

### 2 Pack a Power Strip

**TRAVEL** Having multiple sockets at your disposal comes in handy during a trip, especially abroad. Pack a power strip and you'll need only one travel adapter. You'll also be able to charge multiple devices at the airport, where outlets are few and the competition for them can be fierce.

### 3 Don't Mix Ammonia and Bleach

**HEALTH** Combining these common cleaning solvents creates toxic vapors that, if inhaled repeatedly, can burn your throat and cause respiratory problems such as bronchitis. Even short-term exposure can irritate the lungs. Read the labels on your products before using them near one another. Windex, for example, contains ammonia, and drain cleaners such as Drano typically include bleach.

JOLEEN ZUBEK, STYLIST; MAE LANIER

### 4 Pack Away Plastic Bags Neatly

**HOME** Reusing plastic grocery bags is eco-friendly and cheap, but they can take up a lot of room. To store them efficiently, stuff as many as you can into an empty paper towel roll and toss it into a drawer or cabinet. The cardboard tube keeps the plastic bags contained and makes it easy to pull out one at a time.



### 5 Make Frozen Fish Taste Fresher

**FOOD** If you want the fish that has been in your freezer to taste like it was freshly caught, soak it in milk while it's defrosting, then cook it. You'll limit the fishy odor too.



6

### Never Lose Anything

**TECHNOLOGY** Are you always misplacing your wallet, keys, purse, or briefcase? Low-cost, high-tech tracking devices can help. Two of the most popular are Ping and Tile. Both are Bluetooth-enabled, and the latest model from Ping also uses GPS. The devices connect to apps on your phone that generate maps to your missing items. Some users attach them to their pets' collars or their kids' backpacks.

7

### Make Ink Cartridges Last Longer

**MONEY** Documents created with fonts that were originally made for typewriters, such as Courier and Century Gothic, will use less ink when you print them. So will choosing the "Draft" print option.

8

### Get a Free Engine-Light Check

**AUTO** If you're not sure why your check-engine light came on, try going to a chain automotive store such as AutoZone. They have a tool that deciphers your car's troubleshooting codes, and AutoZone will provide the diagnosis for free. Then you can address easy issues (a loose gas cap, for example) yourself and kick more serious problems (such as a misfiring engine) over to your trusted expert.

9

### Chase Away Deer with Soap

**GARDEN** Because most soap is made with an animal by-product called tallow, it scares off deer. Sprinkle shavings in the garden or hang bars near the plants you want to protect—it works within about three feet. Avoid soaps with coconut oil (deer like those), and change the scent periodically. Deer are adaptable! 🐾





"Sorry I'm late. Two roads diverged in a wood,  
and I took the one less traveled by ..."

## LIFE

IN THESE  
United States

The best gender-reveal party I've ever been to was the one where I gave birth to a baby.

—[@2QUESTIONABLE](#)

**After my beloved dog** Lucky passed away, my daughter tried to explain to her four-year-old son what had happened in terms he might understand.

"Remember that baby bird we found on the sidewalk the other day?" she asked.

As the truth sank in, Ian grew alarmed:

"Lucky fell out of a tree?"

—LAURIE NAVIN  
*Lincoln, Nebraska*

**A local lumberyard** was having an open house, and my mother really wanted to go. Dad, though, had no interest. After badgering him with no luck, she finally said, "If you don't go, I'll be

People say, "I'm taking it one day at a time." You know what? So is everybody. That's how time works.

—HANNIBAL BURESS, *comedian*

the only woman there."

Dad shrugged. "If I go, you'll still be the only woman there."

—GERALD E.  
BRONNENBERG  
*Nixa, Missouri*

**Adult or a dolt?** Actual things grown-ups have had to have explained to them, as shared on reddit.com:

- ♦ Why a room below sea level on a cruise ship would not have a balcony.
- ♦ That there are more than six bones in the human body ... she thought it was head, back, arms, and legs.
- ♦ In regard to the North and South Poles,

**GOT A FUNNY STORY** about friends or family? It could be worth \$\$\$*.* For details, go to [RD.COM/SUBMIT](#).

COURTESY JESSIE CHAR

fall on Friday the 13th. It was my mother.

♦ That islands don't tip over if you put too much weight on the edge.

♦ That Earth has one moon. The new moon on the calendar every month confused her.

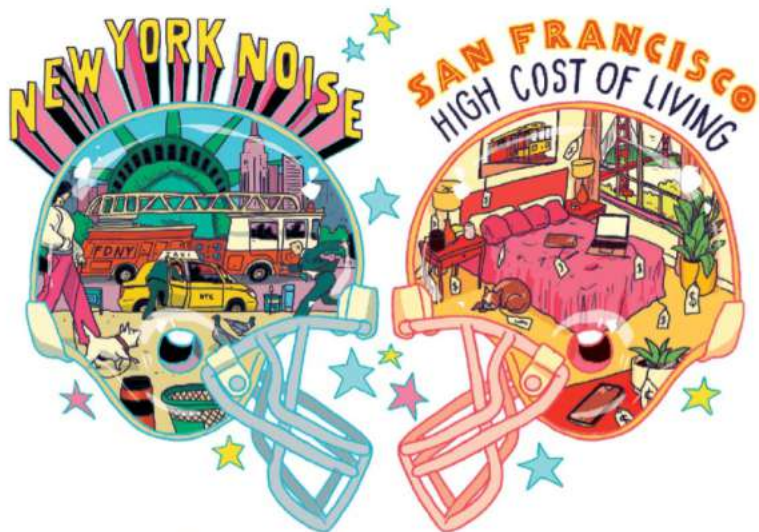
## ON SECOND THOUGHT, I'LL DRIVE



Today, I flew on the set of a nightmare.



## DEPARTMENT OF WIT



## This Team Is a Disaster

*Sports franchise names that make their fans want to call a mover*

BY *Victor Mather*  
FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES

WHEN A GROUP in Minneapolis-St. Paul started an Ultimate Frisbee team, it could have chosen a name to honor the two cities, like the Twins. Or something about the region's heritage, like the Vikings. Or a celebration of the great outdoors, like the Timberwolves or the Wild.

Instead, the Minnesota team in the American Ultimate Disc League is called the Wind Chill.

It's a curious thing, that some professional teams choose names not from their city's best features but instead, arguably, from their worst. It doesn't seem as if the windchill, which regularly dips deep into negative territory in the Twin Cities, would be a local selling point.

Ben Feldman, a team co-owner, has an explanation: "In Minnesota, we experience some of the most brutal windchill temperatures in the winter months, and we want our opponents to feel that very same pain when they step onto the field to play against us."

Fair enough. But what about the New York City affiliate of the Premier Ultimate League? With so many great things to choose from in the city, the team picked the New York ... Gridlock. Perhaps the logic is wanting opponents to feel pain similar to that of being stuck in stop-start rush hour traffic.

Surely these teams could have done something nice for their tourism boards by trying to sugarcoat their names. But it's the Miami Heat of the

NBA, not the Miami Sunshine or the Miami Delightful Beach Weather.

And then there are the teams named after potentially deadly natural disasters endemic to their regions. The San Jose Earthquakes, the Colorado Avalanche, the Miami Hurricanes, and the Iowa State Cyclones. What attracted you to Ames? The chance of encountering a deadly twister!

There's the Chicago Fire of Major League Soccer, named after an event that killed about 300 people. It's not even the first team by that name, as there was a Chicago Fire in the old World Football League of the 1970s.

### IT'S THE MIAMI HEAT OF THE NBA, NOT THE MIAMI DELIGHTFUL BEACH WEATHER.

Perhaps the name refers to something else? Nope. The soccer team's website notes that the moniker was revealed on the 126th anniversary of the famous fire. But don't worry; the Atlanta Blaze of Major League Lacrosse assures us that its name makes "no allusion to the burning of Atlanta during the Civil War."

Plenty of teams are named after scary animals from their regions. Few people in Florida would relish an encounter with a gator, but the

University of Florida chose the animal as its mascot. Names like that and the Arizona Rattlers of arena football might be justified for the fear they theoretically strike in the hearts of opponents.

That doesn't quite explain minor league baseball's Savannah Sand Gnats, though. *The Island Packet*, which covers news in Hilton Head, South Carolina, writes, "Sand gnats leave awful little welts where they rip skin to drink blood." Go, team!

The old XFL had several odd names, including two that seemed to highlight their areas' history of organized crime: the New York–New Jersey Hitmen and the Chicago Enforcers.

As teams seek more and more colorful names to stand out in a crowded marketplace and sell merchandise, the trend of highlighting the worst of a



region may continue. Perhaps we can look forward to the Los Angeles Mudslides, the New York Noise, and the San Francisco High Cost of Living. **R**

NEW YORK TIMES (JULY 30, 2019), COPYRIGHT © 2019 BY NEW YORK TIMES, NYTIMES.COM.

### Artificial or Elizabethan? That Is the Question

Researchers at IBM used artificial intelligence to analyze more than 2,600 Shakespearean sonnets, then asked the AI to use what it had "learned" to create its own poem. Can you tell which of these stanzas is by the Bard?

**A:** With joyous gambols gay and still array  
No longer when he twas, while in his day  
At first to pass in all delightful ways  
Around him, charming and of all his days

**B:** Thy glass will show thee how thy beauties wear  
Thy dial how thy precious minutes waste  
The vacant leaves thy mind's imprint will bear  
And of this book this learning mayst thou taste

ANSWER: THE MACHINE WROTE A; SHAKESPEARE WROTE B.



"Highlight the battleship-gray."

Soon after arriving at basic training, we were marched to the base barbershop, where we were told we'd find a clipboard with our names on it. "Next to your name," the sergeant said, "initial it."

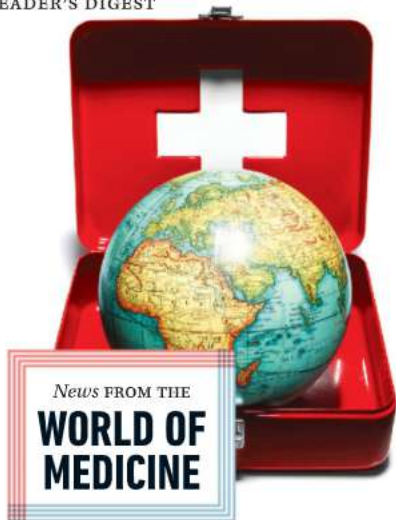
Everyone seemed OK with this order except for one confused recruit. "Sergeant," he said, "what if we don't have any initials?"  
—MATTHEW NAZARIAN  
*Ocala, Florida*

While serving as chief medical officer at Fort Ritchie in Maryland, I attended a nearby wedding. Since it was a formal affair at a country club, I went in my officer's dress blue uniform.

Once at the club, I drove up to the entrance, where the doorman promptly came to the passenger door and assisted my wife out of the car. He then made his way to my side. But

before I could get out, he pointed to the other end of the building and said, "The band entrance is that way."  
—GORDON VANOTTEREN  
*Grand Rapids, Michigan*

**GOT A FUNNY STORY** about the military or your military family? It could be worth \$\$\$.  
For details, see page 3 or go to **RD.COM** /SUBMIT.



News FROM THE  
**WORLD OF  
MEDICINE**

## THE RISK OF *NOT* TRYING NEW FOODS

There's actually a scientific term for the fear of tasting unfamiliar dishes: *food neophobia*. It's not just the name that can be scary. A study from Finland and Estonia found that people with this trait eat lower-quality diets overall and have an increased risk of type 2 diabetes—regardless of their age, sex, or weight. To add more variety to your diet, you'll need to be persistent. "An individual may need to try a new food 10 to 15 times before getting accustomed to it," says study coauthor Heikki Sarin.

## Diabetes Drug May Help Treat Breast Cancer

In a new study, researchers treated certain types of breast cancer cells in the lab with metformin, a medication used to help lower the blood sugar levels of people with type 2 diabetes. With less sugar to feed on, these cells developed a sugar "addiction," which made them work harder to break down the sugar. That extra effort in turn made the cancer more vulnerable to treatment with anticancer drugs. Researchers found that when metformin was combined with a cancer treatment, the cancer cells' growth slowed by 76 percent. This new approach is particularly promising for treating triple-negative breast cancer, an aggressive form of the disease that doesn't respond well to existing treatments.



## ANTIBACTERIAL CLEANERS MAY HELP FUNGI FLOURISH

In a study comparing rural and urban homes, researchers found that while the city apartments generally had fewer bacteria, they actually had more fungi. The study's authors speculate that this may be due to city dwellers' use of antibacterial cleaning products.

"Maybe they're scrubbing away all the bacteria," says Laura-Isobel McCall, PhD, one of the study's coauthors, "and now you have this big open surface for fungi to grow on."

While fungi have been less well-studied than bacteria, researchers have found that certain strains cause infections. Consider this permission to take it easier on spring-cleaning this year.

FCA/FOTODIGITAL/GETTY IMAGES

## Thanks to BetterWOMAN, I'm winning the battle for Bladder Control.



Frequent nighttime trips to the bathroom, embarrassing leaks and the inconvenience of constantly searching for rest rooms in public — for years, I struggled with bladder control problems.

After trying expensive medications with horrible side effects, ineffective exercises and uncomfortable liners and pads, I was ready to resign myself to a life of bladder leaks, isolation and depression. But then I tried **BetterWOMAN**®.

When I first saw the ad for BetterWOMAN, I was skeptical. So many products claim they can set you free from leaks, frequency and worry, only to deliver disappointment. When I finally tried BetterWOMAN, I found that it actually works! It changed my life. Even my friends have noticed that I'm a new person. And because it's all natural, I can enjoy the results without the worry of dangerous side effects. Thanks to BetterWOMAN, I finally fought bladder control problems and I won!



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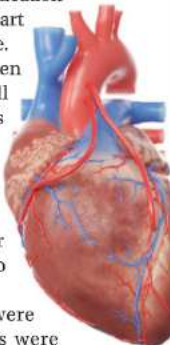
## MANY HEART PROCEDURES ARE UNNECESSARY

**G**OT CORONARY ARTERY disease? Think twice before opting for a stent or bypass surgery to improve your blood flow. Confirming the results of a smaller study in 2007, a recent one found that for people with stable heart conditions, these procedures are no better than medication at reducing the risk of having a heart attack or dying from heart disease.

Researchers followed 5,179 men and women in 37 countries, all of whom had stress-test results indicating they had clogged arteries. Participants were given lifestyle advice and prescribed medication such as aspirin, cholesterol-lowering drugs, or blood pressure-lowering drugs to improve heart health.

Once dangerous blockages were ruled out, half the participants were asked to continue with their lifestyle changes and medication alone. The other half were assigned to undergo either bypass surgery (in which doctors reroute blood flow around blockages) or an angioplasty (in which doctors inflate a tiny balloon and/or place a stent in the artery to help widen it).

Contrary to what many in the medical community expected, rates of heart attacks, heart-related death, cardiac arrests, and hospitalizations for worsening chest pain or heart failure were similar regardless of treatment over the next four years. The invasive procedures did provide one benefit: Those who had them felt chest pain less often.



## Neck Scan Could Diagnose Alzheimer's

In a study of almost 3,200 people ages 58 to 74, those who had the most intense pulses in the blood vessels in the neck (as measured by a five-minute ultrasound) were up to 50 percent more likely to suffer symptoms of dementia over the next 14 years. More intense pulses might damage blood vessels in the brain, leading to Alzheimer's.

## When REM Sleep Hurts

According to a recent experiment, people become even more distressed about upsetting experiences if their REM sleep is fragmented. Researchers believe that's because REM sleep is the only time the brain stops producing nor-adrenaline, allowing it to convert the events of the day into memories. Without REM sleep, bad feelings stay fresh in your mind. **R**

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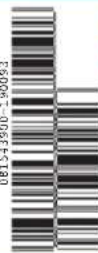
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# THEY GOT AWAY WITH MURDER

*Five whodunits that continue to confound the law*

BY Bill Hangle Jr., Andy Simmons, and Marc Peysler

## WHO KILLED THE BLACK DAHLIA?

*A former Los Angeles police detective is sure he knows who the murderer is, and the suspect is too close for comfort.*

WINTER MORNINGS IN Los Angeles can be chilly, and so it was as Betty Bersinger pushed her daughter's stroller along the weedy sidewalks of Leimert Park on January 15, 1947. In those days, LA was full of half-finished developments like this: gap-toothed mixtures of bungalows and empty lots, construction stalled by the war.

As she approached 39th and Norton at about 11 a.m., Bersinger spotted amid the tall grass and shattered glass what she thought was a broken mannequin just feet from the street. A cloud of insects hung over pale

body parts. In the distance, she saw children on bikes. "It just didn't seem right," she said later. "I thought I'd better call somebody."

Within an hour, the overgrown lot was crawling with cops and reporters, all gaping at a dismembered corpse. The body of the victim—a small woman, about 118 pounds, dark hair, five foot six—had been meticulously severed at the waist and emptied of blood, and it was covered with bruises and violent lacerations. The woman's liver hung from her torso. Her mouth had been sliced from ear to ear. It was, said one eyewitness, "sadism at its most frenzied."

All signs pointed to an agonizing death at the hands of a disturbed soul—perfect fodder for LA's rapacious news biz. The victim, Elizabeth Short, was on every front page within hours: an unemployed Boston girl with no fixed address who'd once been named "Cutie of the Week" while working the PX at a nearby Army base. The owner of a drugstore the aspiring actress frequented mentioned the floral nickname some of his male customers had for her, and the papers soon slapped "Black Dahlia" on every story they ran.

For weeks, police and reporters furiously chased one lead after another: boyfriends, pimps—even folk singer Woody Guthrie was fingered. The weeks turned to months, the months to years. The headlines faded. Even the newspapers faded, replaced by



LAPD VIA FBI (FEVER)

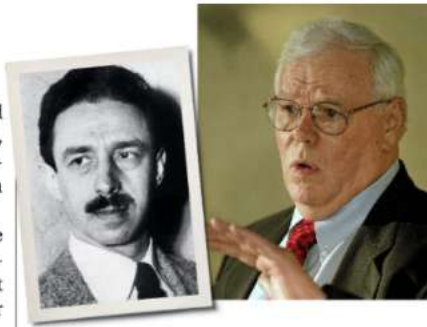
television. Officially, the case remained open. Unofficially, it ripened to legend, spawning novels and films, a grisly reminder that all is never as it appears in Hollywood.

No one knows that better than Steve Hodel. Just five at the time of the murder, he wouldn't learn much about it until 1999, when his half sister, Tamar Hodel, with whom he'd just reconnected, dropped this bombshell about their recently deceased parent: "Steve, did you know our father was a suspect in the Black Dahlia murder?" Steve was shocked, not least because he was a retired Los Angeles police detective.

As a boy, Steve knew his father as a powerful and charismatic but somewhat distant figure. The son of Russian emigrants and a musical prodigy with an IQ higher than Albert Einstein's, George Hodel had started college at 15 and eventually became a physician and a chief medical official for the city of Los Angeles. He married a well-connected Hollywood beauty and befriended luminaries, including the surrealist artist Man Ray.

"He'd walk into a room and all heads would turn," Steve says. "He'd take control and mesmerize people."

Steve was still a boy when his parents divorced and George moved away. The two reconnected when Steve was a young man, and the son learned that his father had a troubling side—an unhealthy obsession with sex, a deep disregard for women, and a powerful need to control and manipulate. Steve



Father and son: George Hodel, at age 38 (left), and Steve Hodel

came to accept that his beloved father was anything but a model citizen.

Even so, when Tamar suggested that George had been a violent killer, Steve's first instinct was: "Impossible." But as a police officer, he knew that only one thing mattered—the evidence. "We go through life with so much BS. To absolutely know the what-is of something is the ultimate," he says. So he started digging. He concluded Tamar was almost certainly right, given the evidence he uncovered:

- ♦ Multiple sources said that George knew Short; the two probably met at his health clinic, which specialized in treating venereal diseases.

- ♦ Just before the killing, George purchased cement in 50-pound bags. Police found empty 50-pound cement bags at the crime scene. (Steve believes that George killed Short elsewhere and used the bags to transport her to the park.)

- ♦ George was one of the few people trained in the procedure used to sever

Short's body—an unusual, delicate technique known as a hemicorporectomy, in which the body is cut in two without breaking a bone.

- ♦ The killer sent letters and some of Short's possessions to the newspapers soon after the murder; the handwriting was a close match to George's.

George initially came to the cops' attention in 1949, after being charged in the sexual assault of his own daughter, Tamar. Witnesses claimed to have seen George molest the teen, but defense attorneys argued that she had made it up to get attention. The jury acquitted him. By 1950, Steve learned, police were investigating George for the Black Dahlia killing. They bugged his Laurel Canyon mansion and recorded hundreds of hours of conversations. At one point, police heard what sounded like an unidentified woman being beaten to death and buried, though they never acted on it. Later, police heard the doctor come close to confessing to Short's murder: "Supposin' I did kill the Black Dahlia. They couldn't prove it now."

But, Steve learned, instead of questioning George about Short, the police suddenly quit the hunt. And nobody tried to stop him when he left the country in 1953 to spend the next 40 years in Southeast Asia.

Why did the LAPD let him slip away? Steve has a simple theory: His father had dirt on practically everybody, and he used it. "He's performing abortions for the rich and famous, for the cops,

for the brass," says Steve. In an infamously corrupt era when would-be starlets such as Short counted for little or nothing, it's entirely plausible that a well-connected man like George Hodel could have made a murder investigation disappear.

Many agree with Steve's hypothesis about the Black Dahlia—"I have no doubt," says one senior LA prosecutor. Others have their own theories, one being that a bellhop murdered Short because she knew of his schemes to rob hotels. As Los Angeles newspaper

## "SUPPOSIN' I DID KILL THE BLACK DAHLIA. THEY COULDN'T PROVE IT NOW."



columnist Steve Lopez puts it, "Once you step inside the cloud of mystery surrounding the Black Dahlia murder, there's no way out."

Today, Steve Hodel toils on in Los Angeles, trying to uncover the undeniable facts about his twisted father.

"I loved Dr. Jekyll, the good part. He could have cured cancer, done so much for humanity," he says. "But Mr. Hyde was the stronger character."

Hodel realizes that he carries some of his father's traits—the better ones, he hopes. "What my dad gave me was the strength and the doggedness," he says. "Those genes that served him in darkness serve me to pursue the truth."

NEW YORK DAILY NEWS ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES (GEORGE HODEL); RD PHOTO STUDIO (PHOTO BORDER); DAMIAN DOVARGANES/SHUTTERSTOCK (STEVE HODEL)

TATIANA/GETTY IMAGES (BLOOD DRIP)

## CAPITOL MURDER

What did the congressman know?



ON MAY 1, 2001, Chandra Levy, a 24-year-old college student who'd just ended an internship with the Federal Bureau of Prisons, left her Washington, DC, apartment building and disappeared. Five days later, after not hearing from their daughter in all that time, Robert and Susan Levy called the DC police from their home in Modesto, California. As police searched Chandra's apartment, Susan looked through her daughter's phone bills, which she and her husband paid. One number kept coming up. They called it and were soon connected with the office of Gary Condit, their congressman.

Chandra met Condit, 53 at the time, while visiting his office with a friend. He was warm and friendly, going so far as to personally give them a tour of the Capitol. By the end of the day, the friend had a job in

Condit's office. Chandra had a date. The relationship reportedly grew quickly. Chandra confided to another friend that her unnamed boyfriend had promised to give up his seat in the House, divorce his wife, and start a second family with her. Based on a

### CHANDRA CONFIDED THAT HER BOYFRIEND WAS GOING TO DIVORCE HIS WIFE.

similarly cryptic conversation Chandra had with her mother, the Levys were convinced that Condit had played a role in Chandra's disappearance and shared that view with the media. Soon, reporters were camped outside his home and office. Even some in the DC police department suspected the



The intern, the congressman, and the flyer that blanketed Washington in 2001

congressman. Condit's lack of directness didn't help him. When asked by police whether he'd had an affair with Chandra, Condit replied coyly, "I don't think we need to go there, and you can infer what you want from that."

On May 22, 2002—386 days after Chandra Levy had gone missing—a man walking his dog near a wooded trail in Washington's Rock Creek Park stumbled upon what he at first believed to be a sun-bleached turtle shell. It was Chandra's skull. Her remains had been exposed to the elements for so long that an autopsy couldn't determine the cause of death

or even detect any important clues.

However, the crime scene did remind police of a series of attacks that had taken place at Rock Creek around the time of Chandra's disappearance. Two female joggers had been grabbed from behind and dragged into a remote part of the park. They were fortunate enough to have fended off their attacker, a 19-year-old El Salvadoran immigrant named Ingmar Guandique, who was convicted of those crimes and serving a ten-year prison term. When a jailhouse snitch alleged that Guandique had confessed to killing Chandra, he was charged with her murder and, in 2010, tried, convicted, and sentenced to 60 years.

Then a twist: A friend of the snitch gave authorities secret recordings in which he admitted to lying about Guandique's confession. Guandique was released and deported to El Salvador, and the identity of Chandra's murderer was once again a mystery.

By then, Condit's career had dissolved. Two months before Chandra's body was discovered, he lost his Democratic primary in a landslide. To this day, no evidence has surfaced linking him to her death, and he has steadfastly refused to say whether he had an affair with her.

In Northern California, Chandra's grave is unmarked. The family will put up a stone only once her killer is found. And Robert Levy told the *Washington Post* what it will say: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

DOMINICK/GETTY IMAGES (BLOOD DRIP)

SHUTTERSTOCK (LEVY); JOE MARQUETTE/SHUTTERSTOCK (CONDIT); SHUTTERSTOCK (MURDER); PHOTO BORDER; GREG WATHESON/SHUTTERSTOCK (CARTEL)





## THE ATLANTA CHILD MURDERS

*The question lingers: Who killed the 24?*

FOR TWO YEARS, from the summer of 1979 to the summer of 1981, African American parents in Atlanta were terrified. During that span, at least 24 black children and teens vanished from the streets only to turn up later as corpses. The first two, 14-year-old Edward Smith and 13-year-old Alfred Evans, were found by a woman rummaging through roadside woods for aluminum cans and bottles. Seven-year-old LaTonya Wilson, one of six children who disappeared over the summer of 1980, could be identified only from her teeth and clothing when her remains were found nearly four months after she went missing.

"Every day, every night, it seemed like they were finding bodies," Sheila Baltazar, whose stepson, Patrick Baltazar, 12, was killed in 1981, told the *New York Times*. "And we were just trying to hold on to our babies."

President Ronald Reagan ultimately sent Vice President George H. W. Bush to Georgia to be briefed on the murders. But the killer has never been found.

At least, not officially. Many Atlanta residents believe they know who the killer is—and he is already in prison. On May 22, 1981, police were staking out the James Jackson Parkway bridge when they heard a loud splash in the



Wayne Williams has always denied any involvement in the murders.

Chattahoochee River below. The only person driving across the bridge at the time was a 23-year-old failed music producer named Wayne Williams. The officers stopped and questioned Williams, then let him go on his way.

When the body of 27-year-old Nathaniel Cater floated to the river's surface two days later, Williams was arrested and ultimately convicted of murdering him and another black man, 21-year-old Jimmy Ray Payne. Both men had been asphyxiated, which was a leading cause of death in the child murders. Investigators found carpet fibers and dog hairs on Payne and Cater that matched those on ten of the murdered children. Perhaps most telling of all: Williams was jailed on June 21, and no more children were killed after that day.

So did Williams murder some, or even all, of the children? The authorities thought so, but they saw no need

to charge him, former Fulton County prosecutor Joseph Drolet told 11Alive in Atlanta, because Williams was already serving two life sentences for killing Payne and Cater.

But not everyone is comforted by that conclusion. Some residents think Williams is innocent and that the Ku Klux Klan was involved. A few of the parents contend that their children were killed in some kind of government conspiracy directed by the CIA or the CDC, which is headquartered in Atlanta. Celebrated author James Baldwin insisted Williams was simply a convenient patsy for city leaders desperate to quiet the whole affair, lest it tarnish Atlanta's rising fortunes

### SOME RESIDENTS BLAMED THE KU KLUX KLAN; OTHERS, THE CIA.



in the 1980s, especially of the black middle class.

But the murders may not stay unsolved for long. Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms, who was a frightened nine-year-old at the time of the last killing, has ordered the police department to reopen the case. "This is about being able to look these families in the eye," Atlanta police chief Erika Shields told the *Times*, "and say we did everything we could possibly do to bring closure to your case."

BETTMAN/GETTY IMAGES (WILLIAMS); RD PHOTO STUDIO (PHOTO BORDER); TATIANA/GETTY IMAGES (BLOOD DRIP)



## THE TOWN THAT SAW NOTHING

*A man was murdered in broad daylight. Why isn't anyone talking?*

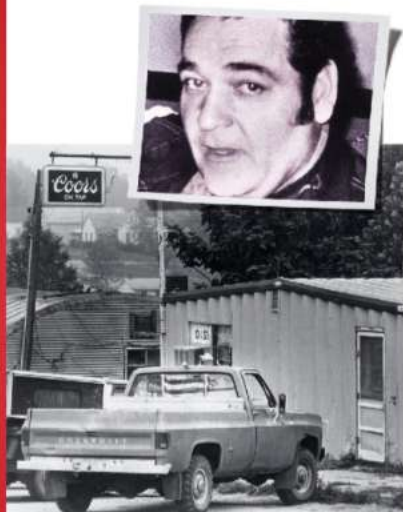
THE MOST HATED man in Skidmore, Missouri, was a thief, a bully, an arsonist—a jack-of-all-horrible-trades. He had no qualms about sticking a gun into an innocent man's belly and pulling the trigger, which he did. And he always got away with it. That is, until July 10, 1981.

Ken Rex McElroy, 47, once described as “a big brute of a guy with slicked-back hair like Elvis,” was a short-tempered man with a long rap sheet. His criminal résumé listed livestock rustling, assault, harassment, and attempted murder. He rarely faced time, thanks to the talents of a cunning lawyer, Richard McFadin, and a loyal cadre of friends always

ready with an alibi. If none of that worked, a little bit of intimidation would do the trick. Once, a farmer who caught McElroy stealing two horses filed charges but recanted after McElroy smashed in his face with a rifle butt.

The legal system seemed impotent against McElroy. When a farmer named Romaine Henry surprised McElroy on Henry's land, McElroy shot him in the stomach. Henry survived and pressed charges, but McElroy produced witnesses who swore he was home at the time of the shooting. A jury found McElroy not guilty.

McElroy's fortunes changed in July 1980, when the local grocer,



Ken McElroy (top) and the truck in which 60 people didn't see him get killed

Bo Bowenkamp, accused McElroy's eight-year-old daughter of stealing candy. An enraged McElroy sought out Bowenkamp and fired a shotgun round into his neck. The 70-year-old survived, and McElroy was arrested and tried. The jury convicted McElroy of second-degree assault. He was sentenced to two years, then released on bond pending appeal. Two years for shooting a man? Released on bond? The people of Skidmore felt betrayed by the legal system yet again. This time, they'd had enough.

On the morning of July 10, 1981, a mob that allegedly included the

mayor and the sheriff gathered at the American Legion hall to discuss what to do. When someone ran in and announced that McElroy had just entered the nearby D&G Tavern, the group descended upon the bar, surrounding him. McElroy, undaunted, grabbed the six-pack of beer he'd

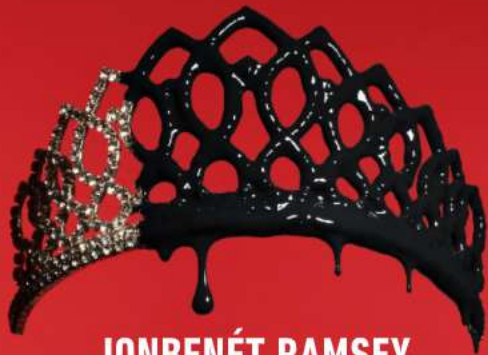
## THE PEOPLE FELT BETRAYED BY THE LAW. THIS TIME, THEY'D HAD ENOUGH.

bought. Then he and his wife sauntered out of the D&G and into the parking area, where he climbed behind the wheel of his Chevy Silverado, his wife by his side. By then, up to 60 men had drifted out of the bar and neighboring businesses. Others peered out from behind the curtains of store windows.

McElroy turned the key in the ignition. But before he could put the pickup in reverse, someone—or maybe it was several someones—started firing. The truck's rear window shattered. McElroy slumped over, dead. Everyone on the street that day claimed to investigators not to have seen a thing.

While some would call what happened to McElroy justifiable, McFadin echoed what others believed when he told the *New York Times*, “The town got away with murder.”

BETHMAN/GETTY IMAGES (2); RD PHOTO STUDIOS (PHOTO BORDER); DOMINICNY/GETTY IMAGES (BIG GUN DRIP)



## JONBENÉT RAMSEY

*Did she know her murderer?*

**T**HE DEATH OF a beauty queen is guaranteed to make big news, and the murder in the Ramsey house was especially shocking. It happened on Christmas in 1996, in an upscale neighborhood of Boulder, Colorado. The Ramseys were a picture-perfect and prominent local family of four. John Bennett Ramsey owned a successful software company. His wife, Patsy Ramsey, was a former Miss West Virginia. But she was not the beauty queen who was found dead in the basement, her mouth covered with duct tape, her wrists bound with an electrical cord, her body wrapped carefully, almost lovingly, in a white blanket. The murder victim was the Ramseys' six-year-old daughter, JonBenét. The cause of death was a broken skull and

strangulation with a macabre weapon called a garrote.

The fact that little JonBenét had won several beauty contests—including Little Miss Colorado—added a layer

### OMINOUSLY, A PRACTICE RANSOM NOTE WAS FOUND IN THE HOUSE.



of twisted curiosity to the tragic story. Pictures of JonBenét with full makeup and blond highlights wearing fancy costumes and gowns filled TV screens and magazines for months. Some wondered what kind of parents would objectify a little girl like that. The tabloids had a field day: Maybe



The tabloids chased the Ramseys for years, but they were never tried.

Patsy had killed her daughter in a fit of rage over some kind of imperfection, such as wetting the bed. Maybe JonBenét's nine-year-old brother, Burke, was consumed by jealousy of his beautiful sister. Maybe John had been abusing his daughter in some way.

When the police searched the Ramseys' stately Tudor home, they found a potentially telling piece of evidence resting on the kitchen staircase: a ransom note. Written in neat but slightly rushed print, it began: "Listen carefully! We are a group of individuals that represent a small foreign faction." The writers demanded precisely \$118,000. Suspiciously, \$118,000 was almost exactly the amount of John Ramsey's year-end bonus. Not many people would know



that outside of the family or the business. Most ominously, a practice ransom note was found elsewhere in the household.

The Ramseys proclaimed their innocence, and police found evidence that could arguably point in other directions. In the basement, there were two windows left open, a third that was broken, and an unlocked door. Police went on to discover a string of robberies in the neighborhood in recent months. There were also 38 registered sex offenders living within two miles of the Ramsey's house. Maybe JonBenét's pageant career had attracted a predator. Or maybe the killer knew the family. For a time, suspicion fell on a former housekeeper and a neighbor who played Santa Claus.

Still, the spotlight never moved far from the Ramsey family, and in 1999 a grand jury indicted John and Patsy on two counts of child abuse that resulted in the death of their daughter (though not murder itself). But the Ramseys were never tried: The district attorney believed the charges were unprovable. Separately, the DA announced that JonBenét's brother, Burke, was not a suspect either.

After a long struggle with ovarian cancer, Patsy Ramsey died in 2006, at age 49. She is buried next to her daughter in Marietta, Georgia. **R**

TATIANKA/GETTY IMAGES (BLOOD DRIP)

RIC FELD/AP/SHUTTERSTOCK (RAMSEYS), RD PHOTO STUDIO (PHOTO BORDER)



Old advice: Pain pills, high-tech tests, shots, and surgery. The latest science: Harness your brain, lace up your sneakers, and go low-tech.

# New Help for Aching Backs

BY Sari Harrar



her opioid pain relievers, nothing helped.

What did it take for Huggins to finally tame her pain? She changed her brain.

She started by researching pain management programs and ultimately found the Chronic Pain Rehabilitation Program at the

Cleveland Clinic, which was near the home of one of her daughters. Huggins enrolled in several classes on how the brain and body interact. She learned how to relax with mindfulness meditation and to tame her fear and anxiety about her back pain with cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). She also discovered the importance of good sleep and overcame her hesitation to start exercising again. Huggins even began taking an antidepressant, not because she was clinically depressed but because the medication helped turn down the volume on the pain messages sizzling through her nervous system.

"Now I hike Shenandoah Mountain. I go boating and fishing on the Potomac River with my husband and our grandchildren," she says. "You really can calm your body down and change

your brain to lessen the pain. I've never spent another whole day on that sofa!"

Could the cure for chronic and short-term back pain start with simply changing your attitude? The idea sounds crazy. Back pain causes real agony for 58 million Americans and fuels an \$87 billion treatment industry of high-tech scans, spinal cord injections, opioid painkillers, and surgery. And yet the evidence continues to mount that these approaches may not help—and could even make things worse.

In the first study of long-term opioid use for back pain, published in March 2018 in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, participants who took opioids had higher pain levels a year later compared with those who took acetaminophen or a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory.

## COULD THE CURE FOR BACK PAIN START WITH CHANGING YOUR ATTITUDE?

"Long-term use of opioids can actually worsen pain, along with causing dependence," says Xavier Jimenez, MD, medical director of the Cleveland Clinic program that helped Huggins. Meanwhile, the latest research from prominent pain experts is revealing how surprisingly effective low-tech strategies can be. In a 2016 University of Washington study,

for example, 342 people with chronic lower-back pain were randomly divided into three groups. Patients in one group got "usual care"—whatever treatment and advice their individual doctors provided. Along with receiving any medical care needed, a second group practiced mindfulness meditation and yoga and the third went to CBT classes for eight weeks. About 44 percent of people in both the meditation and the CBT groups had significant pain improvement after six months, compared with just 26 percent of the "usual care" group.

"Mind-body therapies and physical therapy are often as effective as or more effective than surgeries and injections, despite seeming less 'medical,'" says Dr. Jimenez. "They're also safer."

They're not recommended in every case, of course. Some pain does require more invasive, and immediate, treatment. If your back pain comes with bowel or bladder problems, or if you have progressive muscle weakness in your legs—for instance, if your knees keep giving out or you keep tripping—call your doctor right away or go to the emergency room.

"If the pain radiates down your leg or causes numbness and tingling in your leg or foot, see your doctor. It could be a compressed nerve root that needs attention," says back pain researcher Anthony Delitto, PhD, PT, dean of the School of Health and

# A

After Marty Huggins fractured her lower back four years ago, she says she spent "two years lying on a fuzzy brown sofa in our family room. I was afraid I would hurt my back if I moved even a little." The pain forced the 65-year-old from Stafford, Virginia, to retire from her job as a physical education teacher and competitive jump rope coach, and she stopped going to the gym completely. But despite countless visits to specialists, who performed tons of tests, gave her dozens of steroid shots, and regularly offered



Rehabilitation Sciences and professor in the Department of Physical Therapy at the University of Pittsburgh.

Back pain that lasts 12 weeks or more is considered chronic. If the cause isn't obvious (a fall or a car accident, for example), don't just treat the symptoms with, say, an NSAID such as ibuprofen. It's important to work with your doctor to figure out what's going on. "Pain can be a signal of ongoing tissue or nerve damage

or spinal problems that need to be addressed," says pain scientist Beth Darnall, PhD, an associate professor in the Department of Anesthesiology, Perioperative and Pain Medicine at Stanford University School of Medicine.

If your back pain is new, continue your daily activities, but take it easy when exercising. Most of the time, you'll start feeling better within three days. Once you're on the upswing, talk

to your doctor about incorporating the following strategies to help you stay pain-free.



### Exercise on Your Own or in Physical Therapy

Walking and other activities can improve your back by strengthening muscles, relieving tension and stress,

helping with weight control, and—bonus!—triggering the release of feel-good brain chemicals. In a 2013 Israeli study of 52 nonexercisers ages 18 to 65 with lower-back pain, a treadmill-walking program did as much as back exercises to bolster supportive "core" muscles and improve the patients' ability to perform day-to-day activities.

Don't like walking? "Try an elliptical trainer, a bike, swimming, or any other activity that's fairly easy on your back but lets you move," Delitto suggests. "If you feel some discomfort, try to continue for 10 to 15 minutes. Then reassess how you feel a few hours later. Chances are, you'll feel better than before your exercise session."

Other research suggests that yoga may be as good as physical therapy for chronic lower-back pain. In fact, yoga and tai chi are among the nondrug therapies that the American College of Physicians recommends back-pain sufferers try before turning to pain relievers, especially prescription-strength ones. In one recent national survey of people with back pain, 90 percent who tried yoga or tai chi experienced relief, compared with 64 percent who simply followed their doctor's advice.

If you're nervous about exacerbating your back pain when you exercise, ask your doctor for a referral to a physical therapist. In a May 2018 study, researchers found that people with lower-back pain who tried physical

therapy before other treatments were 89 percent less likely to need opioids and 15 percent less likely to end up in the emergency room.

♦♦♦♦

## Harness Your Mind

Pain scientists are looking closely at an all-too-common mind-set called catastrophizing. "It's normal to protect your back when it hurts," Delitto explains. "But for some people, this leads to worry that any movement will do more damage. So people stop exercising, stop going to work, stop doing everyday activities. That leads to weaker muscles, stiffer joints, weight gain, and depression and anxiety."

Catastrophizing plays a major role in whether acute back pain becomes chronic and how well people respond to treatment. It has also been linked to greater dependence on opioids. Catastrophizing may even feed into "central sensitization," a cruel feedback loop in which the brain interprets little twinges as agony.

"Research shows that when catastrophizing is treated, pain intensity decreases. Daily functioning improves. And the structure of the brain in areas involved with pain processing actually changes, so that the benefits persist," Darnall says.

Mind-body therapies such as meditation, progressive muscle relaxation, and deep breathing help calm your

nervous system so it doesn't react as strongly to pain. CBT, which helps you spot negative thoughts and craft positive alternatives, can stop the cycle of fear.

"Thoughts like 'I can't do any of the things I love because of my pain' can be replaced with thoughts like 'There are many things I can do today despite my pain' and 'Even though I feel challenged right now, I can use several strategies to help calm and soothe myself,'" Darnall explains.

## DISRUPTED SLEEP MAY AFFECT PAIN SENSITIVITY AND INFLAMMATION.

It doesn't take much time to make a difference. In a 2014 study of 76 women and men with a variety of chronic pain problems, Darnall found that just one two-hour session of CBT helped participants catastrophize less within a month.

♦♦♦♦

## Make Deep Sleep a Priority

Nearly six in ten people with back pain say it interferes with sleep, which sets off a vicious circle. "Sleep is our body's way of natural recovery," notes Kevin Ho, lead researcher of the University of Sydney's Musculoskeletal

Research Group. "Emerging evidence suggests that disrupted sleep may upset body processes, including pain sensitivity and inflammation in the brain and spinal cord."

A recent University of Sydney review of 24 studies involving more than 1,550 women and men took a closer look at how much sleep can help back pain. It found that people who tried CBT or took melatonin or eszopiclone (brand name Lunesta) had a 35 percent improvement in sleep and a 14 percent improvement in pain.

Just adjusting your sleep position could help. In a 2016 Portuguese study of 20 women in their 60s with lower-back pain, those who slept on their sides with a pillow between their legs or on their backs with a wedge pillow under their knees reported significantly less back pain after four weeks than a control group that didn't change their nighttime positioning.



In other research, exercises that strengthen core muscles in the torso reduced back pain, improved sleep, and helped relieve depression and anxiety.

♦♦♦♦

## Add Low-Tech Soothers

Recent research has confirmed that massage and heat not only feel good but also can deliver lasting relief for chronic lower-back pain. In a study published in the journal *Pain Medicine*, participants got ten massages over the course of 12 weeks. Half reported clinically meaningful pain improvement during that time, regardless of the type of massages they enjoyed, and most continued to feel better at 24 weeks.

Similarly, by boosting blood flow to the area, heat wraps, patches, and creams help ease back pain caused by muscle aches, according to a 2016 analysis in the *Journal of Chiropractic Medicine*. In addition, studies have shown that massage and heat help people get and stay more active, which also eases pain.

Over-the-counter transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) devices use a low-voltage electrical current to increase blood flow. In a 2019 Harvard University study, back-pain sufferers who used a TENS device experienced significant drops in pain and improved quality of life. **R**

# WHY ARE MILITARY FAMILIES ON FOOD STAMPS?



*Some of America's bravest  
are going hungry. Why aren't  
we doing more to help them?*

BY *Cynthia McFadden, Christine Romo,  
AND Kenzi Abou-Sabe*

FROM NBC NEWS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY *John Francis Peters*

## Desirée Mieir

Desirée had no idea how financially stressful being married to a service member would be. "When the twins were born, there were times we would make pasta for a couple of dollars and stretch that out for half the week. Then we'd think of some other simple dish to last the rest of the week." The family isn't eligible for food stamps, so the food pantry Desirée frequents is a lifesaver.





**D**esirée Mier has four children under the age of ten, including a set of eight-year-old twins, and a husband in the Navy who has been deployed for seven months. She knew life as a military spouse would have challenges, but she never imagined that the biggest one would be feeding her kids.

"Today was not a good sale day," Desirée says as she and the kids leave their local San Diego supermarket. When you're on a tight budget, she adds, "you kind of have to get creative. Some days we go to a food pantry."

That's right: To put food on the table, the Miers, along with thousands of other military families around the country, rely on the kindness of strangers.

At Dewey Elementary School, a truck full of fruits and vegetables arrives every two weeks, courtesy of a hunger-relief organization called Feeding San Diego, a member of Feeding America. A team of volunteers quickly sets up a distribution line in the gym where families—military folks, the newly unemployed, the homeless—will pick through non-perishable items such as beans, rice, and flour along with the fresh produce, all of which are free to those in need.

"I knew we wouldn't be wealthy," Desirée says about life in the military. "But I thought it would be a lot more manageable. I didn't know I'd have to try this hard."

Her one solace: She's not alone. "I

wouldn't say we're check-to-check, but pretty darn close," says Melissa Carlisle, whose husband, like Desirée's, serves in the Navy. "If a tire blows, that's it. We don't have much in the bank. People have this illusion that we [in the military] are rolling in dough, but we're not. We're just really good with the little bit of money that we get."

Data from the 2017 annual Census Bureau survey shows that 16,000

**"I WOULDN'T SAY WE'RE CHECK-TO-CHECK, BUT PRETTY DARN CLOSE."**

active-duty service members received food stamps that year. But that number doesn't include the thousands of military families around the country who are not eligible for food stamps because they make too much money to qualify and yet routinely rely on charities or loans from family to get by. In fact, a survey from Blue Star



**Akiko Lame**

Lame and her husband, a Navy officer, relied on support from the U.S. government's WIC food program during the four years they were stationed in Japan. They no longer needed assistance when they moved back to the States in 2017, but when a friend asked Lame whether she wanted to help fellow military families by volunteering at Feeding San Diego, she said yes. For the past year, she has been working there at least once a week. "I'm very happy to be with them, helping the people," she says. "Everybody says thank you."

Families, a military-spouse support group, says 13 percent of military families report trouble making ends meet, compared with 7 percent of civilians.

Their struggles are caused by a variety of factors: the high cost of living in cities such as San Diego, difficulty qualifying for federal food assistance,

and a transient life—moving from base to base—that makes it challenging for spouses to build careers when they don't know when and where their families will be transferred next. Desirée Mieir was a phlebotomist back home in Oklahoma. But once her husband, Dan Mieir, was stationed in San Diego, they estimated they would

pay more in childcare than they'd make if Desirée joined the workforce.

That lack of a second income is a big hit for the Mieirs. As a communications officer in the Navy, Dan makes \$34,279 a year before taxes. That's just under the national poverty level for a family of six. The military does pay for their housing, but the housing

allowance is treated as income, and that additional "money" is often enough to make a family ineligible for federal food assistance known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), as is the case with the Mieirs.

Enlisted service members do receive a food allowance, about \$373 per month, but that sum is intended for the member alone, not his or her family, and it does not increase if one has dependents.

At Dewey Elementary School, which the Mieirs' three eldest children attend, Principal Tanya McMillin sees food insecurity on the students' faces every day. "We are 80 percent

## AT DEWEY ELEMENTARY, 70% OF THE KIDS GET A FREE OR REDUCED LUNCH.

military and 70 percent free and reduced lunch," she says. "So, essentially, members of our military are paid so poorly they qualify for free lunch and breakfast." As a result, she has students with parents on the front line who go to bed hungry sometimes. "It's shocking."

Vince Hall, the CEO of Feeding San Diego, says that much of the problem is geographic. "Many of these families are the hardest-working people I've

### Hungry Mouths to Feed

Military spouses start lining up early outside the Feeding San Diego food pantry at Dewey Elementary. One problem these families face is that the Pentagon has yet to grapple with the military's changing demographics, Amy Bushatz, the executive editor at *military.com*, told NPR. "You're no longer looking at a 17- or 18-year-old kid right out of high school with no family who's receiving that base-level pay. You're looking at somebody in his or her late 20s who might have a couple of kids."



ever met," he says. "They're focused on skipping meals so that their kids have something to eat. I take great pride in the work that we do here, but I take no pride in the fact that our country stations families in San Diego and doesn't pay them enough money to live in San Diego."

But it's not just San Diego. Records from the Department of Defense reveal that during the 2018–2019 school year, a third of children at DOD-run schools on military bases in the United States—more than 6,500 children—were eligible for free or reduced lunches. At Georgia's Fort Stewart, over 65 percent were eligible. Mazon, a group that combats hunger, has found that there are food pantries on or near every military base in this country.

"There's nothing wrong with going to a food pantry when you need emergency help," says Josh Protas, Mazon's vice president of public policy. "But there's no reason that those who are serving in the armed forces should have to do that on a routine basis."

For its part, the DOD sees the problem of food insecurity in the military as being minimal. Troops are well paid, they insist; there's a subsidized grocery store on each base; and families can avail themselves of the financial-literacy training the military provides.

Desirée Mieir did seek financial help from the military. She says it didn't help. "My husband and I have taken advantage of resources



In 2019, Feeding San Diego provided 2.3 million meals to military families.

available to us," she says. "We've met with financial counselors provided by the military. We have done that work." And yet she and her husband still barely scrape by.

Former Navy fire controlman Crystal Ellison left food insecurity behind only when she left the service. For most of the 13 years she spent managing complex weapons systems and high-powered radars, she had to rely on loans from her in-laws to feed her family.

"I found it embarrassing," she admits. "I felt like, you should be able to provide for your family and not lean on anybody else. That's what you're supposed to do as an adult." It was especially difficult when she was a junior sailor and the pay was lower. "If you didn't have enough money saved up, you were definitely in the hurt locker."

Ellison is now in the private sector and no longer struggling financially,

**Nonmilitary friends don't get it:** "The mindset of many Americans is, If you work hard, you'll be fine. If you tell someone from outside of the military community that you shop at a food pantry, they're like, 'Oh, are you mismanaging your money?'"

**The guilt is crippling:** "For a while there were lots of tears on my part: 'What am I doing wrong? This is

embarrassing.' I don't think that way anymore."

**It's about priorities:** "How can we have new billion-dollar warships when our sailors are struggling to eat? I used to see on the news, 'Support the troops.' Then why don't they pay them enough to live more comfortably?"

**We yearn to be middle-class:** "I'm grateful that I have the

health insurance I do, because a lot of Americans don't. Still, a lot of things a typical suburban family should be able to do, my family can't. We've never been to Disneyland."

**Through it all, she has learned about empathy:** "I no longer take things for granted. As a result, I'm really aware of people who have less than others."

## WHAT A MILITARY SPOUSE WANTS YOU TO KNOW

*Desirée Mieir loves her four young children, her sailor husband, and her country. But she feels the financial burden every day.*

but she wishes more Americans knew that food insecurity among the lower enlisted ranks of the military is a problem. "We're giving 100 percent to the country, and the country doesn't give it back."

On the morning of May 20, the USS *Stockdale*, a guided-missile destroyer, slowly docks at Naval Base San Diego. Jubilant sailors disembark. One of them is Dan Mieir. Among the throng of loved ones waiting is Desirée, wiping away tears of joy, anxiety, and excitement. She's wearing a flaming-red

sleeveless dress and holding a sign that reads, "Hey Sailor, after 212 days, this Missus Needs Kisses."

Later that day, Dan sneaks into his twins' classroom at Dewey Elementary. The second they spot their father, they leap up from their desks, run past their schoolmates, and jump into his open arms, shrieking, "Daddy's home!" Two beautiful words, which, for today, push away all the worries. **■**

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How I Know It's  
**SPRING**

It's not the calendar that alerts me. In my small town, the telltale signs are the ones that melt my heart.

—  
BY *Philip Gulley*  
FROM THE SATURDAY EVENING POST



Every year, I circle the vernal equinox on our refrigerator calendar so the first day of spring won't slip by unnoticed. I'm not sure why I depend upon the calendar to announce spring's arrival, since it has so little bearing on the matter. Spring comes when it's good and ready; sometimes well before its appointed day, sometimes well after.

For years, spring in our town was heralded by Leon and Jo Martin, who owned the Dairy Queen. Every year, after their winter sojourn to Florida, they would post the words "Now Hiring" on their sign. I would walk past, see the sign, see Leon and Jo readying for their spring opening, and feel winter's icy veil lift from around me. It was as accurate an indication of spring as any calendar, and when they died and their children sold the Dairy

Queen to an out-of-town outfit who kept it open year-round, it threw off our town's circadian rhythms something terrible. We're still not sure when spring begins.

Well, that's not entirely accurate. When the implement store on the west edge of town, where Johnston's IGA grocery store used to be, stops selling snowplows and starts selling lawn mowers, that's a pretty good sign winter's grip has loosened.

If they should drop the ball, Frank Gladden is sure to stand at our Quaker meeting and announce that volunteers are needed for our spring fish fry. Frank's announcement is as reliable as any clock and invariably tinged with worry and regret that this might be the last year of the fish fry if volunteers aren't forthcoming.

"We're not getting any younger," he announces to the congregation. Frank is 82 years old, but he's been saying that since 1961, so we Quakers aren't alarmed. The Fairfield Friends Fish Fry is as constant as sunrise. If Jesus were to return on the clouds the day before the fish fry, the men would soldier on, undeterred.

But let us suppose both the implement store and Frank Gladden neglect their duties and we are cast adrift, oblivious to spring's arrival. We would then have to look and see whether Bill Eddy, our town's plumber, was wearing a coat.

When the first leaf withers and falls to the ground in autumn, Bill pulls on his tan Carhartt coat and doesn't remove it until spring. I've known Bill since we were in first grade together, so I am well acquainted with his habits. He wears that Carhartt everywhere, inside and outside, and if he

takes a week off in February to treat his wife to a cruise, you can bet he'll still be wearing his coat while floating around the Caribbean. No matter where he is, his internal thermostat is set for Indiana.

There are other signs of spring if one is watchful. The deer lighten in color, the dog sheds, the buds swell, the snow melts on the south hillside, and the bloodroot in our woodlot pushes out its petals. The calf appears, tethered to its mother by bonds of hunger. The farmer casts the manure upon the field, thoughtfully provided by the aforementioned calf and mother. Who needs a calendar when a calf is nearby?

Nothing seems impossible in spring—a cure for cancer, wisdom in Washington, weight loss. Anything can happen, and often does. I proposed to my wife a dozen times in the winter and was denied each time, so I waited until spring and popped the question a 13th time, an unlucky number. But even superstition takes a back seat to the glories of spring, and she consented. Engaged one spring, married the next. Between that and the Dairy Queen, what more could one want? **R**

SATURDAY EVENING POST (MARCH 21, 2016), COPYRIGHT © 2016 BY PHILIP GULLEY, SATURDAYEVENINGPOST.COM.

### You'd Better Bee-lieve It

If bees made beer, we would be taking better care of them.

BLORE40 ON REDDIT.COM

ALL  
in a Day's  
**WORK**

**At a loss** for words? So were these employees:

♦ I forgot the word *articulate* in an interview and instead said, "I'm good at saying things."

—[@KATHY\\_HIRST](#)

♦ I couldn't remember the term *lab coat* so had to go with "science blazer."

—[@RUSTMONSTER](#)

♦ I am a librarian, and I forgot the word *book*. So I told a new patron, "We have a diverse selection of things."

—[@DUNSLIBRARIAN](#)

**A coworker** once showed up to the office in a white wedding dress with a crinoline, beading—the works. When our manager asked why she'd worn her wedding dress to the office, my coworker replied, "I was out



of clean clothes and didn't feel like doing laundry."

—LAUREN EMILY  
on Facebook, via  
[buzzfeed.com](#)

**Office Motto Makeovers**

♦ Nothing ruins a Friday more than the understanding that today is Tuesday.

♦ Feeling stressed out? Make a nice cup of hot

tea and then spill it in the lap of whoever's bugging you.

♦ The only thing worse than seeing something done wrong is seeing it done slowly.

—HUMORTHATWORKS.COM

**After pulling** three double shifts in a row, my brother Billy, a hotel clerk, was worn out. On one of his

**Spotted on a business marquee in Tacoma, Washington: MY BOSS TOLD ME TO CHANGE THE SIGN, SO I DID.**

—K.H. North Platte, Nebraska

few breaks, he went to the hotel restaurant to grab a bite.

When his food came, Billy, his mind in a fog, bowed his head for the blessing and whispered these words to God: "Good evening, Holiday Inn, how can I help you?"

—BOB COOK  
Ashland, Kentucky

**Feeling ill**, my supervisor went to a nearby doctor, who ordered an EKG. Upon reading the results, the doctor declared that my boss was suffering a cardiac arrest and called an ambulance to whisk him off to the hospital. There, doctors performed their own tests. But those came back negative. After some quick sleuthing, the problem was solved:

The first doctor had read the EKG upside down.

—SUZANNE CLARKE  
Brownsville, Oregon

**Our booking office** had three phones. One day during lunch, I was responsible for answering all of them. It was a constant repeat of "May I help you?" or "Will you hold?"

I guess I got confused because I surprised one man on the other end of the line when I answered his call with, "May I hold you?"

—VERA GRANGER  
Arizona City, Arizona

**ANYTHING FUNNY** happen to you at work? It could be worth \$\$\$\$. For details, go to page 3 or [RD.COM/SUBMIT](#).

**THE CUSTOMER IS (NOT) ALWAYS RIGHT**

♦ The Outside-the-Box Thinker award goes to the customer who called a travel agency asking about legal requirements while traveling in Europe. "If I register my car in France and then take it to England, do I have to change the steering wheel to the other side of the car?"

—CUSTOMERTHINK.COM



♦ The Gutsiest Customer of the Year award goes to a woman in Texas who pulled a cake off a Walmart shelf and devoured much of it while shopping. When she reached the checkout counter, she demanded that she be given a steep discount for the cake since half of it was missing. Walmart had a better idea—they banned her from their stores.

—THE WEEK

MARK PARIS/OFFTHEMARK.COM

TAYNA CONSTANTINE/GETTY IMAGES



# HEROES IN THE HEARTLAND



It has been 25 years since a truck bomb ripped through a federal office building in Oklahoma City. The tales of courage and survival amid the horror that day are as searing and inspiring as ever.

By Henry Hurt

A firefighter's valiant effort to save a young life (left) symbolized the day.

The artifacts shown here are now stored at the Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum.

**At around six on the morning of April 19, 1995, the area around the nine-story Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in the heart of Oklahoma City began to come alive as hundreds of people—workers, visitors, folks with government business—converged on the downtown area.**



Among those heading toward the building that day was a man driving a large yellow truck, its sides emblazoned with the black-lettered logo *Ryder*.

Inside the 20-foot truck were 4,800 pounds of a ghoulish, volatile mixture of diesel fuel oil and gray ammonium nitrate fertilizer, which filled as many as two dozen 55-gallon blue plastic barrels. The entire truck was a lethal bomb.

Shortly before 9 a.m., the man

pulled the yellow truck up to a parking spot on the street in front of the Murrah Building. The truck was just east of the center of the north-facing building. Thirty feet away, above the entrance, the children of the America's Kids childcare center were playing. Some of them had parents who worked in the 18-year-old glass-and-granite-clad building, which housed 16 federal agencies.

Just a few minutes before 9 a.m., the man lit the fuse and walked away. In the day care center, the smallest children had been placed in their cribs to settle down for naps. The older children sang their favorite songs, then had free time to play.

The fireball that hit the Murrah Building seven thousandths of a second after detonation put 1,000 pounds of pressure on every square inch of the structure's surface. It lifted all nine floors upward,



▲ More than 500 people worked in the Murrah Building (facing page and above). The rescue and recovery effort lasted for 16 days.

shearing off the connecting steel reinforcing bars (called rebar) and demolishing three of the building's major support columns.

Desks, file cabinets, and chairs became deadly shrapnel. Chunks of concrete—ranging from fist-sized to wall-sized—were tossed about. Millions of shards of glass, as well as plastic from the bomb, became sharpened daggers that sliced through the air at the speed of bullets.

In violent undulations, whole floors were ripped loose from their moorings. Then, yielding to gravity,

the floors collapsed, sandwiching together and funneling thousands of tons of debris down toward a giant crater blasted out by the bomb.

A few minutes after the blast, a breeze lifted the smoke and dust, and sunlight flooded the groaning carcass that the Murrah Building had become. Its cheerful face was gone—completely ripped away. The cavity carved out by the bomb reached almost to the rear of the structure. Daylight shone clearly from the other side. Twisted cables spilled from the top. Grotesquely contorted rebar jutted wildly in all directions. Fire and burglar alarms shrieked from nearby buildings, which took some of the brunt of the explosion.

Within minutes, a rallying cry spread through the confusion: the

OPENING SPREAD: CHARLES PORTER IV/ZUMAPRESS.COM (INSET); THIS PAGE, JIM ARGO/GETTY IMAGES

BILL VAUGH/AP/SHUTTERSTOCK



childcare center. It was obvious that those children were the highest priority for rescue. With sirens drowning out the crescendo of screams, rescuers by the hundreds began to arrive. They struggled into the jagged heaps of rubble, seeking America's Kids on the second floor.

But soon they realized there was no childcare center. There was no second floor.

What rescuers did find as they clawed through the wreckage was what had been left behind by the children: pieces of clothing, shredded books, a small crumpled shoe, a crushed toy, a stilled mobile. Most horrifying, however, was the almost unspeakable human evidence of the powerful evil that had descended upon this place: a baby's arm, a battered torso, a chubby finger.

One of the first into the building was Det. Sgt. Don Hull of the Oklahoma City Police Department. He and fellow officers crawled through mazes of twisted rebar and shifting concrete slabs. The air was so thick with dust that rescuers—many of them, like Hull, dressed in business suits and with no special equipment—were forced to take breaths as shallow as possible.

Early on, Hull saw a baby in the rubble he thought to be dead. A massive gash marked the side of its face, but there was no blood, and no movement. The baby's arm was twisted around so grotesquely—nearly wrung off—that bone protruded from the biceps.

For some reason, Hull stopped just a moment to pick up the dead baby and straighten out its arm. "I heard a huge gasp," Hull says. "And blood burst from the wounds, as if jostling the body somehow started the heart going."

Hull pressed the infant against his chest, holding the mangled arm in place, and began crawling upward through the heavy rubble. He and his fellow officers had been handing off living victims in a sort of bucket brigade to the outside. But Hull was afraid the baby's arm would fall off if he did that. So he struggled on.

When the baby stopped gasping, Hull began to administer rudimentary CPR, breathing into the child's mouth and nose. This happened twice on the way out. As Hull broke from the building and headed for the closest triage area, he found himself screaming over and over, "Breathe, baby, breathe!"

As he reached an ambulance, Hull saw a couple running toward him—the woman screaming that it was her baby in his arms. Hull swiveled away, not letting them see the child. "I couldn't let them look," he says. "It was too horrible. The baby probably wasn't going to make it, and I didn't want that to be the last sight they had."

"Hold the arm tight!" he yelled to a paramedic, finally handing the baby off.

It was 9:30 a.m., and Hull, like so many others, would be there for hours—until he quit from exhaustion.

1. The building's nine collapsed floors made the rescue treacherous.



2. The explosion occurred 30 feet from a childcare center.



FROM TOP: ROMAN BAS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES; DAVID LONGSTREATH/SHUTTERSTOCK

## FIRST RESPONDERS

The initial response of local medical teams was as impressive as that of the police, fire, and rescue units. Melissa Webster, a manager at an ambulance service, was at the scene with an ambulance 90 seconds after the blast. Fearing that her own trembling building was about to collapse, she had fled from her desk to the street and had seen the black smoke rising six blocks to the south. She and a colleague leaped into an ambulance with six other paramedics.

Within an hour, her paramedics—only one team of dozens—had sent

more than 200 of the wounded to hospitals and managed to treat hundreds of others. By then, all the company's ambulances had arrived, and they were loading as many as five injured people into each vehicle.

Eventually, Webster came face-to-face with the worst dilemma to confront paramedics in triage. A young woman lay before her with terrible neck and head injuries. "She's not breathing," said one of Webster's associates. "You'll have to call her"—meaning that Webster needed to tag her as too far gone to help so they could move on to assisting people with better odds of survival.

Webster felt for the woman's pulse. She wasn't breathing at all, but her heartbeat was strong. Webster knew at that moment she could not "call" her. "Her pulse is as strong as mine," she said. She would see that the woman was given a chance.

"Put her in the ambulance and get her on a ventilator," Webster told a colleague. She turned to minister to others.

She remained at the scene for 12 hours. Later, at home, Webster fell into the arms of her husband and their son and daughter. Covered in soot, she retired to take a shower. She had managed not to break down, but when the hot water hit her body, for some reason all the experiences of the day cascaded upon her. There in the shower, she cried uncontrollably for the next hour—until her

husband tapped on the door to see whether she was OK.

Quietly, a few days later, Webster checked on the young woman she had refused to declare dead. The woman had horrendous injuries that would take months to heal. But she was alive and would get well.

Scenes like this were commonplace as one of the best-organized rescue efforts in history went into action. Within hours, search-and-rescue teams were en route from California, New York, Washington State, Arizona, Maryland, Florida, and Virginia. In addition to support from K-9 search-dog teams, the most sophisticated technical equipment in the world was brought to the scene—tiny television cameras that could peer into remote crevices, infrared devices that could detect body heat.

## RESCUE FROM THE RUBBLE

Priscilla Salyers saw bright stars. An investigative assistant for the Customs Service, located on the fifth floor, she had been talking to her boss, Paul Ice, at 9:02 a.m. when a thunderous, gale-force roar of wind whooshed past her head. Then silence. And blackness. Salyers tried to move but could not. She sensed a tremendous pressure. Something seemed to be crushing her head.

I'm having a seizure, she thought. Is it a stroke? Am I paralyzed?

But her mind was too clear, she thought, for her to have had a stroke or heart attack. She told herself, If I can just get my head up off my desk ...

Nothing. Salyers realized there was little she could move except for her left wrist and hand. Her mouth was filled with earthy-tasting powder. There was a powerful pressure on her head from something that seemed to be slowly crushing her skull.

She was facedown with her rump higher than her head, which was twisted toward her right. Her right arm was pinned under her, and her left arm splayed outward. With the fingers of her left hand, Salyers began trying to dig into the dirtlike substance of the powdered concrete. She also began to pray for God to give her the strength to survive.

Oddly, her most immediate annoyance was a piece of chewing gum in her mouth that had become an irritant. The gum was infused with a foul grit, and Salyers desperately wanted to get rid of it. But her mouth and jaw were so tightly constricted that it was impossible for her to spit it out. It was all she could do to breathe.

About 30 minutes into her entombment, Salyers heard the far-off voices of men. Then, suddenly, close by, she heard a man speak sharply: "OK, this is the day care center. We have a lot of children in here."

Salyers tried to speak, to scream, to let the man know she was there. But she couldn't make her mouth work.

Salyers's greatest terror was that the crushing pressure on her head was becoming greater and greater. She prayed for calm and wisdom, realizing that if the men began working on top of her, it could push the pressure on her head to a breaking point. She also wondered why the men thought

## SOMETHING SEEMED TO BE CRUSHING HER HEAD. SHE THOUGHT, IS THIS A STROKE?

they were at the day care center, three stories below her office.

But then the voices were gone. Eerie silence returned. Her breath was coming much faster now, and she began to feel sleepy. But I've got to pick up Josh at school, so I need to stay awake to do that, she thought. Salyers had continued to rotate her left arm and hand. She prayed that her hand was visible and that she would be able to wave it if she again heard voices.

Suddenly, she heard a shout off to her left: "Hey! Here's a live one!"

Then Salyers felt someone take her left hand and hold it and rub it. Her muscles first went limp with joy and relief—then she squeezed the hand as hard as she could. When the man asked her name, she summoned all of her strength to say, "Priscilla!"

The man realized how hard it was for her to talk, so he did most of the

talking—the sound of his voice flowing into her brain like a glorious symphony.

Salyers indicated to the man that she didn't know what had happened. "The building blew up," he said. "We don't know why, but we're checking it out." By this time, others had crawled into the cramped, cavelike area to remove the rubble piece by piece. At every moment, someone held Salyers's hand.

Then, as her hope rose, the man holding her hand spoke gently: "Priscilla, we're going to have to leave now. We'll be back, but we have to go get a tool." What he did not say was that rescuers were being evacuated because of a bomb threat.

She gripped the man's hand with all her might and found new breath as she begged him not to leave, wondering why they all had to go. She wouldn't release the man's hand. She felt him gently pry her fingers loose. "I'm so sorry," he said, his voice cracking. "We don't have any choice. We'll be back. I promise." Then they were gone, and Salyers was alone in the terrible silence.

Her first reaction was a mixture of terror and anger. Because of the rubble that had been removed, her body was not as tightly constricted, though her head was still in a viselike grip.

As she writhed, she realized there was something poking her in the stomach. She worked her hand around so that she could feel the protrusion. It was a hand—a man's hand, judging by its size. Her heart leaped, thinking

it was her colleague Paul Ice and that perhaps he was in the same situation. She squeezed the hand, but it was cold and unresponsive. For the first time, she began to weep.

Then, out of nowhere, a loud voice boomed, "Hey, over here!" The scene was just like the first time—though the voices were different. A man took her hand, and she squeezed back.

"Get me out of here," she pleaded. Then she closed her eyes and waited and prayed. The men explained each step they took, the most dangerous one being to remove a massive metal-and-concrete column virtually resting on her head. It was a miracle that it had not slipped a single centimeter more. Above her were the awful sounds of circular saws and pneumatic tools. The rescuers worked fast, knowing that at any instant the groaning building might shift at this location.

Salyers's legs and body were freed first, and then both arms. The rescuers told her the hardest part would be last—getting her tightly pinned head free by trying to lift the monstrous column crushing her and, at the same moment, whisking her out from under it. When she was dragged free, terrible pain exploded in her—she had broken ribs, a collapsed lung, and countless nasty puncture wounds all over her body. Four hours and 15 minutes had passed since the bomb exploded. She was so shaken, she hardly heard the cheers from rescuers and bystanders as she was carried from the rubble.



FROM TOP: DAVID J. PHILLIP/AP; MARK HUMPHREY/AP; SHUTTERSTOCK

Despite the agony of the moment and the ongoing threat of danger, volunteers from around the country mobilized to save as many lives as they could.

## AGAINST ALL ODDS

On what had once been the sixth floor, Capt. Randy Norfleet, a Marine pilot, was hurled against a wall with the force of a hurricane at the instant of the explosion. With quickly fading eyesight, Norfleet saw that he had landed about five feet from where the front of the building was sheared off. Then everything started to go black.

When he put his hand to his head, Norfleet could feel what he knew was a severed artery pulsing from his mangled right eye. The blood pouring from his face distracted him from noticing that flying glass had also severed arteries in his arm and wrist. He was quickly weakening.

But as Norfleet's strength ebbed, a powerful instinct came over him. He knew he could not wait for rescuers but needed to risk everything to get out of the building and get medical help. To wait, he sensed, would be fatal.

Someone clamped a T-shirt to his eye socket to stanch the flow. With others helping him, he dragged himself toward a rear stairwell, fighting through rubble clouded with thick dust, and staggered down six floors, where he collapsed into the hands of paramedics. When he reached the hospital, he learned he had lost 50 percent of his blood volume. After more than five hours of surgery and 280 stitches, Randy Norfleet survived—though he would never again be able to serve as a pilot.

Little Nekia McCloud, age four, who was probably putting her doll down for a nap when the bomb shattered America's Kids, seems to have been blown out of the building. It is unclear exactly where she was found, but medic Jason Skaggs, whose unit reached the scene at 9:07, says someone thrust her into his arms minutes after he arrived.

"I couldn't imagine that this child could live," Skaggs says. "She was hardly breathing—just torn all to pieces." There was every reason to "call" the child and move on to someone with better odds of surviving. But Skaggs refused to deny the little girl a chance for life and pumped her chest as he ran with her to an ambulance.

Nekia was in such horrible shape when she reached the hospital that her family was not allowed to see her at first. Doctors asked them to bring photographs so they could try to identify her in that fashion. According to Faye DeBose, Nekia's grandmother, the little girl's skull was crushed. Both legs were broken, and her lungs were filled with debris.

The doctors told the family that if she could survive for 72 hours, she would have a chance. And on the third day, as her grandmother sat holding the unconscious child's hand and praying, she felt a squeeze. "Sooner or later," says DeBose, "I knew Nekia would be OK."

But it would be later rather than sooner. Nekia's injuries were so grave

that she had to virtually start her young life over—learning to talk, to walk, to understand what was going on around her. She was in a coma for

**"I COULDN'T IMAGINE THIS CHILD COULD LIVE. SHE WAS HARDLY BREATHING."**

a month. That is why the family was so overwhelmed at what Nekia said when she was starting to speak again.

The family had sought out medic Jason Skaggs, now a police officer, to thank him for not giving up on their child. Upon meeting Skaggs, the little girl first looked at him shyly, then turned to her mother and grandmother and said quietly, "He's my angel."

## BRAVE TO THE END

Hope of finding others lay in the ghastly ruins of the Murrah Building that first day when hundreds of people were listed simply as missing. In the absence of solid information, people grasped at whatever they could find for sustenance.

One of those missing was Michael Loudenslager, 48, who was in his office at the General Services Administration on the first floor when the bomb exploded. For two days, his wife, Bettie Loudenslager, and their two children heard nothing. But their hopes brightened when one of Michael's friends,

recuperating from terrible injuries, told a remarkable story.

Randy Ledger, 38, was also on the first floor at the time of the explosion. He was buried under the rubble, and blood poured from his slashed throat. As he lay there, bleeding to death, he heard the distinctively gruff, husky voice of his friend: "Don't worry, guy," Michael Loudenslager boomed. "I see you, and I'm going to get help." When rescue workers found Ledger, they clawed the rubble from his body. Paramedics rushed to stop the gushing blood and carried him away.

Only minutes from death, Ledger reached the hospital and began a slow recovery from a severed artery and vein in his neck. Although he could not speak at first and communicated only by notes, he was able to let people know that it was Mike Loudenslager who had found him. Certainly, Mike was alive.

Days later, though, Mike's body was recovered—crushed beneath a huge concrete block deep inside the building, far from the spot where he had last seen his friend. Apparently he had gone farther in to help get someone else. "That's the kind of guy he was," Ledger says.

## HUGS AND TEARS

Even those not physically touched by the disaster will feel its effects for the rest of their lives. When Don Hull went home to rest after spending seven

hours at the Murrah Building, he felt he had to keep active. He dreaded what he would see if he let sleep take control of his brain. Images more awful than any nightmare kept coming to mind. Most of the people he had seen in the building had been dead or dying. "As long as I kept my eyes open, I could control what I was seeing," he says.

With their own daughters, seven and three, in bed, Hull and his wife collapsed in front of the television set to catch up on the larger story of the bombing. One late-night news report said most of the children in the childcare center were presumed to be dead. Then it showed a very brief interview with one parent whose child had emerged alive from the blast.

Hull grabbed his wife's hand. "I know that guy. I pulled his baby out!" Hull had been told the baby died, but the man on TV seemed to be hopeful about his child's chances, and then the interview was over.

At once, Hull called the hospital, and an operator put him through to the waiting room where Dan and Dawn Webber were keeping vigil over their son, Joseph. Hull wanted to know how the child was.

Dan confirmed they were the parents he had shielded from seeing the badly injured baby. He explained that the boy was in grave condition but that doctors thought he had a chance. "There's no way our son would be alive if you hadn't gotten him out," Dan told Hull.

The Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum opened five years after the tragedy.



Overwhelmed to know that the child had survived this long, Hull and his wife went out the next morning, got a gift, and went to the hospital. There in the corridor, Hull looked at the Webbers. They all hugged, long and with warmth. The Webbers then invited Hull to Joseph's bedside.

Says Dan: "It is nothing less than a series of miracles that Don Hull saw Joseph, that he picked him up, that he felt hope, that he breathed life into him and carried him out. It is truly miraculous, the work of God." **B**

*In all, 168 people died in the Oklahoma City bombing, which to this day is the worst act of terrorism ever*

*carried out on U.S. soil by an American citizen. Exactly five years after the explosion, President Bill Clinton dedicated the Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum on the site of the Murrah Building. Its centerpiece is the Survivor Tree, an American elm that stood 150 feet from the explosion yet survived—and continues to grow to this day. In the 25 years since the bombing, seeds from the Survivor Tree have been harvested and distributed to the families of the survivors, visitors to the memorial, and others. A Survivor Tree offspring is also growing on the lawn of the White House.*

**THIS ARTICLE** originally appeared in the May 1996 issue of Reader's Digest.

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# TAKING THE LEAP

*A woman in search of a life  
with less fear confronts her three  
biggest triggers—all at once*

BY Eva Holland

FROM THE BOOK **NERVE: ADVENTURES  
IN THE SCIENCE OF FEAR**

ILLUSTRATIONS BY Cornelia Li





In the last moments before I climbed into the Cessna, I turned and faced a young bearded man who was pointing a video camera at my face. I wore a jumpsuit made of panels of fluorescent orange and green fabric, the colors faded by years of sun and wind. A pair of goggles and a leather helmet were strapped on my head. “Why are you here?” the man asked me.

I TOOK A DEEP breath. “My name’s Eva,” I said, speaking to the camera lens, “and I’m here to face my fear of falling from heights.”

The small crowd that had gathered around me oohed and cheered as I crawled into the tiny plane, awkward in my elaborate harness. Only the pilot had a seat—all the others had been removed—and I sat on the floor behind him, facing backward, spooning with my divemaster, Barry. Another pair climbed in beside us: divemaster Neil and his charge, Matthew, a first-time skydiver like me.

They sat by the open doorway, and Matthew and I bumped fists as

the little Cessna rattled its way down the gravel runway. Matthew looked elated. I knew I was supposed to be excited, too, but I couldn’t get there. For the moment, I existed in a bubble of cold calm. That, I figured, was preferable to the likely alternative: wild, hair-tearing panic.

I was acting on a very popular idea: the notion that facing one’s fears is the key to conquering them. In their third year at Hogwarts, Harry Potter and his classmates are taught by Professor Remus Lupin to face down their fears by laughing at them. In *The Sound of Music*, the abbess tells Maria she must confront her feelings,

not hide out in the abbey. And in the novel *Dune*, in the iconic Bene Gesserit “Litany Against Fear,” Frank Herbert wrote, “I will face my fear. I will permit it to pass over me and through me ... Where the fear has gone there will be nothing. Only I will remain.” Fear, Herbert wrote, was the mind-killer. I wanted my mind to live.

I’D ARRIVED AT the small airstrip in the Canadian village of Carcross several hours earlier. Among its few claims to fame is the Carcross

gather in a jumble of tents, U-Hauls, cars, RVs, and trucks loaded with campers. Barry is their patriarch. When I met him, he’d been jumping for 39 years, including more than 2,000 tandem jumps with clients. He had gray hair and a gray moustache, a big belly and a bigger voice. He’s not what you picture when you think “professional thrill-seeker,” but I found his age and experience more comforting than any young gun could have been. As they say in Alaska, there are old pilots, and there

## I KNEW I WAS SUPPOSED TO BE EXCITED, BUT I COULDN’T GET THERE. I EXISTED IN A BUBBLE OF COLD CALM.



Desert, billed as the world’s smallest, a tiny collection of soft, rolling dunes surrounded by snow-etched mountains and boreal forest. Every summer, a skydiving outfit based in British Columbia caravans up here for a couple of weeks and offers people the chance to jump out of a plane, plummet through free fall, deploy a parachute, and eventually land in the forgiving embrace of this tiny patch of sand.

The pro skydivers live by the airstrip, just outside the village. The vibe of their encampment is somewhere between summer weekend campout and itinerant circus troupe. They

are bold pilots, but there are no old, bold pilots.

When I pulled up, just before 10 a.m., most people were gathered in camp chairs around a fire. I was invited to sit down, offered tea and a hunk of fry bread. I was here because my three most potent physical fears are of heights, speed, and falling. And there was nothing, I figured, that combined all three as effectively—or as horrifically—as skydiving. My notion was to take a blitzkrieg approach to facing my fears. I would force myself to do the scariest thing I could think of, in a full sensory assault on my fear response, and if I came out

## THE LANDSCAPE BELOW ME WAS FAMILIAR, COMFORTING. COUNTLESS TIMES I HAD HIKED IT, BIKED IT, PADDLED IT, DRIVEN IT.



the other side, I would be ... changed, right? Empowered. That was the idea. So far, I just felt sick and scared.

**B**ARRY INTRODUCED US first-time jumpers to the gear we'd be using, explained how the various safety mechanisms worked, and informed me that if I tried to grab on to the plane as we jumped, latching on in a last-minute panic, he would break my fingers to release my grip if he had to. His tone suggested that it wouldn't be his first time doing so.

I signed the bluntest waiver form I'd ever seen. "Sport parachuting is not perfectly safe," it read. "We can not and do not offer any guarantees. We do not guarantee that either or both of your parachutes will open properly. We do not guarantee that individuals at SkydiveBC North or Guardian Aerospace Holdings Inc. will function without error. We do not guarantee that any of our backup devices will function properly, and we certainly do not guarantee that you won't get hurt. You may get hurt or killed, even if you do everything correctly." The form did nothing to calm me down. I signed my name and handed it over.

Barry showed me how we would enter and exit the Cessna. The plane was tiny, and when we launched ourselves through its low doorway, we would be harnessed together. There was a careful protocol to follow. I'd pictured us stepping out of a full-height doorway, or even a yawning, garage-style opening, like in the movies. But the small plane, plus our joined bodies, demanded an awkward crouch-and-roll. For some reason, the sheer impossibility of the maneuver—really, I was going to tandem-somersault out of a tiny opening in midflight?—calmed me down. This couldn't be real. It seemed like a joke.

Then, suddenly, it was time. I pulled on my fluorescent jumpsuit, my helmet, and my goggles, and I got cinched into my harness. I faced the camera, declared my intentions, and climbed into the plane.

We were airborne, rising up above the desert, Carcross, and Bennett Lake stretching away into the mountains. The landscape below me was familiar, comforting. Countless times I had hiked it, biked it, paddled it, driven it, flown over it in commercial jets. I've never minded flying; it was the



falling I was worried about. I tried to breathe deeply and focus on the scenery. There was the train bridge. There was the beach. There was the highway leading home.

The ascent to 10,000 feet seemed to take hours, and as we climbed, the weird out-of-body calm I'd felt on takeoff seeped away.

It was like coming out of shock, losing that numbed protection and feeling the full pain of an injury for the first time—only instead of pain, I felt a terror that rose through my body until it reached my lungs and my throat and my brain and threatened to choke me.

Barry, behind me, sensed my growing tension—no surprise, since we were pressed together like a pair of lugers on a sled. He squeezed my shoulder periodically and pointed out landmarks below. As we neared jump height, the Cessna circled a large cloud, skirting its edge.

"You might be a lucky girl and get a cloud jump," Barry said. I did not want a cloud jump.

The pilot announced that we were nearly in position for Neil and Matthew's jump. They shimmied toward the gaping hole where the plane's door should have been and nudged themselves awkwardly into a spooning





crouch on the lip of the doorway.

Seeing them inch toward open space was nauseating, and I looked away. I couldn't watch them vanish into the sky; I stared at the plane's riveted metal wall instead. The pilot dipped the plane slightly to the right, tipping Neil and Matthew out the door, and then, liberated of their combined 270 pounds, the Cessna sprang back suddenly to the left. My stomach clenched and jerked, and I swallowed hard.

Now it was our turn. Barry directed me to roll over and scuttle into position as the pilot got us lined up for another jump. My breath came fast; I struggled for control. I desperately wanted to shout, No, no, I changed my mind. I don't want to do this. I clenched my jaw. I knew that if I said the word, they would take me back down to the ground, keep my money, and let me walk away. The whole day would be for nothing.

Eventually I got myself in place, hunched over with my kneecaps level in the front of the door frame, Barry

behind me. I tried to unfocus my eyes so I couldn't see the opening and the endless air next to me, the ground far below. Over the roar of the wind and the plane, Barry shouted last-minute adjustments to the pilot, getting us lined up just right. "Give me five left! ... Five right!" The seconds stretched out while I fought the urge to quit. I had the sensation of trying to hold up some massive weight, my strength ebbing away, moment by moment.

Finally Barry put his right foot out on the narrow metal step fixed to the plane's fuselage below the open door frame and yelled for me to do the same. It took me three tries—the wind first blew my foot behind, then in front, before I lodged it against his. Next I had to scooch around so my left knee pointed out over the lip of the doorway and lock both my hands on to my harness, gripping a pair of handles at shoulder height. I was glad to have something to hold on to. Ever since Barry had promised to snap my finger bones if need be, I'd had

a recurring vision of myself reaching out in panic as we exited the plane and fastening on to the door frame or a strut with a viselike grip fueled by fear, pulling the Cessna off-balance and risking everyone's lives.

All I could do was stay limp and trust Barry to get us in the air—actually participating in our exit from the plane was beyond me. I felt him rocking back and forth to get our momentum up, heard him yell something, but I was deep in my own head. Then we rolled out of the plane and into space.

tried to think about arcing my body into a slight bow: feet together, head up, my belly pointing the way down. I stared at the ground rushing up at us, and suddenly I opened my mouth and spoke for the first time since we'd started the flight up.

"Holy —!" I yelled, and the wind seemed to tear the words out of my mouth to make room for more. "Holy —! Holy —! Holy —!" A small part of my brain noted, amazed, that I could even hear myself, could even produce audible speech, with the force of the air roaring by me. (Later,

## ONCE I GOT STARTED, I COULDN'T SEEM TO STOP. MY VOICE GOT HOARSE, MY THROAT RAW. FOR 37 SECONDS, I KEPT HOLLERING.



Barry had urged me to keep an eye on the Cessna as I somersaulted out of it. Watching the plane appear to fall away from you when you were the one plummeting was, he assured me, one of the coolest parts of a jump. But I had no desire to watch the earth and the sky spin around me. I kept my eyes shut hard until I could feel that Barry had stabilized us in free fall.

I felt him tap me on the shoulder, then again, and yell something in my ear, and I peeled my hands off the harness handles and thrust my arms out wide like I was supposed to. I

I would learn that we had reached a peak speed of 101 miles per hour.)

I screamed those same two words over and over through our entire 37 seconds of free fall. Once I got started, I couldn't seem to stop. My voice got hoarse, my throat raw. I kept hollering. Dimly, over the sound of my own swearing, I heard Barry say something about our chute, and then a force seemed to pluck at us from above—not a hard jerk, but now my feet were dangling below me and I could feel my weight pushing down on the crotch straps of my harness.

I stopped yelling. Barry reached



**I STARED AT THE SAND, TRYING TO FIND A SILVER LINING TO COVER UP THE BOTTOMLESS CHASM OF FEAR I CARRIED INSIDE ME.**

forward and offered me the straps that controlled the parachute, to let me steer. It took me a couple of tries to put my shaking hands through the loops, and I was too weak to pull effectively. I could feel him pulling the cords for me from above.

Other jumpers had described the

long, leisurely parachute descent after free fall as “relaxing.” But I couldn’t relax—I was too aware of my weight in the harness, my feet dangling, the familiar landmarks far below me. There was the train bridge. There was the beach. There was the highway leading home. Barry spun us around, and

I felt sick, hated him for a moment, and quavered that I didn’t like that. The fall went on and on. Finally we neared the desert, and Barry took over steering entirely.

He twisted us from side to side, tacking like a sailboat to shed speed as we came in over the dunes. Then he gave me the signal to pull my knees up (I did my shaky best) and pull down hard on the chute straps. I braced for impact, but my feet never touched—suddenly I was on my belly in the sand, Barry on top of me. He released the right waist clip so he could roll off of me as the ground crew approached, cheering, and freed me completely.

The crew and other jumpers clustered around; someone helped me to my feet. I tried to smile, but my cheeks and lips felt as wobbly as my arms and legs. I stared at the sand and dug around inside myself, trying to find some pride in my accomplishment, some kind of silver lining with which to cover up the apparently bottomless

chasm of fear I carried inside me.

Later, after I’d stripped off my harness and helmet and jumpsuit, after I’d calmed down enough to attempt the drive home safely, I did find some pride. I had done it, after all. I hadn’t backed down, pulled the plug at the last minute, and forfeited my money and my dignity. I hadn’t clutched on to the airplane as we rolled out of it, killing us all. I hadn’t screamed the entire way down.

These were small victories. But I knew now that if I was going to achieve a real transformation, to rearrange my relationship with my fears, it would not be through shock and awe. One \$400 skydive was not going to solve my problems. I needed to be smarter, more systematic, more scientific.

There was more than one way to face my fears. If necessary, I would try them all. **R**

FROM THE BOOK NERVE: ADVENTURES IN THE SCIENCE OF FEAR BY EVA HOLLAND. REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION OF THE U. S. PUBLISHER, THE EXPERIMENT, THEEXPERIMENT PUBLISHING.COM.



**Good Things Come to Those Who ... Oops**

Not yet

Not yet

Not yet

Not yet

**EAT ME NOW**

Too late.

—Avocados



## PIECE OF MIND

*Jigsaw puzzles aren't just fun. They can also relieve anxiety, especially when you put them together, well, together.*

BY Caitlin Agnew

WHILE OUT SHOPPING for Christmas presents in 2018, I bought myself a jigsaw puzzle on a whim. It was an unusual buy, one that I now recognize as an attempt at dealing with that particular stress many of us experience during the holidays. Don't get me wrong—I love seeing my family. But

holiday get-togethers have a way of putting any personal shortcomings at center stage. This cheery pink puzzle had everything I felt I needed to distract myself in one box. And at \$20, the price was right. Why not?

As soon as I started on my puzzle, I knew I'd found exactly what I was looking for. Instead of my usual late-night Netflix binge, I was sorting its



1,000 pieces well into the wee hours. I finished it in just a few days. I felt possessed by the soothing, methodical action, almost like I'd been hypnotized or spent hours meditating.

Robyn Breen, a dance instructor at Misfitstudio in Toronto, knows the feeling. At a family gathering years ago, Breen was reintroduced to puzzles and fell in love with their soothing effect.

"I thought, Whoa, I feel really good when I'm doing this. I feel really chill," she recalls. Breen suffers from anxiety, and when she was having worrisome thoughts about an upcoming trip to Nicaragua, she turned to puzzling instead of prescription medication. It worked, and jigsaws have since become an essential part of her daily routine.

Susan Vandermorris is a clinical

neuropsychologist at Toronto's Baycrest Health Sciences, a global leader in brain health and aging research. She says that any type of puzzle is good for the brain and points to the stress-relieving benefits of jigsaws in particular. "If you're doing a puzzle, you are, by definition, disconnected and engaged in a task that's immersive, away from the interruptions and stresses of day-to-day life," she says. "And that, of course, is good for your brain."

Vandermorris believes that doing puzzles with others boasts even more health benefits than doing them on your own, adding that it provides a rare


**"I THOUGHT, WHOA, I FEEL REALLY GOOD WHEN I'M DOING THIS. I FEEL REALLY CHILL."**

opportunity for intergenerational engagement. "Get the teenagers off their smartphones and working on a puzzle with Grandma, and suddenly you've got a really nice family interaction that seems to be harder and harder to come by these days."

Interaction was certainly hard to

come by for Jack Brait. The 23-year-old from Marshfield, Massachusetts, has autism and first took to puzzles as a kid because they "gave him a break from the demands of socializing," says his mom, Michele Brait, who soon realized her son had a remarkable ability. "He could complete a 1,000-piece puzzle in one sitting," she recalls.

As Jack grew, so did his puzzling talent—and its benefits. In 2014, while still in high school, he completed a 32,256-piece puzzle (then the largest in the world) and was inducted into the Ravensburger Largest Puzzle Hall of Fame. Three years later, he tackled another behemoth: 40,320 pieces. Last year, he finished a 52,110-piece.

Jack completed these puzzles by himself, but what used to be an escape from socializing now facilitates it. His oversize works attract attention, and he is more than willing to share the spotlight. "When I completed my first giant puzzle, I invited friends and family," he says. "I enjoy doing them around other people." But the best is when one of his puzzles is put on public display, as Jack likes to donate his handiwork. That, he says, makes him feel "unbelievable, proud, and happy." 

*With Emily Goodman*

**Supersize Me!**

"You like mayonnaise? Prove it." —Costco

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# CONNECTIONS

Your link to values and insights each month

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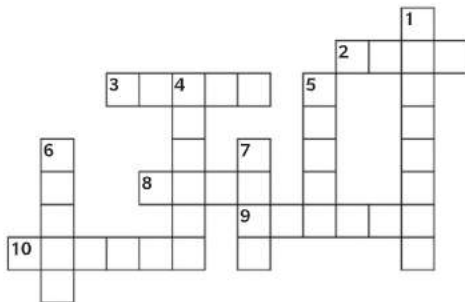


**BRAIN GAMES**

**April Fools'**

**EASY** To get in the spirit of April Fools' Day, place these terms in the grid.

- |        |          |
|--------|----------|
| SPOOF  | MISCHIEF |
| PARODY | QUIP     |
| JOKE   | STUNT    |
| COMEDY | JEST     |
| SATIRE | CAPER    |



**Hidden Produce**

**EASY** The names of five different fruits are hidden between consecutive words in the silly story below. Can you find them all?

Example: Washington, DC, and Lima, Peru, are on the **same longitude**. (melon)

A man goes to a lumberyard. He has little money, so he's looking for cheap lumber. But the prices are too high. Suddenly feeling really cheeky, the man decides to steal the wood he needs and, like a skilled escape artist, manages to slip away without arousing suspicion.



THE NOUN PROJECT (4)

**Sum-thing Special**

**DIFFICULT** Each letter from A to I has one of the nine values listed below. No two letters have the same value. Match each letter to a number to make the equations work.

- |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|
| 1  | 4  | 5  |
| 8  | 12 | 16 |
| 17 | 18 | 21 |

- F = A + B**  
**C = B + B**  
**D = B + C**  
**G = B + D**  
**I = A + E**  
**E = D + F**  
**H = F + G**

For more Brain Games, go to [RD.COM/CROSSWORDS](http://RD.COM/CROSSWORDS).

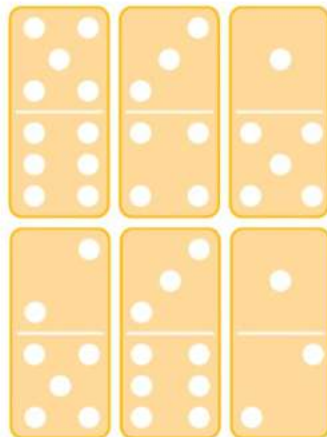


**Fickle Friends**

**MEDIUM** Kristen's friends want to buy her a wedding gift. Originally ten friends were going to chip in equally, but then two of them dropped out. Each of the remaining eight friends had to chip in another dollar to bring the total back up to the original amount. How much money did they plan to collect?

**Dominoes**

**MEDIUM** One of these dominoes is not like the others. Which one is it?



For answers, turn to **PAGE 123**.

MARCEL DANESI (SUM-THING SPECIAL AND DOMINOES); THE NOUN PROJECT (MONEY)

## WORD POWER

After Prohibition went into effect in 1920, Americans suffered through a long dry spell—save for the occasional dip into the bathtub gin. We're toasting the 100th anniversary with some spirited vocabulary. Take your best shot, then turn to page 122 for answers.

BY Sarah Chassé

**1. speakeasy** *n.*  
(/'speek-ee-zee)  
A expert bartender.  
B chatty drunk.  
C illegal bar.

**2. swill** *v.*  
(swil)  
A smuggle.  
B age in barrels.  
C drink freely.

**3. aperitif** *n.*  
(uh-pair-uh-'teef)  
A apricot brandy.  
B predinner cocktail.  
C swizzle stick.

**4. blotto** *adj.*  
(/'blah-toh)  
A with a splash of water.  
B intoxicated.  
C bubbly.

**5. distill** *v.*  
(dih-'stīll)  
A purify a liquid.  
B add a mixer.  
C flavor with bitters.

**6. wassail** *n.*  
(/'wah-suhl)  
A hot spiced beverage.  
B headache cure.  
C public house.

**7. bootleg** *adj.*  
(/'boot-leg)  
A made in small batches.  
B produced unlawfully.  
C watered down.

**8. katzenjammer** *n.*  
(/'kat-sun-jam-er)  
A beer garden.  
B corkscrew.  
C hangover.

**9. snifter** *n.*  
(/'snif-ter)  
A small goblet.  
B nightcap.  
C hip flask.

**10. Nebuchadnezzar** *n.*  
(neh-byuh-kud-'neh-zer)  
A enormous wine bottle.  
B tequila-based drink.  
C Egyptian chalice.

**11. aqua vitae** *n.*  
(ak-wuh 'vy-tee)  
A sparkling seltzer.  
B medicinal syrup.  
C strong liquor.

**12. sommelier** *n.*  
(suh-mull-'yay)  
A wine expert.  
B tasting room.  
C sweet vermouth.

**13. rathskeller** *n.*  
(/'rot-skeh-ler)  
A drinking game.  
B basement tavern.  
C dark ale.

**14. repeal** *v.*  
(ree-'peel)  
A put an end to.  
B garnish with lemon.  
C legalize.

**15. dram** *n.*  
(dram)  
A barstool.  
B small drink.  
C brewery.

## ARTHRITIS PAIN?

Are muscle and joint pains in your back, neck, shoulders or knees keeping you from enjoying daily activities? You should know of a new treatment that targets the source of pain—inflammation, instead of masking it with artificial cooling or warming.

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To play an interactive version of Word Power on your iPad, download the Reader's Digest app.

## Tippling Tonight? Tee-Totally Not

A *teetotaler*—aka someone who doesn't drink alcohol—is not necessarily a tea drinker, as the name suggests. The word likely came from the phrase “tee-total abstinence,” with the first syllable used simply to emphasize the t sound, similar to how you might say, “You're in trouble, with a capital T!”



## Word Power ANSWERS

**1. speakeasy (c)** *illegal bar.* Speakeasies, also known as “blind pigs” or “gin joints,” popped up in cities across America in the 1920s.

**2. swill (c)** *drink freely.* Mimi plans to spend her spring break sunbathing on the beach and swilling margaritas.

**3. aperitif (b)** *predinner cocktail.* After a round of aperitifs, the couple ordered filet mignon and a bottle of cabernet.

**4. blotto (b)** *intoxicated.* “Remember, you're going to college to learn, not to get blotto with your friends,” warned Dad.

**5. distill (a)** *purify a liquid.* Most rum is distilled from molasses.

**6. wassail (a)** *hot spiced beverage.* A wassail is just the thing to warm you up on a chilly evening.

**7. bootleg (b)** *produced unlawfully.* According to family lore, Grandpa sold bootleg whiskey from the back of his general store.

**8. katzenjammer (c)** *hangover.* I had a whopping katzenjammer the day after I turned 21!

**9. snifter (a)** *small goblet.* Hassan collects vintage snifters and highball glasses.

**10. Nebuchadnezzar (A)** *enormous wine bottle.* “Should I bid on that Nebuchadnezzar of champagne at the museum gala?” Carly wondered.

**11. aqua vitae (c)** *strong liquor.* Lakshmi has sworn off aqua vitae until she finishes her doctoral thesis.

**12. sommelier (A)** *wine expert.* A restaurant's sommelier can help you choose the perfect wine to complement your meal.

**13. rathskeller (B)** *basement tavern.* The inn offers a cozy rathskeller just below the formal dining room.

**14. repeal (A)** *put an end to.* Congress ratified the 21st Amendment in 1933, which repealed Prohibition.

**15. dram (B)** *small drink.* For dessert, I'll have the cherry cheesecake and a dram of amaretto, please.

## Vocabulary Ratings

**9 & BELOW:** rotgut  
**10–12:** vintage  
**13–15:** classic

## BRAIN GAMES ANSWERS

See page 118.

### April Fools'

ACROSS	DOWN
2. QUIP	1. MISCHIEF
3. CAPER	4. PARODY
8. JOKE	5. STUNT
9. SATIRE	6. SPOOF
10. COMEDY	7. JEST

### Hidden Produce

mango (man goes), lemon (little money), plum (cheap lumber), lychee (really cheeky), pear (escape artist)

### Sum-thing Special

A = 1, B = 4, C = 8,  
D = 12, E = 17, F = 5,  
G = 16, H = 21, I = 18

### Fickle Friends

\$40 (\$4 each split among ten friends or \$5 each split among eight friends)

### Dominoes

The sum of the dots on the top and bottom halves of each domino is an odd number—except for the domino in the top right corner, where it is an even number.

MAKE US LAUGH!



## Caption Contest

What's your clever description for this picture? Submit your funniest line at [RD.COM/CAPTIONCONTEST](http://RD.COM/CAPTIONCONTEST). Winners will appear in a future Photo Finish (PAGE 124).

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JULIA CHRISTE/OFSE/SHUTTERSTOCK



## PHOTO FINISH

YOUR *Funniest* CAPTIONS



### Winner

"Jonah will be right out!"

—DAVID MCCLBARY *Warsaw, Indiana*

### Runners-Up

"Marco!!!"

—CAROLYN DAVIS *Hillsborough, North Carolina*

Forty-five years later, the remake of *Jaws* seems to lack some real teeth.

—BRIAN SAGAR *Fairfax, California*

*To enter an upcoming caption contest, see the photo on PAGE 123.*



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MARCH 2020

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**RULINGS!**

From YOU BE THE JUDGE

**Tragedy Couldn't**  
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From TEXAS MONTHLY

**"How I Quit My**  
**Fast-Food Habit"**

From the book  
THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

**The Most Daring**  
**Parachute**  
**Rescue EVER**

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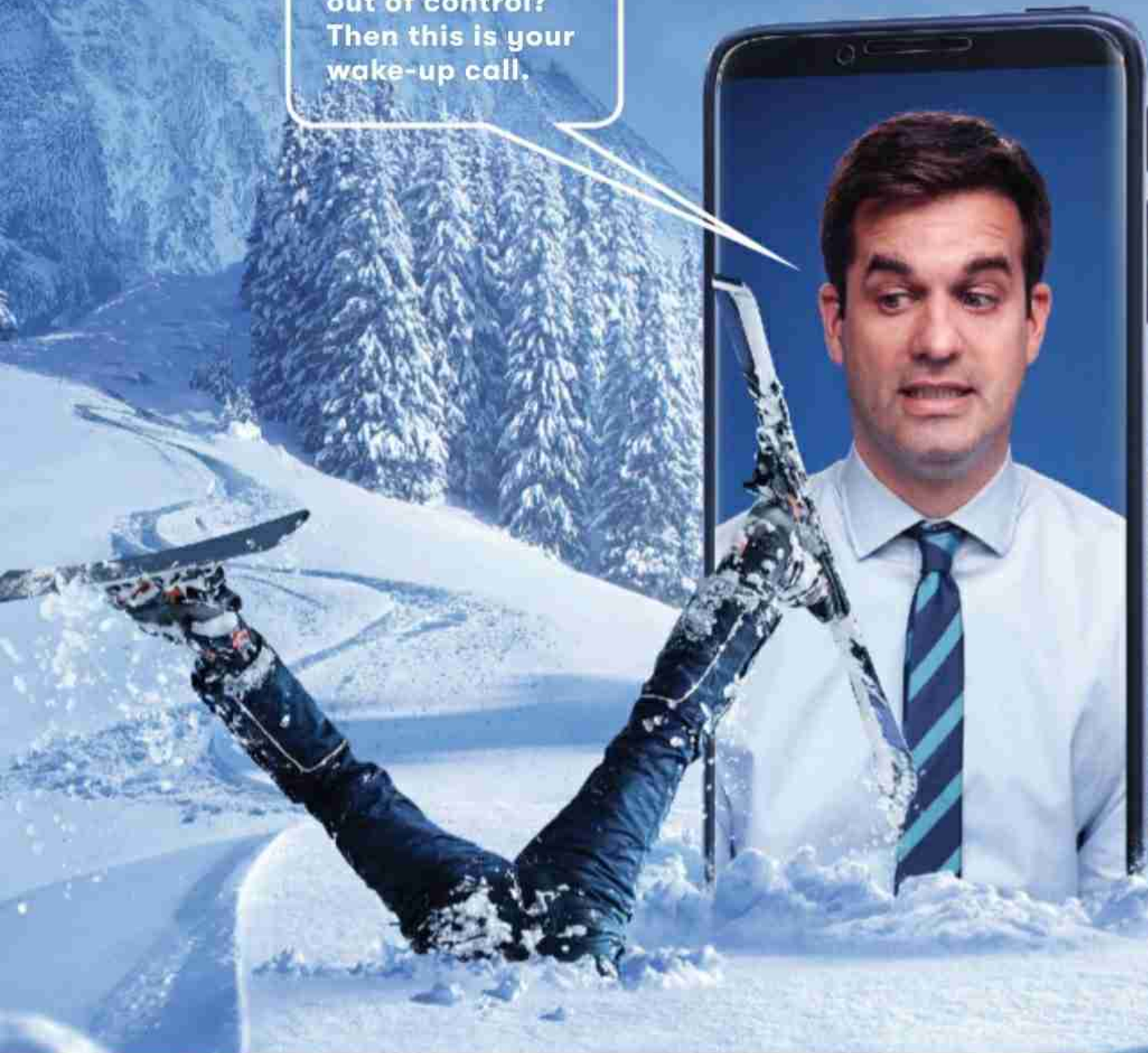
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Send letters to letters@rd.com or Letters, Reader's Digest, PO Box 6100, Harlan, Iowa 51593-1600. Include your full name, address, e-mail, and daytime phone number. We may edit letters and use them in all print and electronic media. **Contribute** your True Stories at rd.com/stories. If we publish one in a print edition of *Reader's Digest*, we'll pay you \$100. To submit humor items, visit rd.com/submit, or write to us at Jokes, 44 South Broadway, 7th Floor, White Plains, NY 10601. We'll pay you \$25 for any joke or gag and \$100 for any true funny story published in a print edition of *Reader's Digest* unless we specify otherwise in writing. Please include your full name and address in your entry. We regret that we cannot acknowledge or return unsolicited work. **Requests for permission** to reprint any material from *Reader's Digest* should be sent to permissions@tmbi.com. **Get help** with questions on subscriptions, renewals, gifts, address changes, payments, account information, and other inquiries at rd.com/help, or write to us at customer@rd.com or Reader's Digest, PO Box 6095, Harlan, Iowa 51593-1595.

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**DEAR READER**

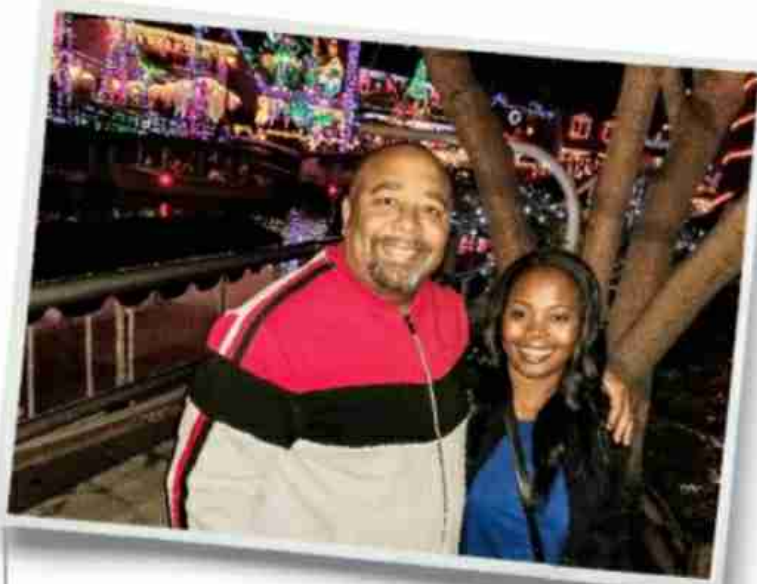
# A Life Saved

**L**AST YEAR, WE heard from reader Veronica Njoku-Carter the kind of tale we've been hearing for decades. A college counselor in California, she was browsing our e-mail newsletter in bed the morning after Thanksgiving when she spotted a headline that made her curious.

As she read our comfortingly scientific article, she got worried. Her husband, Derrick Carter, hadn't been feeling great for a while; now the little discomforts he'd noted jumped off her screen. All were symptoms of congestive heart failure.

She got him to phone his doctor immediately. The call nurse directed him straight to the ER. "I thank God that I read your article when I did," Njoku-Carter wrote. "It saved his life." At the hospital, an angiogram revealed three blocked arteries. "We had no idea his symptoms were signs of something so severe," Njoku-Carter said. Five days and a few stents later, he was back at home, alive and well.

Dealing with mysterious ailments without much help seems to have joined death



With content now found on [thehealthy.com](http://thehealthy.com), Njoku-Carter gave her husband new life.

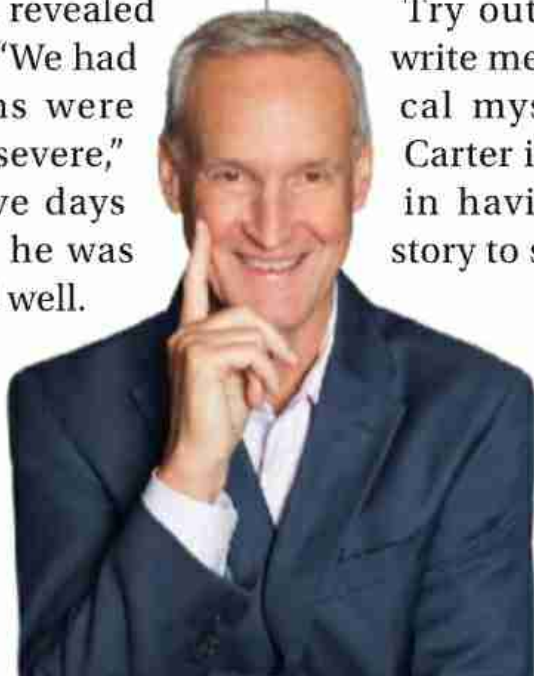
and taxes as the grim givens. A survey done for us by IPSOS (see our cover story on page 56) found that about half of adults with chronic conditions are frustrated by their MD's diagnosis. Many, like Njoku-Carter, have to take their care into their own hands.

That's why we just started a website called *The Healthy*. *RD* has led coverage of medicine for a century, but today the need is for more intensive online help. Staffed by our best health reporters, the site curates our most trusted content from experts and real people to inspire positive action.

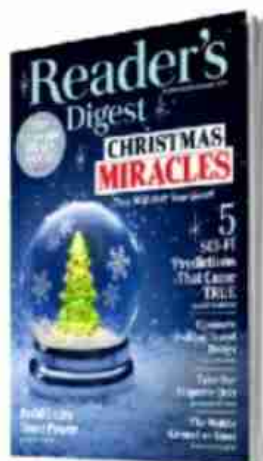
Try out [thehealthy.com](http://thehealthy.com). And write me about your own medical mystery. I know Njoku-Carter is not alone among you in having a valuable health story to share.

*Bruce Kelley,*  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Write to me at  
[letters@rd.com](mailto:letters@rd.com).



FROM TOP: COURTESY VERONICA NJOKU-CARTER. MATTHEW COHEN



## A Time for Miracles

I lost my father in May. Today in the mail I received a *Reader's Digest* in his name but with my address. Of all things, it was the Christmas Miracles issue. We both enjoyed the magazine, but I usually buy it at the grocery store. I just wanted you to know they sell subscriptions in heaven.

—L.M. *via e-mail*

### Mind Your Manners!

Even before reading this article, I had decided what to say the next time someone says I don't look handicapped: "Thank you. It's nice to know the eight orthopedic surgeries don't show that much!"

—DORI OWNBEY  
*Laramie, Wyoming*

I could not disagree more with the advice that the son should pay for some of the cost of

the damaged phone. The young lady was irresponsible for leaving her phone next to the pool, where anybody could have kicked it into the water.

—MIKE BARNARD  
*Plano, Texas*

### "My Pal Charles"

Several years ago, my husband and I were meeting in a hotel bar, and I arrived early. A tall man with a cane joined me, and we got to chatting. He was

visiting a friend at a local hospital and had recently had hip surgery. I was dealing with hip issues myself, and he offered me advice. My husband arrived and whispered to me, "That's Charles Barkley."

—PEGGY SCHROEDER  
*Albuquerque,  
New Mexico*

### The View from Gun Country

As a gun-owning southerner, I want to thank Elaina Plott for writing a piece that so eloquently illustrates the way many of us feel: torn between a way of life we love and the commonsense things many of us feel should be done to curb gun violence. Every American, regardless of where they fall on the political spectrum, should read this.

—C.H. *via e-mail*

### How to Help a Friend Grieve

Several people stand out in my memory from my mother's death

more than 30 years ago. Mom died suddenly of a heart attack just after midnight. Just after sunrise, I looked out the window and saw Mrs. Luckas and Mrs. Hamilton walking up the drive. They told us they had come to wash dishes. All day they washed dishes and stored the contributions of food that friends and family brought. They didn't ask us what we needed. They just saw a need and filled it. As author Megan Devine said, "Say something. Do something."

—SUE ELLEN BRAZELL  
Clarksville, Tennessee

### Dear Reader

In the photo caption of Bruce Kelley and his mother, shouldn't it be "My mother, Shirley,

and I"? Or is that one of the grammar rules that has gone by the wayside? (Sounds like a nice relationship with your mom!)

—FRAN MCCULLOUGH  
Bethesda, Maryland

FROM THE EDITORS:  
*On me versus I: If the photo were of Bruce alone, the caption would be "Me, back in the day." Nothing changes grammatically when you make it "Me and my mom ..."*  
*As for always putting other people before yourself in a sentence, we heard this grammar tip from a number of readers, but there's actually no official rule dictating it (though it certainly sounds polite!).*

## EVEN EARLIER PREDICTIONS

◆ In your roundup of science fiction gadgets that later became reality, I was surprised you left out Maxwell Smart's shoe phone from *Get Smart*, which preceded the cell phone by several decades. It even went off once in a theater.

—Stu Lewis  
PRAIRIE VILLAGE, KANSAS

◆ In the 1960s and '70s, sci-fi author Larry Niven often wrote about people who would no longer use cash but instead conduct transactions with an electronic card that took the money straight from their bank account.

—Douglas Engelhardt  
LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

## Go Ahead, Flatter Yourself

"Flattery will get you nowhere." Oh, really? Who among us doesn't stand up a little straighter after receiving a well-timed word of praise? Thinking back, what was the best compliment anyone ever paid you? (On the flip side, if you recall a particularly clever backhanded compliment, we'd love to hear that too.) Please visit [RD.COM/FLATTERY](http://RD.COM/FLATTERY) to share your story and see terms.



## EVERYDAY HEROES

*Wheeling her red chair and scissors around the city, a salon owner gives out-of-luck strangers the gift of visibility—one free hairdo at a time*

# A Cut Above

BY *Frank Bures*

LAST SUMMER, KATIE Steller pulled off the freeway on her way to work in Minneapolis. She stopped at a traffic light, where a man was sitting with a sign asking for help. She rolled down her window.

“Hey!” she shouted. “I’m driving around giving free haircuts. If I go grab my chair, do you want one right now?”

The man looked to be in his 60s. He was heavysset, balding, and missing a few teeth. As Steller likes to tell the story, he laughed, then paused. “Actually,” he said, “I have a funeral to go to this week. I was really hoping to get a haircut.”

“I’ll be right back,” Steller said.

She drove off, went to the salon she owns, and recruited one of her stylists

to help her load a red chair into her car. Then the two of them drove back. The man, named Edward, took a seat, and they trimmed his curly graying hair. He told them about growing up in Mississippi, about moving to Minnesota to be closer to his adult children, and how he still talks to his mom every day.

After Steller was done, Edward looked in a mirror. “I look good!” he said. “I’ll have to remember to put my teeth in next time.”

To date, Steller has given 30 or so such haircuts to people around the city. These clients are all living on the margins, and she is keenly aware of the power of her cleanup job.

“It’s more than a haircut,” she says. “I want it to be a gateway, to

Steller and her  
magic chair, on  
the road to their  
next free haircut



show value and respect, but also to get to know people. I want to build relationships."

Steller knows that a haircut can change a life. One changed hers: As a teen, she suffered from a bowel disease called ulcerative colitis that was so severe, her hair thinned drastically. Seeing this, her mother arranged for Steller's first professional haircut.

"To sit down and have somebody look at me and talk to me like a person and not just an illness, it helped me feel cared about and less alone," she says.

## "I CAN'T FIX THEIR PROBLEMS, BUT MAYBE I CAN HELP THEM FEEL LESS ALONE."

---

After that, Steller knew she wanted to have her own salon so she could help people feel the way she'd felt that day. Not long after finishing cosmetology school in 2009, she began what she now calls her Red Chair Project, reaching out to people on the streets.

"Part of what broke my heart was just how lonely people looked," she says. "I thought maybe I'd go around and ask if people want free haircuts. I can't fix their problems, but maybe I can help them feel less alone for a moment."

Steller listens to people's stories of loss, addiction, and struggle to get

back on their feet. The attention apparently works. When she was cutting a woman's hair one day, someone drove by and yelled, "You look amazing!" The woman in the chair beamed.

"I'm not invisible," she exclaimed. "I thought I was invisible. Look, people see me!"

Another man was on his way to a job interview at a pet-supply store when he accepted Steller's offer. When she followed up, she learned he didn't get that job, but he did get a landscaping job soon afterward.

An offshoot of the Red Chair Project is the Steller Kindness Project, in which people who commit acts of kindness (volunteering for hurricane relief, helping neighbors in need) are invited for a free makeover at Steller's salon. In exchange, they tell their stories, which Steller shares on her website. Her hope is that by reading about kind acts, others will be inspired to spread their own.

So far, it's working, she says. "I've had people reach out from around the country, saying, 'I'm going to shelters and cutting hair.' Or, 'I've driven by this woman for the past two years, and I've never stopped to say hi. Now I say hi to her every time I drive by.'"

And it all began with a belief in simple acts of kindness, such as a free haircut. "The way you show up in the world matters," says Steller. "You have no idea what people are going to do with the kindness that you give them." **R**

# A Four-Legged Ice Rescue

BY *Andy Simmons*

UPS DRIVER RYAN ARENS was making his rounds near a pond in Bozeman, Montana, when he heard an unearthly sound. “Like a cry for help,” he told [thedodo.com](#), a website for animal lovers. It was December 2018, and about 15 feet from the frozen banks was the source of that cry—a half-submerged brown-and-white wirehaired hound, struggling to cling to a thin layer of ice. How she got there no one knows, but an elderly man was already on the scene, determined to save her. He’d entered the pond in a rowboat and was hacking away at the ice with a rock to create a path to the dog. It was slow going, and Arens, 44, thought he stood a better chance.

“Animals are my weakness,” he told the *Great Falls Tribune*, explaining why he stripped down to his boxers and socks, even though the temperature was in the 30s, and commandeered the rowboat.

His heart thumping, Arens slid closer to the dog and used the other man’s rock to smash away at the ice. He gave one strong heave too many and slipped off the boat, crashing into 16 feet of frigid water.

He resurfaced in time to see the dog going under. Using nervous energy to keep warm, he swam about five feet toward her, grabbed hold of her collar, and pulled her to the ice. He then boosted the dog into the boat and slid it back to the shore, where anxious



Arens and Sadie on terra firma

bystanders carried the dog to the home of the rowboat owner, a retired veterinarian. Once in the house himself, Arens jumped into a warm shower with the dog until they both defrosted. A few more minutes in the pond, the vet told Arens, and she would have likely suffered cardiac arrest.

The next day, Arens was back working the

same neighborhood when the dog’s owner came over to thank him for saving Sadie. “Would you like to meet her?” he asked.

He opened the door to his pickup, and Sadie bolted out. She made a beeline for Arens, leaping on him and bathing him in wet kisses. That special delivery, says Arens, “was the highlight of my UPS career.” **R**



## The World's UGLIEST DOG CONTEST

**YVONNE MORONES,**  
Santa Rosa, California

### **How did you first meet Scamp the Tramp?**

It was just like the young people on Tinder. When I saw Scamp on Petfinder, all of a sudden I understood what that was like. I swiped right because I fell in love with his face.

### **What did you know about him when you adopted him?**

He'd been living on the street in Compton, California, and people were feeding him Taco Bell. And his name was Muffin Man, which didn't seem to fit him at all.

### **What do you do to give him that bed head look?**

It's au naturel! He does



get a mango shampoo and a coconut conditioner, but these gray dreads just appear on his head, back, and tail. The groomer says his hair is uncontrollable.

### **Scamp works with you as a social therapy dog too. How do people react to his unusual looks?**

The first time he went to the senior center with me, the seniors just laughed and said, "Yvonne, what have you got there?" Then they fell in love with

him. They'll even write little adventure stories about Scamp. He just inspires people.

### **Has being crowned the world's ugliest dog changed him?**

He's no longer Scamp the Tramp. He's now Scamp the Champ. Now I have to get him a new dog tag. **R**

*Scamp will defend his World's Ugliest Dog title at California's Sonoma-Marin Fair in June.*



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 **PURINA**

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"It's good, but I don't know if it's refrigerator-door good."

**LIFE**  
IN THESE  
*United States*

**Over dinner,** I could sense something was bothering my mother, so I asked if anything was wrong. "Yes," she

admitted. "What's all this I hear on the news about banning baking products?"

I patted her hand reassuringly and said, "That's *vaping* products."

—JOSEPH MCLAUGHLIN  
*Winthrop, Massachusetts*

**When I was a boy,** I had a disease that required

me to eat dirt three times a day in order to survive. It's a good thing my older brother told me about it.

—ONLINEFUN.COM

**In one of his last** interviews, Eddie Money, the late musician and star of AXS TV's reality show *Real Money*, admitted to *Rolling Stone*

The difference between dog people and cat people: Dog people wish their dogs were people. Cat people wish they were cats.

—[@SIMONSINEK](#)

that his wife didn't like how he appeared on-screen.

"My wife says to me, 'You look heavy on TV.' I said, 'Honey, the camera adds ten pounds.' She said to me, 'How many cameras did they use?'"

**Kitchen Yin ...**

My husband's favorite place to stand is right in front of whatever cabinet I need.

—[@SIXFOOTCANDY](#)  
**... and Yang**

Pretty sure my wife's memoir would be called *Just Take the Extra Two Seconds and Put It in the Dishwasher*.

—[@TIRED\\_DAD\\_OF\\_2](#)

**YOUR FUNNY TRUE STORY** could be worth \$\$\$**.** For details, go to [RD.COM/SUBMIT](#).

**Something tells me**

I need to lose some weight. During a recent trip to visit my son and his family, I stopped

off at a bakery to pick up dessert. After scanning the display case, I settled on a dozen pound-cake cupcakes. The clerk's pleasant response: "Is that for here or to go?"

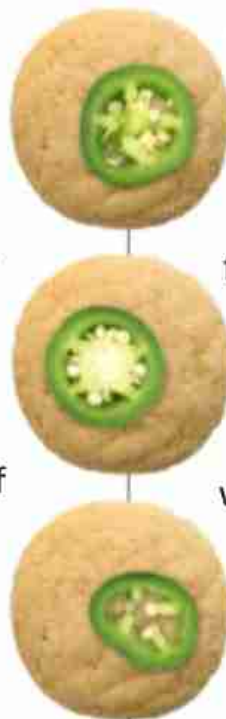
—MIKE COWAN  
*Sandersville, Georgia*

**WHY, GRANDMOTHER, WHAT A SHARP TONGUE YOU HAVE!**

Sure, they look sweet, but some grandmas just don't have a filter.

◆ My freshman year of college, my grandma mailed me sugar cookies for my birthday but wrote in the card that she'd put jalapeños in them so that I would know she was thinking of me "but wouldn't gain the weight."

◆ When my older sister told my family she was pregnant out of wedlock and not in a relationship, my grandma sighed, looked at me,



and said, "We always thought it would be you."

◆ I had just met my boyfriend's family for the first time. As I was leaving, his grandma gave me a hug and said it was wonderful to meet me. I said, "Thank you. It's nice to know I have approval." To which she replied, "Oh, now, dear, just because we like you doesn't mean we approve."

—THECHIVE.COM

AN NGUYEN/SHUTTERSTOCK (JALAPEÑOS), AFRICA STUDIO/SHUTTERSTOCK (COOKIES)

## QUOTABLE QUOTES

Man cannot live by coffee alone, but he will give it a good try.

—Harry Styles, MUSICIAN

**I want people to see me and go, “Oh my God, she got so old!”**

—Linda Hamilton, ACTOR

Karma's going to make sure I come back  
as a lobster—I've cooked too many.

—David Chang, CHEF

**If you're one of those people who says, “Please, no gifts on my birthday,” you and I are very different. I like gifts. I demand them. I'll make you feel awkward if you don't get me one.**

—John Krasinski, ACTOR

To me, that's the American dream—that if you just keep putting one foot in front of the other, fantastical things can happen.

—Sheryl Crow, SINGER



STYLES

HAMILTON

KRASINSKI

CROW

When I say “Be kind to one another,”  
I don’t mean only the people that think the same way  
you do. I mean be kind to everyone.

—Ellen DeGeneres, COMEDIAN

**Work eight hours and sleep eight hours,  
and make sure they are not the same eight hours.**

—T. Boone Pickens, BUSINESSMAN

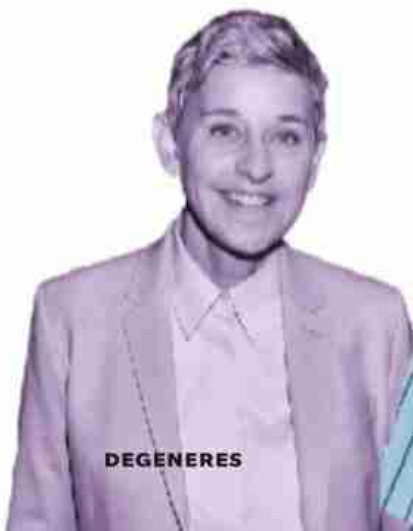
There’s some good in this world, and it’s worth fighting for.

—J. R. R. Tolkien, AUTHOR

## **POINT TO PONDER**

I was a boy from Puerto Caimito, with a glove made of cardboard and a tree branch as a bat and a baseball wrapped with tape. That’s the reason why I always thank God, because my abilities weren’t enough. To end up in Cooperstown the way I ended up there is like the cherry on top of the ice cream, or however that goes.

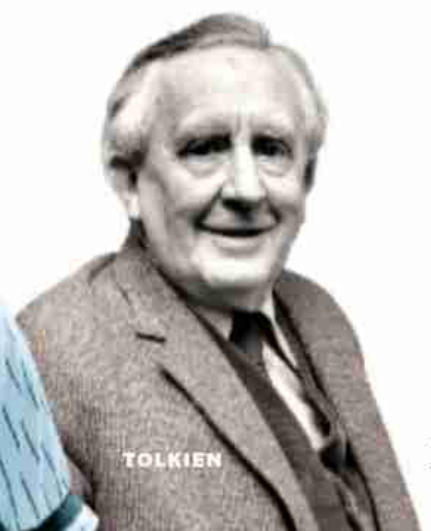
—Mariano Rivera, ATHLETE



DEGENERES



RIVERA



TOLKIEN

DEPARTMENT OF WIT

# Daddy Issues

*Important breaking news about fathers!*

FROM THE ONION



## 1 **Four-Year-Old Convinced Father Is a Moron After 45th Consecutive Hide-and-Sseek Victory**

**GLENDAL, PENNSYLVANIA**—Expressing embarrassment and disappointment over being the son of such a loser, local four-year-old Connor Heyward was convinced Friday that his father, Craig Heyward, was a moron after losing 45 consecutive games of hide-and-seek.

“Jeez, this is bad. I’ve hidden behind that bush a dozen times, and this dope still can’t find me,” said Connor, confessing that after finding his father

## “HIS BEST HIDING SPOT WAS BEHIND THE BACK DOOR. WHO HIDES BEHIND A DOOR?”

crouched behind a chair half his size, he had started to worry he might grow up to be a “complete imbecile” just like his dad. “At first, I thought I might be really good at this game, but after about an hour hiding underneath a hamper with visible holes, I realized he’s completely out to lunch. It’d be one thing if he were only bad at seeking, but so far, his best hiding spot was behind the back door. Who hides behind a door? There’s no strategy to it whatsoever. One time, I went out to find him and he was just standing behind a kitchen stool—he wasn’t

even crouched behind it or anything.”

At press time, a visibly frustrated Connor had emerged from his hiding spot to help his father search for his two-year-old brother.

## 2 **Reality of Fatherhood Never Truly Dawned on Man Until He Held Newborn Son’s Hospital Bill**

**MISSOULA, MONTANA**—Describing how he suddenly found himself overwhelmed by a flood of intense emotions, local man Mike Bentzen told reporters Monday the reality of fatherhood didn’t truly set in for him until the moment he held his newborn son’s hospital bill.

“Wow, this is going to totally change my life,” said Bentzen as tears welled up in his eyes, adding that he was left completely speechless by the little bundle of papers and that it would probably take some time before the magnitude of what had just happened fully sank in. “I’ve had friends tell me about their experience, but you can’t understand what it feels like until you’re looking down at it in your own hands. It’s hard to even put into words. Whatever my world was like before, I just know things are going to be very different from this day forward.”

Bentzen reportedly started weeping softly as he sat down with his son’s medical invoice in his lap and began imagining how he would deal with this for the next 18 years.

**3** **Baby Distracted by Father. Now He Fears He Left Home Without Oversize Multicolored Plastic Keys**

ROCKFORD, ILLINOIS—Patting down his onesie with mounting concern, local eight-month-old Joshua McManus was reportedly overcome by a sharp sinking feeling Monday upon realizing

**HE WAS LEFT SPEECHLESS BY THE LITTLE BUNDLE OF PAPERS.**

he had left home without his over-size multicolored plastic keys. “Oh no—you have got to be kidding me,” Joshua thought, his stomach dropping as he wondered how he could possibly make it through the day without his large ring of blue, pink, yellow, and green keys. “Ah, for crying out loud. I got so wrapped up in that game of peekaboo with Dada before



I headed out that I must have totally spaced on grabbing them. I bet they're still sitting there on the activity table right next to my phone on wheels. I'm such an idiot." **R**

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**The First “American” Word**

In a letter he sent home in 1608, British explorer John Smith described a critter he called a *rahaughcum*. There was no English word for the North American animal, so Smith borrowed the sounds used by the Algonquian. Over the years, the name was simplified to *raccoon*, which is now considered one of the first English words coined in America.

ROSEMARIE OSTLER, IN *SPLENDIFEROUS SPEECH: HOW EARLY AMERICANS PIONEERED THEIR OWN BRAND OF ENGLISH*





HOW TO

# Get Angry the Right Way

*Understanding your rage can help  
you express it more healthfully*

BY Lisa Bendall

THE DRIVER WHO cuts you off in traffic. The neighbors who don't pick up after their dog. The insurance company that keeps you on hold for an eternity. Situations such as these get our hearts racing and send our stress levels skyrocketing. Anger isn't a pleasant feeling. Some of us bottle up the emotion, while others explode in a wild rage. Both habits have repercussions for our bodies, our minds, and our relationships.

Anger may feel uncomfortable, but it's also normal and healthy. "A lot of

STYLIST: MAE LANDER

PHOTOGRAPHS BY Joleen Zubek

people think they have to get rid of their anger," says Patrick Keelan, a registered psychologist in Calgary, Alberta. "But anger is an emotion built into us to signal that something needs to be addressed." When we take notice of that signal and actually rectify the problem instead of ignoring it, we're usually much better for it.

Unfortunately, many of us have been conditioned to keep our emotions hidden. Increasingly, research is suggesting that this can have long-term effects on our health. Investigators at the University of Rochester noticed that people who suppress their emotions tend to have shorter life spans. They're more likely to die earlier from cancer, for example. When we're angry, stress hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol are released, which can make us prone to developing a wide range of diseases, including diabetes, depression, and autoimmune conditions.

Is it better, then, to scream and holler whenever something makes you mad? That's the rationale behind the "rage rooms" that have popped up in many American cities, where folks are invited to vent their anger by violently smashing stuff in a "safe" environment.

"The theory is that you get the anger out of your system through aggressive actions, and it's cathartic," says Keelan. "But the research indicates that when we display our anger aggressively, it can actually increase the intensity of the anger—and increase the likelihood of aggressive actions in the future." It

doesn't take much imagination to predict how a furious rampage can affect your relationships with your spouse, your kids, or your coworkers.

It also hurts your health. A large 2016 study at McMaster University found that people are more than twice as likely to have a heart attack after an angry outburst. The increased blood pressure and heart rate put stress on the cardiovascular system, and if there's already some plaque buildup, the blood flow to the heart may be restricted.

If we shouldn't bottle up our angry

## **BOTTLING UP ANGER ISN'T HEALTHY, BUT NEITHER IS LETTING IT OUT IN A FURY.**

feelings but aggressive behavior isn't healthy either, how should we handle things that tick us off? It's the extreme highs and lows that take a toll. If you're able to apply techniques that smooth out some of those peaks and valleys, you can have a gentler ride.

Start by looking beyond the superficial trigger to your fury. Anger is often precipitated by underlying feelings of fear, anxiety, disappointment, and guilt. Maybe you're furious that your spouse is late, but it's really because you were afraid he or she had had a car accident in the bad weather.

Also, pay closer attention to your



triggers—those daily irritations that you know will set you off. Do you get angry at the long lines at the grocery store? Take a step back and consider that it isn't personal. Everyone in the line has dinner to make, just like you.

One proven method of dealing with anger is to talk about it. Brain imaging at the University of California–Los Angeles and elsewhere has shown that if you name your feelings, you can actually calm the activity in the amygdala, the part of the brain that triggers the release of adrenaline and cortisol. “There is a value to expressing that you don't like what's happening, because it's an opportunity for change,” says Diane McIntosh, a psychiatrist in Vancouver, British Columbia.

It helps to take a cool-down period before explaining to someone you're angry with how he or she rocked your boat. That will allow for the effects of the adrenaline to wear off, which in turn allows you to reflect on what's bothering you. Do some controlled breathing or find some physical activity to take the edge off. “There's clear evidence that exercise helps with feelings of anger,” says McIntosh.

When you're ready to approach the other person, focus on the behavior and why it upsets you, not the person's character traits. Avoid calling the other person names. Don't swear, and don't make generalizations, such as “You always do this!” The idea, says Keelan, “is to bring up your reasonable points to the other person in a manner that is most likely to get a constructive and nondefensive response.”

If you're on the receiving end, remember that there are benefits to acknowledging and trying to understand the other person's anger. Try offering to make a change, if that seems fair to you. If you're willing to be a partner in working through heated situations, the other person will be much more likely to bring matters up constructively in the future. In the end, you'll both be healthier for it. **R**

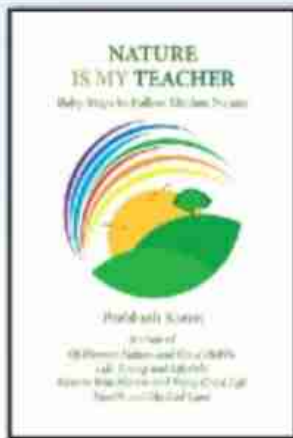


### **A Joyful Measure**

**Happiness makes up in height what it lacks in length.**

ROBERT FROST, POET

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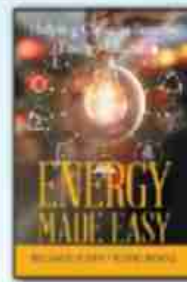
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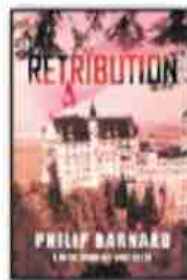
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## EVERYDAY MIRACLES



# Rescue in a Bottle

BY *Jen McCaffery*

CURTIS WHITSON KNEW the waterfall was coming. He'd rafted down the Arroyo Seco, a river in central California, before. He figured he would hop out of his raft into the shallow water, rappel down the rocks on either side of the falls, and

continue on his way, as he had on a previous trip.

But this year was different. Heavy snow and spring rains had turned the usually manageable falls into something fierce. And this year, instead of his buddy, Whitson's

companions were his girlfriend, Krystal Ramirez, and his 13-year-old son, Hunter. As the three of them approached the falls late in the afternoon of the third day of their camping trip, Whitson could tell from the increasing roar of water in the narrowing canyon that they were in serious trouble. There was no way they'd be able to rappel down the rocks as planned.

"The water was just gushing through there with tremendous force," recalls Whitson, 45.

They could wade to the shore, but would anyone find them there? They had no cell service, and they hadn't seen a single person in the past three days. And Whitson knew that they'd be sharing the ground there with rattlesnakes and mountain lions.

As he pondered what to do, Whitson hit on a bit of luck—he heard voices coming from the other side of the falls. He yelled, but the sound of the rushing water drowned him out.

We have to get these people a message, Whitson thought.

He grabbed a stick and pulled out his pocketknife to carve "Help" in it. Then he tied a rope to it so the people would know it wasn't just any stick. He tried tossing it over the falls, but it floated away in the wrong direction.

"We've got to do something!" Whitson yelled to his son. "Have we got anything else?"

Then he spotted his green Nalgene water bottle. Whitson grabbed it and

carved "Help!" on it. Ramirez also reminded him that he had a pen and paper, which she'd brought to play games with, in his backpack.

Whitson knew it was a long shot. But he scrawled "6-15-19 We are stuck here @ the waterfall. Get help please" and shoved the note into the bottle.

This time, his throw over the waterfall was perfect.

"All right, that's all we can do," Whitson told Hunter.

It took 30 minutes to navigate back upstream to the beach where they'd

## **WHITSON KNEW IT WAS A LONG SHOT, BUT HE SCRAWLED "GET HELP PLEASE."**

---

had lunch. They made a fire and laid out a tarp. With no reasonable expectation that their message in a bottle would find its way to anyone, they threw another Hail Mary pass: They spelled out SOS in white rocks, which they set on the blue tarp. As the evening wore on, they placed a headlamp with a flashing light on a ledge so that the SOS could be seen from overhead.

By about 10:30 p.m., they decided they probably weren't going to get rescued that night, so they pulled out their sleeping bags. Before turning in, Ramirez stoked the fire to keep the mountain lions away.

Then, just after midnight, they heard a helicopter hovering above them. Whitson turned to his son and started shaking him.

"They're here!" he said.

Whitson ran over to the headlamp and started flashing it at the helicopter. He, Ramirez, and Hunter were waving and hollering when they heard the magic words: "This is Search and Rescue. You have been found."

The helicopter circled as the pilot looked for a good place to land. Finding none, the crew announced to the campers over the PA system that they would not be rescued until morning and told them to conserve their firewood.

The next morning, the helicopter returned and lowered a crew member on a cable. Then rescuers lifted Hunter, Ramirez, and Whitson out of the gorge one by one and deposited them and their gear on the closest bluff where the helicopter could safely land.

It was a moment of pure happiness as the three chatted with the officers who had rescued them. Together, they marveled at the unlikelihood of it all.

"They said that in the 25 years that they've been performing these kinds of rescues, no one's ever been rescued

by a message in a bottle," Whitson says.

When the officers dropped them back at the Arroyo Seco Campground, the trio learned more about the long shot events that had saved them: Two men had seen the water bottle bobbing in the water. When they picked it up, they noticed the writing on it—"Help!"—which piqued their curiosity. Then they realized there was a note inside. After they read it, they hightailed it to the campground, turned the bottle in, and took off without leaving their names.

"It wasn't about notoriety; it wasn't about leaving their names," Whitson says. "It was just a matter of: Here's the water bottle, here's the note, here's the information we know."

A few days after news of the rescue broke, one of the hikers contacted Whitson. That's when he learned the rest of the story. There were actually two little girls hiking with the men that day. It was the girls who first spotted the bottle and swam to get it. Whitson is planning on having a big barbecue to meet the hikers—and thank them.

"I imagine it's going to be one of the greatest moments of my life," he says. **R**



### A Work in Progress

I love you just the way you are. Though I do have a few suggestions.

 @WILDETHINGY



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# WE FOUND A FIX

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**Keep Your Cat from Getting a Shock**  
**PETS** Does your cat like to gnaw on electrical cables? Discourage him or her by dabbing the cords with Grannick's Bitter Apple or another deterrent spray for pets. Cats hate the flavor.

PAKULA PIOTAR/SHUTTERSTOCK (CAT), XPIXEL/SHUTTERSTOCK (WIRES)



*\*From RD.COM reporting*

# 2

## Use Less Soap

**MONEY** Save money by swapping your liquid hand soap dispenser for a foaming version. Its pump turns regular liquid soap into foam, so it takes about half as much soap to create a lather, according to one study. You'll also use about 16 percent less water.

# 3

## Wear Different Shoes Every Day

**HEALTH** Who among us hasn't fallen in love with a pair of super-comfy shoes and proceeded to slip them on day after day? While that may feel good, you aren't actually doing your feet any favors. Podiatrist Jacqueline Sutera says that wearing the same shoes day in and day out can cause foot fatigue because you're constantly using the same areas of the foot for support and walking. Make sure you have a few pairs of comfortable shoes and rotate through them.



# 4

## Don't Shop for a Car in the Rain

**AUTO** Hunting for a used vehicle? Go on a clear day. It's not about slippery roads for the test drive; it's that rain can hide scratches and other imperfections. Other things to look out for, no matter the weather: difficulty opening the doors, trunk, or hood or mismatched paint between the inside of the trunk and the body of the car, which may be the result of an accident.

# 5

## Nourish Your Hair— with Breakfast

**BEAUTY** Everything you eat at breakfast goes to fuel the body's essential systems, but hair doesn't make the "essential" short list. That means it receives nutrients only once the major organs have been fed. Since eating breakfast fuels the body's life-giving functions right away, filling up your tank first thing means that follicles will get the nourishment they need later in the day.

JOLEEN ZUBEK

## 6

**Sweeten Your Yogurt Without Sugar**

**FOOD** Flavored yogurts often contain dozens of grams of sugar, but plain yogurt can be pretty blah. Add flavor without many calories with a few drops of vanilla, mint, or almond extract. You can also microwave your favorite fruit into a compote and, once it's cool, swirl it into the yogurt.

## 7

**Clean Your Charging Port**

**TECHNOLOGY** When you stuff your phone into your pocket or purse, lint and dust can get caught in the charging port, causing problems with charging. (Similarly, dirt in the headphone jack can make it malfunction.) If you are careful, you can clear any debris with a toothpick. To keep an opening clean, insert a dust plug (a package of them costs less than \$10 on Amazon).

## 8

**Protect Your Fingers When Hammering**

**HOME** Ouch! You just hammered your finger instead of the tiny nail you were trying to pound into that piece of wood. To keep this from happening again, before you start hammering, stick the nail through a small piece of thin cardboard. Position the nail and, holding the cardboard by the edges, hit it home. When you're finished, use your bruise-free fingers to tear away the protective cardboard.



## 9

**Clear Your Ears Before Flying**

**TRAVEL** Thirty minutes before takeoff, take a decongestant. Your sinus and ear membranes will shrink, leaving your nose and ears clear when you're in the air. **R**



THE  
**FOOD  
ON YOUR  
PLATE**

*I Am Pork ...*  
**Bringing Home  
the Bacon**

BY *Kate Lowenstein*  
AND *Daniel Gritzer*

IT IS MY favorite episode of *The Simpsons* of all time. Homer is holding forth at his dinner table about the diverse deliciousness of bacon, ham, pork chops, and other porcine products.

“Dad, those all come from the same animal,” his daughter says helpfully.

“Yeah, right, Lisa,” Homer responds, amused by her naivete. “A wonderful, maaaagical animal!”

As is usually the case, Homer was speaking a fundamental truth to which he happened to be hilariously oblivious: I *am* pretty magical. For starters, my fellow pigs are as smart as most any dog, capable of being taught how to play video games. I also make a great pet that can live for 20 years.

But if eating me is the route you prefer, so be it. After all, I’m the sole farm-raised animal whose main purpose is to be food: I don’t graze pastures, pull plows, lay eggs, produce drinkable milk, or make wool. Nearly every part of me is useful and succulent, and my range of flavors and textures is unrivaled.

No wonder I am the most-consumed meat in the world—even as two major religions, Judaism and Islam, prohibit eating pork. The rest of you grill my chops, braise my shanks, cure my legs into hams and prosciutto, devour me in pâtés, fry my skin into crispy pork rinds, and so much more. I am the cornerstone meat of barbecue, my ribs and shoulders slowly smoked over hardwood until tender and flavorful.

JAMIE CHUNG/TRUNK ARCHIVE

## READER'S DIGEST

And then there's bacon, the darling of breakfast, burgers, BLTs, salads, and, let's be honest, pretty much anything else you put on a plate. Hungry yet?

My fat is arguably what makes me so extraordinary. It's saturated just enough to be solid yet silky at room temperature, making me perfect for chopping, mixing with seasonings and other meats, and curing into delectable sausages, terrines, and rillets. In fact, it's the foundation of the whole centuries-old tradition of curing meat. Charcutiers can't produce quite the same sublime mouthfeel with beef, chicken, or game that they can with porky old me.

All this talk of fat might have you confused if you remember "The Other White Meat." This was the ad slogan developed in 1987 for the National Pork Board as a way of keeping me relevant during the anti-fat craze of the time. It worked: My U.S. sales grew 20 percent by 1991 as consumers began to view me as a health-conscious choice alongside white-meat chicken. I'm nonetheless considered red meat by nutritionists and the USDA—and always have been.

Here's the truth: Sometimes I'm healthful; sometimes I'm not. The Other White Meat campaign focused on my loin and tenderloin, those swaths of flesh along my spine that are quite low in fat and good sources of protein and minerals. But other parts of me, not so much. You'll find the fattiest slabs of fat on my belly, back

# 1 BOWL & YOU'RE & GOOD TILL LUNCH

With 2% milk, at least half of adults had a lower desire to eat than before breakfast for 3 1/2 hours.



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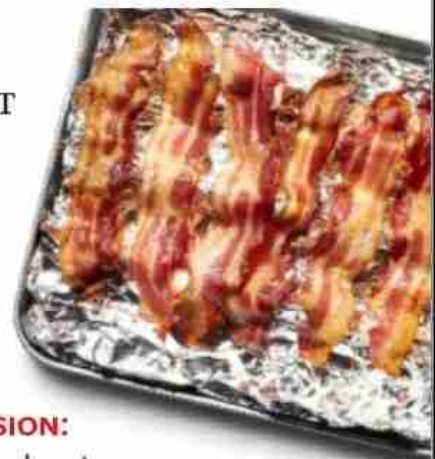


# 10 LAYERS OF WHEAT IN EVERY BITE



## READER'S DIGEST

### PERFECT OVEN-ROASTED BACON



#### FOR THE TENDER VERSION:

On a rimmed baking sheet, set a wire rack or a large piece of crumpled aluminum foil into accordion-like peaks and valleys. Arrange bacon slices close together with no overlaps. Place sheet with bacon on the middle rack of a cold oven, then set to 400°F and allow to heat. Rotating the pan once midway, cook 15 to 25 minutes, depending on the thickness of the rashers and your desired doneness. Transfer cooked bacon to paper towels to drain, then serve.

**FOR THE SHATTERINGLY CRISP-ALL-OVER VERSION:** Line a rimmed baking sheet with foil, only without the ridges, and follow the same cooking directions.

(right on top of those lean loins), and jowls. Falling in between, fat-wise, are my shoulders and legs. Think of them as my dark meat, with fat interspersed with muscle as well as lots of connective tissue. That tissue—actually collagen that forms when a muscle is well exercised—may start off tough when it's raw or briefly cooked. But roast a pork shoulder for eight hours, and that muscly tissue will melt into succulent gelatin to produce a fall-off-the-bone pork juiciness that makes you humans fall off your chairs.

One thing everyone knows about me is that I am an insatiable omnivore, which means that those who raise me have the power to vary how fatty I am



## The Food on Your Plate

and how I taste simply by feeding me differently. Take the *pata negra* pigs in Spain and Portugal that spend their lives grazing on acorns. Their famous funky, translucent-pink *jamón ibérico* (Iberian ham) is so rich in healthy monounsaturated fats—up to 55 percent, a higher ratio than in any other meat—that farmers call their hogs “four-legged olive trees.” Such a privileged lifestyle and meals don’t come cheap. These days, a 15-pound bone-in ham from the elite Spanish brand Cinco Jotas will stop your heart at \$1,200—or \$80 a pound. Meanwhile, a conventionally farmed American pig fattened on run-of-the-mill grains and meal made from meat and bone produces pork that’s higher in saturated fat but costs a mere \$4 per pound.

There are few easier weeknight meals than a pork chop roasted in a cast-iron pan. But boy, do you Americans overcook me. Chops, lacking in fat as they are, dry out when they get too hot. For decades, the USDA made it worse by recommending an internal temperature of 165°F for pork, which delivers a very dry puck indeed. In recent years, they dropped it to 145°F, which is medium-well and a real improvement: juicy and just having lost its pink. Sink your teeth in and enjoy the magic. **R**

---

*Kate Lowenstein is a health editor currently at Vice; Daniel Gritzer is the culinary director of the cooking site Serious Eats.*

# SILENCE YOUR GROWL



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# YOUR TRUE STORIES

IN 100 Words

## Just Like Dad

Nearly 25 years ago, my father told me about his experiences in the Vietnam War. One night, he was stranded in unfamiliar territory with a flat tire. Luckily, a fellow soldier came along and gave my father his spare. Now I'm a paramedic. I recently worked with an older EMT I had never met. At the end of our 12-hour shift, he said, "You know, you look a lot like your father." He recognized my last name. I had been paired up with the hero who'd saved my father 50 years earlier.

—Albert Thweatt  
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

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## A Very Special Finish

My son, Mark, volunteered to help Cherie, a young runner, at a local Special Olympics. Cherie was happy and enthusiastic. Mark encouraged her, kept her calm, and let her know when it was time to line up for her race. When the starting pistol sounded, she took off like a lightning bolt, leaving her fellow racers behind. As she neared the finish line, she stopped, turned around, and motioned for the other runners to hurry. She waited for them so they could all cross the finish line together.

—DEBRA HOLLEY *American Fork, Utah*



## Waste Not, Want Not

I was getting lunch at the deli counter of our neighborhood grocery store. In addition to my sandwich, I ordered a quarter pound of macaroni salad. The clerk put the salad on the scale and apologized that it was a little more than I

had asked for. Was that all right? I said it was fine and that it wouldn't go to waste. That's when the grandmotherly customer next in line replied, "Well, it would sure go to mine!"

—Jim Perkins  
EAST HAMPTON,  
CONNECTICUT

# NASA Scientist Harnesses Surprising Ingredient to Help Block Arthritis Pain

*Dr. Phil Birbara knew a thing or two about solving space-age problems. As a NASA chemist, he helped crack the code on creating drinkable water and breathable air to help humans survive in space. But it's his knowledge of natural chemicals found in plants that's making a big difference here on earth — thanks to his patented, proprietary formula that provides 24-hour joint pain relief to arthritis sufferers.*

## The Secret Ingredient is Found in Chili Peppers!

We've all experienced the "instant heat" sensation that comes from an unexpected bite into a hot pepper. Well it turns out that capsaicin, the natural ingredient that gives chili peppers their eye-watering strength, works amazingly well to relieve pain — offering new hope for arthritis sufferers and anyone looking for long-lasting pain relief from aching muscles and joints.

## Use for a Week. Get Relief for a Month!

PainBloc24<sup>®</sup> is made with the highest concentration of pharmaceutical-grade capsaicin allowed by the FDA without a prescription. Its patented NeuroMax<sup>®</sup> Technology helps the medicine more comfortably penetrate the skin than would otherwise be expected with its high dose of capsaicin. It relieves pain at the source by deactivating certain nerve fibers that transmit pain signals to the brain, for relief that builds with each use. Within a week, the maximum pain-blocking power of capsaicin takes hold, providing round-the-clock pain relief. In fact, PainBloc24<sup>®</sup> is so effective, use it every day for a week as directed, and your pain relief will last up to a month.

## 24 Hour Pain Relief

PainBloc24<sup>®</sup> is not a gimmick or a fad. Its patented<sup>1</sup> formula has been clinically shown<sup>2</sup> to provide long-lasting relief of arthritis pain by helping to block arthritis joint pain at the source of the pain signal.

PainBloc24<sup>®</sup> is different than other pain relievers. Its pain relief **BUILDS** with daily use and is so effective, use it every day for a week, and feel relief that lasts for 24 hours a day all month long<sup>2</sup>. It comes in a no-mess, easy-to-use roll-on applicator and is odor-free.



## See What Arthritis Sufferers are Saying:

*"I am a handyman and I am on my knees and up and down ladders all the time. At first I used it twice a day then I went to once a day now about every 3 days. It's the best thing I have ever used! Thank you very much."*

**Jeff**

*"This is the only product that has helped my 86-year old mother with her constant leg and hip pain!"*

**Jonelle**

*"For the first time in a LONG time I do not have joint pain! The product works great on myself as well as my mother who has chronic arthritis. Love it!"*

**Q.D.**

MANUFACTURERS COUPON EXPIRES 6/30/20

# SAVE \$3.00 NOW

on any ONE (1) PainBloc24<sup>®</sup> product



PainBloc24<sup>®</sup> is a registered trademark of Vizuri Health Sciences LLC. © 2020

## Choose 24-Hour Pain Relief

Available at:

**Walgreens**

**CVS pharmacy**

and other fine retailers



[www.PainBloc24.com](http://www.PainBloc24.com)

Use as directed.

<sup>1</sup>Patent Nos. 9956190, 10085936, and 10206892

<sup>2</sup>Clinical study in osteoarthritis knee pain

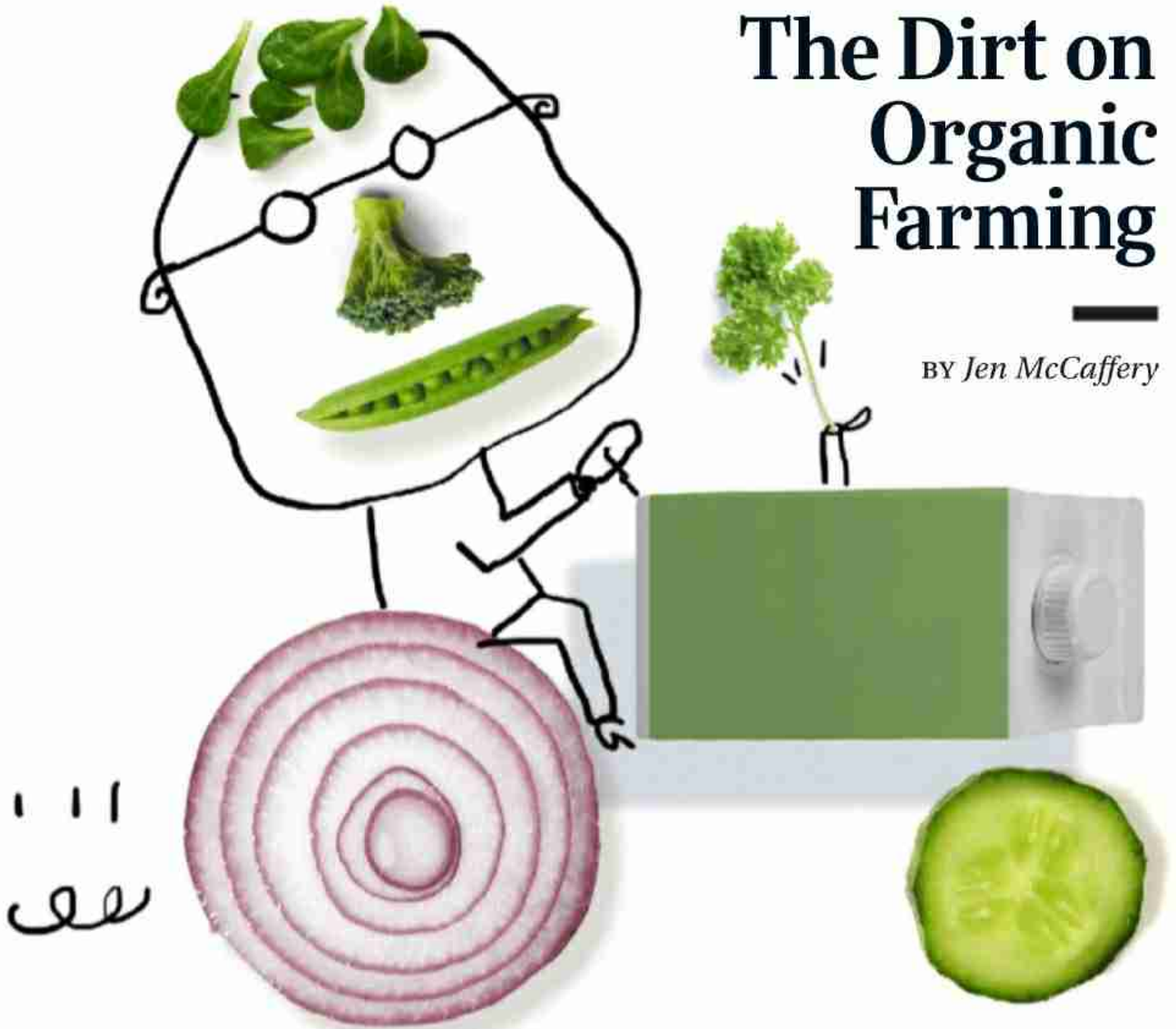
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LIMIT ONE (1) COUPON PER PURCHASE OF SPECIFIED PRODUCT AND QUANTITY STATED. NOT TO BE COMBINED WITH ANY OTHER COUPON(S). LIMIT OF TWO (2) IDENTICAL COUPONS IN SAME SHOPPING TRIP. Void if expired, reproduced, altered, copied, sold, purchased, transferred, or exchanged to any person, firm, or group prior to store redemption, or where prohibited or restricted by law. Any other use constitutes fraud. **Consumer:** You pay any sales tax. **Retailer:** Vizuri Health Sciences will reimburse you for the face value of this coupon plus 8¢ handling if submitted in accordance with Vizuri Health Sciences Coupon Redemption Policy (available upon request). Mail coupons to: Inmar Dept #17707, Vizuri Health Sciences, 1 Fawcett Drive, Del Rio, TX 78840. Cash value 1/100¢. No cash back if coupon value exceeds selling price. Valid only in the USA. Expires 6/30/20

13 THINGS

# The Dirt on Organic Farming

BY Jen McCaffery



**1** PEOPLE ASSUME that organic products come from small family farms, but many of the foods labeled organic in supermarkets are actually produced by large corporations. For example, Conagra owns Alexia; a private-equity company

owns Bolthouse Farms; and organic produce grower Earthbound Farm is itself a giant, earning nearly half a billion dollars in 2018. Big or small, a farm must follow the same rules to be certified organic: fertilizing soil with natural ingredients

such as compost and manure, planting with organic seeds, rotating crops to prevent soil erosion and disease, and allowing animals to graze.

**2** USING PESTICIDES isn't completely forbidden on an organic farm. "There are about 25 chemicals that have been approved for use," says Jessica Shade, PhD, director of science programs at the Organic Center in Washington, DC. "But before organic farmers can even use those 25, they have to prove that they have used every other method possible for controlling their pests and weeds."

**3** ORGANIC FARMERS aren't supposed to use antibiotics, but their cows do sometimes get sick. "You do have to give your cows medicine if they need it," Shade says. Also allowed: aspirin. (Cows get swollen joints too.)

**4** WHILE IT may seem that there are all-natural farms everywhere these days, less than 1 percent of the 911 million acres of farmland in the United States are certified organic, according to the Pew Research Center. The most organic state: Vermont, where 11 percent of farms have the USDA designation.

**5** NEARLY HALF of organic farmers are women, even though women make up only 29 percent of all American farmers, according to the USDA. Organic farmers are also younger (average age: 52) than farmers overall (58), according to *Modern Farmer*.

**6** THERE WAS NO need for "certified organic" before the mid-20th century—because organic was the only way to farm. But in the 1940s, after World War II, nitrate factories that had been making bombs switched to

producing synthetic fertilizers. Ironically, the era of mass-scale chemical fertilizer and pesticide use is commonly referred to as the Green Revolution because of the dramatic increase in crop yields worldwide. For instance, the yield of rice in India increased by 164 percent from the 1950s to the 1990s.

**7** WE KNOW it's good for our health, but eating organic can put a strain on the budget. According to the USDA, organic produce carries a premium of 10 to 30 percent. Fortunately, a study has shown that the risk of ingesting pesticides is relatively low with certain foods, primarily because their thicker skins or outer coverings protect us. At the top of the Environmental Working Group's "Clean 15" list: avocados and sweet corn, with less than 1 percent of the samples showing any pesticide residue.

**8** THE BIGGEST organic retailer in the country isn't Whole Foods—it's Costco, which sold about \$4 billion in organic products in 2017, compared with \$3.6 billion at Whole Foods.

**9** THE TOP-SELLING organic products, in order: cow's milk, eggs, chicken, apples, lettuce, strawberries, grapes, tomatoes, and corn, according to the Pew Research Center. (See No. 7 above for why organic corn might not be worth the cost.)

**10** DO YOU know which residents of organic farms aren't all that environmentally friendly? The cows. They burp

and fart up to twice as much methane as conventionally reared cattle. Methane is 20 times more powerful a greenhouse gas than CO<sub>2</sub>.

**11** DON'T EVEN think of saying your farm is organic if it isn't. The government will fine you as much as \$17,952 for each time you falsely sell or label a product as organic. The USDA has a list of people fined for "fraudulent certificates" on its website.

**12** PERHAPS THE most famous organic farmer in the United States today is Joel Salatin. He is the author of books such as *The Marvelous*

*Pigness of Pigs* and has appeared in documentaries such as *Food, Inc.* The Virginia-based Salatin also enjoys a burgeoning friendship with Prince Charles. The fellow farmer and future king has invited Salatin to his residence in Dumfries, Scotland.

**13** ORGANIC FARMING isn't just about feeding you. According to Statista, pet owners will spend \$6.8 billion on organic food for their dogs and cats this year, more than double than a decade ago. But beware, animal lovers: Foods marked "natural" do not carry the same requirement as those that are certified organic. 



### Great Moments in American Cheese History

President Thomas Jefferson first ate macaroni and cheese on a trip to France. He loved the dish so much that he later served it at a state dinner in 1802.

SMITHSONIAN

For his last public party in the White House, President Andrew Jackson served his guests a 1,400-pound wheel of cheese. It was gone within two hours.

THE ATLANTIC

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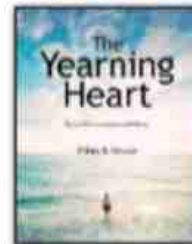
This family genealogy and history chronicles the story of the Page family and the changes in work and religion that the family experienced over three centuries living in England.



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This is a book about an internal spiritual voyage. *The Yearning Heart* offers contemplative poems reflecting a personal but also universal consciousness.

**LAUGHTER**  
THE BEST *Medicine*



**A Swiss man** looking for directions pulls up at a bus stop in Zurich where two American tourists are waiting.

*“Entschuldigung, können Sie Deutsch*

*sprechen?”* he asks.

The two Americans just stare at him.

*“Parlez-vous français?”* he tries.

The two Americans continue to stare.

*“Parlate italiano?”*

No response.

The Swiss guy gives up and drives off. The first American turns to the second and says, “We should really learn a foreign language.”

“Why?” asks the second. “That guy knew three, and it didn’t do him any good!”

—ENGLISHFORUM.CH

**What happens** when an artist has trouble finding inspiration? She draws a blank.

—Submitted by  
CHERYL HERMAN  
Baltimore, Maryland

**So you’re telling me ...**

... a shrimp fried this rice?

—[@ZULUONLY](#)

... a flea runs this market?

—[@ADAM DERPIN](#)

... this garage is on sale?

—[@SLIMSHANESHARK](#)

**The police** arrested a man selling “secret formula” tablets he claimed gave eternal youth. It was actually

I just read that 4,153,237 people got married last year. Not to cause any trouble, but shouldn't that be an even number?

—MADDANY94 on reddit.com

the fifth time he'd been caught for committing the same medical fraud. He had been arrested in 1794, 1856, 1928, and 1983.

—INVESTORSHUB.ADVFN.COM

**A nurse** noticed a golfer pacing up and down the hallway outside an operating room where another golfer—who had a golf ball lodged in his throat—was being treated.

"Is he your relative?" the nurse asked.

"No," said the golfer. "It's my ball."

—SWINGBYSWING.COM

**My husband cooks** for me like I'm a god—by placing burnt offerings before me every night.

—BOKBREATH on reddit.com

**Two old guys**, Fred and Sam, went to the

movies. A few minutes into the film, Fred noticed Sam searching for something under his seat.

"What are you doing?" Fred asked.

"Well"—Sam sounded aggravated—"I had a candy in my mouth, but it fell out."

"Forget it. It'll be dirty by now."

"I've got to find it—my teeth are in it."

—Submitted by

FERN HANSEN  
*Onawa, Iowa*

**My dad suggested** that I register for an organ-donor card. He's a man after my own heart.

—MASAI GRAHAM,  
*comedian*

**GOT A FUNNY JOKE?**  
*It could be worth \$\$\$.*  
*For details, go to*  
**RD.COM/SUBMIT.**

## DEAD LINES



An obituary for someone you don't know can seem bland, but these lines (from real obits!) might just make you miss a person you never met:

"His regrets were few but include eating a rotisserie hot dog from a convenience store in the summer of 2002."

"Civilians will recognize him best as Spider-Man and thank him for protecting our city."

"His wife refuses to honor his request to have him standing in the corner of the room with a glass of Jack Daniel's in his hand so that he would appear more natural to visitors."

"When the doctors confronted his daughters with the news that 'Your father is a very sick man,' in unison they replied, 'You have no idea.'"

—LOVELIVESON.COM AND  
THE NEW YORK TIMES



**The first and only overactive bladder (OAB) treatment in its class.**

**BOARDING PASS**

**IS YOUR  
BLADDER  
ALWAYS  
TAKING YOU  
ON A TRIP  
OF ITS OWN?**

-  **Urgency**
-  **Frequency**
-  **Leakage**

In clinical trials, those taking Myrbetriq made fewer trips to the bathroom and had fewer leaks than those not taking Myrbetriq. Your results may vary.

---

**TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR  
OAB SYMPTOMS BY TALKING  
TO YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT  
MYRBETRIQ TODAY.**

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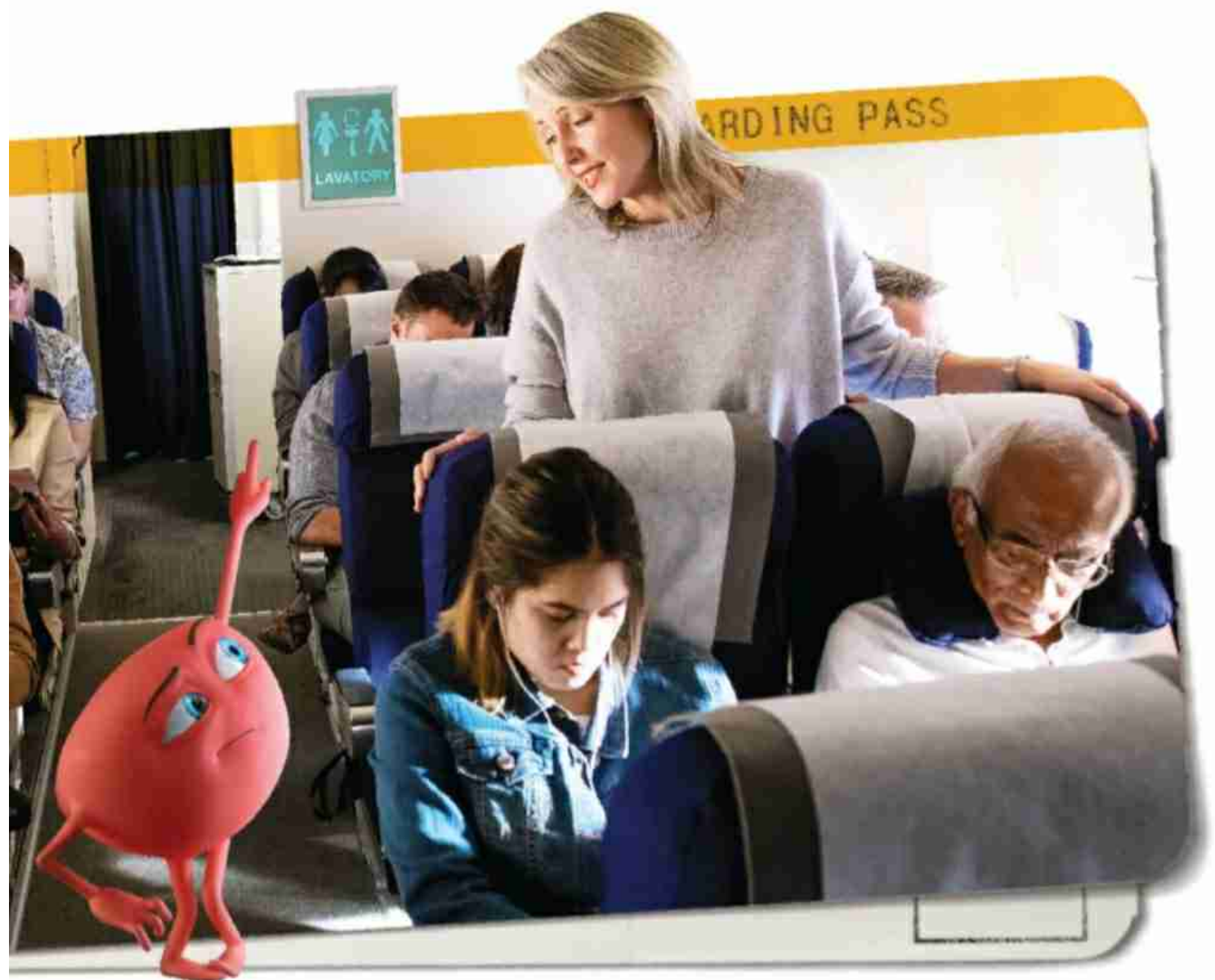
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#### **USE OF MYRBETRIQ (meer-BEH-trick)**

Myrbetriq® (mirabegron) is a prescription medicine for adults used to treat overactive bladder (OAB) with symptoms of urgency, frequency and leakage.

#### **IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION**

Myrbetriq is not for everyone. Do not take Myrbetriq if you have an allergy to mirabegron or any ingredients in Myrbetriq. Myrbetriq may cause your blood pressure to increase or make your blood pressure worse if you have a history of high blood pressure. It is recommended that your doctor check your blood pressure while you are taking Myrbetriq. Myrbetriq may increase your chances of not being able to empty your bladder. Tell your doctor right away if you have trouble emptying your bladder or you have a weak urine stream.



## IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION (continued)

Myrbetriq may cause allergic reactions that may be serious. If you experience swelling of the face, lips, throat or tongue, with or without difficulty breathing, stop taking Myrbetriq and tell your doctor right away.

Tell your doctor about all the medicines you take including medications for overactive bladder or other medicines such as thioridazine (Mellaril™ and Mellaril-S™), flecainide (Tambocor®), propafenone (Rythmol®), digoxin (Lanoxin®) or solifenacin succinate (VESicare®). Myrbetriq may affect the way other medicines work, and other medicines may affect how Myrbetriq works.

Before taking Myrbetriq, tell your doctor if you have liver or kidney problems. The most common side effects of Myrbetriq include

increased blood pressure, common cold symptoms (nasopharyngitis), dry mouth, flu symptoms, urinary tract infection, back pain, dizziness, joint pain, headache, constipation, sinus irritation, and inflammation of the bladder (cystitis).

**For further information, please talk to your healthcare professional and see Brief Summary of Prescribing Information for Myrbetriq® (mirabegron) on the following pages.**

**You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit [www.fda.gov/medwatch](http://www.fda.gov/medwatch) or call 1-800-FDA-1088.**

**Like us on Facebook**  **and visit [Myrbetriq.com](http://Myrbetriq.com)**



 **Myrbetriq®**  
(mirabegron)  
extended-release tablets  
25 mg, 50 mg



## **Myrbetriq® (mirabegron) extended-release tablets 25 mg, 50 mg**

### **Brief Summary based on FDA-approved patient labeling**

Read the Patient Information that comes with Myrbetriq® (mirabegron) before you start taking it and each time you get a refill. There may be new information. This summary does not take the place of talking with your doctor about your medical condition or treatment.

### **What is Myrbetriq (meer-BEH-trick)?**

Myrbetriq is a prescription medication for adults used to treat the following symptoms due to a condition called overactive bladder:

- Urge urinary incontinence: a strong need to urinate with leaking or wetting accidents
- Urgency: a strong need to urinate right away
- Frequency: urinating often

It is not known if Myrbetriq is safe and effective in children.

### **Who should not use Myrbetriq?**

**Do not** take Myrbetriq if you have an allergy to mirabegron or any of the ingredients in Myrbetriq. See the end of this summary for a complete list of ingredients in Myrbetriq.

### **What should I tell my doctor before taking Myrbetriq?**

**Before you take Myrbetriq, tell your doctor about all of your medical conditions, including if you:**

- have liver problems or kidney problems
- have very high uncontrolled blood pressure
- have trouble emptying your bladder or you have a weak urine stream
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if Myrbetriq will harm your unborn baby. Talk to your doctor if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant.
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. It is not known if Myrbetriq passes into your breast milk. Talk to your doctor about the best way to feed your baby if you take Myrbetriq.

**Tell your doctor about all the medicines you take**, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Myrbetriq may affect the way other medicines work, and other medicines may affect how Myrbetriq works.

Tell your doctor if you take:

- thioridazine (Mellaril™ or Mellaril-S™)
- flecainide (Tambocor®)
- propafenone (Rythmol®)
- digoxin (Lanoxin®)
- solifenacin succinate (VESIcare®)

### **How should I take Myrbetriq?**

- Take Myrbetriq exactly as your doctor tells you to take it.
- You should take 1 Myrbetriq tablet 1 time a day.
- You should take Myrbetriq with water and swallow the tablet whole.
- Do not chew, break, or crush the tablet.
- You can take Myrbetriq with or without food.
- If you miss a dose of Myrbetriq, begin taking Myrbetriq again the next day. Do not take 2 doses of Myrbetriq the same day.
- If you take too much Myrbetriq, call your doctor or go to the nearest hospital emergency room right away.

### **What are the possible side effects of Myrbetriq?**

Myrbetriq may cause serious side effects including:

- **increased blood pressure.** Myrbetriq may cause your blood pressure to increase or make your blood pressure worse if you have a history of high blood pressure. It is recommended that your doctor check your blood pressure while you are taking Myrbetriq.
- **inability to empty your bladder (urinary retention).** Myrbetriq may increase your chances of not being able to empty your bladder if you have bladder outlet obstruction or if you are taking

other medicines to treat overactive bladder. Tell your doctor right away if you are unable to empty your bladder.

- **angioedema.** Myrbetriq may cause an allergic reaction with swelling of the lips, face, tongue, throat with or without difficulty breathing. Stop using Myrbetriq and tell your doctor right away.

The most common side effects of Myrbetriq include:

• increased blood pressure	• dizziness
• common cold symptoms (nasopharyngitis)	• joint pain
• dry mouth	• headache
• flu symptoms	• constipation
• urinary tract infection	• sinus (sinus irritation)
• back pain	• <b>inflammation of the bladder (cystitis)</b>

Tell your doctor if you have any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away or if you have swelling of the face, lips, tongue, or throat, hives, skin rash or itching while taking Myrbetriq.

These are not all the possible side effects of Myrbetriq.

**Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.**

#### **How should I store Myrbetriq?**

- Store Myrbetriq between 59°F to 86°F (15°C to 30°C). Keep the bottle closed.
- Safely throw away medicine that is out of date or no longer needed.

**Keep Myrbetriq and all medicines out of the reach of children.**

#### **General information about the safe and effective use of Myrbetriq**

Medicines are sometimes prescribed for purposes other than those listed in the Patient Information leaflet. Do not use Myrbetriq for a condition for which it was not prescribed. Do not give Myrbetriq to other people, even if they have the same symptoms you have. It may harm them.

You can ask your doctor or pharmacist for information about Myrbetriq that is written for health professionals.

For more information, visit [www.Myrbetriq.com](http://www.Myrbetriq.com) or call (800) 727-7003.

#### **What are the ingredients in Myrbetriq?**

**Active ingredient:** mirabegron

**Inactive ingredients:** polyethylene oxide, polyethylene glycol, hydroxypropyl cellulose, butylated hydroxytoluene, magnesium stearate, hypromellose, yellow ferric oxide and red ferric oxide (25 mg Myrbetriq tablet only).

#### **What is overactive bladder?**

Overactive bladder occurs when you cannot control your bladder contractions. When these muscle contractions happen too often or cannot be controlled, you can get symptoms of overactive bladder, which are urinary frequency, urinary urgency, and urinary incontinence (leakage).

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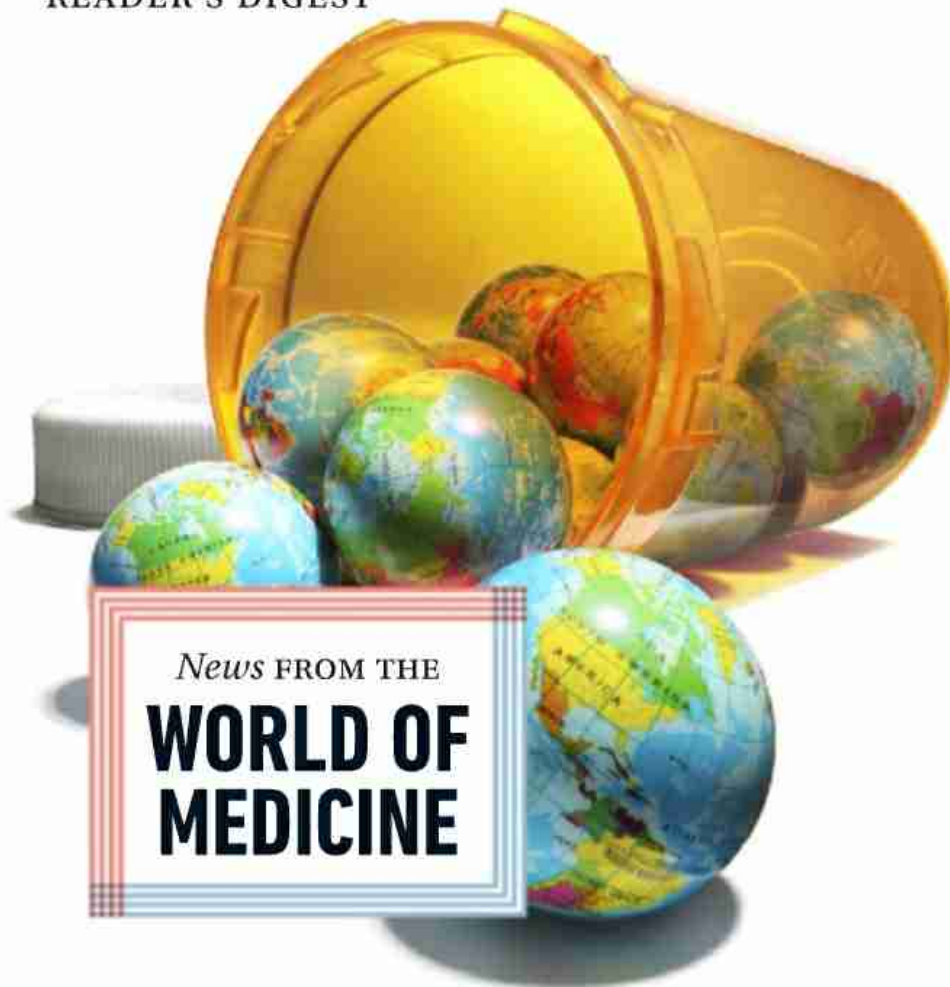
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Revised: April 2018  
206813-MRVS-BRFS  
057-2652-PM



News FROM THE  
**WORLD OF  
 MEDICINE**

## SIT TIGHT ON STANDING DESKS

Desks that can be adjusted for either sitting or standing are sometimes touted as a way to fight obesity, but according to a review of 53 studies, no significant results support this claim. This makes sense, given that simply standing doesn't burn many calories. However, some study participants found that standing helped them feel less fatigued, reduced lower-back pain, and improved blood pressure mildly. Desk height, monitor height, amount of time standing, and use of an antifatigue mat (to cushion the feet) all affected the benefits people experienced.

## New Type of Dementia

A report published in the journal *Brain* found that up to a third of Alzheimer's-like dementia cases may actually be caused by a newly identified disease called LATE, which stands for limbic-predominant age-related TDP-43 encephalopathy. LATE generally progresses more gradually than Alzheimer's and is marked by the accumulation of the TDP-43 brain protein, while Alzheimer's is associated with the beta-amyloid and tau brain proteins. But many people appear to suffer from both diseases, triggering a more rapid decline than either condition alone. This finding may help explain why trials of drugs designed to curb beta-amyloid and tau have failed to help patients—and point the way to more effective treatments in the future.

## Hands-Only Version of CPR Saves Lives

Traditional cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) includes both chest compressions and mouth-to-mouth rescue breaths, which some people are reluctant to perform because they're afraid of contracting an infectious disease. But when a patient is in cardiac arrest, according to a review of national Swedish data between 2000 and 2017, you can leave out the mouth-to-mouth breathing and still save a life. Compared with no CPR, receiving the standard or hands-only version at least doubled a patient's chances of survival, and the likelihood that someone would receive CPR from a bystander rose by nearly 70 percent with Sweden's promotion of the compression-only version.



## MAGNETS HELP EYES

The fluid in your eyes helps protect your cornea. However, if too much builds up, it can cause glaucoma, an increase of ocular pressure that may damage the optic nerve and cause blindness. Glaucoma drainage devices, which remove excess fluid, are an increasingly common treatment, but over time, microorganisms within your body collect on the devices and render them inoperable. Now researchers have designed a self-cleaning drainage device with tiny components that vibrate when a doctor passes a magnet over them, shaking loose the microorganisms.

## Inactive Ingredients Not Always Harmless

A pill's inactive components aren't meant to affect the body directly; they're merely intended to improve qualities such as taste, absorption, and shelf life. But when researchers surveyed more than 42,000 medications, nearly all contained at least one substance (such as lactose, food dye, or peanut oil) known to trigger allergic reactions or digestive issues in some people. If you take several medications and have stomach or allergy symptoms, the small amounts in each might be collectively causing problems. It isn't always easy to learn what's in a formulation, but pharmacists can help identify possible allergens. Over-the-counter products have a list of inactive ingredients on the packaging or on an attached label.

## TAKE BLOOD PRESSURE MEDICATION AT NIGHT

**I**F YOU'RE ONE of the millions of Americans who take a blood pressure medication as part of their morning routine, you may want to rethink that. A new study has shown that taking your medication at night instead might save your life.

The study was simple yet thorough: 19,084 Caucasian adults who had been prescribed one or more of five common blood pressure medications were randomly assigned to take them either immediately upon awakening or right before turning off the lights to go to bed. After more than six years, those who took their medicine at night had slashed their risk of dying from heart or blood vessel problems by 66 percent more than the morning pill poppers did. Plus, their risk of stroke plummeted by 49 percent more; of heart attack, by 44 percent more; and of heart failure, by 42 percent more.

It's not entirely clear why taking the medications at night affects the results so dramatically, though the researchers had previously reported that "average systolic blood pressure when a person is asleep is the most significant and independent indication of cardiovascular disease risk, regardless of blood pressure measurements taken while awake or when visiting a doctor."

While more research is needed to confirm whether the effects hold true with other ethnic groups, there's little downside—and a potentially huge upside—to taking medications at bedtime.

## Beating Antibiotic-Resistant Bacteria

A combination of antibiotics and probiotics was recently shown to destroy two strains of drug-resistant bacteria that infect wounds, thus providing a potential answer to a threat that kills at least 23,000 people a year in the United States.

## Blue Light Ages Fruit Flies

A recent experiment on fruit flies showed that blue light damaged their brain cells in a way that accelerated aging and shortened their life spans by about 10 percent. While there are no studies showing a comparable effect on humans, we do know that the blue light from phones and computers can impair your vision and interfere with your sleep. Besides limiting your exposure, you can try glasses that filter out blue light and set your devices to block blue emissions. **R**



She prescribed Gatorade. But the episodes got more frequent and severe. One night at dinner with the kids, Pete completely zoned out. He didn't understand what we were saying, and he wasn't able to get any words out.

We immediately called his doctor, but we couldn't get her on the phone. Her nurse referred us to a neurologist, but he had a six-week wait for an appointment. After some begging, we got in sooner, and he sent Pete for an MRI. The scan showed that Pete had a brain tumor the size of a golf ball.

## “PHYSICIANS ARE LITERALLY RUNNING FROM ROOM TO ROOM.”



Thankfully, after a long and harrowing journey, Pete has fully recovered, but my experience navigating that medical crisis now helps inform and inspire my work as a health-care journalist. If I had to distill everything I've learned over the years as a patient, spouse, parent, and medical reporter into one lesson, it's this: Trust but verify.

While I believe most doctors have our best interests at heart, our system is deeply flawed. Medical errors are estimated to be the third-leading

cause of death in the United States—in fact, most of us will receive an incorrect or late diagnosis at least once in our lives, often with serious consequences, according to a National Academy of Medicine analysis. News headlines about outrageous bills, conflicts of interest, and depersonalized care plant more seeds of doubt.

Doctors are keenly aware of the problems, but many of the underlying circumstances are beyond their control. Electronic record keeping, a boon to efficiency in many ways, takes an average of nearly six hours of a primary care physician's day—more time than is spent with patients. Most face-to-face visits are now about 15 minutes—and down to only 8 minutes in some parts of the country, says Andrew Morris-Singer, MD, president of Primary Care Progress, a nonprofit working to improve primary care. “Physicians are literally running from room to room,” he says. “We have physicians tell us that they are constantly constipated because they can't even stop to go to the bathroom.”

What's more, insurance companies have cut doctors' payments, forcing them to see more patients or invest in lucrative sidelines (such as selling supplements, medical devices, or imaging services) to keep their practices in the black.

These changes have “driven a huge wedge” into the patient-physician relationship, Dr. Morris-Singer says.

This is not a minor concern.

STYLIST: REBECCA SIMPSON STEELE, SET STYLIST: MAE LANDER, HAIR: TAKUYA YAMAGUCHI, MAKEUP: ALLISON BROOKE, NAILS: MARCELA MEJIAS





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**TRUST TIP**

The average doctor spends up to six hours a day on electronic record keeping.

But you can ask to see his or her notes.

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Research shows that without trust a patient might not feel comfortable sharing information his or her physician needs to provide quality medical advice. Patients who trust their health-care providers are more likely to follow their treatment plans, have fewer symptoms, practice healthier behaviors, and be more satisfied with their care. In addition, a doctor who

knows you and your health history is less likely to overprescribe or send you for unnecessary tests. Finally, I believe a doctor is more likely to make an extra effort for you if you have a relationship. It's just human nature.

Building that relationship takes time and care, and sometimes that's still not enough. Pete had been seeing his primary care doctor for almost

a decade when he called about his light-headedness, yet he still had to wait three weeks for an appointment. Once he got in, she listened carefully as he described his symptoms, but she was out the door 15 minutes later. Would more time have yielded a more accurate diagnosis or an earlier MRI? It's hard to know.

Maybe we can do more as patients. Dr. Morris-Singer says it helps to show your doctors that you recognize the pressure they face. When your physician comes into the room, say something like, "How are you doing? I know it can't be easy being in health care these days." Asking about family, travel plans, or other personal details helps you connect on a human level.

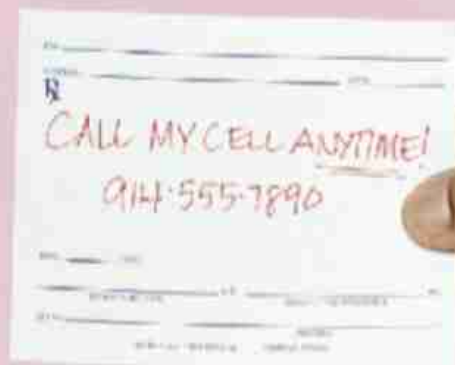
When the exam is underway, ask your doctor whether you can see the notes he or she is typing ("Do you mind if I take a look?"), suggests Lolita Alkureishi, MD, of the University of Chicago, who has studied the impact computers have had on the doctor-patient relationship. I tried this at my most recent physical, and my doctor didn't seem to mind. I even pointed out that the system still listed a prescription I was no longer taking.

Steven Feldman, MD, PhD, a dermatologist at Wake Forest School of Medicine, has his own strategy for building relationships with his patients. He discovered that they are more likely to take their prescriptions if he gives them a business card with his cell phone number and asks them



**TRUST TIP**

One doctor found that giving out his cell phone number helps establish trust. Online patient portals can also get you an answer quickly.





## MOST TRUSTED HEALTH BRANDS

*This year's RD/IPSOS survey of most trusted brands produced 20 winners—and one compelling insight: Of the 3,500 people who participated in the survey, half said that trust was a top driver for their over-the-counter purchases. These surprising product facts offer a sense of why that's true.*

### ALLERGY RELIEF

#### Claritin

The company offers a free service called Blue Sky Living that sends members personalized allergy forecasts.

### ANTIAGING SKIN CARE

#### Olay

Olay tests its products on “lab skins”—artificial material designed to mimic the properties of natural skin. It's part of the company's push to end animal testing in the skin-care and beauty industries.

### BLOOD GLUCOSE MONITOR

#### OneTouch

The OneTouch Reveal mobile app (also available for your computer) can share your blood sugar information directly with your health-care professional.

### BODY LOTION

#### Aveeno

Known originally for oat-based skin care, Aveeno has published clinical evidence supporting the benefits of oats and other natural ingredients for 70 years.

### COLD & FLU REMEDIES

#### NyQuil

The nighttime cold and flu relief comes in formulas that include one for severe symptoms, another specifically for cough suppression, and one that's alcohol-free.

### CONTACT LENS SOLUTION

#### Bausch & Lomb

Every year since 1933, the company has honored outstanding high school science students. Winners are automatically considered for a \$30,000 scholarship to the University of Rochester.

### COUGH REMEDY

#### Robutussin

The honey in the Honey Cough + Chest Congestion medicine comes exclusively from American honey companies that abide by U.S. laws around honey sourcing and beekeeping.

### EYE CARE

#### Visine

Screen time overload is a reality for most Americans, so Visine now makes drops to relieve tired eyes (as opposed to those that are just dry, itchy, or aggravated by allergies).





## MOST TRUSTED HEALTH BRANDS

### FOOT CARE

#### Dr. Scholl's

The company now offers custom 3-D-printed inserts made from foot scans users can take with their cell phones.

### HEADACHE/ PAIN RELIEVERS

#### Tylenol

Inspired by customer feedback, the redesigned packaging features bottle caps that are easier to open while generating less plastic waste.

### HEARTBURN/ANTACID

#### Tums

Some women get heartburn for the first time during pregnancy. Tums is the number one ob-gyn-recommended brand of antacid.

### HERBAL SUPPLEMENT

#### Nature Made

For two decades, the company has been supporting and participating in clinical trials and sharing data with other researchers and health-care professionals.

### LIP CARE

#### ChapStick

In addition to lip balm, the company now makes 100 percent natural "lip butter," which is paraben-free and has no artificial colors or flavors.

### MULTIVITAMINS

#### Centrum

Because they are made with all-natural plant-based colors, Centrum MultiGummies may darken over time but are still safe to take.

### NATIONAL PHARMACY/ DRUGSTORES

#### CVS Pharmacy

Through its addiction-prevention program, Pharmacists Teach, CVS has provided 300,000 teens with free information about drug abuse.

### NUTRITIONAL DRINK/ MEAL REPLACEMENT

#### Ensure

Doctors recommend specialized Ensure immunonutrition shakes to help your body prepare for and

recover from surgical procedures.

### NATURAL SWEETENER

#### Splenda

When a researcher was asked to "test" the compound that became Splenda, he misheard the request as "taste" it. That's when he discovered its sweetness.

### SLEEP AID

#### ZzzQuil

ZzzQuil is also approved to treat motion sickness and certain symptoms of Parkinson's disease.

### SOAP/BODY WASH

#### Dove

The company joined the Girl Scouts on their Self-Esteem Project to promote positive body image in young people.

### SUN PROTECTION

#### Coppertone

The development of SPF levels in skin-care products began in the 1970s at Coppertone's Solar Research Center.



### TRUST TIP

There are websites that will show you how much money (if any) your doctor has received from pharmaceutical companies.

to call him in three days to tell him how the medicine is working.

“They can’t believe I give them my cell phone number. It establishes both trust and accountability,” he says.

Unfortunately, Pete’s difficulty getting in to see both his primary care doctor and the neurologist dented our confidence that he would get the care he needed. And then things got scarier.

The MRI showed that Pete had a meningioma, the “good” kind of brain

tumor, the neurologist explained to us, because it is usually benign. But Pete’s was large, and it was wrapped around his carotid artery, pressing on his optic nerve and extending into the speech center of his brain.

The neurologist sent us straight to a neurosurgeon, supposedly the best in the city. He spent an hour patiently answering our questions, but his prognosis was terrifying: The tumor needed to be removed, and the

operation would likely leave Pete blind in one eye and possibly without the ability to speak. With Pete's episodes of light-headedness occurring more frequently, the surgeon scheduled the surgery for the following week.

What happened next can be described only as a stroke of luck. Pete and I reached out to the rabbi at our temple for comfort, and she connected us with another congregant whose son had undergone surgery to

remove a brain tumor a few years earlier. She encouraged us to get a second opinion from the neurosurgeon at Duke University Medical Center who had operated on her son. "He can do things other surgeons can't," she said.

As a health reporter, I knew objectively that a second opinion could be valuable. A 2017 Mayo Clinic study found that one in five people who sought a second opinion went home with a completely new diagnosis. Another

ZHUKOV/SHUTTERSTOCK

## TOP PATIENT FRUSTRATIONS

**FOR THE PAST SIX YEARS**, our annual Trusted Brands Survey has compiled a list of the most reliable medical products and services, as determined in a national poll. This year, we also looked at where medical care *isn't* meeting expectations, according to the 3,500 people queried. Our sister website, **The Healthy**, is using the data to power a yearlong study of the challenges and promises of major health conditions: heart disease, diabetes, depression, cancer, arthritis, and more. To read these stories, go to [thehealthy.com/2020solutions](https://thehealthy.com/2020solutions).

**67%**

of those with a chronic condition said getting an **accurate diagnosis** can be frustrating. For people with digestive ailments such as ulcers or irritable bowel syndrome, it was 73 percent.

**52%**

said they have had to take their health care **into their own hands** rather than relying just on their doctor's treatment plan.

**45%**

found value in **connecting with others** experiencing similar health issues.

**39%**

had to **visit many doctors** before being diagnosed and treated properly. Among people suffering with issues such as anxiety or depression, it was 51 percent.

66 percent got new information or a revised diagnosis. A second opinion can also reveal different treatment options.

Yet surveys show that more than half of Americans don't bother, even when faced with a major medical decision. As Pete and I debated what to do, I understood why. Duke is a three-hour drive away, which seemed like a hassle. We liked the local surgeon. Most important, Pete couldn't wait to get this thing out of his brain.

But the woman from our temple insisted and even called Duke to get an appointment for us. That appointment changed everything. The Duke

surgeon told us he used a different technique. It was lower risk, and it would spare Pete's eyesight.

If your doctor is irritated by your decision to seek a second opinion, as Pete's local neurosurgeon seemed to be, it's a red flag that perhaps he or she is not the right fit. Smart doctors won't feel threatened or offended, says Robert Arnold, MD, chair of the University of Pittsburgh's Institute for Doctor-Patient Communication. "They know that once you get that second opinion and come back, it's way better, because you will both be on the same page about the best way to move forward," he says.



### TRUST TIP

Smart doctors won't feel threatened if you ask about getting a second opinion. If yours gets irritated, it's a red flag.





### **TRUST TIP**

Bringing flowers or cookies to your medical team can help you connect on a human level. So does simply asking how they are doing.

and perhaps give them insights into your case they might not otherwise receive.

You should do your homework about your doctors too. While they may believe they are unbiased, physicians are not immune to money or gifts (including meals or speaking fees) they receive from pharmaceutical or medical-device companies. A ProPublica analysis found that doctors who take such payments are two to three times more likely to prescribe brand-name drugs

To prepare for Pete's appointment at Duke, I started reading up on meningiomas. I tried to stick to fact-based websites published by academic medical centers, such as Johns Hopkins, Harvard, and the Mayo Clinic. I also looked for condition-specific websites, especially those staffed with medical professionals. It may sound obvious, but being well prepared for appointments can help maximize what little time you have with your doctors

compared with those who don't. You can look up how much money your doctor has received (and from whom) on ProPublica's Dollars for Docs site ([projects.propublica.org/docdollars](https://projects.propublica.org/docdollars)) and the federal government's Open Payments site ([openpaymentsdata.cms.gov](https://openpaymentsdata.cms.gov)).

If your doctor is listed, that doesn't mean he or she has done anything wrong. But you may want to ask whether the medications you are



taking are made by those companies and whether there are any cheaper generic alternatives.

Similarly, if your doctor offers a “cutting-edge treatment” not covered by insurance, look it up before you pay up. I learned this lesson the hard way, when my podiatrist recommended a series of laser treatments for the arthritis in my big-toe joint. Five treatments and \$750 later, my toe actually felt worse. “The treatments don’t work for everyone,” explained the doctor somewhat apologetically before she rushed off to see her next patient.

I later googled the type of laser therapy she’d used, and while some small studies showed good results, others were inconclusive. More ominously, perhaps, the device manufacturer’s website touted its profit-producing potential: “Start Creating a Cash-Based Division in Your Practice with Laser Therapy.”

When Pete was at the Duke hospital for his brain surgery, we wanted to connect with his medical team even though we would be there for just a short time—as with any relationship, I believed that personalizing our interactions would help ensure the best care.

I placed a family photo in the recovery room, not just to comfort Pete but also to remind the hospital staff that he was a husband and a father to three young children. I delivered bags of homemade chocolate-chip cookies to Pete’s nurses. And we gave the surgeon a note from our eight-year-old

daughter. It said “Please take care of my daddy.”

When they finally took Pete into the operating room, I shed tears for the first time. We had done our homework, followed every instruction, and chosen the best doctor. Now Pete’s life was in the surgeon’s hands. Eight hours later, he was wheeled to the recovery room. The operation was a success.

A few days later, a biopsy revealed that the tumor was a rare aggressive type of meningioma that exhibits cancerlike behavior. The surgeon sent us to a Duke oncologist who recommended radiation to prevent a

## BEWARE OF “CUTTING-EDGE TREATMENTS” NOT COVERED BY INSURANCE.

reoccurrence. She told us there were different types of radiation therapy but little consensus on which was best and to take our time making a decision while Pete healed.

As I researched our options, a physician friend sent me an article from a health portal that medical professionals rely on called [uptodate.com](http://uptodate.com). The information is dense, but it includes the latest evidence-based treatment guidelines for almost every condition,

and it helped me understand the different types of radiation. Patients can access the site by paying a fee (\$20 for a one-week subscription), and I often subscribe when a friend needs deeper information than what he or she can find on free sites.

After studying all the options, we talked with the oncologist and decided to do the radiation closer to home rather than under her care at Duke. But her honesty and understanding in

that situation helped build the foundation for a physician-patient relationship that Pete values to this day. He treks to Duke to see her several times a year to make sure the tumor hasn't returned. He often e-mails her with general questions about his health—even though he has a new primary care physician—and she always takes the time to reply. They developed something simple yet precious in their time together: a sense of trust. **R**

## TO GET THE BEST CARE, "TRUST BUT VERIFY"

### TRUST-BUILDING MOVES

- **See the same doctor**, not just any doctor in a large practice, for your regular checkups as well as when you are sick, if possible. You may want to look into "direct pay" physicians, who charge a membership fee for care.
- **Ask about office policies.** How much time do they set aside for the first appointment? (One hour is ideal; 30 minutes is more realistic.) How long is the typical wait for an appointment? How do they handle patient questions?
- **Share your concerns.** If you have any doubts about your diagnosis or treatment plan, don't be shy about telling your doctor so he or she can try to address them.

### VALID WAYS TO VERIFY

- **Do your own research.** In addition to consulting well-known, reputable sites such as [mayoclinic.org](http://mayoclinic.org), [hopkinsmedicine.org](http://hopkinsmedicine.org), and [uptodate.com](http://uptodate.com), reach out to your own network of friends and family.
- **Check credentials.** You can find information on malpractice or disciplinary actions against physicians at [docinfo.org](http://docinfo.org). Verify board certifications at [certificationmatters.org](http://certificationmatters.org).
- **Ask about possible financial conflicts.** Does the office allow

representatives from pharmaceutical companies to pitch their products to the staff? Does the physician have a financial interest in an imaging center, a surgery center, or special medical equipment? If you're uncomfortable asking your doctor or you just don't want to spend your precious face-to-face time on these questions, ask the office manager. Honest communication involves the entire practice.

## LAUGH LINES

Never get into a lane-merging game of chicken with a person who has a garbage bag for a car-door window.

—[@MelvinOfYork](#)

**The worst thing** about parallel parking is witnesses.

—[@armyVet1972](#)

**Now that I've** removed my windshield wipers I shouldn't be getting any more parking tickets.

—[Mariah Scary](#)  
ON TWITTER

# The Highway to Howls

**Somebody actually** complimented my driving today. They left a little note on the windshield that said "parking fine."

—[@aadil](#)

**How is it that** a parking spot gets paid more per hour than I do?

—[@markedly](#)

**The irony of** being hit by a Dodge.

—[@rikpayne](#)



# Department of State



UNCLASSIFIED

September

The Honorable  
Secretary  
Central Intelligence  
Washington

Dear Sir:

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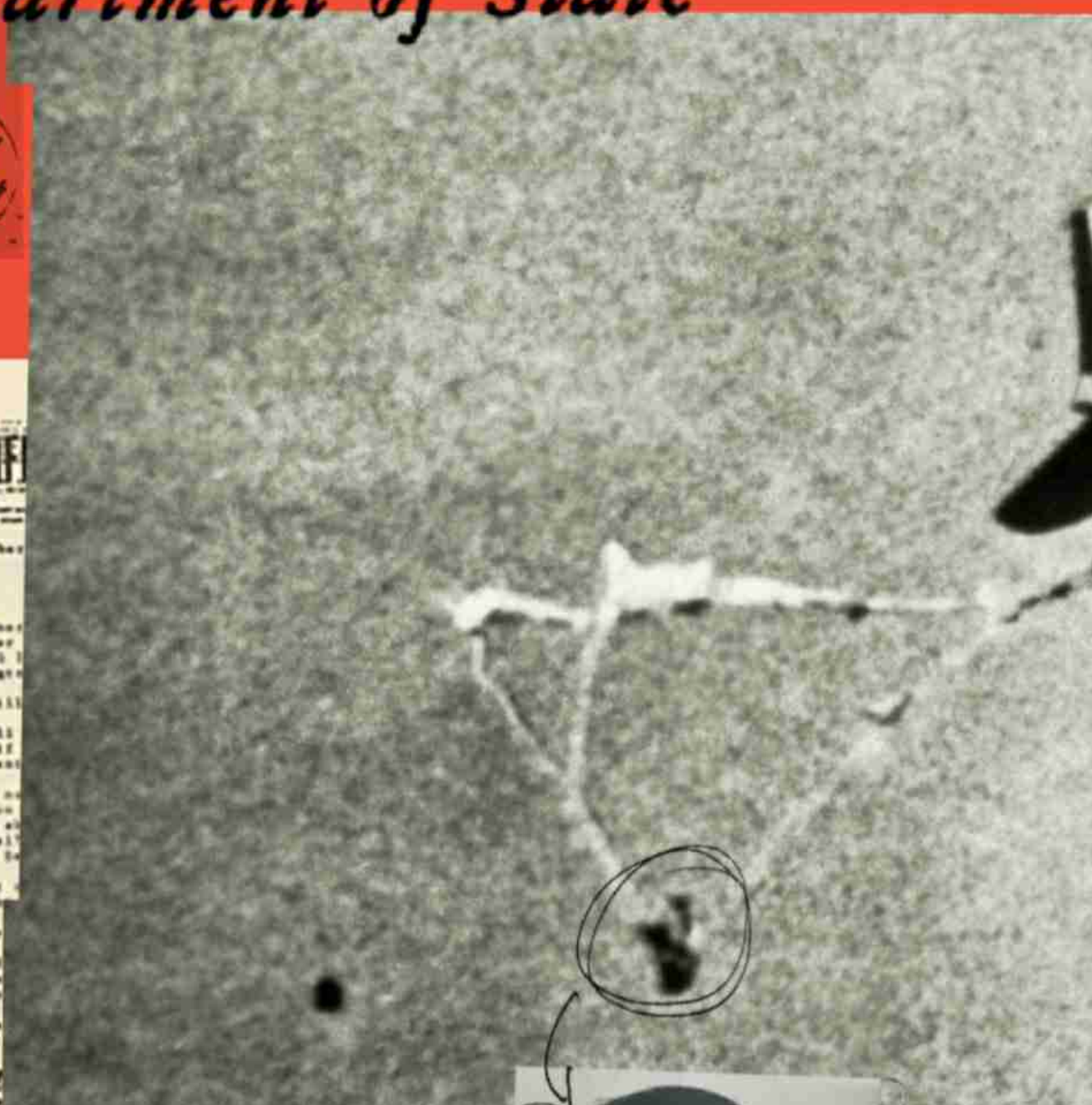
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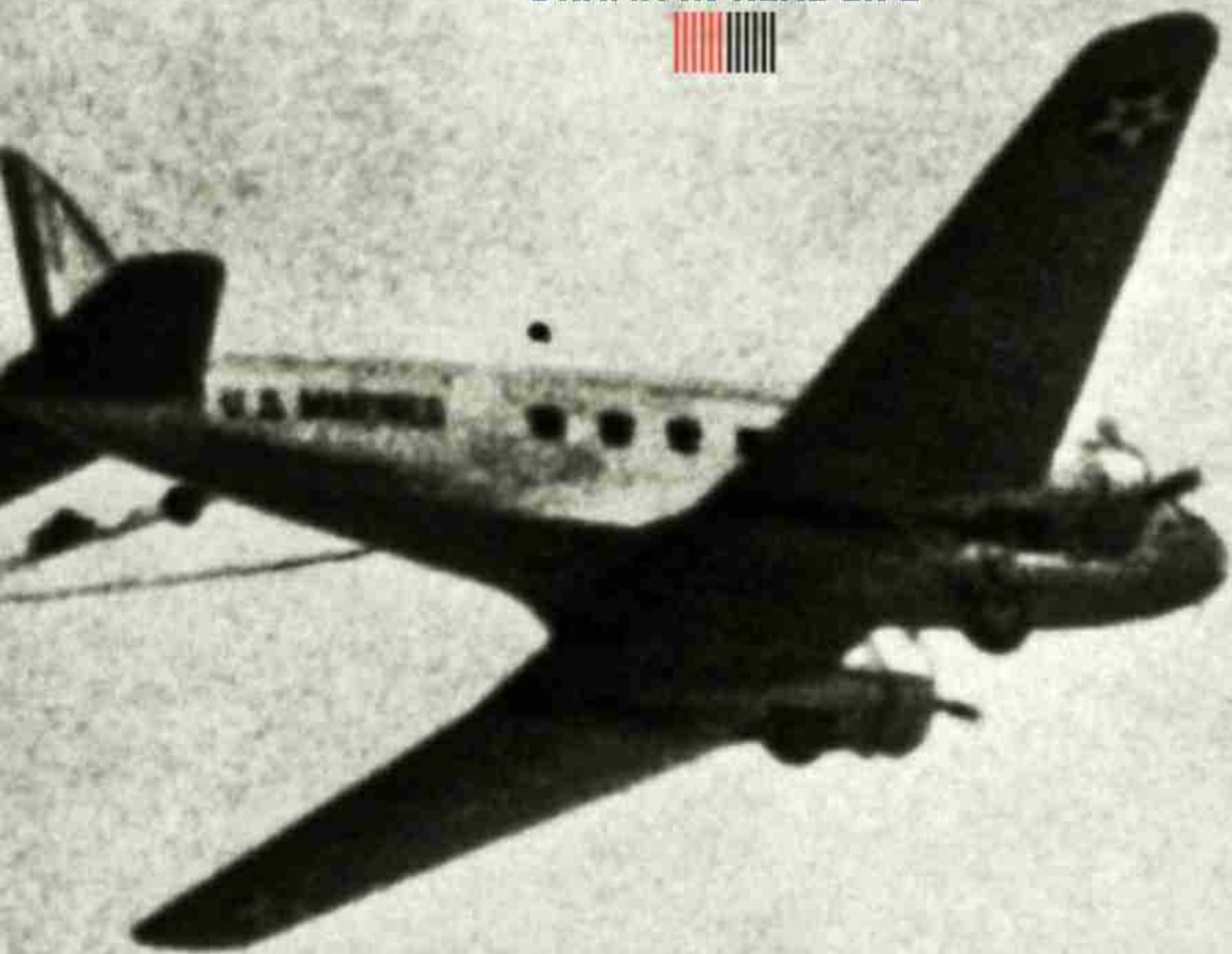
NAME:  
Walter Osipoff

DOB:  
Sep 16, 1917

INCIDENT DATE:  
May 15, 1941

classified/selected on 2/22/11  
for production of E.O. 12958  
204, National Security Council

DRAMA IN REAL LIFE



SUBJECT NO# 15544

# Miracle in Midair

DESCRIPTION:

Almost 80 years after it unfolded in the sky over San Diego, a nearly impossible rescue mission remains one of the most daring feats in aeronautical history

BY: Virginia Kelly



**I**t began like any other May morning in California. The sky was blue, the sun hot. A slight breeze ruffled the glistening waters of San Diego Bay. At the naval airbase on North Island, all was calm.

At 9:45 a.m., Walter Osipoff, a sandy-haired 23-year-old Marine second lieutenant from Akron, Ohio, boarded a DC-2 transport for a routine parachute jump. Lt. Bill Lowrey, a 34-year-old Navy test pilot from New Orleans, was already putting his observation plane through its paces. And John McCants, a husky 41-year-old aviation chief machinist's mate from Jordan, Montana, was checking out the aircraft that he was scheduled to fly later. Before the sun was high in the noonday sky, these three men would be linked forever in one of history's most spectacular midair rescues.

Osipoff was a seasoned parachutist, a former collegiate wrestling and gymnastics star. He had joined the National Guard and then the Marines in 1938. He had already made more than 20 jumps by May 15, 1941.

That morning, his DC-2 took off and headed for Kearney Mesa, where Osipoff would supervise practice jumps by 12 of his men. Three separate canvas cylinders, containing ammunition and rifles, were also to be

parachuted overboard as part of the exercise.

Nine of the men had already jumped when Osipoff, standing a few inches from the plane's door, started to toss out the last cargo container. Somehow the automatic-release cord of his backpack parachute became looped over the cylinder, and his chute was suddenly ripped open. He tried to grab hold of the quickly billowing silk, but the next thing he knew he had been jerked from the plane—sucked out with such force that the impact of his body ripped a 2.5-foot gash in the DC-2's aluminum fuselage.

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## THE AUTOMATIC- RELEASE CORD ON HIS CHUTE WAS LOOPED OVER THE CYLINDER.

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Instead of flowing free, Osipoff's open parachute now wrapped itself around the plane's tail wheel. The chute's chest strap and one leg strap had broken; only the second leg strap was still holding—and it had slipped down to Osipoff's ankle. One by one, 24 of the 28 lines between his precariously attached harness and the parachute snapped. He was now hanging some 12 feet below and 15 feet behind the tail of the plane. Four parachute shroud lines twisted around his left leg were all that kept

PREVIOUS SPREAD: COURTESY RICK LAWRENCE (PORTRAIT). AP/SHUTTERSTOCK (PLANE). MAYTAL AMIR/SHUTTERSTOCK (GRAPH PAPER). PAKET/SHUTTERSTOCK (PAPER CLIP). REDDAVEBATCAVE/SHUTTERSTOCK (CLASSIFIED DOCUMENT). ARCHIVE.ORG (GOVERNMENT DOCUMENT)



Lt. Col. John J. Capolino, a Philadelphia artist, painted this scene of Osipoff's rescue in the 1940s. It belongs to the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Quantico, Virginia.

him from being pitched to the earth.

Dangling there upside down, Osipoff had enough presence of mind to not try to release his emergency parachute. With the plane pulling him one way and the emergency chute pulling him another, he realized that he would be torn in half. Conscious all the while, he knew that he was hanging by one leg, spinning and bouncing—and he was aware that his ribs hurt. He did not know then that two ribs and three vertebrae had been fractured.

Inside the plane, the DC-2 crew struggled to pull Osipoff to safety, but they could not reach him. The aircraft

was starting to run low on fuel, but an emergency landing with Osipoff dragging behind would certainly smash him to death. And pilot Harold Johnson had no radio contact with the ground.

To attract attention below, Johnson eased the transport down to 300 feet and started circling North Island. A few people at the base noticed the plane coming by every few minutes, but they assumed that it was towing some sort of target.

Meanwhile, Bill Lowrey had landed his plane and was walking toward his office when he glanced upward. He

and John McCants, who was working nearby, saw at the same time the figure dangling from the plane. As the DC-2 circled once again, Lowrey yelled to McCants, "There's a man hanging on that line. Do you suppose we can get him?" McCants answered grimly, "We can try."

Lowrey shouted to his mechanics to get his plane ready for takeoff. It was an SOC-1, a two-seat, open-cockpit observation plane, less than 27 feet long. Recalled Lowrey afterward, "I didn't even know how much fuel it had." Turning to McCants, he said, "Let's go!"

Lowrey and McCants had never flown together before, but the two men seemed to take it for granted that they were going to attempt the impossible. "There was only one decision to be made," Lowrey later said quietly, "and that was to go get him. How, we didn't know. We had no time to plan."

Nor was there time to get through to their commanding officer and request permission for the flight. Lowrey simply told the tower, "Give me a green light. I'm taking off." At the last moment, a Marine ran out to the plane with a hunting knife—for cutting Osipoff loose—and dumped it in McCants's lap.

As the SOC-1 roared aloft, all activity around San Diego seemed to stop. Civilians crowded rooftops, children stopped playing at recess, and the men of North Island strained their eyes upward. With murmured prayers

and pounding hearts, the watchers agonized through every move in the impossible mission.

Within minutes, Lowrey and McCants were under the transport, flying at 300 feet. They made five approaches, but the air proved too bumpy to try for a rescue. Since radio communication between the two planes was impossible, Lowrey hand-signaled Johnson to head out over the Pacific, where the air would be smoother, and they climbed to 3,000 feet. Johnson held his plane on a straight course and reduced speed to that of the smaller plane—100 miles an hour.

Lowrey flew back and away from Osipoff, but level with him. McCants, who was in the open seat in back of Lowrey, saw that Osipoff was hanging by one foot and that blood was dripping from his helmet. Lowrey edged the plane closer with such precision

## THE TIMING HAD TO BE EXACT SO OSIPOFF DIDN'T SMASH INTO THE PROPELLER.

that his maneuvers jibed with the swings of Osipoff's inert body. His timing had to be exact so that Osipoff did not smash into the SOC-1's propeller.

Finally, Lowrey slipped his upper left wing under Osipoff's shroud lines, and McCants, standing upright in the rear cockpit—with the plane still going



100 miles an hour 3,000 feet above the sea—lunged for Osipoff. He grabbed him at the waist, and Osipoff flung his arms around McCants's shoulders in a death grip.

McCants pulled Osipoff into the plane, but since it was only a two-seater, the next problem was where to put him. As Lowrey eased the SOC-1 forward to get some slack in the chute lines, McCants managed to stretch Osipoff's body across the top of the fuselage, with Osipoff's head in his lap.

Because McCants was using both hands to hold Osipoff in a vise, there was no way for him to cut the cords that still attached Osipoff to the DC-2. Lowrey then nosed his plane inch by inch closer to the transport and, with incredible precision, used his propeller to cut the shroud lines. After hanging for 33 minutes between life and death, Osipoff was finally free.

Lowrey had flown so close to the transport that he'd nicked a 12-inch gash in its tail. But now the parachute, abruptly detached along with the shroud lines, drifted downward and wrapped itself around Lowrey's rudder. That meant that Lowrey had to fly the SOC-1 without being able to control it properly and with most of Osipoff's body still on the outside.

Yet, five minutes later, Lowrey somehow managed to touch down at North Island, and the little plane rolled to a stop. Osipoff finally lost consciousness—but not before he heard sailors applauding the landing.

Later on, after lunch, Lowrey and McCants went back to their usual duties. Three weeks later, both men were flown to Washington, DC, where Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox awarded them the Distinguished Flying Cross for executing "one of the most brilliant and daring rescues in naval history."

Osipoff spent the next six months in the hospital. The following January, completely recovered and newly promoted to first lieutenant, he went back to parachute jumping. The morning he was to make his first jump after the accident, he was cool and laconic, as usual. His friends, though, were nervous. One after another, they went up to reassure him. Each volunteered to jump first so he could follow.

Osipoff grinned and shook his head. "The hell with that!" he said as he fastened his parachute. "I know damn well I'm going to make it." And he did. **R**

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*This article first appeared in the May 1975 edition of Reader's Digest.*



### Chew on This

Bubble gum, made in 1906, was originally called Blibber-Blubber.

HISTORY.COM



"If you want me to give 110 percent, I want a 10 percent raise."

ALL  
in a Day's  
**WORK**

**Sometimes honesty** isn't the best policy.

A patient showed up at our medical office and asked, "You're

Mary, aren't you?"

I smiled. "No, sorry, I'm not."

"Are you sure? You look just like someone I know named Mary."

"Well, I hope she's young and skinny."

"No," he said, settling into his chair.

"She looks like you."

—JANICE GRUDOWSKI  
*Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania*

**A coworker** was telling us all about her trip to Las Vegas. "That sounds great. Where'd you stay?" asked a colleague.

"I can't remember," she said. "But I think it began with an s."

"Was it Caesar's?"

—DARRELL BERGER  
*Johnsonburg, Pennsylvania*

**NEW HIRE:** Some man put all these files on my desk. Isn't there an employee here to take care of all this petty stuff?

**OLDER ASSOCIATE:** Yes, there is. You.

—STUPIDCOWORKERS.COM

**Me:** Why aren't you smiling in your school pictures?

**Child:** Because I'm at school.

**Me:** So?

**Child:** Can I see your work ID?

**Me:** OK, never mind.

—[@RODLACROIX](#)

**While taking** a clinical history from an elderly patient, I asked, "How's your love life?"

"I don't know," he said. "I'll ask my wife." He got up, walked into the hallway where his wife was sitting, and shouted, "Hey, the doctor wants to know if we still have sex."

His wife shouted back, "No, the only thing we have is Medicare and Blue Cross."

—SIVAPRASAD

MADDURI

*Poplar Bluff, Missouri*

**Never lie** on your résumé. You might get caught by hiring managers, like these fraudsters did:

◆ One applicant took credit for writing computer code that was actually written by the manager conducting the job interview.

◆ Another applicant reported being an anti-terrorist spy for the CIA during the years when he would have been in elementary school.

◆ Yet another reported studying under German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, who, by then, had been dead for 117 years.

—CAREERBUILDER.COM

**YOUR FUNNY WORK STORY** could be worth \$\$\$*.* For details, go to [RD.COM/SUBMIT](#).

## WORK-LIFE BALANCE—WHAT'S THAT?

◆ I have dealt with so many difficult customers over the years that I used to angrily call my dog "Sir" when I was mad at him.

—CONFESSIONSOFAHOTELWORKER.COM



◆ **Customer:** You close at six thirty, right?

**Barista:** Yes, but we close emotionally at six.

—[@sehnaoui](#)

◆ Once, I went into my supervisor's office five minutes before we opened to ask him a question. He was lying on the floor with a pillow and blanket and the lights turned off. He just said, "I'm not here yet." I work at a public library, by the way.

—Mary Ellis ON FACEBOOK, VIA BUZZFEED.COM

FIRST PERSON

IT WAS A MEGA  
CALORIE OBSESSION  
THAT I COULDN'T  
SEEM TO QUIT. THEN  
I LOOKED AT THE  
CALENDAR AND FOUND  
INSPIRATION ON THE  
DAY BEFORE LENT—  
AKA FAT TUESDAY.

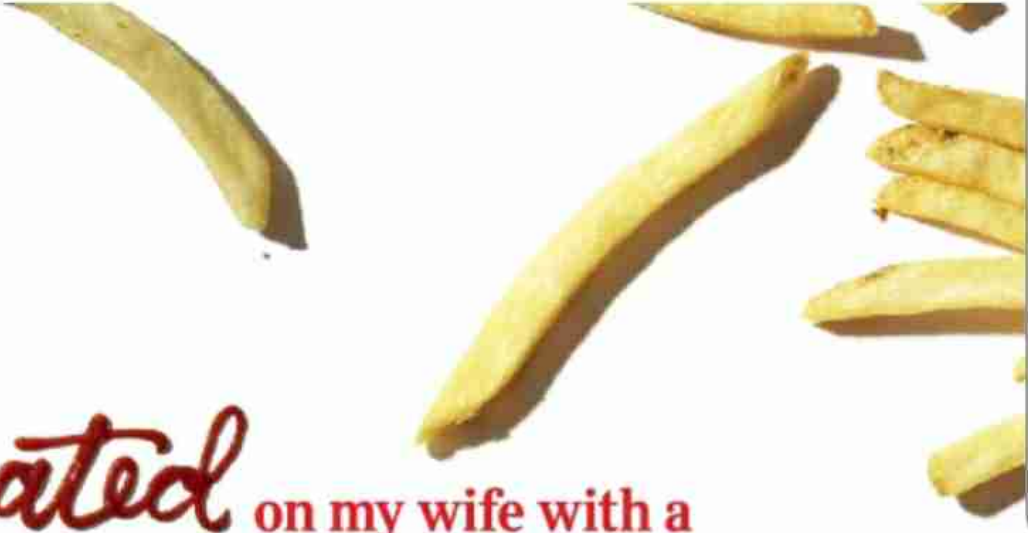
**MY FAST  
FOOD LOVE  
AFFAIR**

\*\*\*\*\*  
BY TOMMY TOMLINSON  
FROM THE BOOK THE ELEPHANT  
IN THE ROOM

\*\*\*\*\*  
PLEASE COME AGAIN!!







*I cheated* on my wife with a redhead named Wendy. Her place was just a couple of miles away. She was always smiling when I pulled up. She gave me exactly what I wanted. Every time I left, I swore I wouldn't come back.

Wendy was my favorite, but she wasn't my only one. Sometimes I went across town for a quickie with a guy in a clown suit named Ronald.

Fast food is my deepest addiction. Since I was 16 and got my first car, I've spent endless hours idling in drive-through lanes, waiting to trade my money for my fix. I did some deeply depressing calculations and figured out that I've spent at least \$30 a week on fast food for the last 35 years. That comes to somewhere around \$55,000, enough for a bass boat or a new kitchen, with some left over to stash in the bank. Instead, I have invested it in Big Macs and big pants. If you're addicted to anything and want to get one solid measure of how much it has hurt your life, do the math.

Next time you go to a fast-food joint, take a slow walk around the parking lot. You'll find the spaces filled with customers eating in their cars. That's where the junkies hang out. Alone

in your car, you can get the Double Whopper and the onion rings and the chocolate shake, and nobody knows but the cashier who hands you the bag. Every car I've owned has ended up with salt in the cracks of the passenger seat and leftover napkins in the glove box.

One time I was in the drive-through and called out my regular order. "I'll have a number two combo, medium-sized, with a Dr Pepper, and—"

The cashier cut in. "And a junior bacon, right?"


"Right."

Wait, what?

I was at the anonymous fast-food joint, ordering in the most anonymous way possible. But I went there so often that the cashier knew what I wanted just from hearing my voice. I'd become a regular.

I told myself I was never going back again.

I was back in a week.





Everybody needs a third place—a bar or a coffee shop or a bookstore—to feel comfortable that's not work or home. Willie's Wee-Nee Wagon in my hometown of Brunswick, Georgia, was my third place for a lot of years. I went there to meet friends. I went after getting in trouble with my folks. I took dates there. I slunk back there after getting dumped. I went when I didn't know what else to do. I'd sit on the hood of my car, and somebody I knew would eventually show up.

A couple of weeks after my sister, Brenda, died at the too-young age of 63, I drove 40 miles from her place to Willie's. I ordered a dog and some fries and a tea and ate in the car. I grieved for Brenda and felt a little better.

This sounds pathetic, I know, but one of the things I always got from fast food was companionship. I'm

an introvert who learned to talk to strangers because I love my work as a reporter and how it makes me feel. I adore my wife and family and friends. But I spent so much time alone in my room growing up, so much time alone when I was single, so much time working the day shift as a newspaper reporter while my wife, Alix, worked nights. Aloneness has become my natural state. That's not who I want to be, but it's who I am.

On those days when the gravity of solitude tried to pin me down, fast food would serve as a little bridge to the other side. Sometimes, in a creative rut, I'd take a drive to get out of the house and see things with a fresh eye. I'd almost always end up in a drive-through. Maybe I'd sit in the car and people-watch. Maybe I'd take my

**OTHER PEOPLE SOOTHE THEIR PAIN WITH A BOTTLE. I SOOTHED MINE WITH A BURGER.**



food home. But at least, I'd tell myself, I'd been out among people.

This is the cruel trick of most addictions. They're so good at short-term comfort. I'm hungry. I'm lonely. I need to feel a part of the world. Other people soothe these pains with the bottle or the needle. I soothed them with a burger and fries.

I did some more math one day, and



it just about knocked me over. On a really bad day, I might eat 6,000 calories—roughly the same amount the average adult tiger consumes. And it goes without saying that I wasn't spending half my day chasing down wildebeests.

How does a human being end up weighing 460 pounds? Six thousand calories at a time.

For the last few years, every time I bought fast food, I kept the receipt in my billfold. The idea was that one

## I DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH GUILT WEIGHS. BUT THAT MORNING, I FELT SOME OF IT LIFT.



of those meals would be the last fast-food meal I ever ate, and I wanted the receipt as a reminder. The weary ritual: I would buy something from the drive-through, toss the old receipt from my last meal, and replace it with the newest mistake. At my worst, I swapped it out twice a day.

Every so often, I'd pull out the latest receipt and look at it. Most days the ink was still fresh. I'd think about that day when I'd pull it out and it would be so old that it was yellowed and faded. I'd think about the day when it wouldn't be a symbol but just a useless scrap of paper. I'd think about the day when I could throw it in the trash, not needing the reminder anymore

because I broke the addiction before it broke me.

And then I finally did. I did it. I gave up fast food for Lent.

ON FAT TUESDAY, the day of feasting, I got Wendy's one last time for lunch. On Ash Wednesday, Alix and I went to the evening service at our church, and I made a vow that I was done with all the fast-food chains—anyplace with a drive-through, ketchup packets, and food that comes in a bag.

Why then? Mostly because Brenda's death shook me. I saw what it did to the rest of us for her to leave so soon. I don't want to put my family through that again. I want all the time I can get with the people I love.

Since my last binge, I have stayed away from McDonald's, Taco Bell, KFC, and their kin. There has been one exception: the day I took my mom to the doctor and she decided on the way home that she wanted biscuits at Hardee's. When your mama wants





biscuits at Hardee's, you get biscuits at Hardee's. I trust that God gave me a pass.

That was March 9, 2016. I stuck the receipt in my billfold. That Hardee's receipt is still in my billfold. The ink is so faded, I can barely see what I ate.

That summer, for the first time in my life, I bought a scale. It tops out at 400 pounds, and the first few times I stepped on, the digital readout said ERROR. Then, on the last day of August, I stepped on and when I looked down, the readout said 399.

I don't know how much guilt weighs. Guilt and shame are the hardest weight to shed. But that morning, I felt some of it lift off me.

I've had cravings, sure. One day in September, I drove from Charlotte to Harlan, Kentucky, for a story. I got there late and hungry. I drove down the main drag, and all the bright lights were temptations: Arby's, Taco Bell, Pizza Hut, and my former sweetheart Wendy. I just about gave in. Then I found a Food City supermarket. I got a turkey sandwich from the deli. I'm not going to pretend that it was as good as a Quarter Pounder, but when I got home, I was able to put an X in that box on the calendar where I am marking the days I have held on to my pledge. The calendar is now a big unbroken string of X's, and each

one of those is its own jolt of pleasure.

Let me be clear: I am still a sinner. There is a Dairy Queen five blocks from our house, and sometimes on a summer night, I'll dive into a Blizzard with Oreos. (Not a meal, though!)

I've never tried this hard before. I thought it was hopeless because I thought I was hopeless. I used to worry that I was lying to myself about being able to stick to a healthy diet and get in shape. Now I see that I told myself a bigger lie: that I wasn't worth the trouble.

These days my pants are falling off for the right reasons. They used to fall off because my gut was so big that it pushed my waistband down to my knees. Now they fall off because the waistband is too big. When I rent a car, I don't have to try out three or four until I find one where the seat belt buckles. When I go to the movies, I don't have to flip up the armrest between the seats.

Perhaps best of all, I have performed a magical antiaging trick: I've erased some of the worry lines around Alix's eyes. When we go out to eat and I skip the burger for the grilled chicken, she smiles and says, "What have you done with my husband?" When she hugs me now, her arms go all the way around me. To feel her fingertips touch at the small of my back is a pleasure no meal can match. **R**

FROM THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM: ONE FAT MAN'S QUEST TO GET SMALLER IN A GROWING AMERICA BY TOMMY TOMLINSON. COPYRIGHT © 2019 BY TOMMY TOMLINSON. REPRINTED BY PERMISSION OF SIMON & SCHUSTER, INC.



YOU BE THE JUDGE



# OUTRAGEOUS VERDICTS!

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A favorite *RD* feature is back,  
with four rulings that infuriated  
their losers. Do you agree?

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BY *Vicki Glembocki*

ILLUSTRATIONS BY *Magoz Studio*



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## The Case of the Broken Lottery Machine

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You might say that Pauline McKee is a slot machine veteran. At 87, she had been working the slots for more than six decades. But the “Miss Kitty” machine at the Isle Casino Hotel in Waterloo, Iowa, was new to her. That’s where McKee was playing on July 2, 2011, when, at around 10 p.m., she wagered 25 cents on a spin and won \$1.85. But that wasn’t all. A special message also popped up on the game’s screen: “The reels have rolled your way! Bonus Award—\$41,797,550.16.” McKee and her daughter, who was

playing nearby, excitedly called over a casino attendant. The supervisor on duty took a photo of the screen, told McKee she needed to make a few phone calls, and gave McKee \$10 to continue to play while they waited for more information. The supervisor even paid for McKee's hotel room for the night.

The next day, McKee received a note from the general manager of the casino, who described the situation as "unusual." She comped all the rooms McKee's family had stayed in—McKee, a widow and grandmother of 13, had come to Waterloo from her home in Antioch, Illinois, for a family reunion—and explained that she'd contacted the Iowa Racing and Gaming Commission (IRGC) to inspect the machine.

IRGC sent Miss Kitty's hardware and software to Gaming Laboratories International, a testing lab. The logs on the machine showed that the game misinterpreted a notice from the casino's central system as an award bonus. Miss Kitty was capable of displaying a max bonus of \$10,000, but bonuses weren't technically listed as possible prizes in this Miss Kitty's rules—which McKee hadn't read but were accessible by tapping a button on the screen. In other words, the computer had malfunctioned, and the jackpot McKee thought she'd won was, as the IRGC put it, "not valid." A sign posted on the front of the machine was plain:

"Malfunction voids all pays and plays." As a result, the casino refused to pay the \$41.8 million.

On January 26, 2012, McKee sued, claiming, primarily, that the casino had breached a contract by not paying her the bonus. That October, the district court announced it wouldn't move forward with the case since the rules of the game, which McKee had access to, formed the relevant contract. Ultimately, McKee appealed to the Iowa Supreme Court. "Whether the casino intended it to happen or not, Mrs. McKee didn't do anything wrong," said her attorney, Steve Enochian. "She played the slots like the casino wanted her to, so it needs to pay."

***Did the casino owe Pauline McKee \$41.8 million?***

**★ THE VERDICT ★**

In April 2015, before a jury could hear the case, the Iowa Supreme Court dismissed her claim. And it wasn't because paying would have sent the casino into bankruptcy, as its attorney, Stacey Cormican, noted to the press. Since Miss Kitty's rules didn't "provide for any kind of bonus," Justice Edward M. Mansfield wrote, "McKee had no contractual right to a bonus." So the casino awarded her the \$10,000 max, right? No. A thousand? A hundred? No. She only ever received what she had won on that spin—\$1.85. As McKee complained to the *Chicago Tribune*, "That's terrible."



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## The Case of the Pet Raccoon

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Kellie Greer was walking in Cottage Grove Park near her Seattle home in June 2010 when she spotted two newborn raccoons. She'd already come across a dead adult raccoon in the road, which she assumed was their mother. Still, she waited several hours to see whether an adult raccoon would return for the babies, and when none did, she brought the tiny orphans home. One died that night, but the other held on. Kellie called the Progressive Animal Welfare Society and 15 animal rehabilitation centers in the area. None, she says, had space for the raccoon. So she and her husband, Chris Greer, decided to keep her. They named her Mae.

For seven years, Mae was part of

the family, along with two kids, two cats, koi, and chickens. They walked her on a leash, trained her to use a litter box, and built an enclosure for her in their backyard. They called her "human-friendly." In fact, she regularly posed for photos with the neighbor kids, Seattle police officers, and even Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) game wardens, whom the family ran into on annual fall camping trips to Icicle Creek park.

During one trip in November 2017, the Greers stopped for gas in Coulee City. While Chris pumped, Kellie walked Mae around the parking lot. A WDFW officer, Glenn Steffler, pulled in behind the Greers and asked whether they had a permit to possess a wild animal; it's illegal to keep raccoons as pets in Washington. Chris fibbed and said yes.

But Steffler checked the records and discovered the truth. A week later, another officer knocked on the Greers' door. Kellie invited him in. There was Mae, lying on the sofa.

"I need to take her," the officer said.

"Today?" Kellie asked. Yes, he said.

Mae ended up at Center Valley Animal Rescue in Quilcene. She had a broken tooth and had been too domesticated to ever return to the wild. If she couldn't be used for educational purposes at the rescue center, she might be euthanized. On December 5, 2017, the Greers sued for custody of Mae. At the Thurston County Superior Court hearing in April 2018, Chris turned to the WDFW's attorney and said, "We don't understand why you want her now."

***Should Mae the raccoon be returned to the Greer family?***

★ **THE VERDICT** ★

When the hearing officer decided against the Greers, they wept in the courtroom. They appealed—and lost. "This raccoon is not in good shape," announced the judge nearly a year after Mae had been taken from the Greers. This was the final ruling and, according to WDFW attorney Neil Wise, the right precedent. Otherwise, he said, "What's to stop everybody from grabbing animals out of the wild and making pets out of them?" Once no animal shelter would take her, the ruling made clear, the Greers should have simply left Mae to die.



**The Case of the Halal KFC**

In 2016, Afzal Lokhandwala's business was booming. He owned eight Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) franchises around Chicago, most serving large Muslim populations. They knew that Lokhandwala was also a practicing Muslim, and they knew that all the chicken-on-the-bone he sold was halal. To be certified as halal—i.e., "permissible"—the chicken had to be slaughtered, distributed, and prepared according to Islamic religious standards.

Lokhandwala emigrated from India in 1989 and landed a job as an assistant manager at a South Side KFC. He worked his way up to manager, then to franchisee, opening his first KFC in 2003. His franchise director, Ken Taft, helped him find a halal-certified, KFC-approved poultry slaughterhouse, and KFC had "full knowledge and approval" of his marketing the chicken as halal on signs in his restaurant. In fact, Lokhandwala says, several KFC execs visited his restaurant "regularly."

In 2006, Lokhandwala opened a second franchise, and with KFC's approval he advertised that the restaurant was halal in the newspaper and on TV. He opened a third franchise four years later. In 2012, he opened five more, in Muslim communities.

But in October 2016, Lokhandwala received a letter from KFC's corporate



headquarters saying that his halal advertising could confuse customers who had been to other KFC shops that didn't offer halal chicken. Then, in December, a KFC lawyer informed him that he was violating a 2009 KFC policy that prohibited franchises from making religious claims about KFC products. He was told to stop marketing his chicken as halal.

Lokhandwala had not been aware of this policy, and it had never been mentioned when he was negotiating with KFC about opening the five franchises based entirely upon offering halal chicken. Had he known, he says, he never would have purchased those stores. He was now at risk of losing \$1 million a year in sales.

In August 2017, Lokhandwala sued KFC, claiming breach of contract and asking the court to stop KFC from preventing him from advertising its chicken as halal. Already, he claimed,

sales were down 20 percent. An attorney for KFC, Daniel Weiss, filed a motion to dismiss all claims because the franchise agreement gave the company "the absolute right" to prohibit any advertising of its product.

### ***Should KFC let Lokhandwala continue to advertise halal chicken?***

#### **★ THE VERDICT ★**

U.S. district judge John Robert Blakey dismissed the case outright on January 23, 2018. "Under the franchise agreement, defendant has every right to bar plaintiff from advertising his products as halal," Blakey wrote, "even if defendant allowed that advertising in the past." Lokhandwala was dumbfounded. "You'd think that a company in the business of selling product to as many people as possible would want to reach out to certain communities," notes his attorney, Michael Goldberg. "It made no sense."



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## The Case of the Towering House

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Pierce and Barbara McDowell had lived in their historic home on South Second Avenue in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, for 24 years. Built in 1924, it is on the National Register of Historic Places, one of several such buildings in their McKennan Park neighborhood, which is itself a registered historic district recognized for its “well-maintained houses” with “cohesive character.”

The McDowells welcomed new next-door neighbors, Josh and Sarah Sapienza, in 2013. The next year, the Sapienzas submitted plans to the

Sioux Falls Board of Historic Preservation proposing to raze their 1920s Tudor house and build a new 4,000-square-foot structure. The architect who’d drawn the renderings had taken into account the state’s special requirements for new construction in historic areas. The board approved the plans.

The Sapienzas’ contractor, Dick Sorum, revised the plans in accordance with the city’s zoning restrictions for height and setback from adjacent properties, but he didn’t realize that historic regulations were different. Sorum took his plans to the city’s historic-preservation office, but the employee he needed to get approval from was out, so he left the plans there. They were never formally approved by the preservation board.

Two months later, in August, Pierce McDowell and Josh Sapienza met for drinks. Later, Pierce sent Josh a text: “I have to forewarn you that my wife is really suffering about all of this. The home is just way too big for the lot ... not your problem or fault ... just a tough gig for us.” On October 22, the city issued a building permit; the plans did conform to its standard height and size requirements. Still, no one coordinated with the historic-preservation office, even as the foundation was poured in November.

Over the next six months, as the house was constructed, the McDowells were shocked by how close the new structure was to their



property and, specifically, to the chimney of their own historic wood-burning fireplace. They called the fire department, which inspected the house, only to turn around and ticket the McDowells for a code violation, ordering them not to use the fireplace or risk responsibility for damages that might occur.

The McDowells hired attorney Steve Johnson, who, on May 8, 2015, sent the Sapienzas a cease-and-desist letter. Still, construction continued. The 4,000-square-foot house ultimately stood 44.5 feet high, exceeding the regulations for historic buildings and towering over the other houses in the neighborhood by an average of more than eight feet. The McDowells sued, claiming the Sapienzas had been negligent and asking the court for injunctive relief—either make the house compliant or knock it down. A circuit judge agreed.

Of course, the Sapienzas appealed, arguing to the state supreme court in October 2017 that they'd followed the rules—they got all board approvals and all the proper permits. Their attorney, Dick Travis, asked the court:

“What more could Josh and Sarah Sapienza have done?”

***Should the Sapienzas be required to revamp—or demolish—their new home?***

### ★ THE VERDICT ★

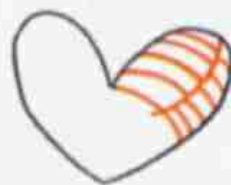
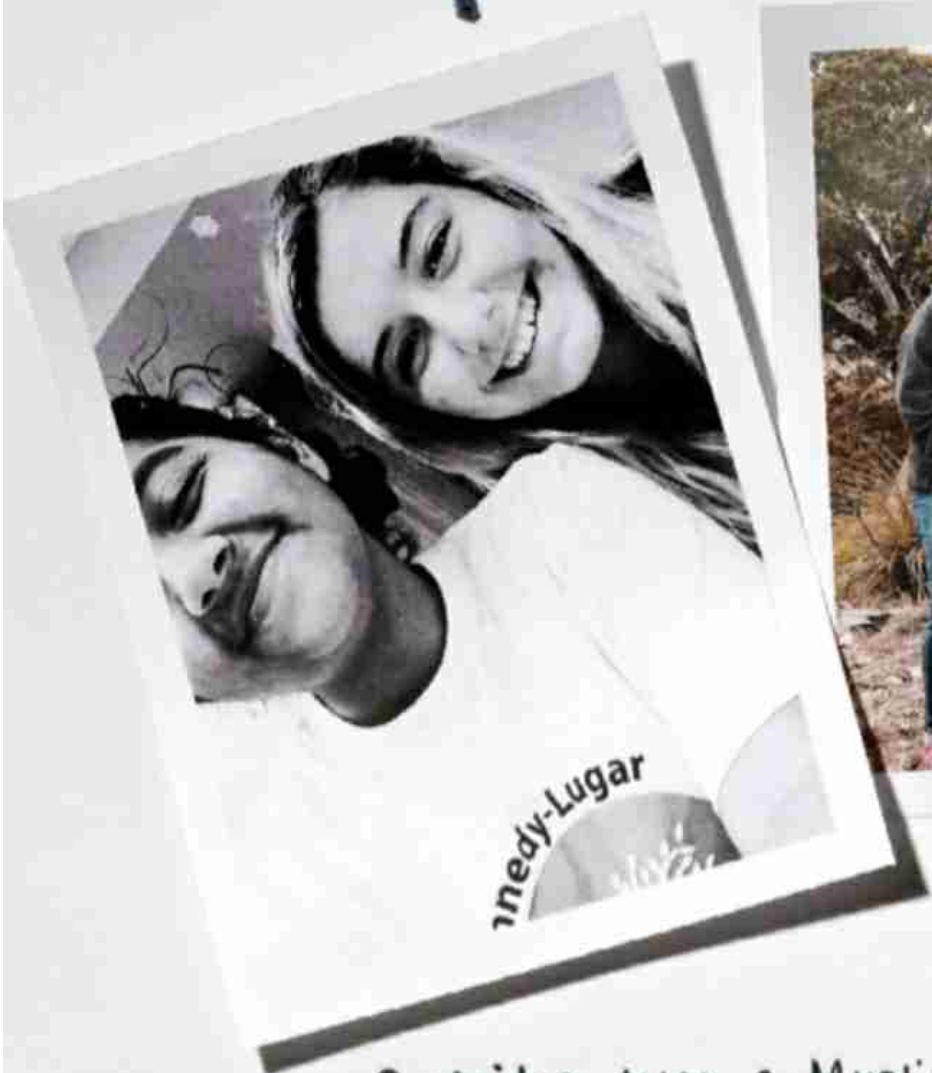
“This is a difficult case,” noted Justice Steven Zinter, one of a five-judge panel that heard the case. Chief Justice David Gilbertson asked whether the lower court’s ruling was basically “a demolition order,” and the Sapienzas’ lawyer suggested that his clients compensate their neighbors for the fireplace and lost property value rather than tear down their entire house. But in January 2018, the supreme court affirmed the circuit court’s ruling: Even if the McDowells could be compensated, that “would not remedy McKennan Park’s continuing and long-term loss of its historic character.” In May, a giant crane knocked down the Sapienzas’ home. As Sarah Sapienza watched the demolition, she maintained that she had paid a steep price for a flawed process, telling a reporter, “The city made a mistake; the historic board made a mistake. I did not make a mistake.” **R**



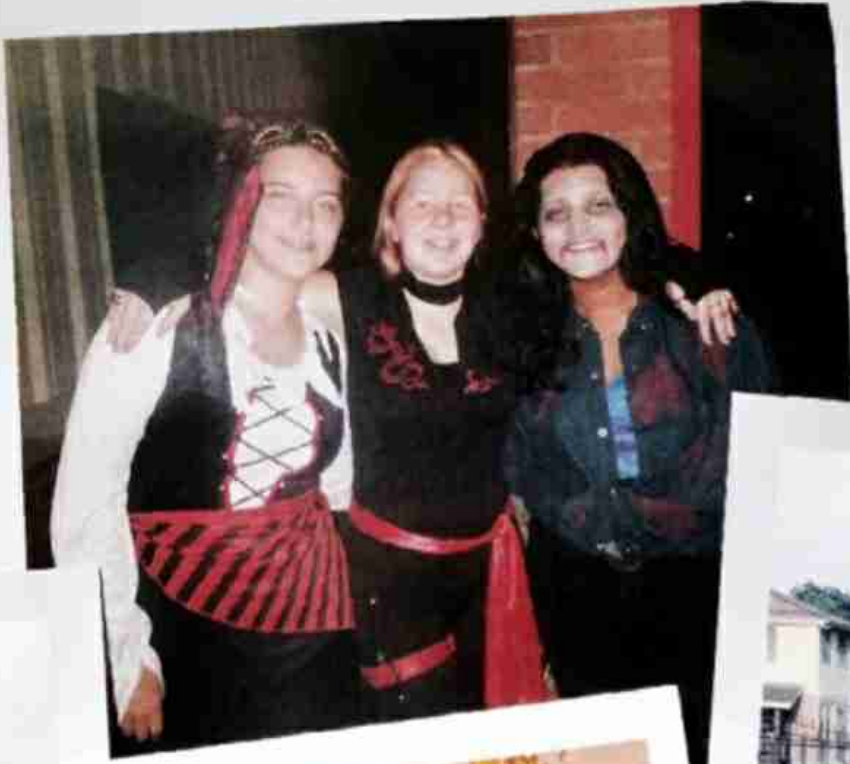
### What Will They Call It Now?

The Leaning Tower of Pisa is getting taller! In 1990, engineers closed the 185-foot white marble building for a decade to make structural adjustments that corrected the lean by 17 inches. Recently, the Italian government announced that the tower had recovered 1.57 more inches largely on its own (and thanks to its shored-up foundation). At this rate, the tower will be perfectly straight—in 4,000 years.

# Faithful



Sabika was a Muslim exchange student from Pakistan. Jaelyn was a homeschooled Christian. Somehow, **they became inseparable**— until the unthinkable happened.



# Friends

By Skip Hollandsworth  
From Texas Monthly



Some 1,500 students attend Santa Fe High School; many are conservative Christians.



**Only a few kids** in the fourth-period girls' PE class noticed the new student. She had long black hair and mahogany eyes, and she sat by herself in the bleachers, staring curiously at the other girls in their shorts and T-shirts doing jumping jacks and push-ups. It was September 11, 2017, and after two weeks of cancellations caused by Hurricane Harvey, classes had resumed at Texas's Santa Fe High School, some 35 miles south of Houston.

Just one student approached. She had straw-blond hair and turquoise eyes, and she wore a blue T-shirt with a Bible verse, Matthew 4:19, printed on the front: "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."

The girl with the blond hair smiled. "I'm Jaelyn," she said.

The girl with the black hair smiled back. "I'm Sabika."

Jaelyn told Sabika her full name was Jaelyn Cogburn. She was 15 years old, a freshman, and new to the school, so she didn't know many people. Sabika said her full name was Sabika Sheikh, and she was a foreign exchange student from Pakistan. She was 16, a junior. She didn't know anyone at all.

The bell rang, and Jaelyn and Sabika moved on to their other classes. At the end of the day, Jaelyn hurried out to the parking lot, where her mother, Joleen Cogburn, was waiting. "Mom," Jaelyn asked, "where's Pakistan?"

Despite its proximity to Houston, Santa Fe, with a population of 13,000, feels like a small town. Deeply conservative, the town attracted national attention in 2000 when school officials appealed all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court to defend their practice of conducting public prayers before football games. (They lost.)

Joleen and her husband, Jason Cogburn, live with their six children

(three of whom are adopted) on three and a half acres in a comfortable two-story home. Every Sunday, the family attends Santa Fe Christian Church. Joleen has homeschooled all the children, following a Bible-based curriculum.

Jaelyn, the oldest birth child, was shy. Outside of her siblings and a couple of girls from her church youth group, she stayed mostly to herself. But that summer, she had surprised her parents, telling them that she wanted to go to Santa Fe High.

Joleen and Jason assumed that their daughter would have trouble adjusting to life at a public high school with 1,500 students. Instead, Jaelyn came home on that first day smiling and talking excitedly about meeting a girl from Pakistan. She googled Pakistan and read that almost all the country's 200 million residents are Muslim.

"You know, Mom," Jaelyn said, "I've never met a Muslim."

"Well, maybe God has put you together for a reason," Joleen said. "Who knows? Maybe the two of you will become friends."

That same night, at the home where Sabika was staying with her host family, a Pakistani-born Muslim couple, she called her parents, 8,500 miles away in Karachi. Sabika's mother, Farah Naz Sheikh, and her father, Abdul Aziz Sheikh, who goes by Aziz, had been up with their three other children since dawn—awakened, as they were every morning, by the call to

prayer that warbled from loudspeakers attached to the nearby mosque.

Karachi, a sprawling port city on Pakistan's southern border with a population of some 15 million, is often called one of the world's least livable cities. The roads are choked with rickshaws, motorcycles sputtering clouds of exhaust, and wagons hitched to donkeys. Millions of residents dwell in slums without water or electricity. In 2002, Karachi made

Sabika had not yet  
reached her first  
birthday on  
September 11, 2001.



international headlines when *Wall Street Journal* reporter Daniel Pearl was abducted on a downtown street and later beheaded.

Still, Sabika loved Karachi. She loved piling into her father's green Toyota Corolla with her family for the 15-minute drive to the beach. She eagerly anticipated visits to the mall. And she looked forward to playing badminton on the roof of their apartment building with her sisters, Saniya and Soha, and her brother, Ali. With the aromas of spice-laden dinners wafting from neighbors' apartments, the children would play until the sun set, when the call to prayer sounded.

Sabika had not yet reached her first birthday when Al Qaeda attacked the

United States on September 11, 2001. As a teenager, disturbed by the characterization of her country as a breeding ground for extremism, she told friends and family that she planned to join Pakistan's foreign service and become a diplomat. She wanted to show people that Pakistanis were not terrorists and that there was nothing to fear about their faith.

In the fall of 2016, Sabika's cousin Shaheera Jalil Albasit told her about a U.S. State Department program that provides funding for high school students from countries with large Muslim populations to study in the United States for a school year. Aziz and Farah feared that their daughter would be disparaged by anti-Muslim Americans, but they agreed to allow her to apply.

Sabika was one of roughly 900 students selected. She was ecstatic. When she received the news that she would be sent to Santa Fe, Texas, she and her parents went online and looked at photos of the town and the high school, a long, boxy redbrick building alongside Highway 6.

On the day she left, in August 2017, Aziz and Farah arranged for a *sadaqah*, a ritualistic sacrifice of a goat, to protect Sabika from harm. Then the family piled into the Corolla to take Sabika to the airport.

**After their first-day** meeting, Jaelyn and Sabika became fast friends. Every day during fourth period, they walked laps around the gym, with

Jaelyn asking Sabika questions based on what she had read online. Was she really not allowed to eat pork because it's considered unclean? (Correct.) Would she allow her marriage to be arranged by her parents? (Most likely, though she would want to meet him first.) And did she truly believe that the Koran was the final word of God? (Of course, Sabika said.)

Jaelyn showed Sabika the Bible app on her phone, and Sabika pulled up her Koran app, along with a digital compass, which she relied on to face east toward Mecca for her prayers.

"They were the odd couple, the Christian girl and the Muslim girl,"

Each evening, Jaelyn would quote the Bible and Sabika the Koran.

says their PE teacher, Connie Montemayor. "In a way, it was a perfect pairing of opposites."

In October, Jaelyn invited Sabika to her house to meet her family. "Welcome to Texas!" Joleen said, giving her a hug. Over the next few weeks, Joleen drove Sabika and Jaelyn to the movies, a high school football game, and the theater department's performance of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.

After Sabika shared with Jaelyn that she wanted to experience life in a non-Muslim home, Jaelyn asked



The Cogburns were already raising a large family, but they made room for Sabika.

her parents whether Sabika could live with them. “Honey, I’ve already got six children to raise,” said Joleen. But she noticed a pleading look in Jaelyn’s eyes that she had never seen before, and soon it was arranged for Sabika to live with the Cogburns.

She was given an upstairs bedroom. She hung a Pakistani flag on the wall, and on her door she taped a drawing she had made of an airplane flying over a globe. Beneath the airplane she had written, in English, “Up in the clouds, on my way to unknown things.”

Each evening, after Sabika prayed and called her parents, she and Jaelyn would talk late into the night. Jaelyn would quote the Bible, and in turn Sabika would quote the Koran.

On Christmas Eve, a few days after she moved in, Sabika said she wanted to go to church with the Cogburns. She wore an ankle-length, traditional Pakistani dress and sat next to Jaelyn. She listened in bewilderment as the

pastor talked about Jesus being born in a manger to a virgin, and she watched the congregants observe the Last Supper by drinking grape juice and eating wafers. She rose with everyone else to sing contemporary Christian songs, and she closed her eyes during prayers.

For Christmas, Joleen bought Sabika last-minute presents: a camera, a scrapbooking album, a ring decorated with a crescent moon, pajamas, sweaters, and socks. And the week after, Sabika went with the Cogburns to a Christian retreat center in West Texas. There, word spread that Sabika was a practicing Muslim, and a teenage boy confronted her, snidely asking whether she was a terrorist. “Stop it!” Jaelyn snapped. “Sabika’s my friend!”

“You’re friends with *her*?” the boy pressed.

“We’re *best* friends,” said Jaelyn.

**Just as she had** been in Pakistan, Sabika was a straight-A student. In physics,



**Jaelyn's mission is to share Sabika's message of love.**

In January, she and Jaelyn learned that a schoolmate had killed himself. And on Valentine's Day, they got alerts on their phones that a deadly shooting had occurred at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. Sabika was familiar with school violence. Over the years, the Taliban

she made nearly perfect grades. In English, she dutifully read American classics such as *Of Mice and Men*, *The Crucible*, and *The Great Gatsby*, and she wrote a research paper on the #MeToo movement. ("One of the best students I've ever had," says Dena Brown, her English teacher.) In history, she gave a presentation about Pakistan in which she described the friendly people and delicious food. And she left an impression in other ways. "I don't know how to explain this exactly, but you felt happy around Sabika," says Montemayor. "She never argued, and she never got upset. She was a peacemaker. I used to tease her and call her my Nelson Mandela."

Occasionally, Sabika did encounter tragic aspects of American life.

had forcibly closed schools that educated girls in regions of Pakistan. But why, she asked Jaelyn, would an American boy, blessed with privileges most Pakistanis saw only on TV, go on such a rampage? If he was having a hard time, didn't he have anyone to talk to? Couldn't his family have helped?

During one of her calls with her parents, Sabika opened up about the side of American high school life that troubled her. Some of the students seemed so lonely, she said. They weren't close to their families the way Pakistani children were. Aziz and Farah asked Sabika whether she felt safe, and she assured them there was nothing to worry about. She and Jaelyn were together always. "We will never put ourselves in danger," she said.



**Sabika was scheduled** to return to Karachi on June 9, 2018, which meant that she would be spending most of Ramadan, the holiest period of the Islamic year, with the Cogburns. Sabika explained to them that every day during the monthlong observance, Muslims are required to fast from dawn until sunset. They are not allowed to engage in thoughts or behaviors considered impure. It is a time of introspection and communal prayer. Jaelyn, Joleen, and Jason said they wanted to fast with her. "It was our way of honoring Sabika," says Joleen. "It was our way of letting her know how much she was loved."

And so, on May 16, the first day of Ramadan, Jason, Joleen, Jaelyn, and Sabika woke earlier than usual and ate

Jaelyn called her parents. "I can't find Sabika!" she screamed.

a full breakfast before the sun rose. At school, Jaelyn and Sabika still walked laps during PE, but they didn't take a sip of water. That night, Joleen prepared a dinner of chicken spaghetti, and the family waited for sunset.

After dinner, Sabika went upstairs for her evening prayer, and as she unfurled her prayer mat, the bedroom door opened behind her. There stood Jaelyn, holding her own prayer rug.

She placed it beside Sabika's and said she wanted to pray with her. Sabika nodded and dropped to her knees.

"*Ashhadu an la ilaha illa Allah,*" Sabika recited.

"Dear precious Lord and Savior, thank you for this day," Jaelyn began.

**The morning of** May 18, Sabika and Jaelyn ate a predawn breakfast, and then Jaelyn drove them to school in the family's old green pickup. They sat in the truck and chatted until the bell rang. Sabika asked whether they could hang out a little longer. Jaelyn, though, had a test in her first-period biology class.

"We're already late," Jaelyn said. "Let's just go."

Minutes after Jaelyn took her seat in class, the fire alarm sounded. "It's probably just a drill," her teacher said. Jaelyn exited the school through a side door with other students. Once outside, she saw several police cars speed past, sirens screaming. She overheard a teacher say there had been a shooting in the art room. Panicked, Jaelyn borrowed a phone to call Sabika, but it went straight to voice mail. She tried again, over and over. She ran from one student to another, asking whether they had seen Sabika. She called her parents. "I can't find Sabika!" she screamed.

Soon, news helicopters were hovering overhead. Local television stations broke into their regularly scheduled broadcasts to announce that an active

shooter was at Santa Fe High School.

Half a world away, Aziz, Farah, and their children had just finished iftar, the evening meal at the end of the day-long fast. Aziz turned on the television to catch the news, and he saw on the ticker that there had been a shooting at a Texas school. He switched to CNN. On the screen was a photo of the same high school that Sabika had seen on her computer when she'd learned she was going to Santa Fe.


Aziz called Sabika 24 times in a row. He finally called Jason, who had driven to the high school with Joleen. The two men had never spoken. Talking slowly so that Aziz could understand him, Jason said Sabika was missing and that as soon as he was given more information, he would call back.

Jason, Joleen, Jaelyn, and other families who were still looking for their children were sent to a nearby building that officials were calling a "family reunification center." Periodically, a bus arrived with students who had been inside the school since the police lockdown. The Cogburns watched each student step off the bus, hoping Sabika would emerge.

At 1:30, the final bus arrived, carrying students who had been in the art room. Joleen asked whether anyone had seen Sabika, and someone said she had seen her go into the classroom but hadn't seen her come out. By then, only ten families remained at the reunification center. Jason got a call from a friend at the hospital.

He ushered Jaelyn and Joleen into an empty room to tell them Sabika was dead. Jaelyn collapsed to the floor, and Joleen began screaming.

After the Cogburns drove home, Jason composed himself and walked outside to call Aziz, who was standing in his living room, surrounded by friends and relatives who had heard about the shooting. Farah sat with the children on the sofa. After speaking with Jason, Aziz lowered his phone. He turned to everyone in the room and said, "Sabika is no more."

"The only way one gets through tough times is to serve others." 

**In all, eight students** and two teachers were murdered, and thirteen others were wounded. A junior at the school, Dimitrios Pagourtzis, confessed. That morning, he had carried two guns to school under his trench coat. He went to the school's art lab, pumped the shotgun, and started shooting.

For days, mourners gathered on the high school's front lawn. The Cogburns went to a memorial service that the Islamic Society of Greater Houston held for Sabika. More than 2,000 people showed up. Jaelyn, her head covered with a prayer shawl, told the crowd in a trembling voice that Sabika was "loyal to her faith and her

country. She loved her family, and she couldn't wait to see them. She was the most amazing person I've ever met. I will always miss her."

Sabika's casket was wrapped in the green-and-white flag of Pakistan and flown to Karachi. A Pakistani honor guard placed the casket in a van, which transported it to the Sheikhs' apartment. A throng of people had already gathered. When someone asked how Aziz was feeling, he said, simply, "My heart drowns."

Sabika was taken to a small cemetery to be buried, not far from her grandparents. Aziz turned her face to the west so that she always would be looking toward Mecca.

Joleen asked the pastor at their church to hold a service for Sabika. It was a peculiar request—a memorial for a Muslim at an evangelical church. But during Sabika's time in Santa Fe, the congregation had come to adore her. More than 100 people attended, singing Sabika's favorite songs.

After the service, Jaelyn was in better spirits. But as the days passed, she had trouble focusing on anything but Sabika's death. Joleen reminded her of a famous passage from the book of Psalms: "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning."

Jaelyn, though, was haunted by one thought in particular: if only. If only she'd stayed with Sabika in the parking lot, Sabika likely wouldn't have been in the art room when the shooting started. Why, Jaelyn asked

herself over and over, hadn't she talked with her best friend a little longer?

In her bedroom, Jaelyn spent hours in prayer, begging God to "make a way" for her, and in June, just after her 16th birthday, she told her parents that God had heard her prayers.

"What does God want you to do?" Joleen asked.

A year earlier, Jaelyn had embarked on a ten-day mission trip with her church's youth group to the impoverished Belizean village of Teakettle. She had volunteered at an orphanage and worshipped at a tiny tin-roofed Baptist church. Now she was convinced that God was calling her back. Just like Sabika, she told her parents, she wanted to live for a year with a host family and attend the local high school. She wanted to volunteer at the orphanage and spread a message of love to the Belizean people.

"We knew that if Jaelyn stayed around Santa Fe, nothing would get better," says Jason. "The only way one gets through tough times is to serve other people."

And so, in August, Jaelyn and Joleen flew to Belize and drove to a part of the country that tourists rarely see: its interior, thick with rain forests and tiny villages, where dirt streets are lined with shanties and smoke from cooking fires lingers in the air. Joleen stayed to help her daughter settle in. Once on her own, Jaelyn acclimated to her new routine, though she continued to experience flashbacks of the shooting. At

the end of each day, she called home, read her Bible, and drifted off to sleep. On Sundays after church, she liked to go swimming in a river with the children from her host family.

In December, her school in Belize announced its annual poetry contest. Jaelyn decided to write about Sabika. It would be the first time she told anyone there about the shooting back home. The day of the competition, the entire student body gathered at the outdoor chapel to hear the contestants read their work. The themes were, for the most part, typical of teenage life: a girl's lamentation about other girls who pretend to be friendly but really aren't; a boy's adoration of his brother.

When it came time for Jaelyn's reading, she shuffled to the stage and stood in silence, rivulets of tears forming across her face. A minute passed. Then another. Jaelyn finally looked up and announced the title of her poem: "Why I'm Here." She began:

*I'm an American girl in Belize living her life alone.*

*You've never seen me. I'm unheard of and unknown.*

She described her friendship with Sabika.

*I swear I've never been closer to a person. Nor will I ever be.*

*She was like an angel sent from God and came to set me free.*

She recounted the shooting.

*A boy went to school with a gun in his hand.*

*He started shooting. And I just ran.*



Aziz visits his daughter every day. "Sabika is with Allah," he tells his other children.

She shared the despair that still haunted her.

*I know what it's like to hurt, to have pain, to gain, to lose.*

*I know what it's like to live when death has come so close.*

When she finished, her fellow students gave her a standing ovation. Jaelyn broke into tears again and slowly walked back to her seat.

During one of their nightly phone calls, Jaelyn told Joleen that she did not plan to return home when the school year ended.

"I believe God is calling me to stay in Belize," she said.

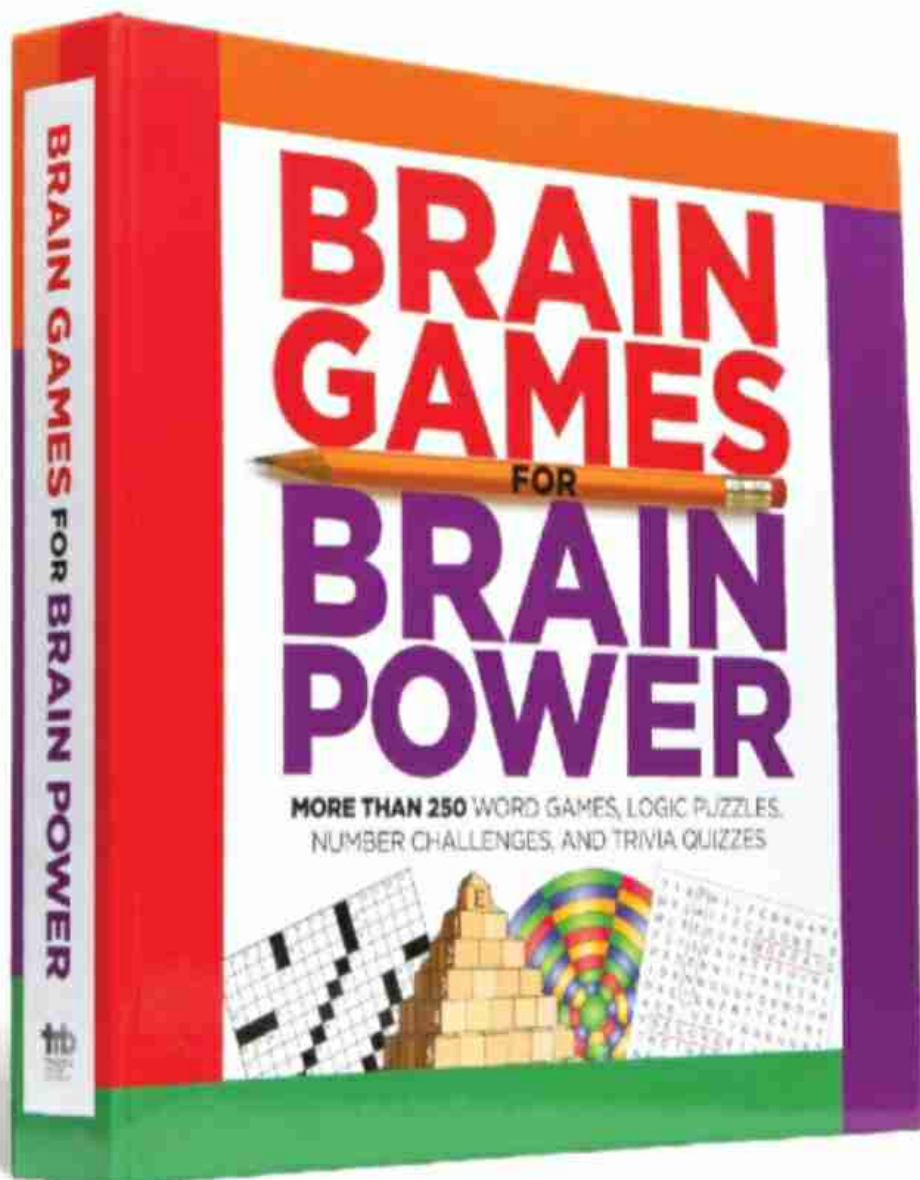
"For another year?" Joleen asked.

Jaelyn explained that she felt as if she was making a difference. She was getting the chance to do for others what Sabika had done for her and keeping Sabika's spirit alive.

"Is there anything better I could do with my life?" Jaelyn asked. "Anything?" **R**

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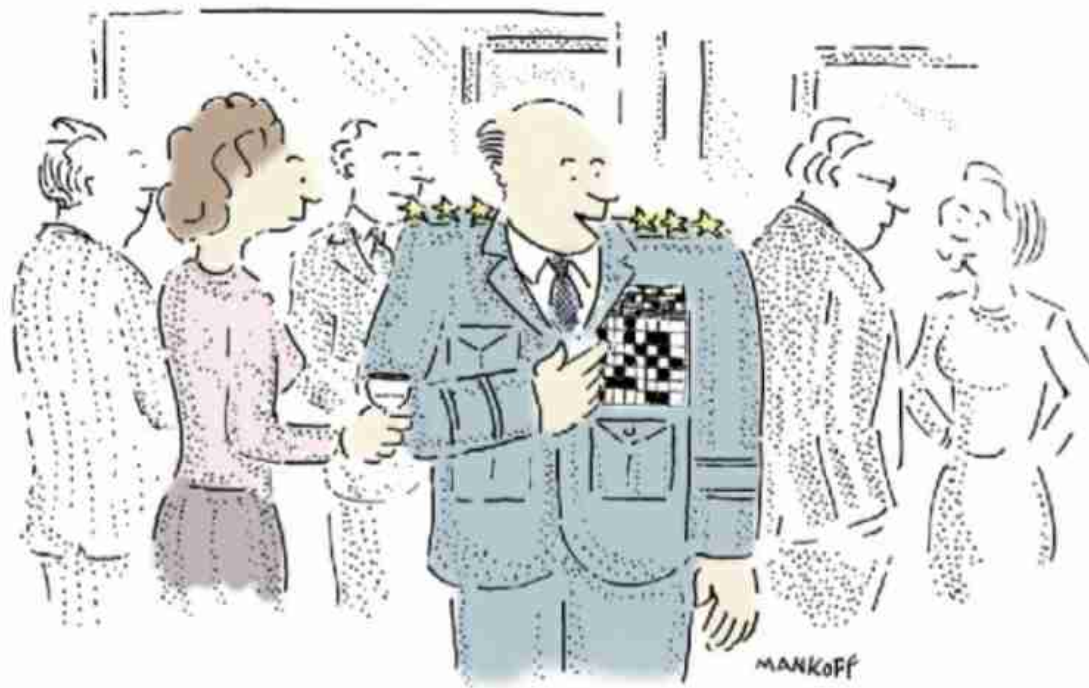
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"And this is a crossword puzzle I'm working on."

HUMOR *in*  
**UNIFORM**

**When I was** a Navy student pilot, I visited the home of a classmate. I met his wife and baby and was impressed that he had all his flight gear neatly laid out on a table. But something struck me as odd.

Picking up some unidentifiable gear, I said, "I didn't get one of these!"

"Ummm ... no, you're good," he mumbled. "That's my wife's breast pump."

—CURT GREGORY  
*Reno, Nevada*

**As part of** my Naval Reserve requirements at Emory University Dental School, I attended a talk about proper dental procedures following nuclear warfare. Evidently, one of my classmates found the talk less than stimulating and fell asleep. Unfortunately for him, our lecturer caught

him. Sidling right up to the student, the speaker shouted in his ear, "What would you do for a patient in the event of a nuclear war?!"

My startled classmate sat up and responded, "Place a temporary filling, sir!"

—R. H. SASSER JR.,  
DDS  
*Swainsboro, Georgia*

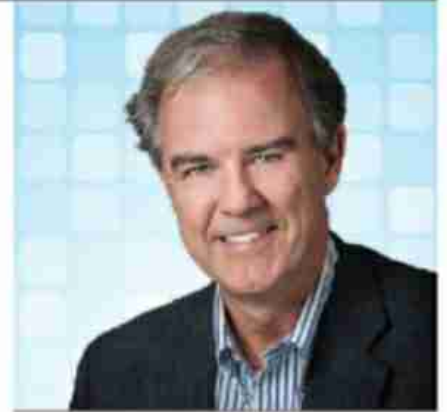
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**David C. Kelsall, M.D.,**  
*Cochlear Medical Advisor*

Dr. David C. Kelsall, a cochlear implant surgeon and medical advisor to Cochlear, the world leader in cochlear implants, answers questions about cochlear implants and how they are different from hearing aids.

#### **Q: How are cochlear implants different than hearing aids?**

A: Hearing aids help many people by making the sounds they hear louder. Unfortunately, as hearing loss progresses, sounds need to not only be made louder, they need to be made clearer. Cochlear implants can help give you that clarity, especially in noisy environments.<sup>1</sup> Be sure to discuss your options with a Hearing Implant Specialist in your area.

#### **Q: Are cochlear implants covered by Medicare?**

A: Yes, Medicare and most private insurance plans routinely cover cochlear implants.\*

#### **Q: How do I know a cochlear implant will work for me?**

A: Cochlear hearing implant technology is very reliable.<sup>2</sup> In fact, it has been around for almost 40 years and Cochlear has provided more than 550,000 implantable hearing devices.

#### **Q: Is it major surgery?**

A: No, not at all. In fact, the procedure is often done on an outpatient basis and typically takes just a couple hours.

Call **1 800 610 4901** or visit **Cochlear.us/Rdigest** to find a Hearing Implant Specialist near you and get a free guide about cochlear implants.

1. The Nucleus Freedom Cochlear Implant System: Adult Post-Market Surveillance Trial Results. 2008 June.

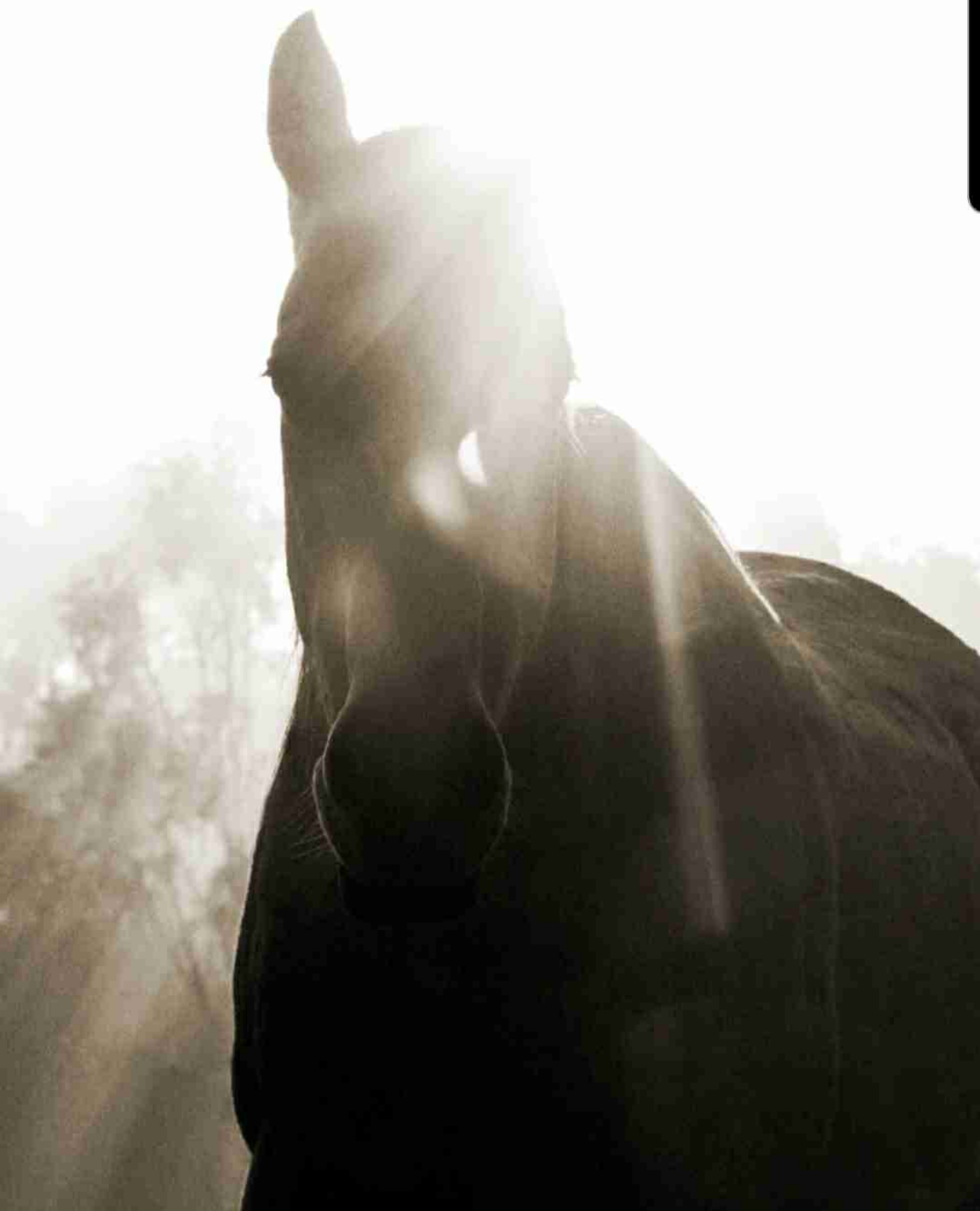
2. Cochlear Nucleus Implant Reliability Report. Volume 17 | December 2018. D1593476. Cochlear Ltd; 2019.

\*Covered for Medicare beneficiaries who meet CMS criteria for coverage. Contact your insurance provider or hearing implant specialist to determine your eligibility for coverage.

Please seek advice from your health professional about treatments for hearing loss. Outcomes may vary, and your health professional will advise you about the factors which could affect your outcome. Always read the instructions for use. Not all products are available in all countries. Please contact your local Cochlear representative for product information. Views expressed by hearing health providers are that of the individual.

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INSPIRATION

# He Trots THE Air

*Her horse had stayed by her side for 25 years.  
Now it was time to let him go.*

---

BY Pam Houston

FROM OUTSIDE

**L**AST SUMMER, I put my old roan horse in the ground. But there's way more to the story than that. Thirty-nine years on the planet, 25 of those with me.

The first thing I noticed about Roany was that he had a kind eye; the second was his size—just under 17 hands (five foot eight) at the shoulder. The Santa Fe cowboy who sold him didn't tell me much apart from his age, which likely had a year or two shaved off, and that he went better away from the barn if you wore spurs. Within days, I came to understand Roany's intensely good nature. Each morning when I went out to feed him, he greeted me with a just-happy-to-be-here chortle.

He was as solid a trail horse as I've ever ridden, never flinching in big wind, or while crossing water, or when mule deer twins who'd been stashed by their mother in some willows leaped in front of him. He was so bombproof that the county search-and-rescue team enlisted his help a few times a year to find and deliver a wayward hiker.

I bought Roany the same year I moved to a ranch in Creede, Colorado, because Deseo, my alarmist Paso Fino, was deciding that Colorado was the scariest place he'd ever been. First off, there was snow—a whole lot of it. The predator-to-livestock ratio was not to his liking, and the pasture was surrounded by hundred-foot spruce trees that often sang in the wind.

I grew up in an unpredictably violent

household, so my temperament ran a little closer to Deseo's. I counted on Roany to keep the whole barnyard calm, not just Deseo and the mini donkeys but also the ewes and lambs, the recalcitrant rams, the aging chickens, and me.

I called Roany "the horse of a different color." In the dead of winter, he was burgundy wine with tiny white flecks. In March, he would shed to a dappled gray with rust highlights. By mid-summer he was red again, but not such a rich red as in wintertime. And when

## **ROANY BLEW BUBBLES IN HIS WATER BUCKET BECAUSE HE KNEW IT MADE ME LAUGH.**

his heavy coat grew back in October, he was solid gray for most of a month.

For two and a half decades at the ranch, Roany's coat marked the changing of the seasons. I stopped riding him when he turned 33, because I thought he deserved a lengthy retirement, though he stayed well muscled and strong until a few months before his death.

He had a bout of lameness in April and a longer one in May. By late June, he was limping more often than not. When Doc Howard came for a ranch call, he said, "There's a number associated with this lameness, Pam, and it's 39."



**Roany's coat marked the changing of the seasons: burgundy with white flecks in the dead of winter, dappled gray in the spring, and red again in summer.**

**I** DID THE THINGS there are to do: supplements, an ice boot, DMSO to reduce swelling, Adequan shots, even phenylbutazone on the most painful days. We'd had very little snow and no spring rain, and for the first time in my tenure the pasture stayed dormant all summer, the ground extra hard on sore hooves.

Roany loved nothing more than the return of the spring grass, and it seemed radically unfair that in what was looking to be his last year, there wouldn't be any. I watered, daily, a thin strip of ground between the corral and the chicken coop and named it Roany's golf course. He had some good days there, but

mostly he hung around the corral.

The downside of Roany having the best head on his shoulders of any animal I'd ever owned was that he never got the bulk of my attention. But that summer, between me; my fiancé, Mike; and my ranch helpers, Kyle and Emma, he hardly had a moment's peace. We iced his legs and groomed him twice daily, mixed canola oil into his grain to help keep weight on him, and hugged him constantly.

He seemed bemused, maybe even touched, by all the attention. Every time we set the water in front of him, he took a giant drink, and I suspect it was more for our sake than his. One day, Kyle, not knowing I was out there,

set a bucket down next to Roany not three minutes after he had drunk three fourths of a fresh bucket for me. Roany looked at Kyle for a minute, glanced over at me, then lowered his head to drink again.

My biggest fear was that he would fall and break something during one of the weeks I was away from the ranch and would have to be put down immediately. This was accompanied by a lesser but still palpable fear that the same thing would happen on a day when I was there all alone.

As his condition deteriorated, I worried that we would pass the point when we could ask him to walk far enough across the pasture to a burial site where his grave wouldn't invite trouble to the remaining animals who lived in and around the barn.

I had made difficult decisions a dozen times in my life with beloved dogs, but the length of a horse's life and the sheer size of its body made the timing even trickier. I knew I didn't want Roany rendered with a chain saw. I knew that if we had to drag his body across the pasture behind a piece of heavy equipment, it would tear him all to hell.

Roany was stoicism defined. As his condition worsened, he learned to pivot on his good front leg—and would, for an apple or a carrot or to sneak into the barn to get at the winter's stash of alfalfa. He blew bubbles in his water bucket because it made me laugh, and he would sometimes

even give himself a bird bath by splashing his still-mighty head.

I also knew that just because he could handle the discomfort didn't mean he should. He had been so strong so recently, a force of nature thundering back and forth across the pasture. There was no chance I was going to ask him to make another winter, but as long as he was hobbling to his golf course and chortling to me each morning, it seemed too early to end his life.

**T**HAT SUMMER, I was getting ready to marry Mike, a U.S. Forest Service lifer who was teaching me, in my 56th year, what it meant for a man to show up in a relationship. More than one of my friends suggested that Roany had held on so long to deliver me safely to Mike, and I had no reason to argue.

Among Mike's other gifts is a deep intuition about the suffering of people and animals, so I paid attention when he said, on a Monday night in mid-August less than two weeks before the wedding, "This is entirely your decision, but if you want to put Roany down this week, I could take Wednesday afternoon off."

I was not surprised, on Tuesday morning, to see a slight downturn in Roany's condition. He ate his food, drank his water, stood for his treatments, but there was something a little lost in that kind eye, in the way he held his body up over his aching feet. I

called Doc and made the appointment for Wednesday afternoon, with the caveat that I could cancel if Roany's condition improved or I lost my nerve.

By Tuesday night, Roany was swaying just slightly over his feet. He ate his gruel of Equine Senior, bute powder, and oil, but with a little less enthusiasm than usual. I went out to check on him at 8 p.m. and then at 10. The moon was bright and the coyotes were singing; there was a tinge in the air that suggested a light morning frost. Even by moonlight I could see that Roany was holding his body like he didn't feel right inside of it.

**“IF YOU WANT TO PUT ROANY DOWN,” MIKE SAID, “I COULD TAKE WEDNESDAY OFF.”**

I woke at 4:30 with the kind of start that always means something has happened. The moon had set by then, so I grabbed a flashlight and rushed to the corral, but Roany wasn't there, nor on his golf course, nor in the yard.

I called his name and heard hoofbeats coming hard across the pasture. I allowed myself to indulge the fantasy that after all these weeks of suffering he was miraculously cured. Then I heard Deseo's high whinny. My hot-blooded alarmist, my early-warning system, my tsunami siren. Deseo skidded to a stop in front of me and butted

his head against my chest, seeming to say: About time you got here.

The flashlight batteries were already dying, but my eyes were adjusting to the dark. I started out across the pasture with Deseo beside me, heading for one of Roany's favorite spots—the wetland (though dry this year) at the back of the property. When I turned at the quarter pole, Deseo whinnied again: Not that way, human. By this time, Mike was crossing the pasture to meet me. Deseo whinnied again, and we followed him to another favorite spot—a shady stand of blue spruce at the base of the hill where the ranch's original homesteaders are buried. It was the first time since last summer that Roany had been out that far.

He was still standing when I got there. But the minute he saw me, he went to the ground with relief. He curled up like a fawn, and I could hear that his breathing wasn't right. Mike and I sat beside him and petted his handsome neck.

Above us, stragglers from the Perseid meteor shower, which had peaked over the weekend, streaked the blackness. Pegasus, the biggest horse of all, galloped across the sky, carrying Princess Andromeda away from her mother, Queen Cassiopeia, with her future husband, Perseus, alongside.

Eventually, a lighter blue tinted the eastern horizon. Deseo stood nearby, head lowered. We listened to Roany's breathing and the coming of dawn. In the distance, the hoot of a great



**The author and Mike on their wedding day, with the excitable Deseo (right) and a donkey named Isaac serving as the four-legged members of the wedding party**

horned owl, the sheep stirring in their pen clear across the pasture; even farther away, tires crossing a cattle guard.

In the gathering light, Roany stretched out his long legs and put his head in my lap. I thanked him for taking good care of the ranch animals, including the humans, including me. I told him I'd be OK, that we'd all be OK, and he could go whenever he needed to, but he went on taking one slow breath after another.

**O**N ONE OF Roany's first bad days, a bank teller in town, a compassionate horsewoman named Debbie Lagan, had quite innocently asked me how I was. My answer was no doubt more than she'd bargained

for, but on that day she became my adviser and advocate in horse eldercare and pain relief. She also promised that, when the time came, she would send her husband out on his track hoe to dig the hole, never mind that they lived off the grid more than 20 miles away.

It was finally daylight, but the sun hadn't risen. Mike and I were shivering hard, so he slid into my place to hold Roany's head and I ran to get sleeping bags. I called Debbie to say I thought we were close and Doc to say I thought we might not need him. When I got back across the pasture, Roany's head was still in Mike's lap, but now he was struggling for breath.

"Touch him," Mike said. I knelt and put my hand on his big red neck, and

he took one breath and then another and then the last breath he would take forever.

“I was helping him go,” Mike said. “I was with him in that place, you know?” I nodded. I did know. I had been in that place with several dogs and more than one human. Mike said, “I think he was waiting until you got back.”

A moment later, the first rays of sun came over the hill, turning the sky electric. I crossed the pasture one more time to get Roany’s brushes to groom him up for burial. I grabbed a flake of hay for Deseo so that if he wanted an excuse to stay near his old friend for a while, he would have one.


## “AN OLD COWBOY DOESN’T TAKE MONEY TO BURY AN OLD HORSE.”

Debbie’s husband, Billy Joe Dilley, had a dozen things to do that morning, but he arrived at the ranch before the first vulture (or even fly) made its appearance. I don’t know Debbie very

well, and Billy Joe hardly at all, but as much as anything else this is a story about them and about the way people in my town care for one another.

When I tried to pay Billy Joe for his time, or even for gas, he shook his head and said, “An old cowboy doesn’t take money to bury an old horse.” He buried Roany respectfully and efficiently, the cowboy way, with his tail to the wind.

If there is such a thing in the world as a good death, Roany had one. It was almost as if he had heard Mike’s offer, looked at his watch, and said, All right then, Wednesday, and how about in that stand of spruce on the other side of the hill? What I’ve always said about Roany is that he was a horse who never wanted to cause anybody trouble. He remained that horse till the last second of his life and beyond.

Late that night, I watched the Perseids burn past my window and imagined my old Roany up there, muscles restored to their prime and shining, burgundy coat alongside the white of Pegasus, both of them with their heads held high, and galloping. 

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### Better Later Than Never

Actor Carol Channing married her fourth husband, Harry Kullijian, when she was 82, but she’d known him for 70 years by then. They had been sweethearts at San Francisco’s Aptos Junior High School. “Most women don’t ever forget their first love,” she said, “and apparently men don’t either.”

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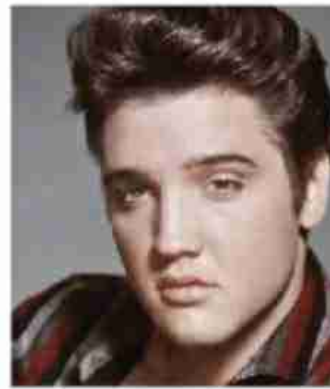




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# THE GENIUS SECTION

10 Pages TO SHARPEN  
Your Mind

## TRAIN LIKE A MASTER

*To stay on top of their mental game, the world's best chess players do serious workouts—physical ones*

BY *Aishwarya Kumar*  
FROM **ESPN.COM**

**O**N A BLUSTERY day in early March, Fabiano Caruana decides to get away. He drives three hours west from his St. Louis apartment to a 2,000-acre compound in rural Missouri owned by a friend.

At 7:30 the next morning, he heads out for an hour-long run with his training partner, Cristian Chirila. As he's jogging, it's easy to mistake him for a soccer player. At five foot six, Caruana has a lean frame, his legs angular and toned. He has a packed schedule for the day: a five-mile run, an hour of tennis, half an hour of basketball, and an hour of swimming.

But Caruana is, in fact, an American grandmaster in chess, the number two player in the world. His training partner, Chirila? A Romanian grandmaster. And they're doing it all to prepare for the physical demands of ... chess? Yes, chess.

IT SEEMS ABSURD. How could two humans—seated for hours, exerting themselves in no greater manner than intermittently extending their arms a foot at a time—face physical demands?

Still, the evidence overwhelms.

The 1984 World Chess Championship was called off after five months and 48 games because defending champion Anatoly Karpov had lost 22 pounds. "He looked like death," grandmaster and commentator Maurice Ashley recalls.

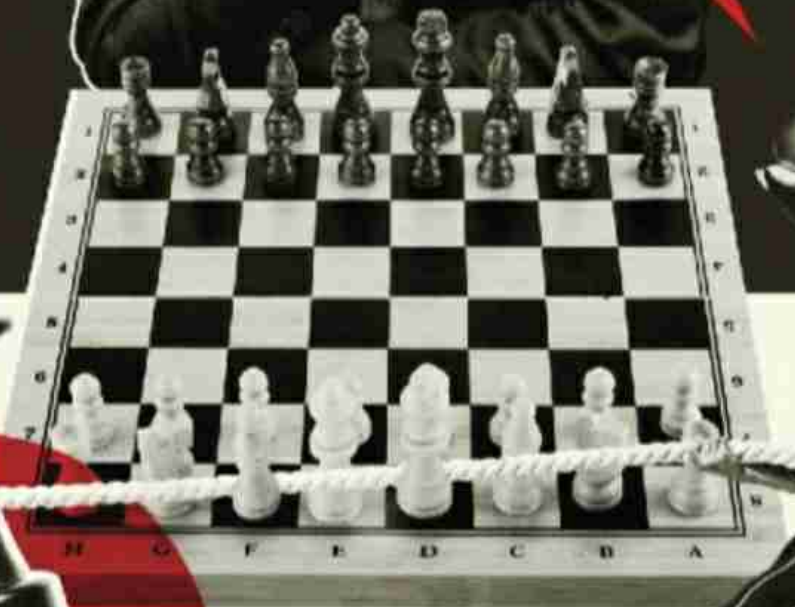
In 2004, winner Rustam Kasimdzhanov lost 17 pounds during the six-game world championships.

In October 2018, Polar, a U.S.-based company that tracks heart rates, monitored chess players during a tournament and found that 21-year-old Russian grandmaster Mikhail

SHUTTERSTOCK (4)

READER'S DIGEST

- 7. ... to B
- 8. ... castles
- 9. Q. B. P. on
- 10. Q. B. to R.
- 11. Q. to Kt. th
- 12. R. takes E
- 13. Q. P. two
- 14. Kt. to Q. s
- 15. K. to R.
- 16. Q. to B. se
- 17. Kt. takes I
- 18. Kt. to K. fi
- 19. Kt. takes I
- 20. Q. R. to K.
- 21. R. takes K
- 22. K. R. P. on
- 23. ... to B.
- 24. B. to. Kt. s
- 25. Q. to B. th
- 26. Q. to Kt. th
- 27. Q. to Kt. fo
- 28. Q. to B. th
- 29. Kt. takes I



H G F E

Antipov had burned 560 calories in two hours—roughly what Roger Federer burns in an hour of tennis.

Grandmasters in competition are subjected to a constant torrent of stress. That causes their heart and breathing rates to increase, which forces their bodies to produce energy.

Meanwhile, players eat less during tournaments, simply because they don't have the time or the appetite.

Stress also leads to altered—and disturbed—sleep patterns, which in turn cause more fatigue and can lead to more weight loss. A brain operating on less sleep, even just one hour, Kasimdzhanov notes, requires more energy to stay awake during the chess game.

It all combines to produce an average weight loss of 2 pounds a day, or about 10 to 12 pounds over the course of a ten-day tournament.

To combat the stress, today's players have begun to incorporate strict food and fitness regimens to increase oxygen supply to the brain during tournaments, prevent sugar-related crashes, and sustain their energy. "Physical fitness and brain performance are tied together," Ashley says.

According to Ashley, India's first grandmaster, Viswanathan Anand, does two hours of cardio each night to tire himself out so he doesn't dream about chess. Kasimdzhanov plays tennis and basketball every day. Chirila does at least an hour of cardio and an hour of weights to build

muscle mass before tournaments.

But not one of these grandmasters has perfected his fitness routine the way the current world champion, Magnus Carlsen, has.

IN 2017, CARLSEN realized he had a problem. The reigning world number one for four years felt his grasp on the title loosening. He was still winning most tournaments, but his matches

## HOW COULD TWO HUMANS, SEATED FOR HOURS, FACE SUCH PHYSICAL DEMANDS?



were lasting longer, the victories less assured. He was waning in the final hour of games. He noticed younger players catching up to him.

So Carlsen visited the Olympic training center in Oslo, Norway, with his father, seeking advice from performance specialists. Their suggestion was deceptively simple: "Cut back on the orange juice you drink during tournaments."

Carlsen had relied on a mix of half orange juice, half water for an energy boost since he was a child. But now, in his late 20s, his body was no longer breaking down the sugar as quickly, leading to sugar crashes. The nutritionists suggested that he instead

drink a mixture of chocolate milk and plain milk, which contains less sugar but would also supplement his body with calcium, potassium, and protein.

“It kept his blood sugar at a reasonable level without too big a variation, and he felt less tired during key moments in tournaments,” his father says.

But that was merely the beginning of Carlsen’s makeover. Since then, he has trained his body for chess. Before the world championship last year, he went skiing every day and tweeted that it strengthened his legs and his willpower. He hired a personal chef who travels with him to ensure he’s eating the right combination of proteins, carbs, and calcium.

During tournaments, Carlsen focuses on relaxing and conserving energy. He chews gum during games to increase brain function without losing energy; he taps his legs rhythmically to keep his brain and body alert.

He has even managed to optimize ... sitting. That’s right. Carlsen claims that many chess players crane their heads too far forward, which can lead to a 30 percent loss of lung capacity. And, according to Keith Overland, DC, a chiropractor who has worked with the U.S. Olympic Training Center, tilting your head 60 degrees forward increases stress on the neck by nearly 60 pounds, ultimately resulting in headaches, irregular breathing, and reduced oxygen to the brain.

Instead, Carlsen rests his lower back against the chair so it retains a

natural curve, keeps his feet firmly on the ground, and leans forward at about a 75-degree angle. In this position, he’s not too far forward to limit his oxygen and not so far back as to require extra energy.

Carlsen has also reduced his schedule to six to eight tournaments a year (as opposed to the 12 to 14 of most elite players), taking months off to recuperate after each one.

BACK IN MISSOURI, Caruana and Chirila hole up in the dining room for six hours of chess. Afterward, Caruana looks exhausted, his glasses askew. Still, he grabs a handful of nuts and heads out for a final hour of tennis before dinner.

After dinner, he passes on the chocolate pudding pie. “No dessert for me today,” he says.

Last year, Caruana gave up alcohol before the world championship. This time, he has chosen sugar. It’s a habit he picked up from Carlsen, who is showing signs, at long last, of being mortal. After a run of eight consecutive tournament victories, the Norwegian dropped ten games at a competition in August.

It’s the opening Caruana has been waiting for. In his mind, Caruana knows what he has to do; he just needs his body to hold up.

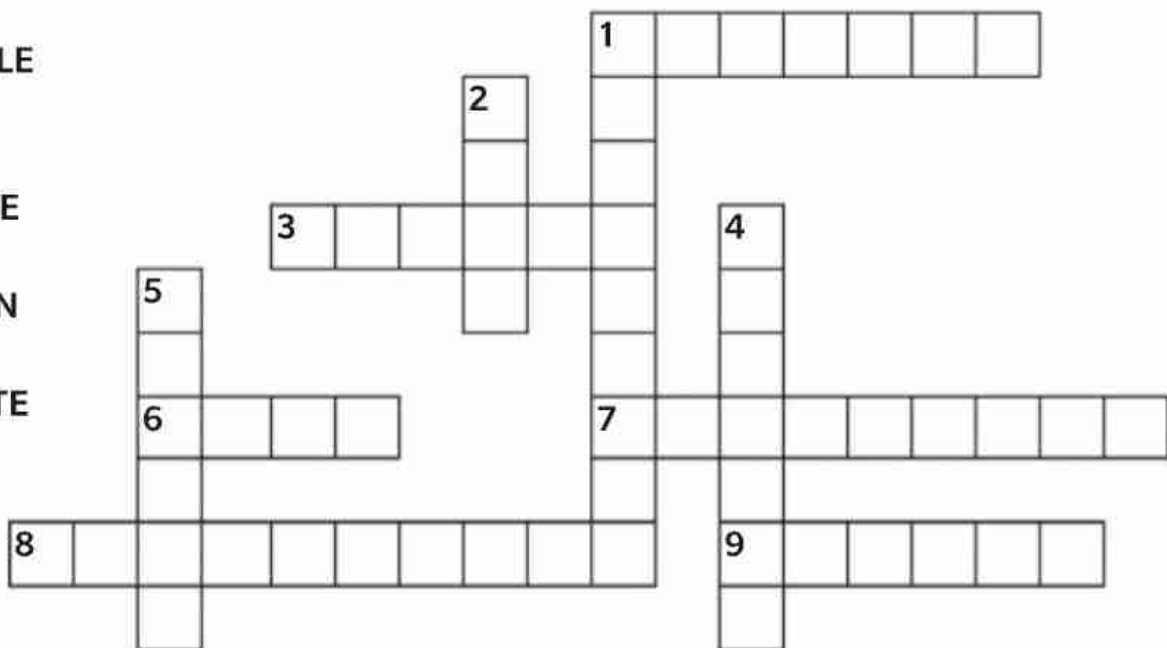
“Sometimes you have to shock your body into listening to you,” he says. **R**

# BRAIN GAMES

## Quick Crossword

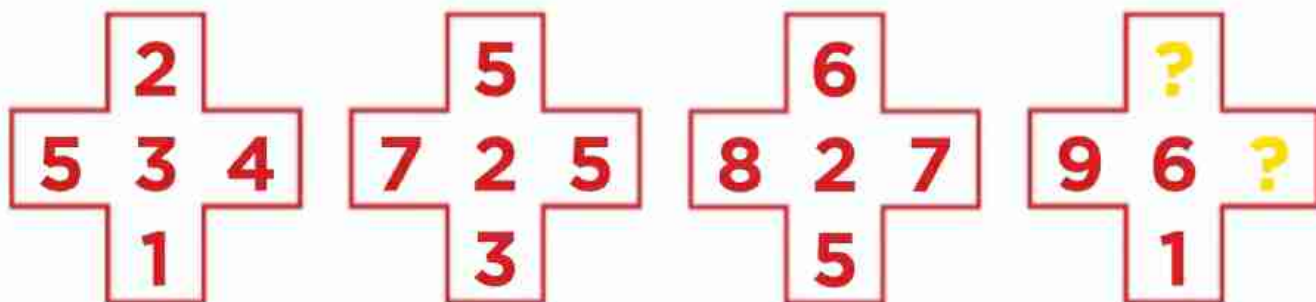
**EASY** To whom it may concern: March 4 is National Grammar Day! To celebrate, place these elements of language in the grid.

- ADVERB
- PARTICIPLE
- VERB
- CLAUSE
- ADJECTIVE
- SUBJECT
- PRONOUN
- GERUND
- PREDICATE
- NOUN



## Crossfit

**MEDIUM** Supply the missing numbers.

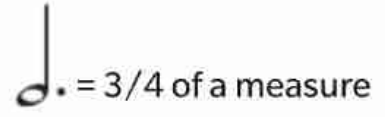
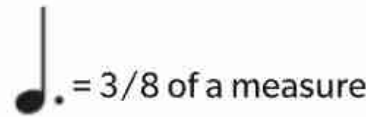
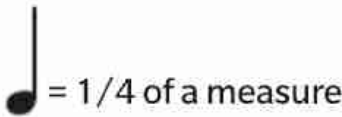
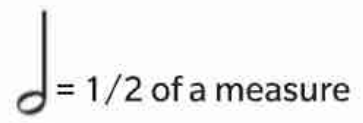
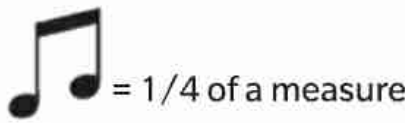
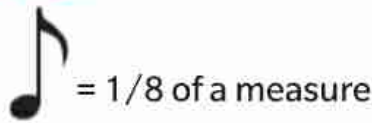




### Time for a Tune

**EASY** Musical notation divides time into equal sections known as measures. The legend below shows what fraction of a measure each type of note takes up when you're playing in 4/4 time. How many measures will have elapsed once you finish playing the sequence of notes above in 4/4 time?

#### Legend:



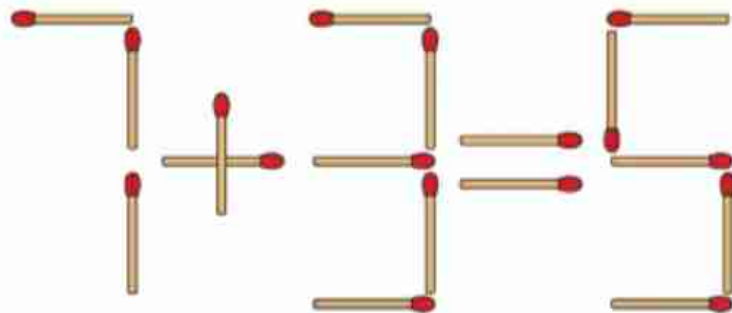
### Kangaroo Words

**MEDIUM** Kangaroo words contain the letters—in order—of another word that means almost the same thing as the original word. For example, the *r*, *e*, *s*, and *t* from *respite* form *rest*. Find the kangaroo words in the terms below.

- DECEASED
- INSTRUCTOR
- RAMBUNCTIOUS
- SPLITCH
- PERAMBULATE

### Math with Matches

**DIFFICULT** Change the position of two matchsticks in order to create a correct equation.



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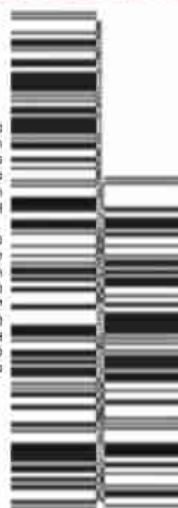


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**WORD POWER**

**In search of** a kind word—or perhaps the perfect put-down? Before you start doling out compliments or throwing stones, take this quiz to brush up on words of esteem and contempt. We won't be offended if you check the next page for answers.

BY *Emily Cox* AND *Henry Rathvon*

**1. Adonis** *n.*  
(uh-'dah-niss)  
**A** handsome man.  
**B** star player.  
**C** evil witch.

**2. popinjay** *n.*  
( 'pah-pun-jay)  
**A** sneaky thief.  
**B** unwelcome visitor.  
**C** vain windbag.

**3. impeccable** *adj.*  
(im-'peck-uh-bull)  
**A** flawless.  
**B** unruly.  
**C** charming.

**4. adroit** *adj.*  
(uh-'droyt)  
**A** idiotic.  
**B** vulgar.  
**C** masterful.

**5. churl** *n.*  
(cherl)  
**A** ill-bred person.  
**B** friend to many.  
**C** lazybones.

**6. magnanimous** *adj.*  
(mag-'nan-ih-muss)  
**A** coarse.  
**B** self-centered.  
**C** big-hearted.

**7. poltroon** *n.*  
(pahl-'troon)  
**A** criminal.  
**B** fool.  
**C** coward.

**8. nonpareil** *adj.*  
(non-puh-'rel)  
**A** unequaled.  
**B** useless.  
**C** sweet.

**9. braggadocio** *n.*  
(brag-uh-'doh-see-oh)  
**A** arrogant boaster.  
**B** womanizer.  
**C** conquering hero.

**10. urbane** *adj.*  
(er-'bayn)  
**A** playful.  
**B** sophisticated.  
**C** childish.

**11. skinflint** *n.*  
( 'skin-flint)  
**A** skilled artisan.  
**B** cheapskate.  
**C** fraud.

**12. kibitzer** *n.*  
( 'kih-bit-ser)  
**A** misfit.  
**B** meddler.  
**C** nitpicker.

**13. smarmy** *adj.*  
( 'smar-mee)  
**A** insincerely earnest.  
**B** well dressed.  
**C** inadequate.

**14. contumely** *n.*  
(kon-'too-muh-lee)  
**A** arrogant rudeness.  
**B** ravishing beauty.  
**C** scrumptious meal.

**15. brick** *n.*  
(brik)  
**A** careless person.  
**B** reliable person.  
**C** pigheaded person.

To play an interactive version of Word Power on your iPad, download the Reader's Digest app.



## A Burn from the Bard

Shakespeare was a master of colorful insults. One of his most scathing comes when Prince Henry slams Falstaff in *Henry IV*: “That trunk of humours, that bolting-hutch of beastliness, that swollen parcel of dropsies, that huge bombard of sack, that stuffed cloak-bag of guts, that roasted Manningtree ox with the pudding in his belly, that reverend vice, that grey iniquity, that father ruffian, that vanity in years?”

### Word Power ANSWERS

**1. Adonis (A)** *handsome man*. Arya has fallen hard for a blue-eyed Adonis at the gym.

**2. popinjay (C)** *vain windbag*. Please don't seat me next to that popinjay; he'll talk my ear off.

**3. impeccable (A)** *flawless*. After an impeccable performance on the balance beam, Jada received a perfect score.

**4. adroit (C)** *masterful*. Harry Houdini was an adroit escape artist, freeing himself from handcuffs and straitjackets.

**5. churl (A)** *ill-bred person*. Remove your elbows from the table, you churl!

**6. magnanimous (C)** *big-hearted*. The magnanimous dentist treated needy patients for free.

**7. poltroon (C)** *coward*. “You're all poltroons, scared of your own shadows,” muttered the king.

**8. nonpareil (A)** *unequaled*. Luca's baking skills are nonpareil—his cakes are almost too beautiful to eat.

**9. braggadocio (A)** *arrogant boaster*. Kate's boyfriend is a loud-mouthed braggadocio who loves talking about his fancy car.

**10. urbane (B)** *sophisticated*. Witty and urbane, Pablo speaks three languages and has traveled the world.

**11. skinflint (B)** *cheapskate*. Does reusing coffee filters make me a skinflint?

**12. kibitzer (B)** *meddler*. “Maybe I'm just being a kibitzer, but I do think you should wear your blue dress instead of the red,” Mom said.

**13. smarmy (A)** *insincerely earnest*. The heiress was wooed by smarmy suitors interested only in her money.

**14. contumely (A)** *arrogant rudeness*. I don't know how much more of your contumely I can take.

**15. brick (B)** *reliable person*. My best friend has been an absolute brick during my illness.

### Vocabulary Ratings

**9 & BELOW:** middling

**10–12:** accomplished

**13–15:** transcendent

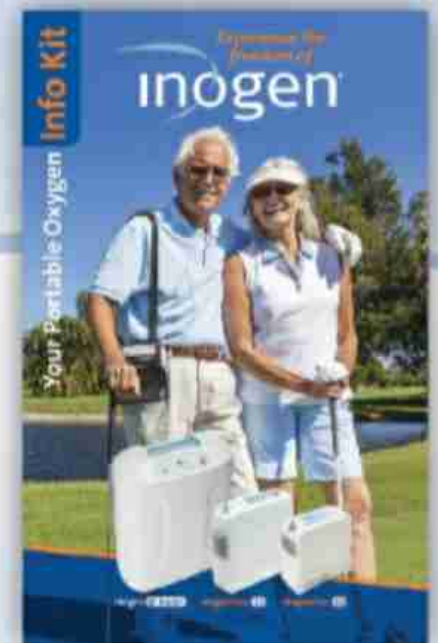
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## BRAIN GAMES ANSWERS

See page 120.

### Quick Crossword

- |               |              |
|---------------|--------------|
| <b>ACROSS</b> | <b>DOWN</b>  |
| 1. PRONOUN    | 1. PREDICATE |
| 3. GERUND     | 2. NOUN      |
| 6. VERB       | 4. SUBJECT   |
| 7. ADJECTIVE  | 5. ADVERB    |
| 8. PARTICIPLE |              |
| 9. CLAUSE     |              |

### Crossfit

3 AND 7.

In each grid, add the top number to the one in the center to get the number on the left. Then add the center number to the one on the bottom to get the number on the right.



### Time for a Tune

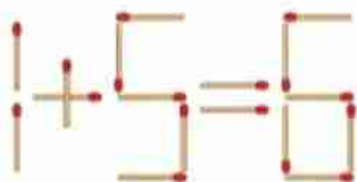
4 MEASURES, as shown by the dividing bars



### Kangaroo Words

DEAD, TUTOR, RAUCOUS, SPOT, AMBLE

### Math with Matches



MAKE US LAUGH!



### Caption Contest

What's your clever description for this picture? Submit your funniest line at [RD.COM/CAPTIONCONTEST](http://RD.COM/CAPTIONCONTEST). Winners will appear in a future Photo Finish (PAGE 128).

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Reader's Digest Founders: DeWitt Wallace, 1889–1981; Lila Acheson Wallace, 1889–1984

**Chief Marketing Officer** C. Alec Casey

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**Magazine Acquisition** Heather Plant

**Magazine Retention** Linda Alexander

**Operations** Michael Garzone

**Chief Digital Officer** Vince Errico

**Chief Technology Officer** Nick Contardo

**Chief Content Officer, Taste of Home and**

**Enthusiast Brands** Beth Tomkiw

**Chief Content Officer, The Family Handyman and**

**Construction Pro Tips** Nick Grzechowiak

**Human Resources** Jen Tyrell

**Compensation & Benefits** Heather Schwartz

**General Counsel** Mark Sirota

**PHOTO FINISH**  
YOUR *Funniest* CAPTIONS



**Winner**

Never ask your husband to take your bandannas to the Laundromat.

—DOUG HUGHES *San Jose, California*

**Runners-Up**

The infamous deleted Laundromat scene from *Planet of the Apes*.

—KEITH SCHEIDIES *Kearney, Nebraska*

Fresh Fruit of the Loom.

—SAMANTHA WILLOW *Portland, Oregon*

*To enter an upcoming caption contest, see the photo on PAGE 126.*

Prevagen<sup>®</sup>  
Improves Memory<sup>\*</sup>



# #1 PHARMACIST RECOMMENDED MEMORY SUPPORT BRAND<sup>†</sup>

Prevagen<sup>®</sup> is America's best-selling brain support supplement<sup>‡</sup> and has been clinically shown to help with mild memory loss associated with aging.<sup>\*1</sup>



<sup>†</sup>Per *Pharmacy Times* National Survey of Pharmacists 2019-2020.

<sup>‡</sup>According to Nielsen data.

<sup>1</sup>[www.prevagen.com/research](http://www.prevagen.com/research)

**\*These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.**