



## A NOT-SO-SAFE SUMMER AT GRANDMA'S HOUSE

REMEMBERING THE DAY I BURNED THE YARD DOWN

As I write this, we're at the height of summer, and I can't help but think back on the Julys of my childhood. Some of my fondest memories are of my grandparents' tobacco farm in Nottoway County, Virginia. Every summer, I'd spend at least a few days there, if not a week. I enjoyed romping through the fields, playing in the barns, exploring endless forests, fishing, and building forts.

Although the purpose of these getaways was fun, I'd also lend a hand with things that needed tending to around the farm. One of those things was cutting my grandmother's yard; it was a monster. In some places, like over the underground septic fields in the backyard, it looked like the Amazon Rainforest — thick, dense, and impenetrable. In other places, like under the massive oaks in the front, it grew rather dry and tough. Back then, all my grandma had was a small Briggs & Stratton push mower to do the job. I would crank it up and spend most of the day mowing.

One day I planned to cut the yard, but we had no gas. No gas meant going all the way to Farmville, Virginia, to get it. We didn't have a gas can, so I had to find some other sort of container (in this case, an empty, white Clorox bleach bottle with a handle) to fill up. There's your gas can. We drove 20 minutes to Farmville in Grandma's old Buick, filled up the Clorox bottle with gasoline, and drove back to the farm. I started cutting.

When a boy cuts grass, he daydreams. And that's precisely what I did as I cut the Amazon rainforest in the backyard. Then, something caught my attention: a flash of light toward the front of the house. I looked up and saw nothing. I kept cutting. Then it happened again. I looked up at the corner of the house and saw my older cousin, Timmy, peeking around the corner, grinning from ear to ear. "What is he up to?" I wondered. Well, whatever it was, it seemed more interesting than cutting grass, so I stopped to check it out.

There, up on the front porch of my grandparents' 100-year-old wooden farm house, stood Timmy with a box of Brillo pads, a couple of wire coat hangers, and a box of matches. I watched as he took a Brillo pad, fastened it to the end of a handle he'd fashioned from the coat hangers, and lit it. The result: a hand-held torch that you could run around with and even throw. Brilliant idea! I was in!

After doing this for a while, we realized the Brillo pads didn't burn all that well. They needed a little something extra ... and there sat the Clorox bottle of gasoline. Pretty soon, we were drenching the pads in gasoline and lighting them. In the words of Eddie Murphy's uncle, "NOW THAT'S A FIRE!"

What I'm about to describe happened in a matter of seconds, but to this day, it seems like it unfolded over several minutes. I'm still not exactly sure how it happened, but it did.

Timmy took a match, lit it, and, in the process, burned his finger. He threw down the match, which ignited a trail of gasoline that led — you guessed it — straight to the Clorox bottle. In a blink of the eye, the Clorox bottle was on fire. And then, the most miraculous thing of all happened.

Timmy — in a great display of reflex and agility — sprang into action. He grabbed the burning Clorox bottle by the handle and flung it off the porch and out into Grandma's front yard, where it exploded in a ball of flames.

Stunned, we stood there on the front porch, watching as the dry grass in Grandma's front yard burned. And, boy, did it burn! After a few moments of silence, Timmy said, "Welp, Grandma's not going to like this very much." And she didn't.

I hope that whatever you and your family get up to this summer, it's far less dramatic than that day on the farm. We were all very lucky that no one was seriously injured as a result of our shenanigans that day, and I'm eternally grateful for Timmy's quick thinking. The moral of the story is this: Cooler heads prevail! If you've been injured in an accident, you need to act quickly (like Timmy!) and contact a personal injury attorney to assist you with your situation. We can be reached Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (EST) at (804) 823-2011. Let "cooler heads prevail" — and let us help you in your time of need!"

—Kevin Mottley

## DOES DEPRESSION HELP US COPE?



Many mental health experts blame the recent spike in mental illness on the DSM-5 (the standard classification of mental disorders) and the ever-expanding list of psychological conditions it identifies. But others, like neuroscientist Stephen Porges, aren't convinced we can attribute increasing mental health problems to just more diagnoses — new ideas about mental health are changing how we view depression forever.

We used to think depression started in the head and presented physical symptoms as a result, a behavioral representation of the turmoil within. But Porges, and researchers like him, believe it's actually opposite of that. They theorize that the body can take in stimuli and internalize situational data much better than we thought, and that — at least for the Americans afflicted with mild or moderate depression — the mental illness is an immune reflex, similar to the swelling caused when blood rushes toward an injury to flood it with nutrients and, in some cases, immobilizing the area. Of course, that swelling can be a serious health problem in itself, and the same is true for depression.

However, the new school of thought points out the positive effects of depression in many situations. For example, when people are in long-term traumatic situations, depression takes them “out” of themselves, and researchers posit that this numbing effect allows them to survive their daily difficulties, and memories of the period may be less damaging once they escape it.

The question, then, is what do these new theories mean about the epidemic of mental illness sweeping America today? At the base level, it indicates that many Americans find themselves in unpleasant living situations, at the least, and hope for a future where that isn't the case. Perhaps, Porges' group says, modern people feel trapped in a world where comfort and convenience are the highest priorities. Mass depression is the result.

This means that to survive, depression may be our buffer until we can pursue a vastly different way of living — a societal dilemma of the first order, and one we cannot afford to ignore.

## WAIT, WHAT'S A DEPOSITION?

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THIS IMPORTANT PHASE OF YOUR CASE



The word “deposition” is thrown around a lot on cop shows and legal dramas. You might also remember it from back in the 1990s, when President Bill Clinton had to give a deposition during the Monica Lewinsky scandal. (I heard the word “deposition” more that month than any other time in my life, and I'm a lawyer!) Still, in my experience, even people who have heard the word don't necessarily know what it means. This is problematic, since it's an important step in your legal case.

### SO, WHAT DOES ‘DEPOSITION’ MEAN?

Merriam-Webster offers multiple definitions for “deposition,” but the one I like best is “an out-of-court testimony made under oath and recorded by an authorized officer for later use in court.” A deposition is basically a formal interview. It's a key part of the process when you file a lawsuit.

### WHEN DO DEPOSITIONS TAKE PLACE?

Depositions happen during what is called the “discovery period,” which occurs after you engage a lawyer but before you go to trial. Typically, once you hire a lawyer, like me, both sides will exchange documents. Then, if one of the lawyers wants to know more from a specific person before the trial, they'll ask to take a deposition. You might have to sit through a deposition yourself, or I might take one on your behalf.

### WHAT DOES A DEPOSITION LOOK LIKE?

When a deposition starts, the person who is going to be questioned (aka “the witness”) is called into a special room, usually a lawyer's office or a conference room. There, they sit down with all of the lawyers involved in the case. There's also a stenographer and occasionally a videographer in the room to record the witness's testimony. Once everyone is settled in, the lawyers ask the witness questions. The witness has to tell the truth when they answer because they're under oath, just like in court.

### HOW DO LAWYERS GET READY FOR DEPOSITIONS?

Every lawyer has a different process. Personally, I spend a lot of time getting ready, particularly if I'm deposing an important party. I start by researching all the nuances of the case. Then, I sit down with a blank legal pad and list out five goals I hope to accomplish during the deposition. For example, a common goal is to simply find out everything the witness knows about an important issue in the case. I then rank those goals from 1 to 5, from the most to least important. I then plan to spend about 50% of my time in the deposition achieving the No. 1 goal. Then, once I accomplish that goal, I allocate 25% of the time to the No. 2 goal, and so on down the line. This helps me manage my time during the deposition and helps me know I got the most bang for my buck out of the process.

### HOW CAN A LAWYER HELP YOU GET READY FOR A DEPOSITION?

If you're called into a deposition, the first thing I'll do is explain the whole process to you and answer any questions you have. Then, I'll put myself into the shoes of the opposing counsel. I'll list and rank what I think their top five goals will be during the interview, then use that list to help you prepare to answer those questions correctly.

I like to prepare my clients this way because giving a deposition isn't as simple as “just telling the truth.” If you're nervous, it's easy to accidentally answer with incorrect information or speculate about a topic you don't really know about. This can come back to bite you later, so it's important you're ready to give the correct information when asked, not just what you feel is “the truth.”

Do you still have questions about the deposition process? Give me a call any time — I'm happy to help.

# 3 INGREDIENTS THAT ARE A WASTE OF TIME, MONEY, AND TASTE BUDS!

There are several foods in just about every supermarket that aren't what they seem. These are foods that may appear perfectly fine at a glance, but they are actually a waste of time, money, and pantry space. Here are three of those foods and their better alternatives!

## BEEF BROTH

When you buy beef broth, you buy it with the expectation that it is, in fact, beef-based. However, many products that call themselves "beef broth" are actually yeast-based. All of their flavor comes from yeast and various spices, not beef, thanks to lax U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) regulations on beef broth. The product may have just enough actual beef broth for it to be on the ingredient list and label. The next time you need beef broth for a recipe, replace it with the same amount of chicken or vegetable broth, both of which have more stringent USDA regulations.

## COOKING WINE

This is one of the biggest scams in the culinary world. First, most products called "cooking wine" on their label are low-quality wines. Second, many manufacturers add salt to cooking wine. If you encounter a recipe that calls for cooking wine, in general, stick to regular wine that you would serve on its own. Use white wine for



lighter-in-color dishes, such as risotto, and red wine for dark, richer dishes, including sauces and gravies.

## GROUND BLACK PEPPER

Many spices can actually fall under this category, but ground black pepper tends to be the most popular — and the most problematic. When spices, like pepper, are ground, they come into contact with air and begin to oxidize and lose flavor. Ground spices stored in sealed containers in a cool, dry place will lose flavor slowly, but ground pepper tends to be left out, which means it loses flavor faster. Instead, invest in a pepper mill and fill it with whole peppercorns. The flavor difference in your dishes will be noticeable!

# SUDOKU

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## SOLUTION

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4	8	1	9	6	3	5	7	2
6	3	5	2	9	7	4	1	8
1	7	8	4	2	9	3	6	5
5	9	6	7	3	8	1	4	2



THE BEST  
TEXAS-STYLE  
SMOKED  
BRISKET

Impress guests at your next barbecue with this perfectly smoked brisket. Plus, you'll have plenty of leftovers!

## INGREDIENTS

- Wood chips
- 1/4 cup paprika
- 1/4 cup white sugar
- 1/4 cup ground cumin
- 1/4 cup cayenne pepper
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/4 cup chili powder
- 1/4 cup garlic powder
- 1/4 cup onion powder
- 1/4 cup salt
- 1/4 cup pepper
- 10 lbs brisket

## DIRECTIONS

1. In a bowl, soak wood chips in water overnight.
2. In a large bowl, mix paprika, white sugar, cumin, cayenne pepper, brown sugar, chili powder, garlic powder, onion powder, salt, and pepper.
3. Rub spice mixture on the brisket and refrigerate for 24 hours.
4. Preheat smoker to 230 F. Drain wood chips and place them in the smoker.
5. Smoke brisket until it has an internal temperature of 165 F.
6. Remove brisket and wrap it in aluminum foil.
7. Smoke brisket further until it reaches an internal temperature of 185 F.

Inspired by AllRecipes.com





# The Mottley Law Firm

8001 Franklin Farms Drive, Suite 125  
Richmond, Virginia 23229

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## THEY EAT *WHAT* ON PIZZA?!

Here in the U.S., pineapple is considered a wild and controversial pizza topping. Even celebrities take a stand. Justin Bieber is pro-pineapple, but Jimmy Kimmel is against it. According to a 2019 YouGov Omnibus study, only anchovies and eggplant are more hated. But in other parts of the world, the tangy yellow fruit is far from the strangest topping you'll see!

Here are five wacky pizza trends from around the globe that will either make you hungry or inspire you to sprint the other way. You may want to order a comforting cheese pie from your favorite local pizzeria before reading this, just in case.

- 1. BANANA-CURRY PIZZA (SWEDEN)** — The Swedes first accessed bananas in 1944, and since then, they've put them on *everything*, including pizza which they top with tomato sauce, smoked cheese, banana slices, and curry powder.

- 2. KETCHUP AND CORN PIZZA (BRAZIL)** — According to several sources, Brazilians swap pizza sauce for ketchup or tomato slices and top their pies with strange combinations of local ingredients like corn, beets, hearts of palm, and potato sticks.
- 3. HAGGIS PIZZA (SCOTLAND)** — Pizza may be the only semi-enjoyable way to eat haggis: a mix of sheep or calf offal, oatmeal, suet, and seasonings that are boiled in an animal's stomach. Last year, Papa John's got in on the action when it released a limited-edition haggis pizza in honor of a Scottish poet, Robert Burns.

- 4. MOCHBA PIZZA (RUSSIA)** — This local pie comes topped with four kinds of fish (sardines, tuna, mackerel, and salmon), onions, herbs, and occasionally fish eggs. Most troubling of all, it's served cold!



- 5. CHICKPEA PANCAKE PIZZA (ARGENTINA)** — In Buenos Aires, locals top their super-cheesy pizza slices with fainá — chickpea pancakes cooked separately from the pies and balanced on top of each slice.

Keep these pizzas in mind when planning your next international vacation! They might be tastier than they sound, and if not, they'll still make great Instagram fodder. As actor Cole Sprouse once tweeted, "You're losing followers because you're not relatable enough. Try mentioning that you eat pizza. If that doesn't work, play the ukulele."