

if you squeeze
Pi into five SLEEVEs
Hotdog TOASTERS
will THROW
Velociraptors at
QUANTUM PHYSICS

A SHORT STORY BY
NICHOLAS DIAK

*If You Squeeze Pi into Five Sleeves, Hotdog Toasters will throw Velociraptors
at Quantum Physics*

A Short Story

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For my beautiful Grandmother.

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Preface.

One of the best pieces of criticism I have ever received was from a creative writing professor I had while at Wright State, Jimmy Chesire. Why was it one of the best, you may ask? Well, because it was raving. I've never had more of a positive reaction towards my writing before or since. The piece of criticism is included below, but I'm going to rant here for a bit longer. *If You Squeeze Pi...* was the last story I ever wrote for college, and I feel that it is quite a fitting final nail in my academics coffin. One of my favorite activities in the classroom was writing some of the most outlandish stories possible, and then sitting back and laughing as everyone tried to figure out their meaning. Then when time came for me to explain myself, I would refuse, because, after all, truth is subjective is it not? And one's own subjective truth is in fact reality, correct?

Wrong.

This story has one true meaning, but I'm not telling :-P

Okay, let's get back on track here. I have included the piece of criticism that came as an E-Mail from Jimmy after my last creative class had come to a close. Because the story was my final project, it never got read in the classroom. Very, very sad indeed. Anyway, I'll shut up now, and here's the freakin' E-Mail:

Nick,

I read your third story yesterday, as I finish up my grading, and think it is inspired! Wonderful. Funny. Clever. Well done -- your characters are interesting, your plot is surprising and compelling, and you're so damn funny; and on top of that, you're imaginative, daring, willing to write this sort of silly fantasy satire drama, and do it so well. It is hilarious. I think you should send a copy of it to the whole class and tell them I ordered you to do it because it is so damn good. I am very impressed. I am delighted. I am inspired by you and your wild and wonderful, velociraptor imagination.

Thanks.

Now email this f****er to everyone. That's an order. Do it, son, or a hungry horde of velociraptor zombies will invade your bedroom and attack you in your sleep, tearing you to shreds, devouring you, wolfing you down like a hungry dog wolfs down a juicy piece of red, red, raw meat.

Email the story. Everyone will love it, I guarantee it.

Jimmy

"If I were invited to a dinner party with my characters, I wouldn't show up."

~Dr. Seuss

"Even fools are thought wise when they keep silent; with their mouths shut, they seem intelligent."

~Proverbs 17:28

"Blessed is he who, in the name of charity and goodwill, shepherds the weak through the valley of darkness, for he is truly his brother's keeper and the finder of lost children."

~Jules Winnfield quoting a fictional Ezekiel 25:17 (Pulp Fiction)

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"Brittney rapped on the old decayed door of the forgotten house on Salem Street, and waited with chilled fingers. 'Hello? Is anyone home?' she called hoping whomever, or whatever was in the house had unconcerned ears. She would wait in the porch's shade hidden from the dry sun for only a few more seconds before bolting back down the crooked stone staircase descending the sharp sloped hill back to her parent's picturesque home with a feeling of accomplishment—

Abruptly, the door cracked open, and out shot a red foam ball fixed in the center of a pale painted face. Three bottomless black eyes snapped open as large crimson lips spread wide exposing a mass of serrated shark-like metal teeth. Brittney flinched as sparks flew out in her face as the teeth began buzzing around inside the gapping void screeching like a chainsaw. Brittney screamed in absolute horror falling back onto the porch's rail. She screamed even more in absolute horror as her face was shredded off her skull. Well, needless to say, today didn't turn out like the wonderful day Brittney the cheerleader had planned for it to be after all. Thee End!" A petite girl of eighteen brings her clasped black nail polished hand up to her black lipstick glazed lips and clears her throat before returning to her seat.

Looking around she sees the six speechless people of her creative writing class sitting in a circle of steel cold chairs as fluorescent lights fade the few colors in the room. Blinking her overly black eyelinered eyes she waits in silence for her classmates to say something...anything, but nothing comes except their continuous unblinking stares. A single racing thought causes her heart to begin thumping faster than it had prior to her nervous reading. The single racing thought was the only possible conclusion in the entire universe: Everyone hates her story, she is the worst writer ever, and she might as well just go home and slit her wrists right—

"Okay, who wants to start off our discussion regarding Christi's *cough* interesting story?" the white haired, thin professor asks causing the awkward silence to crumble to the floor. Christi slowly slides her tiny framed body down into her seat as her face grows full of warmth. Her short quick breaths slow and almost come to a complete stop before her eyes gloss over. The colors in the room seem to fade even more to the point that the people almost blend perfectly within the white walls.

No one is going to say anything, her thoughts echo in her head as her life begins to come to an end, How dumb was I to actually think that I could wri-

"I'll begin," one of the older male students says slightly raising his hand. "Well...I liked it..." the man states adjusting his glasses, and tryingly raises one of his legs to cross it over the other's thigh. Due to the man's age, size, pressure, and activity deprived ligaments this action creates a sideshow effect where none of the spectators would be surprised if his leg suddenly snap off its body spinning across the room.

He's lying, Christi thinks, Just trying to be nice is all. My story is the biggest piece of crap ever writ-

"I conclude that this story is in fact a commentary on our generation's corporate existence," the man continues, "Brittney symbolizes the more minuscule sole proprietorships, while her parents symbolize the grander legal business entities. When her parents enjoin that Brittney remain in bed and not to commune at the 'Flying Fish Dance' due to her current infirmity, I ponder if this is not an analogy of the ample corporation's inevitable cessation of the expatiations of minor industries, whether with conscience intent or not. When the Canis lupus familiaris... or more commonly, the domestic dog, gets eaten by the twelve-armed fish of...what was it? ...of Slubbed... confixacend...the dog is comparable to the...the laborers whose professions get outsourced to alternative sovereign territories. The archfiendish, almost, Arlecchino, if you will, or clown, on the other hand represents the most prodigious iniquity of them all: 'Wal-Mart'." He concludes his observations and picks up his water bottle that sits next to his seat, then after taking a quick sip, he places it comfortably back on the tiled floor.

Just as the water bottle hits the ground another student, not much younger than the first, cries out, "Hhhhhawhat?! Are you flubbin' kidding me, Tom? That was probably the biggest line of B.S. I've ever heard in all my life. 'The little girl symbolizes mama mama, and the K-9 blahblah symbolizes...well, whatever crock you came up with. It's obvious that the little girl is actually a reincarnated Abraham Lincoln and the clown is Lee Harvey Oswald therefore making the argument that history repeats itself! There! Come on now!" He concludes and takes a quick sip from his own water bottle with both eyes wide shifting quickly back and forth at the circle of students. Tom sits motionless stirring up at the ceiling.

The professor, after a long 5 seconds of waiting with pretend consideration, speaks nodding, "That was a very interesting take on the story...both of you, Tom and Steve. But didn't John Wheelks Booth shoot Abe Lincoln?" The room falls evermore silent, as all fourteen eyes minus the professor's, seem to suddenly find the plain walls and ugly tiles of the floor hundreds of times more interesting than normal. "Oookay. Does anyone else have something to add?" The four remaining members of the class yet to speak quickly lower their heads and pretend to be diligently rereading through a story that they had never read in the first place. "Anyone?" No one?" Christi feels her cheeks grow warm again. She feels all the eyes of the class watch as her face grows redder and redder. She knows they are all laughing at her on the inside, all laughing at her story and her glowing scarlet face. "Is there anything you'd like to add, Christi? Were Tom and Steve close on their interruptions?" asks the professor.

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"Um...well..." she begins, her desiccated throat cracking, "well, actually the story is about this cheerleader who picked on me in...um, I mean...uh, they're both right! Brittney, uh, represents small businesses and is also the reincarnation of...President Lincoln. The dog was...is...a metaphor for union workers, but the clown not only represents 'Wal-Mart', he, uh, also...um, represents...the paradox of nihilism!"

"Hmmm. Very interesting," the professor says scratching his white goatee. "I'd say it was probably one of the best stories we've had all quarter. Very good work, Christi." He picks a black fuzball out from his white beard and flings it to the ground.

She feels the warmth recoil back from her cheeks allowing the cold shallowness of the room to again stretch across her face. Christi sits up towering in her seat with racing thoughts as she realizes, I'm probably the greatest writer since Emily Dickenson. In fact, I'm probably better than Emily Dickenson, and will be far richer and more famous than she ever was. A slight smile cracks its way across Christi's pale, black outlined face.

Corey, sitting across from Christi, looks past the globed on eyeliner, deep into her cool blue eyes. Normally, he isn't attracted to this type of girl, but underneath all that black Corey can tell lays a very mignon and precious girl. He dreamed of debonairly asking her out, but unfortunately Corey's friends would never understand what he sees in Christi. Or at least that's the reason he gives himself. The actual truth is it doesn't really matter what Corey's friends think, because Corey's friends are incapable of thinking. That's because Corey's friends consist of an old toilet paper tube, a clothespin with a scribbled on face, and an old Ken doll whose clothes and head had been lost long before the war. Corey's other friend, the bottle of tanning lotion, or TL as she likes to call her, is more than just a friend; they share a special relationship. And what it would do to poor TL if she ever saw Corey carrying Christi over the threshold of their front door one day? SHE WOULD BE DEVASTATED, THAT'S WHAT!!! Corey sits unblinking for several minutes.

"Okay. Next we'll hear Marsha's story, 'The Big Bloody Spot' which should be quite riveting, I'm sure. Marsha, if you would?" The professor welcomes readjusting his left, white cowboy boot around his calf.

A hefty woman, lost somewhere in her 30's but who doesn't look a day over 25, stands up and bellows out, "T'was the dawn before the end of the world. Three thousand throngs of werewolf like ravenwolves scrape down the hillside heading towards their most sadistic mêlée. They go forth towards their skirmish verses the ten thousand masses of Velociraptors..."

Velociraptors! Sally thought so heavily that she almost said it out loud...or had she said it out loud... Very carefully, cocking her head to one side, Sally shifts her left eye probing the ring of people. A slight reinsurance scales across her spin as she notices everyone transfixed on Marsha's deep rolling voice and raised palm. Sally pulls her sunhat and blond curly extensions as far down her snouted face as she can. Why would Marsha write about velociraptors? Does she know? Sally had been so careful. She had spent weeks watching old Friends episodes, and practicing for days in front of her mirror; she was sure she perfectly blended in. But still, as Sally thinks

about the possibility that Marsha might know her secret, her heart begins to speed and a sudden choking feeling enters her throat. Is she trying to tell me that she knows? Is she secretly sending me messages that she plans to blackmail me? Is she conveying that she knows that I'm no person at all, that I am, in fact, a Velociraptor!? Gelidness ripples across her furfuration at the very thought. Nope, I'm sure of it, Marsha knows, she concludes. Sadly enough, I'm going to have to eat Marsha. But on the bright side of things, Marsha will make a meal that'll last more than a few weeks.

"...and then an militia of draculas swooped down from the tranquil firmament and transformed from their bat bodies into their undead ones and cleaved the heads off of the velociraptors bathing in their spewing liquid crimson. And they all lived happily ever after."

A large lump lags in Sally's throat as Marsha finishes her story and looks directly at Sally before sitting down. Wait, what was that? And what was that the end there? Draculas? Is she trying to tell me that she has a whole army of draculas?! One dracula is bad enough, but a whole army of bat transforming draculas!? Her thoughts scream in her head so loud that her lizard lips just barely mock the words as she thinks them. A whole army of draculas? Killing Marsha is going to be harder than I first imagined. Her focused left eye watches the skin folds of Marsha's arm flop across her large, soft belly as Sally wets her cold-blooded lips with her long pointed tongue. Oh, but it shall be worth it, she unconsciously whispers.

"Okay, well that was a very interesting," the professor says taking a quick breath. "Who would like to open this discussion?"

Tom's the quickest, yet only one, to raise his hand, while Steve is even quicker to roll his eyes and say as coherently as he can with his cheek resting on the side of his palm, "Oh, here we go again. I can only imagine what you've got cooked up in that dumb skull of yours this time. Actually, I can't imagine."

With completely no reaction to Steve's inane remark, Tom readjusts his glasses, and begins speaking, "Well, first of all...I liked it, but...I discerned that the prose was unduly preposterous, and I became quite incredulous during parts of the narration. Such as, when Triffen descends upon the gorilla army while in possession of the Blade of...what was...of Stilvingl..stilvinleo... Stilviwhatever, I excogitated that the composition in totality is exceedingly phantasmal. That is to say, I couldn't really see it happening."

Steve vomits a laugh so violently he starts to choke, "You're a real piece of work, Tom! A real piece of work! Triffen defeating the Gorilla Army with the Blade of Stilvengoshexxinie was too unbelievable for you. But let me expect that you found it perfectly conceivable and believable when the walking cadaver clones come down from outer space and suck the ballerina buccaneers' brains out! HA! A real piece of work, Tom, you're a real piece of crock." And with that, Steve falls silent and takes the sip of water as he glances over at Corey who is staring blankly straight ahead seemingly at nothing.

Steve crosses his arms in front of his chest and strains to hold a flex. His eyes glaze over Corey's thinly haired legs, his small framed body, and shaggy...sort of dirty, hair...but that's alright. Steve hopes Corey notices how masculine Steve is

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when he argues with Tom. Steve sits wondering if Corey ever thinks of Steve the way Steve thinks of Corey when Steve is working at the gas station late at night hiding in the back of the freezer with his hands full of warm mashed ice cream wearing his Gene Simmons mask.

Seemingly ignorant of Steve's comments, Tom continues, "and the cigar smoking pterodactyl or pteronadon or whatever...hmmmmmm," he stops with a deep look of intricate thinking before concluding, "...I find him utterly and intolerably implausible." Tom concludes and takes a quick sip from his water bottle.

Steve slides down in his seat, and places his arm over the back of his chair before saying, "You're an idiot, Tom," and then finishes with another slow cliché eye roll before taking a quick corner peak back at Corey.

But unbeknownst to Steve, Corey is catatonically infatuated with Christi's pale glossy legs at the moment, and how he loves the taste of salt-

"Corey, you've been quite this class period. What do you think of Marsha's story?" the professor asks abruptly.

"Huh? Oh...well...it's pretty good. I liked it. Um, I don't really have anything else to say that...hasn't already been said," he says fully content on how well that statement never fails with dodging bullets.

"Okay. Well, Christi. Do you have anything to say?"

"Uh, well, I liked it, but...um, well, there wasn't any actual characters in it at all, except for Triffen, and the talking puddle of fecal matter. But even still they were both very much cardboard cutout clichés. The whole story seemed to be only a series of random, pointless violence."

"Good response, Christi," the professor comments, making Christi's face glow with pride. The professor looks around the circle of students, and comes upon an empty seat. "Where is Michael?"

"He went to the bathroom 10 minutes ago," Tom answers.

"Oh please, it was more like 20 minutes ago," Steve snorts.

"Hmmm, I hope everything is alright," the professor says raising his eyebrows and twisting his mouth to the right side.

"Sally followed him out," Steve adds looking over in Sally's direction. Sally's eyes shift quickly as the other members of the class bring their eyes upon her, and wait for a rejoinder.

"I -" Sally's voice breaks deep and gruff. She clears her throat and paces slowly out in a higher pitched voice, "I do not know where he has gone off too."

Sally waits for a moment as her defense calculates in everyone's brain. She sighs with relief as the class turns their gaze away from her seemingly satisfied. With

that Sally hunches over and pulls her sunhat even further down her long, scalely stout. All she wants to do is take classes, and be a good writer. Why are people the only ones who are aloud to go to school and write? she asks herself. But the truth is she does know where Michael had gone off too; she knows all to well as she picks her sharp canines with her pointed tongue. Velociraptors are very nice creatures; it is not her fault Michael had a really tasty looking head.

Marsha glimpses over at Tom and wonders what he's pondering. A penny for your thoughts, she chortles in her mind's eye. He seems like such a brilliant and cognizant man, with his glass adjustments and all, and these types of men do not comprehend genre fiction. And thus she understands and does not care the least that he had said her story was 'phantasmal'. Phantasmal, she chortles again this time slightly dramatizing the laugh out. And after all, he did like her last story. The one about the little blind and deaf girl, who the teacher taught to say 'wah, wah", but who in the end was only pretending to be blind and deaf. The professor didn't like that one, said it was near plagiarism. Tom liked it though, and that's all that mattered to her. Maybe Tom should be the professor. Oh, how she would love for him to take her out to some fancy ethnic food restaurant to pick his brain. They would talk about all sorts of wonderfully deep things while pleasuring themselves with gorges of som tam and foi tong. She stares into his black eyes and imagines how large the gray matter sitting behind them have to be. Once, in one of her worthless Gen Ed classes, she heard that the smarter someone was the wrinklier their brain was. Blushing with a slender grin, she fantasizes about how ridiculously wrinkly Tom's brain must be, as her eyes grow dreamy.

Tom sits there staring up at the ceiling. The thoughts in his brain zips around so fast that he has a hard time keeping them all straight. If you squeeze Pi into five cups, hotdog toasters will throw velociraptors at quantum physics, he thinks. Baseball bats taste good under the backseat of an elephant. Fish will be the square root of pinecones in the left ear of the potato. Cats can be the tesseract if you paint the banana karate chop. AEdHNBVXZghkqruz. With this last thought Tom looks over at Marsha and thinks how great she would fit inside his chimney if only she was turned inside out.

Marsha catches Tom's glance and smiles, returning a girlish blush and petite a chortle.

"Okay, our last story for the day is..." the professor glances down at shaggy looking piece of paper, "uh, well, actually a poem written by Corey on a used napkin stapled to a tattered piece of notebook paper." Glancing up queerly, the professor finds Corey staring blankly off in Neverland somewhere. "Corey, you do realize this is a short story workshop class, right? And that your final drafts are to be typed on plain white multipurpose paper, correct?" The professor waits for a response but none comes. "Corey? Hello? You with us, Corey?"

"Huh, oh... Is it my turn now?" Corey says sitting up with a slugging face.

"Yes, will you please read your...poem?"

"Ah, sure thing, prof." Corey stands up, takes another napkin out from his back pocket, unfolds it, squints his eyes, clears his throat, and begins, "It's called,

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um...‘Velociraptors in Your Soup.’ Sally almost falls out of her seat causing everyone to snap their heads back at her with gawking faces. But Corey makes a loud “Uhem!” bringing everyone’s attention back to himself before reading aloud in a quick and bored voice,

“‘Velociraptors in Your Soup’ by Corey Crisenski.
‘Velociraptors in your soup
Velociraptors in a scout group
Velociraptors aren’t they cute
Velociraptors in their birthday suit
Velociraptors 1, 2, 3
Velociraptors don’t agree
Velociraptors with your choice
Velociraptors in dating Joyce
Velociraptors a, b, c
Velociraptors don’t eat me...please.’”

The room falls silent...well, even more silent than normal. No one blinks, and everyone’s jaw drops open. Not a single person takes a single breath for 10.7 seconds. Corey sits back down in his seat and looks at the five “Shrik” resembling waxy faces. When the 10.8th second pasts, all the students shoot up from their seats as an explosion of applause thunder around the room. All of the students hoot and holler; the ones that can whistle, whistle, the ones that can sing, sing. Steve even begins crying. Tom proclaims, “That was the mostest wonderfulestic work of fiction ever conceived or written by an mortal man! Me can’t even speak good anymore. A worlds ain’t never gonna be a same none again. Anybody whoms ears hear them word...them’s lives change forever. These poem be solvin’ a whole worlds problems, cure world hungries, and be bring about world piece! Well work, Corey! Well work, I boy!” Corey brings his eyes back to Christi and her legs, but Tom slaps Corey hard on the back almost sending him face first onto the tiled floor.

“Yeah, great work Corey. I think I’m going to stop stealing money from my mother who has terminal cancer and get a job!” Marsha declares.

“I’m going to stop cutting myself!” Christi cries.

“And I’m going to stop killing kittens!” Steve shouts.

“Me gonna to stop fire jugglin’ kittens!” Tom cheers.

All the students continue to applaud; no one seems to be able to stop, or show any sign of wanting to. All the students that is except for Sally. She just sits back and watches. She’s sure of it now; they all know what she is. She’s surer about that fact than she’s ever been about anything else in her short life outside of her atrocious paddock. She knows exactly what needs to be done.

With a swift flash and shriek, Sally pounces up and onto Corey as her sunhat blows off revealing what she is really is to the whole class. She slices with one of her toe mounted 6-inch retractable claws disembroiling Corey. Hot mush splatters onto the tiled floor. Marsha hurls-up some different kind of hot mush all over the tiles. Steve runs for the door, while Tom continues to clap and cheer. Christi watches as Sally rips and gulps the flesh from Corey’s face down her throat. She’s never really

noticed Corey before, but for some reason now she finds herself oddly falling in love with him.

The professor sits there for a moment watching Sally as she devours Corey. He sits there, taking it all in before making a quick flash and shriek of his own. He jumps up, pulls out a Hudson sawed-off double-barreled shotgun, and cries, "Clever, girl!" He squeezes back the trigger, but with a quick flicker, Tom flies into the professor. "No! I love Sally!! Don't kill her!!!!" Tom screams as he knocks the professor back almost flipping him over his chair. There is a loud bang and Marsha falls back with a gapping hole in her chest, leaving her already broken ruby heart splattered against the back white wall.

"You bumbling idiot!" the professor affirms as he smashes the butt of the gun into Tom's cranium. Tom falls motionless to the ground.

Sally shrieks again as she dives forward at the professor. Snapping her jaws only inches away, the professor recocks his gun and blows the upper half of Sally's snout clean off. She squeals out with spewing crimson as her body falls twitching to the ground.

The professor turns to Christi, "Well, that was close." he comments with a laugh as he runs his hand through his thin, white hair.

"That was awesome!" Christi exclaims. They both look over at Steve as he lies quivering in the front corner of the classroom, only conscious of his plaguing fear. His boney arms wrapped tightly around his head.

Suddenly, the ceiling of the room is ripped off by what looks like two giant metallic lobster claws as sunlight pours in. A strange whirling sound dances a thrasher's death metal dance inside the professor and Christi's eardrums. Quickly, the light is blacked out by a large floating object that resembles a silver metallic version of one of those Mexican hats they make you wear on your birthday at any one of those esophagus corroding restaurants. A row of windows rime the round top component of the object. Two snouted heads pop out from one of the windows and cry down at the professor in a hissy voice, "You jerk face! You just killed our long lost daughter, Princess Sally! We've been searching for her for years, and we just located her! You shall pay for this most terrible deed!!! Fire, Henry!!" one of them scream.

A large blue beam of light blasts from the under belly of the unidentified flying object. Christi dives behind the professor, but to no avail the beams misses the professor and Christi's head is zapped clean off her body.

The professor stumbles over Christi's falling body as he hightails it towards Steve who's frantically tugging on the classroom's doorknob. "It a push not a pull, you nitwit!!" The professor cries, but before the professor can shove Steve out of the way, another blue beam zaps Steve in the back and his body explodes all over the door welding it shut. Realizing that his fate is sealed, the professor shuts his eyes, says one last prayer, and awaits the blast that will surly end his life.

With his eyes still shut, he hears a massive, thunderous roar. Not fully sure if the roar is his body exploding, he opens his eyes and witnesses the floating object

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burst open with giant electrical fire. A different giant object slices the ship in two as it falls through it. The gianormous falling object crashes from the sky and embeds itself deep into the tiled floor on top of Tom. The flying object ignites into a final plasmic ball of flame and plummets to the ground underneath the gianormous object. It takes several seconds for the professor's racing brain to calculate what he is looking at. After his brain catches up with his eyes, he realizes that the object is not an object at all, but instead three bolded words. The professor rubs his eyes, and takes another look at the thirteen letters that had fallen from the sky, saving his life. He reads them aloud with a gracious laugh. The three words he reads are:

“DUES EX MACHINA”



Hi, my name is Nicholas Diak. I am a writer. I write things. Things that will cleave your mind of your intelligence, and replace it with true intelligence. That is, with my intelligence...okay, not really. For more than 52 years I've been writing stories which might be odd to some because I'm only 27 years of age. But I guarantee that it is not odd in the least. I've also worked as a freelance journalist and photographer for the Dayton Daily News for a while now. Oh, and I've got one of those B.A. things from Wright State U. in English...not to brag or anything. You know what B.A. stands for, right?

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