

You think you're alone on the highway. You've been bothered by this thing all afternoon, but too many people were around. Glancing into your rear view mirror, you see no one else nearby.



At last! You can, for lack of a more delicate way of putting this, finally start digging for silver in a gold mine. Soon, you are intently mining all right, that index finger rammed nearly to the third joint up one nostril.

Then out of the corner of your eye, you see her: the girl of your dreams. She's passing you, a look of abject horror and disgust on her perfect face, or worse, she's laughing hysterically and possibly even shooting video from her phone which will wind up on YouTube before you can even yank that auguring digit from your nose.

This is just another manifestation to Murphy's Law, "Whatever can go wrong will go wrong." I refer to it as "Tatum's Corollary": The magnitude of beautiful women you will see on a deserted stretch of highway is directly proportional to how far your finger is up your nose."

The only thing worse than getting nailed during prime pickin' time is becoming afflicted with things beyond your control. How many of us, even well into our adult years, wake up on the morning of some important event, such as your wedding day, only to be confronted by a third eye in the middle of your forehead?

That one huge zit can send a normal person into exponential hysterics. In many ways, such moments are worse when you are an adult. When you're a teenager, yeah, acne ain't much fun, but at least most everyone's got some. But when you're 31 and you have to dress up as a three-eyed zoid from outer space on your first day at work, well, as I said, the horror...the horror.... People can't help but snatch furtive and horrified glances at your new growth, which pulses redder and redder the more self-conscious you become. Sooner or later, someone lets some comment slip, making things even more uncomfortable. If you've seen that commercial for the product that's supposed to alleviate gas distress, "Oh, your son is calling; he's on line toot..." then you get the idea.

Of course, nothing causes morbid irresistibility like forbidden fruit, as this evil genius practical joke I pulled a few years back proves. True, it will undoubtedly come back to bite me, but I had great fun perpetrating it, so the few extra minutes in purgatory won't make a whole lot of difference.

Anyway, a new reporter at our paper was getting ready to go do an interview for a story on a retiring school district employee. Because it was summer, our heroine had arranged to meet with her interview at the woman's house. So I thought I'd offer a few helpful tips.

"So is her husband going to be home, too," I said.

"Yes, they're both there today," she replied.

"Okay, then, whatever else you do, DO NOT look at his neck."

"Why?"

"Just believe me; don't do it, whatever else you do, do not look at his neck."

She pestered me with questions for the next half hour about the whys and details thereof; all I would say is "just don't do it."

She came back to the office several hours later, steaming mad.

“I didn’t see anything wrong with his neck,” she said.

“You looked?”

“Yes, d*** it! How could I not after you told me all that? It about drove me crazy! Now what is wrong with his neck?”

“Nothing. I just felt like saying that.”

Who knew a recent college graduate sweet young thing knew words as pungent and as anatomically impossible as the ones she used to describe me for the next three hours?

Oh well; sometimes we must suffer for our art...