

# FLATTMANN FILES

April 2024

“Quality Is No Accident”

## SEEKING OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN

### Why I Try (and Sometimes Fail) to Learn as Much as Possible

April 19 is Education and Sharing Day and to that end, I have a confession: If you were to look around my home, you might see a lot of unfinished books.

I'll admit it's not a blasphemous confession, but I do think it's an important one to acknowledge. I've been guilty of buying a self-improvement book, only to find myself reading a chapter or two, jotting down a few notes, and then never picking it back up again. It's in the same vein as the many times I've tried to learn a new language or pick up the guitar. I've tried it, but I haven't succeeded ... yet.

“Yet” is an important word here. I don't think I've failed. Yes, I may never finish those books on the end table or be fluent in another language, but I won't give up trying.

As I've grown older, I have become a lifelong learner, and I believe learning is important — even if I don't master what I set out to learn.

There are a few different ways I enjoy learning. For starters, I do gravitate toward self-improvement books, and believe it or not, I do finish many of the books I pick up. Recently, I finished reading “The Power of One More” by Ed Mylett. It's about pushing ourselves to do one more task or continue something difficult for one more day, which can get us beyond what we thought possible and influence lifelong change. I highly recommend reading it.

Another way I like to learn is through podcasts. I like podcasts from the production company Noiser, including “American History Tellers” and “History Daily.” I'll turn one of these on when I'm in the car, which makes the commute easier, and I get to learn something along the way.



Finally, it took me until halfway through law school to realize that another valuable way to learn is through collaboration with others. When I finally came to this realization, I learned just how boxed in we are if we only rely on our own experiences and knowledge. Collaboration opens you up to new perspectives; you may not even realize what you are missing.

I credit my legal profession with a lot of my learning, too. Without it, I would never have known how dredging operations work along the East Coast, how to measure the height of a porch from a photo, or how the data recorder in a vehicle works, much less what it is and does.

Some of the greatest learners in history were people who did great things, like cavemen discovering fire or Leonardo da Vinci changing the course of art, thinking, and medicine. But we don't have to have a great mind for learning to make a difference.

For me, learning isn't about being the smartest person in the room. It's about becoming a better person. God created us to be the best versions of ourselves and provides us with daily opportunities to learn and grow. It's on us to recognize what that looks like and run with it. Even if our coffee tables are covered in unfinished learning. It's the fact that we tried that helps us grow.



So, what will you (try to) learn this month?

*Grady Flattmann*

# LEGALLY UNBELIEVABLE

## WHEN THE LAW MEETS ABSURDITY

There are some outlandish laws in the U.S., but you can also get away with plenty of surprising things. Let's dive into some of the crazy laws from around the country.

### Surprisingly Legal

#### Flame On

Owning a flamethrower is surprisingly legal and easy in 48 states. The only state where you can't own one is Maryland. And if you want a flamethrower in California, you must get a license. The rest of the states say, fire away!

#### Car Radar

Another surprising law concerns radar detectors: In most states, utilizing a radar detector in your personal vehicle is completely legal. Do you want to check someone's speed or look out for police officers? Unless you live in Mississippi,

Virginia, Washington, D.C., or on a military base, it's entirely legal!

#### Sleepy Surgery

There are absolutely no laws that state surgeons must get a good night's sleep before surgery. As dangerous as this sounds, at least surgeons usually do have a limit on how long they can work at once, curtailing the worst outcomes of an exhausted doctor.

### Shockingly Illegal

#### Car Cursing

While in Maryland, you should be mindful of keeping your swear words to yourself (or whisper them softly) while driving through the small city of Rockville. It is considered a misdemeanor to swear from a vehicle within earshot of other people. Your curse words could cost you up to \$100 in fines or 90 days in jail.



#### Blindingly Obvious

Driving blindfolded has never been a good idea, but that clearly didn't stop adventurous residents in Alabama from testing their blind driving skills. Maybe that's why the state passed a law making blindfolded driving illegal.

Keep an open ear and be mindful of what is legal and what is not. Nobody wants weird laws creating dumb criminals!

## Joke's on You!

### THE HISTORY OF APRIL FOOLS' DAY

Have you ever wondered why we celebrate April Fools' Day every April 1 with silly pranks and whimsical tricks? April Fools' originated in France during the 16th century when the country switched from the Julian calendar to the Gregorian calendar. The change moved the new year from the end of March to Jan. 1.

The shocking part is that not everyone was aware of the change. Those who continued celebrating New Year's Day on April 1 were mocked, labeled as "April Fools," and subjected to pranks.



These pranks included having paper fish placed on their backs and being referred to as "poisson d'avril" (April fish), said to symbolize a young, easily caught fish or a gullible person. Historians have also linked April Fools' Day to festivals such as Hilaria (Latin for joyful), which was celebrated in ancient Rome at the end of March by followers of the cult of Cybele.

It involved people dressing up in disguises and mocking fellow citizens and magistrates and was said to be inspired by the Egyptian legend of Isis, Osiris, and Seth. There's also speculation that April Fools' Day was tied to the vernal equinox, or the first day of spring in the Northern Hemisphere, when Mother Nature fooled people with changing, unpredictable weather.

Regardless of its origin, April Fools' Day has become a worldwide tradition with links from the past. Today, April Fools' Day means playing pranks and tricks on friends and family. People have gone to great lengths to create elaborate April Fools' Day hoaxes. Newspapers, radio and TV stations, and websites have participated in the April 1 tradition of reporting outrageous fictional claims to fool their audiences.

So, when someone pulls a nasty prank on you on April Fools' Day, remember why and where it came from!

# TAKE A *BREAK*

## SOLUTION

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

## Be the Parents Who Are Prepared

### CREATING AN EMERGENCY KIT FOR ANY SITUATION

To be proactive in life is to be successful! As a parent, planning ahead must become second nature if we want our children and families to stay strong in the face of adversity. While many good parenting tips are out there, the smartest is creating an emergency kit to help out in any scenario.

An emergency kit will have everything you and your family may need during an emergency, such as having to stay inside for longer than usual or the electricity goes out. Each family's kit will vary depending on their kids' individual needs. It's vital to have all these things collected *before* the trouble begins, stored in a container, and kept in a safe and easily accessible location in case of an emergency. Making a family emergency kit can also be fun for the family to do together.

These are the necessary steps to create a toolkit:

1. You will need a large plastic bin or box to put things into.
2. Go to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website for a list of key items to include in a kit: [CDC.gov/childrenindisasters/checklists/kids-and-families.html](https://www.cdc.gov/childrenindisasters/checklists/kids-and-families.html).
3. Go shopping for the appropriate items you need, then check them off the list as you put them into your emergency kit.
4. Place an updated copy of your checklist inside your large plastic bin or box once you put your kit together to know what is inside the kit and to find your checklist easily.

Keeping your family safe should be a top priority at all times. It is so important to teach preparation skills to our children at a young age so they can be ready and thrive through life's most turbulent moments.



## Grilled Steak With Chimichurri Sauce

Savor the flavor with our mouthwatering grilled steak, paired perfectly with vibrant chimichurri sauce.

### Ingredients

- 2 lbs steak (flank, sirloin, or skirt steak)
  - 2 tbsp olive oil
  - Salt and pepper, to taste
- For the chimichurri sauce:**
- 1 cup fresh parsley, chopped
  - 2 cloves garlic, minced
  - Juice of 1 lemon
  - 2 tbsp olive oil
  - 1 tsp red pepper flakes
  - Salt and pepper, to taste

### Directions

1. Preheat grill to medium-high heat.
2. Rub the steak with the olive oil, salt, and pepper.
3. Grill the steak for 4–5 minutes per side or until it reaches desired doneness.
4. Meanwhile, make the chimichurri sauce: In a small bowl, mix together the parsley, garlic, lemon juice, olive oil, red pepper flakes, and salt and pepper.
5. Let the steak rest for 5 minutes before slicing.
6. Serve the steak with the chimichurri sauce and enjoy!



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# FROM CONFLICT TO COMPASSION

## Luke Combs Strikes a Chord

Imagine waking up one December morning to the bizarre news that one of your favorite celebrities is suing you for a whopping \$250,000. That’s what happened to Florida resident Nicol Harness, a devoted fan of country music sensation Luke Combs.

The story began when Harness found herself in hot water for selling unofficial merchandise adorned with lyrics from Luke Combs’ songs. She had sold 18 tumblers at \$20 each and had no clue this would lead to a legal battle that would wreak havoc on her life.

Harness, who had been dealing with congestive heart failure, received an email from Combs’ legal team during her hospital stay. Unfortunately, due to her medical condition, she missed the 21-day response window, which resulted in further complications. Her Amazon account,

containing funds from recent sales, was locked due to the lawsuit, leaving her in a dire financial situation.

What sets this story apart is not the initial legal dispute; it’s the remarkable response from Combs himself. Upon learning of Harness’s situation, he recorded a heartfelt TikTok video where he apologized directly to Harness and extended his hand to help her during this challenging time. He gave her \$11,000, twice the amount that had become inaccessible in her Amazon account due to the lawsuit. He emphasized that no fan should ever go through such an ordeal and expressed his sincere regret for the situation.

Combs didn’t stop there; he decided to positively impact Harness’s life by selling similar tumblers on his own website. All proceeds from these sales were directed



Photo by David Bergman

toward Harness’s family to support her medical care, further showcasing Combs’ commitment to making amends and righting the situation.

This incredible turn of events reminds us that even in the face of legal battles and adversity, acts of kindness and empathy can prevail. Combs, a country music superstar, proved in words and actions that he values his fans, turning a potential lawsuit into a story of compassion and unity in the country music community.