

# FLATTMANN FILES

October 2023

“Quality Is No Accident”

## UNWIND WITH SLOW SOUTHERN COOKING

### Grady Embraces the Therapeutic Benefits of Weekend Cooking

Cooking can be therapeutic, especially if you have enough time to do it right. Two years ago, I shared my love for cooking during National Cookbook Month, and I thought my new readers would also like a peek into what I love to cook in my household. As the chef in the family, I take great pride in the meals I make and enjoy every second of it!

Of course, there are times like weeknight dinners or school morning breakfasts when I need to get food on the table ASAP. While I've mastered the art of short orders and whipping up everyone's preferred dish in record time, I will *always* prefer my weekend dinners.



It's probably not a shock to you that I grew up eating some incredible Southern meals, and these dishes are the ones I find myself cooking the most. Southern food and flavors are decadent and taste so much better when you use quality ingredients and take the time to give your ingredients time to slowly “marry.”

Turkey and andouille gumbo is one of my favorite dishes to cook on the weekends because I will wake up in the morning and spend the next 8–10 hours slowly building it. I start by making a dark roux, then let the homemade turkey broth cook down, add more

stock, and cook down again on a repetitive cycle until the result is a rich, flavorful gumbo with turkey and andouille sausage that can put just about anyone into a food-induced nap!

I don't like rushing when it comes to cooking, and I would much rather take my time preparing a meal. You need patience when it comes to more complex dishes because speeding up the process or cutting corners will result in a less-than-great dish. Plus, when you aren't running around frantic in the kitchen, cooking can become therapeutic. It's a chance to slow down, focus on the task at hand, and unwind. In the end, you also get to feed your loved ones with a meal you're proud of!

I collect cookbooks, and my main cooking inspirations are chefs Paul Prudhomme and Frank Davis. While these chefs have passed away, I still go back to their cookbooks and television shows often for inspiration. I even met Prudhomme once when he was catering at the Louisiana Supreme Court building dedication ceremony. As an inspiration of mine, I'll never forget meeting him! Chef Paul's cooking show still airs on Saturday mornings, and I'll put the program on as I start cooking. My kids always get a kick out of it!

While these chefs were certainly experts, I never follow any recipe down to a T. Instead, I try to make it my own. I'll read numerous recipes for a single dish, see what I like (and what I don't), and tailor it to my taste. I think this is the secret to making a dish your own and cooking food that really hits home.

Whether it's my daughter's favorite red beans and rice or the family's beloved jambalaya, I'll cook whatever they want! It's not only my way of slowing down and relaxing but also showing my family that I care. I'll even cook enough to have leftovers for the week and share them with family.



This Cookbook Month, I hope you can give yourself some extra time to unwind in the kitchen and make something memorable. Happy cooking!

*-Grady Flattmann*

# FROM APPLICANT TO ARRESTED: The Fugitive Who Applied for a Police Job

Even most criminals need traditional employment to pay the bills, but Zyeama Johnson looked for work in all the wrong places. Perhaps Johnson imagined her previous experience with law enforcement would give her a leg up in her application to the Hudson County Sheriff's Office in New Jersey in 2022. But unfortunately for her, all of Johnson's past and future involvement with the police would be on the wrong side of the law.

Johnson was looking for a legal way to earn a living when she applied for a job as a security guard at the sheriff's office. But her past money-making ventures allegedly involved fraud, and she had failed to appear in a Pennsylvania court on the charges. Presumably, Johnson did not realize a police station would perform a background

check before hiring — or that this office specializes in resolving outstanding warrants.

When processing her application, the Hudson County Sheriff's Office discovered the active bench warrant in Pennsylvania. The routine investigation also found 10 additional active bench warrants in Jersey City, New Jersey; Johnson had allegedly failed to appear on traffic charges.

Most employers in this situation would probably move on to the next applicant, but the sheriff's department decided to call Johnson in for an "interview" instead. Unsurprisingly, they had no intention of hiring her and arrested the fugitive on the spot. It gave the standard interview

question, "Where do you see yourself in five years?" a new meaning.

After taking Johnson into custody, the police proceeded to search her property. Incredibly, they found two credit cards in her possession they believed were stolen. Police added credit card theft charges to Johnson's already considerable rap sheet. To make matters worse for her, the sheriff's office also contacted Johnson's former employer, the United States Postal Service, which launched its own investigation into her conduct.

As of October 2022, Johnson was being held in a Hudson County jail awaiting extradition to Pennsylvania for the most serious charge against her. It's unclear why she thought applying for a law enforcement position with outstanding warrants was a wise career move, but at least she made her would-be coworkers' jobs easy that day.



## Unlock the Secrets of a Calming Bedtime Routine

Does it always seem like your kids get a burst of energy right before bedtime? After a jam-packed day, your child's pent-up stress and energy will likely spike when it's time to head to bed. The key is implementing a consistent bedtime routine to help them transition into sleep mode. Try therapeutic techniques to soothe your child for a full night of shut-eye.

### **Squeeze 'em tight (add pressure).**

Just like you would swaddle a baby, you should wrap your kids up like tiny burritos! When you add pressure that squeezes them tight, your child's tactile and proprioceptive senses are activated, which creates a sense of calm and relaxation. You can also do this with weighted blankets, tight cuddles, or by tucking them in nice and snug with pillows placed around them to add more pressure.

### **Get them warm and cozy.**

Warmth is another element that can increase calm and signal bedtime! Put their

blankets in the dryer so they'll have them nice and warm when it's time to lie down. Additionally, you can give them a warm drink with a straw, as the warmth not only relaxes them but the straw also encourages sucking motions, which are incredibly soothing for children.

### **Create gentle movements.**

Repetitive and rhythmic movements like rocking back and forth generate vestibular input for the nervous system. This will help your children feel comfortable and ready to sleep! You can try these motions by rocking them on a yoga ball for a few minutes, reading a bedtime story in a rocking chair, or sitting with them in a porch swing or hammock right before bed.

### **Turn the screens off.**

We already know that looking at screens harms our sleep, so why would that be any different for children? Decrease screen time as the day advances and completely turn off any screens at least two hours



before bedtime. Not only do you want to cut these harsh lights, but you should also add comforting ones! Unwind in dim lighting as the day ends, and place lava lamps or a night light in your children's rooms to help soothe them. Also, adding a white noise machine or playing calm music can do wonders!

Combine these therapeutic methods to create the perfect bedtime routine that will have your energetic kiddos in bed without a hitch.

# TAKE A *BREAK*

## SOLUTION

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

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



## THE REVENGE OF THE RONIN

### Unveiling the Historic Massacre of Kira Yoshinaka

Never has there been a tale of revenge so blood-filled and epic as the 47 Ronin. Honorable and loyal to the end, these samurai warriors proved their dedication to their master in an incident that would become immortalized in Japanese literature, theater, and film. So, what led these samurai on a vengeful rampage?

It started in April 1701, when nobleman Asano Naganori, also known as the lord of Ako, was treated with complete disrespect and arrogance by Kira Yoshinaka, a court official. After holding back his anger, Asano finally snapped. Asano revealed his sword and attacked Kira in the middle of the palace's main hall. Although Kira lived to tell the tale, Asano broke court rules and was ordered to kill himself. Following the court's ruling, Asano ended his life on April 21, 1701.

After his demise, Asano left behind his faithful 47 samurai, whose status was lowered to ronin (samurai with no leader). Crushed by his death, the ruthless men created a plan. The 47 Ronin laid low for two years by dispersing and living in "retirement." The years passed, and the men were able to lower Kira's guard. At this point, one of the ronin had reached his 80s and could not participate in the vengeful plan. However, the remaining 46 men raided Kira's estate on an early January morning in 1703. They fearlessly battled Kira's samurai and decapitated Kira. The ronin then carried his head in a basket for miles to their deceased lord's grave.

Authorities were intensely conflicted on how to treat the vengeful massacre. While it broke the shogun's rules, the act followed the respected samurai warrior code. Yet, in the end, all 46 men were ordered to kill themselves via self-disembowelment, *hara-kiri*. The ronin ranged in age from 15 to 77 years old. After their deaths, the ronin became legends and were buried alongside their master, Asano Naganori. You can visit this famous site at Sengakuji Temple in Tokyo.



## HOMEMADE PUMPKIN SPICE LATTE

Inspired by [AmbitiousKitchen.com](http://AmbitiousKitchen.com)

Save money this October with this delicious homemade pumpkin spice latte that will taste better than any store-bought coffee.

### Ingredients

- 2 shots espresso (or 1/2 cup freshly brewed coffee)
- 1 cup milk of choice
- 3 tbsp pumpkin purée
- 1–2 tbsp maple syrup
- 1 tsp pumpkin pie spice
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- Whipped cream for topping (optional)

### Directions

1. In a small pot on medium heat, heat milk until simmering but not boiling.
2. Make your espresso (or coffee) and pour into a large mug or Mason jar. Add pumpkin purée, maple syrup, pumpkin pie spice, and vanilla and stir until well combined.
3. With a milk frother, froth the heated milk until foamy. Then, pour into your pumpkin espresso mixture and top with whipped cream. For decoration, you can sprinkle more cinnamon or pumpkin spice on top!



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# THE SHOCKING TRUTH BEHIND SHERRI’S KIDNAPPING REVEALED

Sherri Papini vanished out of thin air in November 2016. The day she went missing, her husband, Keith Papini, came home expecting to see his wife and kids but found the residence eerily empty. Keith called the children’s day care to ask when his wife picked them up, but they informed him she never did. While the kids were safe, Sherri was missing.

Three weeks passed before Sherri was finally found alone on a freeway nearly 146 miles from her home on Thanksgiving Day. She was cut and bruised, her long hair chopped short, and her back branded with a Bible verse.

When the police questioned Sherri, she was hesitant and frightened. She claimed two Hispanic women abducted her, took her to an unknown location, chained her up, and tortured her before planning to traffic her. The story horrified

the community and made many Hispanic women fear wrongful persecution.

At the time, male DNA was found on Sherri’s clothing, despite her insistence no men were involved in her kidnapping. Years later, in 2020, the authorities used genetic DNA technology to track down the man, Sherri’s ex-boyfriend, James Reyes. This was when Sherri’s tale began to fall apart. Reyes was questioned by police, who exposed the truth about Sherri’s vanishing act.

He revealed that Sherri told him her husband, Keith, was abusing her, and she needed his help to escape. She convinced him to brand her, but all her other injuries were self-inflicted. Reyes had no idea about Sherri’s fabricated story involving two Hispanic kidnapers. At first, Sherri stuck with her story when questioned again but eventually admitted it was all a hoax.

In 2023, Sherri Papini was charged with false statements and mail fraud and sentenced to 18 months in prison for her long-winded lies that wasted police resources and federal financial assistance. Her story resulted in numerous innocent Hispanic women being wrongly questioned by authorities. But now, these women can rest easy knowing the case is finally closed.

