

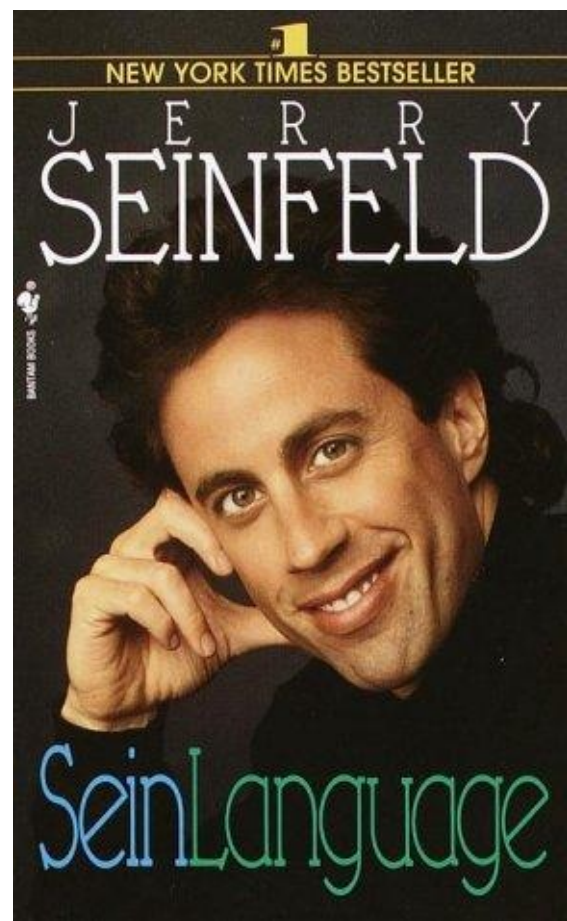
#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

J E R R Y
SEINFELD



SeinLanguage

Dedication



SEINLANGUAGE Jerry Seinfeld

To my wonderful parents Betty and Kal, and my also wonderful sister Carolyn, who, when they heard I wanted to become a comedian, thought it was a great idea.

INTRODUCTION

When I was a kid my father used to take me around with him in his truck. He was in the sign business on Long Island and he had a little shop called the Kal Signfeld Sign Co.

He really did.

I'd ride in the van with my sneakers up on the dashboard and it was there that I first learned one of life's great pleasures, watching other people work.

In truth, there were few people as much fun to watch work as my father. There has never been a professional comedian with better stage presence, attitude, timing, or delivery. He was a comic genius selling painted plastic signs that said things like "Phil's Color TV" and cardboard ones like "If you want to raise cattle, why do you keep shooting the bull?"

The thing I remember most about those afternoons is how often my father would say to me, "Sometimes I don't even care if I get the order, I just have to break that face."

He hated to see those serious businessman faces. I guess that's why he, like me, never seemed to be able to hold down any kind of real job.

Often when I'm on stage I'll catch myself imitating a little physical move or certain kind of timing that he would do.

"To break that face."

It was a valued thing in my house. I remember when Alan King would walk out on the Ed Sullivan Show hearing my mother say, "Now, quiet." We could talk during the news but not during Alan King. This was an important man.

And I was proud to be the only kid in my neighborhood with a complete Bill Cosby album collection. He was my favorite comedian and the first black actor to star in a series. But to me, he was the first adult on TV to wear sneakers on a regular basis.

I know that affected me, but I'm not sure in what way.

My father lived to see me start to make it as a comedian and he was always my most enthusiastic supporter. He taught me a gift is to be given. And just as he gave it to me, I hope I am able to give it to you.

I certainly never imagined at fifteen, when I started writing down these funny thoughts that kept coming into my head, that someday they would amount to a book. I never thought they would amount to anything, really. But a lot of people have this little corner of their brain that wants to play all the time. The idea of this book for me and for you is to keep that corner alive. It's good to play, and you must keep in practice.

I still can't believe this book is in a bookstore. I love bookstores. A bookstore is one of the only pieces of physical evidence we have that people are still thinking. And I like the way it breaks down into fiction and nonfiction. In other words, these people are lying, and these people are telling the truth. That's the way the world should be.

"Hi, I'm Jerry Seinfeld.. I'm fiction."

"I know."

"How did you know?"

"Because I'm nonfiction."

I also find a bookstore to be a wonderful laxative. I don't know what it is. I don't know whether it's the quiet, or all the available reading material, but you walk in there and something just happens. I really think they should eliminate a couple of aisles and put in some nice men's and ladies' rooms in the back, and then a bookstore would really be a wonderful place to visit.

I think the biggest problem bookstores have is not enough room by the cash register to sell stuff. They seem to feel this is the only really good selling area. They think "The only way we're going to unlock this one is if their money's already out."

Why not give each salesperson in the store their own cash register, and let them follow the customer around? When they see someone pick up a book, they sneak up behind them and go, "cha-ching" and the customer will turn around and go, "Well I guess as long as you've got it rung up already . . ."

I would say the main competition for the book is the video because for some reason people feel they need to come home with a rectangular block of something that they don't know the end of. The big advantage of a book is it's very easy to rewind. Close it and you're right back at the beginning.

It must be frustrating to work at a bookstore. They see someone come in, spend two hours, and walk out with nothing. They must want to explode—just push the customer in the back as they exit, "So you know everything? There's nothing you need in here?"

There must be something you're at least interested in. Why did you come in here in the first place? Well, you don't need you, you know."

In a lot of ways, that's what a bookstore is. It's a "smarter than you" store. And that's why people are intimidated—because to walk into a bookstore, you have to admit there's something you don't know.

And the worst part is you don't even know where it is. You go in the bookstore and you have to ask the people, "Where is this? Where is that? Not only do I lack knowledge, I don't even know where to go for it." So just to walk into a bookstore you're admitting to the world, "I'm not too bright."

It's pretty impressive, really.

But the pressure is on you now. This book is filled with funny ideas but you have to provide the delivery. So when you read it, remember—timing, inflection, attitude. That's comedy. I've done my part. The performance is up to you. And if you find at some point that you're not laughing, keep

smiling, wipe your brow, and try to get them on the next bit.

FREEWAY OF LOVE

Well that's it, I give up. I really don't know what the women are thinking. I've talked with them. I've studied them. I've asked them to study me. And I have to admit I am still at square one. Not that I really object to square one. It is the only numbered square in the game. At least you know your position. Nobody ever screws up and goes, "Well, back to oval seven." I believe we're all secretly happy we can't figure our relationships out. It keeps our minds working. I think we have to be grateful for the one thing in our lives that keeps us from being totally focused on eating.

THE DATE

Dating is pressure and tension. What is a date really, but a job interview that lasts all night? The only difference between a date and a job interview is that in not many job interviews is there a chance you'll wind up naked at the end of it.

"Well Bill, the boss thinks you're the man for the position. Why don't you strip down and meet some of the people you'll be working with?"

Maybe we need some kind of pre-date ritual. Maybe first meet up in one of those rooms where you visit prisoners. You have that glass between you. You talk on the phones. See how that goes before you attempt an actual date. This way the only sexual tension would be deciding if you should put your hand on the glass or not. And if you're not comfortable at any point, you just signal to the guard and they take the other person away. It's hard to have fun when you're feeling evaluated.

We should say, "You seem nice. Why don't we get together sometime for some serious scrutiny?" Because that's the thing that happens. Whenever you think about this person in terms of maybe spending your future with them, you have to magnify every little thing about them.

The guy will be like, "I don't think her eyebrows are even. I can't believe it. Her eyebrows are uneven. Could I look at uneven eyebrows for the rest of my life?" And of course, the woman's thinking, "What is he looking at? Do I want someone looking at me like this for the rest of my life?" Women, of course, have powers far beyond those of mortal men. A woman left a message on my phone machine the other day, with kind of a breathy voice. And no matter what a woman says, if it's in that breathy voice, it sounds so appealing.

A stewardess could lean over, whisper in my ear, "Would you put on your seatbelt? We're about to crash into a mountain." And I would go, "Really? So what are you doing later by the rupture of fuselage? What do you say we meet for some peanuts over by the black box? I'll bring the cushions."

Women need to like the job of the guy they're dating. If they don't like the job, they don't like the guy. Men know this—which is why we make up the phony, bogus names for the jobs that we have. "Well right now, I'm the regional management supervisor. I'm in development, production, consulting ..."

Men, on the other hand, if they are physically attracted to a woman, are not that concerned with her

job. We'll just go, "Really? Slaughterhouse? Is that where you work? That sounds interesting. So, what do you have, a big cleaver and you just lop their heads right off? That sounds great. Listen, why don't you shower up and we'll get some burgers and catch a movie."

And why is it always dinner? You pick your teeth, I'll wipe my chin, we'll find out what we're really about here.

He's thinking, "Boy, nice hair."

She's thinking, "I can't believe the size of the piece of bread he just put in his mouth."

That always happens to me. Why is it when I reach for the bread I suddenly forget I'm on a date? I have this split-second mental lapse and think I'm alone in a hotel room in Milwaukee. And there's nothing you can do once that bread is in there. You just get it down and hope she likes your car.

What would the world be like if people said whatever they were thinking, all the time, whenever they came to them? How long would a blind date last? About thirteen seconds, I think.

"Oh sorry, your rear end is too big."

"That's okay, your breath stinks anyway. See you later."

"No problem."

"Goodbye."

"Okay."

"Thank you very much."

Dating in modern times is actually a big improvement on past civilizations. You know that in ancient tribal cultures, they would sacrifice a virgin. This is true. They thought that would accomplish something. They would find some girl that had never been out with anybody and they would throw her into a volcano. Now there's a first date she'll never forget. She winds up in Heaven, talking with Chuck Woolery.

"So, tell me, Lisa, how did the date end?"

"Not well, Chuck. Not well."

"Well, if you'd like to be thrown into a volcano again, we'll pay for it. . . ."

The worst dates are often the result of the fix-up. Why do we fix people up? Because you think they'll have a good time? Who the hell are you? It's a little power trip isn't it? You're playing God.

Of course God was the first person to fix people up. Fixed up Adam and Eve, you know. I'm sure he said to Adam, "No, she's nice, she's very free about her body, doesn't really wear much. She was going out with a snake—I think that's over though."

To me, the fix-up just doesn't work. You cannot fix people up. It doesn't work because nobody wants to think that they need to be fixed up. You cannot get that out of your mind; it affects your attitude when you meet the person that you're fixed up with. You go, "Well, I guess everybody thinks I should be with you." I was fixed up one time. Couldn't deal with it.

The whole time we were out, I could feel the puppet strings of the fixer-uppers on me. I couldn't even operate my body. I go to put my arm around her . . . —SLAP— "Sorry, I can't control my arms. The whole evening wasn't my idea. I'm just a puppet."

Has it ever occurred to you that the ventriloquist dummy always seems to have a very active, sexual social life? He's always talking about dates and women that he knows and bringing them back to the suitcase at night. There's always a sawdust joke in there somewhere, kinky sexual references to being made out of wood or spinning his head around. We're somehow expected to accept this.

I guess because the face is so animated, they think we're not noticing, for example, that the feet are just kind of swinging there. Dummy feet never look really right, do they? Plastic shoes just kind of dangling there. Always kind of askew. You always just see a little ankle, those little thin white fabric ankles that they have. And the thought creeps in:

"You know, I think they're trying to put something over on me here."

I've always wanted to invite a woman up to my apartment for a nightcap then just give her one of those little hats that flops over on the side.

"That's all. I just wanted to give you that. You can go now. If you want to go out next week, I'll give you a short robe that matches."

Now if you do spend the night at somebody else's house . . . Which happens. It could happen. It happened to a lot of people. . . . You always think to yourself, "I can handle this. It's no big deal." But your hair the next morning is the true reflection of how you really feel inside. Your hair freaks out when it wakes up at somebody else's house.

You go in the bathroom, it's like, "This is not our sink, this is not our brush, this is not our mirror—Aaaah!" You have to keep it from panicking. "Would you just calm down! We'll be home in a minute!" What can you do at the end of a date when you know you don't want to see this person ever again, for the rest of your life? What do you say?

No matter what you say, it's a lie. "I'll see you around?" See you around? Where is that?

"If you're around, and I'm around, I'll see you around that area. You'll be around other people, though. You won't be around me. But you will be around."

"Take care now." Did you ever say that to somebody? Take care now. Take care, now. Because I'm not going to be taking care of you. So you should take care of yourself now."

"Take care, take care."

What does this mean, "Take care?"

"Take off."

Isn't that what you really want to say? "Take off now. Get out of here."

THE SEX

The problem with the sex-orientation process is that every person has their own sexual timetable, and you don't know what should happen when. The other person of course knows nothing about it, and no one's talking to them. We all have this demeanor like that poster of W. C. Fields in the poker game. That's why I think we need some sort of sexual rulebook where it's written down and agreed upon, a sexual standard dating procedure. If there are any problems, you simply refer to it and go,

"Look honey, I'm very sorry, but we've been out three times and according to Article 7, Section 1, there's got to be some physical contact, as you can see right there. Otherwise I will report you to the board and they can put out a warrant for an embrace."

And a woman can go, "First of all, if you think meeting me for a half hour on my lunch break for a small yogurt, no topping, is going to hold up as a date in front of that board you can forget it. Not to mention calling me 'honey' before the end of the three-week endearment moratorium period. That's a misdemeanor, you know."

Seems to me the basic conflict between men and women, sexually, is that men are like firemen. To us sex is an emergency, and no matter what we're doing we can be ready in two minutes. Women, on the other hand, are like fire. They're very exciting, but the conditions have to be exactly right for it to occur. Men and women, all in all, behave just like our basic sexual elements. If you watch single men on a weekend night they really act very much like sperm—all disorganized, bumping into the walls and their friends, swimming in the wrong direction.

"I was first."

"Let me through."

"You're on my tail."

"That's my spot."

We're like the Three Billion Stooges. But the egg is very cool: "Well, who's it going to be? I can't divide. I can wait a month. I'm not swimming anywhere." Which brings us to the condom. There's nothing wrong with the condom itself.

The problem with condoms is still buying them. I think we should have like a secret signal with the druggist. You just walk into the drugstore, you go up to the counter, he looks at you and if you nod slowly, he puts them in the bag for you. That's it. You show up there, you put your little shaving cream, your little toothpaste on the counter.

"How are you today?"

(You nod.) "Not bad. Yourself?"

(He puts them in.) "Oh, pretty good."

And you've got them.

Nakedness is a big thing with men. We're living for the naked city. Whatever it is that you won't show us, that's what we're obsessed with seeing. I mean, if women always wore hats in public all the time you'd see men buying Playhead magazine. Reading "Skulls of the Big Ten." This would be our only interest. You start wondering about these cultures in National Geographic where everybody's naked, you know?

You see all these people and you wonder, "What are the men in these cultures trying to look at when women walk by?" Could you have a strip club in a place like that? Woman goes on stage, takes off the necklace, takes out the nose ring—that's it, show's over.

Men are in the audience going, "Wow, you see that little indentation there in the top of her lip? I told you, man. This place is hot!"

That's why fashion works on men. Every year women cover up one thing, show us something else. Drives us wild. We never catch on that you've been alternately concealing and revealing the exact same things to us for centuries. We don't know. Every time women put on a new outfit we're mystified all over again.

"I think the boobs are in there."

"Really? I think they're over there."

What about talking during sex? The question is: Does the talking really improve the sex, or is the sex act there now just to spice up the conversation? Of course, eventually, I'm sure people will get tired and too lazy even for phone sex. They'll start having phone-machine sex.

They'll be really bored, "Yeah, I want you really bad. Just leave it on the tape." Then I guess the phone company will come out with sex waiting. That'll be the new thing.

"Uh, yeah, hold on honey it's the other line. . . . Oh, hiya baby. One second. . . . Uh, honey, I've got to take this. Yeah, I've got sex waiting on the other line. I've got to take this call."

THE RELATIONSHIP

See, each man and each woman actually does have an owner's manual. Nothing's written down anywhere, but the directions for operation of an individual in a relationship are detailed and specific nonetheless. So when you start out with someone, you're essentially driving a strange car for the first time and none of the controls are labeled.

So the wipers can come on at strange times, sometimes you stall. On top of that we've all met people with bad steering, no brakes, needs a muffler, headlights a little dim, too much in the trunk, not enough under the hood, prone to backfiring, won't turn over, and just plain out of gas. Which is why when people get ready to get married they so often seem to choose basic transportation. It's simple, it's reliable, and it gets you there. That's important on a long trip.

What is the problem, why is commitment such a big problem for a man? I think that for some reason when a man is driving down that freeway of love, the woman he's involved with is like an exit, but he doesn't want to get off there. He wants to keep driving. And the woman is like, "Look, gas, food, lodging, that's our exit, that's everything we need to be happy . . . Get off here, now!"

But the man is focusing on the sign underneath that says, "Next exit twenty-seven miles," and he thinks, "I can make it." Sometimes he can, sometimes he can't. Sometimes the car ends up on the side of the road with the hood up and smoke pouring out of the engine. He's sitting on the curb all alone, and he says, "I guess I didn't realize how many miles I was racking up." For me, the best part of a relationship is when you're sick. And the best time to be sick is in a relationship.

If I have to get married, you know all those vows, "For richer or for poorer, for better or for worse . . . All I need is the sickness part. That to me is the most important one. "Do you take this man with his sickness?" The rest of the time go out, have a ball, do whatever you want—but if I get the sniffles, you'd better be there.

Don't get me wrong, the wedding ceremony is a beautiful thing. The vows, the costumes. I think the idea behind the tuxedo is the woman's point of view that "Men are all the same, we might as well dress them that way." That's why, to me, a wedding is like the joining together of a beautiful, glowing bride and some guy. The tuxedo is a wedding safety device, created by women, because they know that men are undependable. So in case the groom chickens out, everybody just takes one step over, and she marries the next guy. That's why the wedding vow isn't, "Do you take Bill Simpson?"

It's, "Do you take this man?" I have a friend who's about to get married. They're having the bachelor party and the bridal shower the same day. So it's conceivable that while the girl's friends are giving her sexy lingerie, the guy could be at a nude bar watching a table dancer in the exact same outfit. I think that'll be a very special moment.

To me, the difference between being single and married is the form of government. When you're single, you are the dictator of your own life. You have complete power. When I give the order to fall asleep on the sofa with the TV on in the middle of the day, no one can overrule me! When you're married, you are part of a vast decision-making body. Before anything is accomplished, there's got to be meetings, committees have to study the situation. And this is if the marriage works. I think this is the reason why divorce is so painful. You've been impeached and you weren't even the President.

THE END

There's no easy way to break off any relationship. It's like the mozzarella cheese on a good slice of pizza. No matter how far you pull the slice away from your mouth it just gets thinner and longer but never snaps. Of course you could always just eat your pizza with a knife and fork, but I think this is clearly what's known as "pushing the cheese analogy."

One way to end the relationship is adultery. Adultery. Now that's a heavy thing. You can't just have a relationship, you must commit adultery. But you can't commit adultery unless you have a commitment. So you have to make the commitment before you can even think about committing it. There's no way to commit without the commit.

Once you commit, then you can commit the adultery, then you can get caught, get divorced, lose your mind, and they have you committed. But you know, some people actually cheat on the people that they're cheating with, which is like holding up a bank and then turning to the robber next to you and going, "All right, give me everything you got, too." I think that even if you've had a relationship with someone—or let's say, especially if you've had a relationship with someone—and you try to become friends afterward, it's very difficult. Because you know each other so well.

You know all each other's tricks. It's like two magicians trying to entertain each other. The one goes, "Look, a rabbit." The other goes, "So? ... I believe this is your card." "Look, why don't we just saw each other in half and call it a night? Okay?" I think when you first start dating, they ought to give you three "Get Out of Relationship Free" cards so you can just go up to the person and say,

"Uh, here you go. I'm sorry. I'll grab my tennis racket. Don't get up. Best of luck. Sorry."

Which is fine—unless, of course, the person you're in the relationship with happens to have an "Eight More Months of Guilt, Torture, and Pain" card. "Uh, hold it, I think I've got a little something for you ..."

PERSONAL MAINTENANCE

Let's face it, the human body is like a condominium apartment. The thing that keeps you from really enjoying it is the maintenance. There's a tremendous amount of daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly work that has to be done. From showering to open heart surgery, we're always doing something to ourselves. If your body was a used car, you wouldn't buy it. You'd go, "Nah, I've heard about these human being bodies. This is one of those Earth models, right? Yeah, a cousin of mine had one. Too much work to keep them going. The new ones are nice looking, though."

THE UPKEEP

Women definitely go to maintenance extremes. It's amazing the way women take care of all the hair on their bodies. One of the great mysteries to me is the fact that a woman could pour hot wax on her legs, rip the hair out by the roots, and still be afraid of a spider. Sometimes they go even further than that—electrolysis. That's giving your hair the chair. It's the death penalty for hair. You put him in a little chair, you put the little metal cap on him, give him his last shampoo, whatever creme rinse he wants. The only thing that can save him is a call from the Epilady.

For men, the transplant is the hair procedure of choice. The hair plug is an interesting process. It's really quite amazing. Hair that was on your shower soap yesterday can be in your head tomorrow. How did they do the first transplant? Did they have the guy take a shower, get his soap, rush it in to the hospital by helicopter, keep the soap alive on a soap-support system? Eventually they move it over, "We got the hairs, but ... I think we lost the Zest." Sometimes a body rejects a vital-organ transplant. Is it possible that a head could reject a hair transplant?

The guy's just standing around, suddenly "bink"—it lands in someone's frozen yogurt.

There are many cosmetic-surgery procedures available to people today. Liposuction, for instance. Are you familiar with this? This is a fat-sucking machine. Now you know that somewhere, somebody is working on a way to make this available in a restaurant. So you could just order it off the menu. "I'll tell you what, gimme the cheesecake, crank me up to 9, and put a scoop of ice cream on the side."

One of the most popular procedures today is the nose job. The technical term for the nose job is rhinoplasty. Rhino? I mean, do we really need to insult the person at this particular moment of their life? They know they have a big nose, that's why they're coming in. Do they really need the abuse of being compared to a rhinoceros on top of everything else? When someone goes in for a hair transplant they don't say, "We're going to perform a cueball-ectomy on you, Mr. Johnson. We're going to attempt to remove the skin-headia of your chrome-domus . . . these are the technical terms, of course."

While I haven't had any cosmetic surgery . . . Does having teeth pulled count? What about shaving? It's cosmetic, there's blood ... I do have a regular physical examination. Giving them that urine sample that's always a pleasure isn't it? There's always the amount question. "I don't know what you need. I mean, I gave you whatever I had there. I've got more. I mean, whatever you need I can get it for you. Just let me know what's necessary and I'm sure eventually I can meet the requirement."

With any kind of physical test, I don't know what it is, I always seem to get competitive. Remember when you were in school and they'd do those hearing tests? And you'd really be listening hard, you know? I wanted to do unbelievable on the hearing test. I wanted them to come over to me after and go "We think you may have something close to super-hearing. What you heard was a cotton ball touching a piece of felt. We're sending the results to Washington, we'd like you to meet the President."

We all think we're experts on our own bodies. I was in the drug store the other day trying to get a cold medication. Did you ever try to pick one of these out? Not easy. There's an entire wall of products that you need. You stand there going, "Well, this one is quick acting but this is long lasting. . . . Which is more important, the present or the future?" I read recently that wine can actually improve your health by reducing the risk of heart attack, hardening of the arteries and cholesterol. This is good news, unless you're a wino. They see this, "Oh no, I'm getting better. That means eight extra years of sleeping in doorways wearing 7 hats."

Medical science is actually making advances every day to control health problems. In fact, it's probably only a matter of time before a heart attack becomes like a headache. We'll someday see people on TV saying, "I had a heart attack this big, but I gave myself one of these." He puts the electro-paddles on his chest. "Clear!" Baroom! ". . . and it's gone."

Smoking is certainly one of the oddest and stupidest human idiosyncrasies. Why did anyone think a camel is a good product image for a cigarette? I think each one is the equivalent tar of smoking an actual Camel. I love the ad campaign they had a few years ago on their anniversary, "75 years and still smoking." Well, not everybody. I think there might be a few empty chairs at that big birthday bash. Maybe the appeal is the fire. There's something very scary and exciting about fire. People always run to see a fire. They're very proud that they have a fireplace. This is what smoking is really all about. The power of "I've got some fire right here in my hand. Smoke and fire is literally coming right out of my mouth." And it's very intimidating to the nonsmoker because it's like talking to someone who's going, "My head could open up, lava could explode out, pour right down my face, doesn't bother me a bit." And the cigar is even worse. A cigar is like, "You think this end is scary, look at this wet, disgusting, chewed up nub."

Whatever happened to Raleigh cigarettes? Remember Raleighs? With valuable Raleigh coupons. Really valuable. Each one is worth 1/1000th of a penny. You lose a lung trying to get a badminton set. Even if you get it you can't play. "Cough, cough. Let's smoke a few more packs. I can get a new birdie."

Of course, everyone wants to be healthy. The amusing thing is no one's really sure how to do it. I love to exercise, but I still have to laugh at it. You go to the health club, you see all these people and they're working out; they're training, they're getting in shape. But nobody's really getting in shape for anything. In modern society, you really don't have to be physically strong to do anything. The only reason that you're getting in shape is so you can get through the workout. So we're working out, so that we'll be in shape, for when we have to do our exercises. That's comedy.

I once tried one of these relaxation float tanks. It's this big tank and you get in it with about 500 lbs. of salt dissolved in water so you float. Now I've found the best thing to do with one of these things is to get in there with a bunch of paper cuts and some razor burn. By the time they let you out, your body will have taken the shape of the inside of that container. Then you won't need a relaxation tank because you'll actually be one.

The other thing I don't get about working out is why we're so careful about locking up our dirty towel, filthy shorts, and smelly jockstraps. What exactly is the black-market value on these disgusting items? I give my car to any guy in front of a restaurant because he's got a short red jacket—"I guess he's the valet guy." I don't even think about it. But for my hideous, putrefied gym clothes I got one of these locks, you can put a bullet through it and it won't open. That stuff is safe.

Well, I'm getting down to that little sliver of soap in my shower again. I'm going to have to make a decision pretty soon. Throw it out or try to do that Vulcan mind-meld to the next bar. If you do that with every bar, how much free soap does that come out to be at the end of your life? Does it really add up? Do you one day look around and discover you're hundreds of bars ahead of everybody else? You're throwing soap parties. Giving it away around the office. "Here, Joe. Happy Wednesday." "Gee, thank you. Where do you get it all?" "I have my methods." "Wow, that guy sure has a lot of soap." "Yeah, he's quite a guy."

Can someone please tell me what is the deal with B.O.? Why do we need B.O.? Everything in nature has a function, a purpose, except B.O. Doesn't make any sense. Do something good—hard work, exercise—smell very bad. This is the way the human being is designed. You move, you stink. Why don't our bodies help us? Why can't sweat smell good? Be a different world, wouldn't it? Instead of putting your laundry in the hamper, you'd put it in a vase. Go down to the drugstore, pick up some odorant and perspirant. You'd have a dirty sweatsock hanging from the rearview mirror of your car. And then on a really special night, maybe a little underwear coming out of your breast pocket, just to show her that she's important.

THE OUTFITS

I think I was named best-dressed man one year. But I don't remember the year and I don't remember what I was wearing. You want to know the truth? (and I can't believe anyone actually has to be asked that) I hate clothes. I hate them, okay? I hate the selecting, the trying on, the conversing with the sales help. There's another oxymoron, sales-help. You're either helping me or selling me but they're not the same thing. I hate carrying shopping bags. I hate receipts. I hate tags, pins, labels, hangers, buttons, zippers, drawstrings, lapels. I hate bleach, color-safe bleach, detergents, liquids, powders, tablets, stain lifters, stain fighters, stain neutralizers, special crystals, active ingredients, enzymes, whiteners, brighteners. I hate hot water, cold water, warm water. I hate getting \$1 off. I hate getting 1/3 more FREE. I hate fabric softener and static cling, so I lose either way. I hate detergents that are good for the environment, bad for the environment, not even aware of the environment. I hate carrying laundry bags. I hate dry cleaning plastic, people that work at dry cleaners, talking about my stains to the dry cleaner. I hate and refuse to read any poster or notice about anything on the wall of the dry cleaner. If it was posted "We reserve the right to steal your clothes," I wouldn't care. I'm not interested. Just take the clothes. Just let me get the hell out of here and back to the world as soon as possible.

Let's get one thing straight about dry cleaning right now. It doesn't exist. There's no such thing as dry cleaning. There's no way of cleaning with dry, washing with dry, or doing anything with dry. Dry itself is nothing. You can't use it. You can't do anything with it. It's not there. Dry is nothing. Are you listening to me? And we walk into these places with the big signs out front, "Dry Cleaning," and somehow never question how they were able to put this absurd concept over on us. If I gave you a filthy shirt and said, "I want this immaculate. And no liquids!" what are you going to do? Shake it? Tap it? Blow on it? Give me a break. You almost can't get something dirty with dry, let alone cleaning

it. And "One-Hour Martinizing"? Come on. We inspect, examine, and scrutinize every square inch of our lives yet the whole Martinizing charade just goes completely by us without a word. You know what I think One-Hour Martinizing is? I think they just put the clothes in plastic and give it right back to me. That's One-Hour Martinizing. You can get One-Second Martinizing if you want it.

I once had a leather jacket that got ruined in the rain. Now why does moisture ruin leather? Aren't cows outside a lot of the time? When it's raining, do cows go up to the farmhouse, "Let us in! We're all wearing leather! Open the door! We're going to ruin the whole outfit here!" "Is it suede?" "I am suede! The whole thing is suede! I can't have this cleaned. . . . It's all I got!"

I am so tired of having to come up with another little outfit for myself every day. In fact, I will say this—and I think many people agree with me—I think eventually fashion won't even exist. I think someday we'll all wear the same thing. Because anytime I see a movie or a TV show where there are people from the future or another planet, they're all wearing the same outfit. Somehow they all decided, "All right, that's enough. From now on, this is going to be our outfit. One-piece silver jump suit, with a V-stripe on the chest, and boots. That's it. We're going to start visiting other planets and we want to look like a team."

The suit is definitely the universal business outfit for men. There is nothing else that men like to wear when they're doing business. I don't know why it projects this image of power. Why is it intimidating? "We'd better do what this guy says, his pants match his jacket." Men love the suit so much, we've actually styled our pajamas to look like a tiny suit. Our pajamas have little lapels, little cuffs, simulated breast pocket. Do you need a breast pocket on your pajamas? You put a pen in there, you roll over in the middle of the night, you kill yourself.

And why the little plastic bag with the extra buttons in the suit-jacket pocket? What kind of a sicko would save these, keep thousands of them in a huge file so he'll always be prepared? "Where the hell is that button?" Is it that hard to get black, round buttons, that they have to make it into a whole thing? Like you've got such a great jacket, so unique, so one-of-a-kind. "You'll never find buttons like these we'll save you the trouble of knocking your brains out looking. Because we know they're going to fall off, too." That's the other thing they're trying to tell you.

Even when you die, they bury you in a suit. All the other men stand around. "Boy, it's a shame he died. It's a beautiful suit." The one good thing is that when it's your funeral, you can definitely get same-day alterations, no questions asked. "This'll be ready next Tuesday." "Oh, no, we've got to have it by today, this is his last day. I don't think he's going to get another chance to wear it."

The proof that we don't understand death is we give dead people a pillow. I mean if you can't stretch out and get some solid rest at that point, I don't think there are any bedding accessories that can make the difference. But the suit and the pillow really shows how we have no idea what to get these people ready for. I mean, what situation are you going into with a suit and a pillow? There's no business nap meetings.

Buying clothes is always tricky. But when there's loud music playing, it really throws your judgment. You look at stuff like, "Hey, if there was a cool party and I was a cool guy, this might be a cool shirt." You get it home, there's no music, there's no party, and you're not a cool guy. You're the same chump for 75 bucks lighter.

Women approach clothes from a different angle altogether. The other day I was watching women in a department store looking at clothes, and I noticed women don't try on the clothes, they get behind the clothes. They take a dress off the rack and they hold it up against themselves. They can tell something from this. They stick one leg way out and kind of lean back. I guess they need to know, "If someday I'm one-legged at a forty-five-degree angle, what am I going to wear?" You never see a man do that. You never see a guy take a suit off the rack, put his head behind the collar, and go, "What do you think about this suit? I think I'll get it. Put some shoes by the bottom of the pants, I want to make sure. Now what if I'm walking? Move the shoes, move the shoes, move the shoes." I love watching women put on their perfume. They're very careful. They have their little stratego areas. Places they think we're going. They always hit the inside of the wrist. Women are convinced that this is the most action-packed area that could ever happen. Why, ladies? What is happening there? Is that in case you slap the guy? He still finds you intriguing. . . . —CRACK!— He turns back, "Oh . . . Chanel."

What is the real idea behind wearing these fragrances? Are we hoping, "Maybe people will think I really smell like this." Someone gave me one of those gift sets. Has the cologne, after-shave, soap-on-a-rope. I need soap on a rope. Lot of times I'm in the shower and I want to hang myself. Why do they connect these two things? Because they rhyme? I don't need shaving cream on a wooden beam. I even have the underarm deodorant with the cologne smell. Why do you want the smell there? I think once a woman's got her nose in your armpit, the seduction's pretty much over. I think she likes you. Are we like dogs now, where you have to smell every square inch of a person before you make up your mind? Even dogs just go by looks once in a while.

I think the wonderful thing about men and women is how interested we are in these people we have virtually nothing in common with. Men are obsessed with cleavage, women are obsessed with shoes. It's the exact same obsession. It doesn't matter how many times we've seen these things, every time these objects are presented to us, we have to look. We cannot not look. To men, cleavage is like the nearest thing to a UFO landing nearby, that's what it is. To women, buying a pair of shoes that they really love is like boarding the alien ship. I think it's entirely possible that aliens have landed and they haven't been able to get our attention because we're so preoccupied with cleavage and shoes.

Why is it so difficult and uncomfortable to be naked? It's because when you have clothes on, you can always make those little adjustments that people love to do. Hitching, straightening, adjusting. You know, you feel like you're getting it together. "Yeah, pretty good. Feeling good, feeling pretty good." But when you're naked, it's so final. You're just, "Well, this is it. There's nothing else I can do." That's why I like to wear a belt when I'm naked. I feel it gives me something. I'd like to get pockets to hang off the belt. Wouldn't that be the ultimate thing? Picture that. To be naked and still be able to put your hands in your pockets. I think that would really help a lot.

PALDOM

Friends are the DNA of society. They are the basic building blocks of life. If you have a couple of good ones, treasure them like gold. There's nothing better.

Ever look at that MCI ad they have, "Friends and Family"? Who do they mention first? Your friends help you carry the big weight in life.. That big burden we've all got called, "What the hell am I doing

THE MALE CODE

All plans between men are tentative. If one man should suddenly have an opportunity to pursue a woman, it's like these two guys never met each other in life. This is the male code. And it doesn't matter how important the arrangements are. Most of the time they scrub a space-shuttle mission it's because one of the astronauts met someone. He's leaning against the rocket talking to her, "So listen, when I get back, what do you say we get together for some Tang?"

A man is paralyzed mentally by a beautiful woman, and advertisers really take advantage of this. Don't you love those ads where you see the woman in the bikini next to the 32-piece ratchet set? And we'll be looking at the girl in the bikini, then looking at the ratchet set, going, "All right, well if she's right next to the ratchet set, and I had that ratchet set ... I wonder if that would mean that ... I better just buy the ratchet set."

I am not gay, I am however, thin, single, and neat. Sometimes when someone is thin, single, and neat people assume they are gay because that is the stereotype. You normally don't think of gay people as fat, sloppy, and married. Although I'm sure some are—I don't want to perpetuate a stereotype—but they're probably in the minority within the gay community.

They're probably discriminated against because of that. People say to them, "You know Joe, I enjoy being gay with you, but I think it's about time you got in shape, tucked your shirt in and lost the wife. But if people are going to assume that people who are neat are gay, maybe instead of making that little tilting hand gesture and saying, "You know I think Joe might be a little . . . well, you know . . ."

They should mime vacuuming, "You know I think Joe might be a little . . . vrrrrrm."

"Yeah, I had a feeling he was a little vrrrrrm ..."

What causes homophobia? What is it that makes the heterosexual man worry about this? I think it's because deep down all men know that we have weak sales resistance. We're constantly buying shoes that hurt us, pants that don't fit right. Men think, "Obviously, I can be talked into anything. What if I accidentally wander into some sort of homosexual store thinking it's a shoe store and the salesman says, 'Just hold this guy's hand, walk around a little bit, see how it feels. No obligation, no pressure, just try it.'"

GETTING THE MESSAGE

I've come to the conclusion that there are certain friends in your life who are always your friends and you just have to accept it. ~~You see them even though you don't really want to see them. You don't call them, they call you. You don't call back, they call again. You're late, they wait. You don't show up, they're not upset. You try and stab them, they understand.~~

The only way to get through talking with people that you don't really have anything in common with is to pretend you're hosting your own little talk show. This is what I do. You pretend there's a little desk around you. There's a little chair over there and you interview them. The only problem with this is there's no way you can say, "Hey, it's been great having you on the show, but I'm afraid we're out of time."

The problem with talking is that nobody stops you from saying the wrong thing. I think life would be a lot better if it was like you're always making a movie. You mess up, somebody just walks on the set and stops the whole shot. Think of the things you wish you could take back. You're out somewhere with people. "Boy, you look pregnant, are you?" "Cut, cut, cut, cut, that's not going to work at all. Walk out the door, come back in, let's take this whole scene again. People, think about what you're saying."

Have you ever called someone up and you're disappointed when they answer the phone? You wanted the machine. And you're always kind of thrown off. You go, "Oh I uh, I, didn't know you were there, I just wanted to leave a message saying, 'Sorry I missed you.'" So because of the phone machine, what you can have is two people that don't really ever want to talk, and the phone machine is like this relationship respirator keeping these marginal, brain-dead relationships alive. Why do we do this? Because when we come home we want to see that little flashing red light and go, "All right, messages." People need that. It's very important for human beings to feel they are popular and well-liked amongst a large group of people that they have no interest in.

I love my phone machine. I wish I was a phone machine. I wish if I saw somebody on the street I didn't want to talk to I could just go, "Excuse me, I'm not here right now. If you just leave a message, I can walk away." I also have a cordless phone, but I don't like that much. Because you can't slam down a cordless phone. You get mad at somebody on a real phone, "You can't talk to me like that!" BANG, it's over. But a cordless phone—"You can't talk to me like that! All right now, let me just find that little thing to turn this off. . . . Just hang on, I'm hanging up on you."

To me, nothing matches the phone machine as a modern technological accomplishment. First of all, look at how long it took before they made ones that actually worked. Ever take your clock radio or your stereo in to be fixed or returned? Never. They always work perfect. For some reason phone machines are like old Italian cars. You have to take them to obscure little fix-it shops in strange neighborhoods. And when they break, people scoop them up and carry them in their arms like sick children.

They yell at befuddled repairmen, "What do you mean there's nothing you can do?" This is why the phone machine is our most important piece of technology. Look how we care about it. What other machine has such an intimate relationship with you? Who called and when, exactly what they said, how they sounded. Your best friend can't give you such details. Only your phone machine lives and dies with you as you replay the triumphs and disappointments of the day's calls. It's like your little message fisherman. You come in the door, "How was the catch today? They biting?" I'm sure somewhere someone has returned a phone machine, like a bad lure, because it didn't get enough calls

I would say the concept behind the car phone, and the phone machine, the speaker phone, the airline phone, the portable phone, the pay phone, the cordless phone, the multi-line phone, the phone pager, the call waiting, the call forwarding, call conferencing, speed dialing, direct dialing, and the redialing is that we all have absolutely nothing to say, and we've got to talk to someone about it right now. Cannot wait another second! I mean come on, you're at home you're on the phone, you're in the car you're makin' calls, you get to work, "Any messages for me?" You've got to give people a chance to miss you a little bit.

The downside of the message is it usually means somebody wants something from you. There's two types of favors, the big favor and the small favor.

You can measure the size of the favor by the pause that a person takes after they ask you to "Do me a favor." Small favor—small pause.

"Can you do me a favor, hand me that pencil." No pause at all.

Big favors are, "Could you do me a favor. . . ." Eight seconds go by. "Yeah? What?" ". . . well."

The longer it takes them to get to it, the bigger the pain it's going to be. Humans are the only species that do favors. Animals don't do favors. A lizard doesn't go up to a cockroach and say, "Could you do me a favor and hold still, I'd like to eat you alive." That's a big favor even with no pause.

It's tough to do a good deed. Let's look at your professional good-deed doers, your Lone Rangers, your Supermen, your Batmen, your Spidermen. They're all wearing disguises, masks over their faces, secret identities. They don't want people to know who they are. Too much aggravation. "Superman, yeah thanks for saving my life, but did you have to come through my wall? I'm renting here. They've got a security deposit. Now what am I supposed to do?"

THE GIFT OF FRIENDSHIP

I am getting a little tired of pretending I'm excited every time it's somebody's birthday. I mean really at this point, what is the big deal? How many times do we have to celebrate that someone was born? Every year, every person, over and over? All you did was not die for twelve months. This is the big accomplishment? Nobody likes having "Happy Birthday" sung to them. Nobody likes those icky white frosting cakes. Nobody likes pretending they like the gift.

"Do you really like it?"

"Yes, I do."

"Because if you don't, you can return it and get something else."*

"No, no, I really like it."*

"I want to be sure you like it."*

"Yes, I love it."*

"I had a feeling you'd like it."*

"You know, it's perfect."*

(* These are all lies.)

There's an entire industry of bad gifts. All those "executive" gifts, any stupid, goofy, brass wood thing they put a piece of green felt on the bottom, "It's a golf-desk-tie- stress-organizer, Dad," Nothing compares with the paperweight as a bad gift.

To me, there's no better way than a paperweight to express to someone, "I refused to put any thought into this at all." And where are these people working that the papers are just blowing right off of their desks anyway? Is their office screwed to the back of a flatbed truck going down the highway or something? Are they typing up in the crow's nest of a clipper ship? What do you need a paperweight for? Where's the wind coming from?

Somebody just gave me a shower radio. Thanks a lot. Do you really want music in the shower? I guess there's no better place to dance than a slick surface next to a glass door.

I also love the gift certificate. That's another real slap in the face, isn't it? It's got that little, bogus border around the edge, so it looks real official. It's an "I-don't-give-a- damn diploma." That's what a gift certificate is.

The clearest indication of the complexity of modern relationships is that greeting card companies are forced to put out cards that are blank on the inside. Nothing . . . no message. It's like the card companies say, "We give up, you think of something.

For seventy-five cents it's not worth us getting involved." And what about the soft-focus people on the cards? You know the ones I mean? They're having a picnic with a tree and a horse and a pond. They're in the canoe and they're paddling along. Is this supposed to remind us of ourselves? Are those people we're supposed to want to be like? I don't know. What would you write inside a card like that anyway? "Here's another couple having a better relationship than us. ... They certainly seem to be getting along."

I love those astrology cards where they tell you all the people that have the same birthday as you. It's always an odd group of people too, isn't it? It's like Ed Asner, Elijah Mohammed, and Secretariat. "Yeah, I've always felt I had something in common with them."

My friend just had a baby. There is so much pressure to see this baby. Every time I talk to them, they say, "You have got to see the baby. When are you coming over to see the baby? See the baby. See the baby." Nobody ever wants you to come over and see their grandfather. "You gotta see him. He's sooo cute. A hundred and sixty-eight pounds, four ounces. I love when they're this age. He's a thousand months. You know the mid-eighties is such a good time for grandpeople. You've got to see him. He went to the bathroom by himself today."

What's tough about seeing people when they have a new baby is that you have to try and match their level of enthusiasm. They're always so excited. "What do you think of him? What do you think?" Just once I would like to meet a couple that goes, "You know, we're not that happy with him frankly. I

think we really made a big mistake. We should've gotten an aquarium. You want him? We've really had enough."

Those baby visits can get a little boring. You have to yawn. It's either yawn or leave. I don't think there's anything wrong with yawning. I hate when people try not to yawn. First of all, we all know you're yawning. Teeth clenched, their cheeks start vibrating, trying to keep their mouth closed. It's like watching someone get electrocuted. Electrocute.

There's another word that's kind of strange when you break it down. Electro-cute. What's cute about it? "Would you mind putting on this cute little metal hat for me? This is going to be just the sweetest 50,000 volts you ever felt." Electro-cute. It's like, "Oh no, we're not going to hang you. We're just going to do this little thing we call rope-dee-doo."

SHUT UP AND DRIVE

I love to travel. Much more than I've ever enjoyed getting anywhere. Arrival is overrated. Moving is much more exciting. Planes, boats, cars, trains, feet, whatever. I just want to move. I think destinations were invented just so we all wouldn't look like we were wandering around in a daze. My all-time favorite form of motion is the car. I'm one of those people. I love cars. It's the greatest physical object I've ever seen. I don't know why, really. My only theory is, when you're driving, you're outside and inside, moving and completely still, all at the same time. I think that's something.

ON THE GROUND

In parking lots now, they have these "Compact Car Only" spots. Isn't that discrimination against the size of your car? If I want my ass hanging out of the back of my parking spot, that's my business. There are people out there with real asses hanging out of their pants, nobody's stopping them. Nobody goes, "Hey, hold it sir, those are compact jeans, you can't pull that in there." Have you ever been walking down the street and there's a car following you because they think you're going to your car and they want the space? Isn't it weird when a car is going the same speed that you're going? You notice that you stop, they stop, you turn, they turn—it's like having your own giant remote control car. You could break into a sprint, and try to run it into a wall. You can weave back and forth, the guy gets pulled over for drunk driving. It's fun.

It seems to me the way they design the car alarm is so that the car will behave as if it were a nervous, hysterical person. Anyone goes near it, anyone disturbs it, it just goes, "Waahaahaahaah!" Lights flashing on and off, acting all crazy. Not everyone wants to draw that much attention to themselves. Wouldn't it be nice if you could have a car alarm that was a little more subtle? Somebody tries to break in the car and it goes, "Uh, ahem. Ahem. Excuse me?" I would like a car alarm like that.

People will kill each other for a parking space in New York because they think, "If I don't get this one I may never get a space. I'll be searching for months until somebody goes out to the Hamptons." Because everybody in New York City knows there's way more cars than parking spaces. You see cars driving in New York all hours of the night. It's like musical chairs except everybody sat down around 1964. The problem is, while car manufacturers are building hundreds of thousands of new cars every year, they're not making any new spaces. That's what they should be working on. Wouldn't that be great, you go to the auto show and they've got a big revolving turntable with nothing on it. "New from Chrysler, a space."

The handicap parking spot is the mirage of the parking desert. You know the feeling. You see it in the distance, there it is. You can't believe your eyes, "It's too good to be true. A big, wide spot, and it's right by the entrance. Somehow everybody missed it." And then when you pull up, wait—it wasn't even there. There's nothing. It's like you were hallucinating. "I, I thought there was a spot there. I, I don't know what happened. . . . I—" What is the handicap parking situation at the Special Olympics? They must have to just stack like a hundred cars into those two spots. How else can they do it?

Many states in the country now have traffic school to get a ticket taken off your license. I went to traffic school, I didn't mind it. I felt bad for the traffic school instructor. This guy goes to traffic school every day no matter how he drives. What is his incentive not to speed? He's going to traffic school anyway. Why not get a race car, do two hundred miles an hour down the street? Cop stops you "Where are you going?" "Traffic School." "All right, go ahead. And you better hurry, you really need it." Maybe the punishment should be instead of traffic school or traffic court, just traffic. They sentence you to one hundred hours of traffic. They assign like five people to drive all around you at five miles an hour wherever you go. You're on your way to Vegas, there isn't a car in sight, "Come on, move it!"

I was in front of an ambulance the other day, and I noticed that the word ambulance was spelled in reverse print on the hood of the ambulance. And I thought, "Well, isn't that clever." I look in the rearview mirror, I can read the word ambulance behind me. Of course while you're reading, you don't see where you're going, you crash, and you need an ambulance. I think maybe they're just trying to drum up some business on the way back from lunch.

You know what I never get with the limo? The tinted windows. Is that so people don't see you? Yeah, what better way not to have people notice you than taking a thirty foot Cadillac with a TV antenna and a uniformed driver. How discreet. Nobody cares who's in the limo anyway. You see a limo go by, you know it's either some rich jerk, or fifty prom kids with a dollar seventy-five each. A lot of people like to use that glass divider between the front, they like to put that up. Then you have to talk to the driver on the phone through the glass, so now what you have is a traveling prison visiting room. That feels good. Being in the back of a limo, I'm sorry, it's just not that cool. Most of the time, I've felt like I'm in some depressing single guy's apartment from 1975. All that maroon velour furniture, couple of half-filled bottles of unknown liquor, three cassette tapes, all those mysterious stains . . . You're thinking, "There must've been ten thousand asses already on this seat."

The subway change-booth guy. I feel for this person. He's in a shark cage down there. It's this little safety chamber just floating in the subway. They give him like twenty-eight bucks in change, they see him up inside this thing with bullet-proof glass, closed in on all sides, it's like some kind of Houdini torture tank of doom. How do you breathe in there? It looks like if you put your hand over the change slot, you could suffocate him in thirty seconds.

So I take the subway down to Coney Island to go on the Cyclone. Here I am, I'm sitting on the "D" train for an hour and fifteen minutes, so I can go on a scary ride. How dumb is that? You know that first sharp drop on the Cyclone? I fell asleep. It was the least exciting part of my day.

LOOK, UP IN THE AIR!

I'm not afraid of flying, although many people do have a fear of flying and I have no argument with that. I think fear of flying is quite rational because, human beings cannot fly. Humans should have fear of flying the same way fish should have fear of driving. Put a fish behind the wheel and they probably go, "This isn't right. I shouldn't be doing this. I don't belong here."

Do you think that the people at the airport that run the stores have any idea what the prices are everywhere else in the world? Or do you think they just feel they have their own little country out there and they can charge anything they want? "Little hungry? You want a tuna sandwich? It's 28 dollars. If you

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