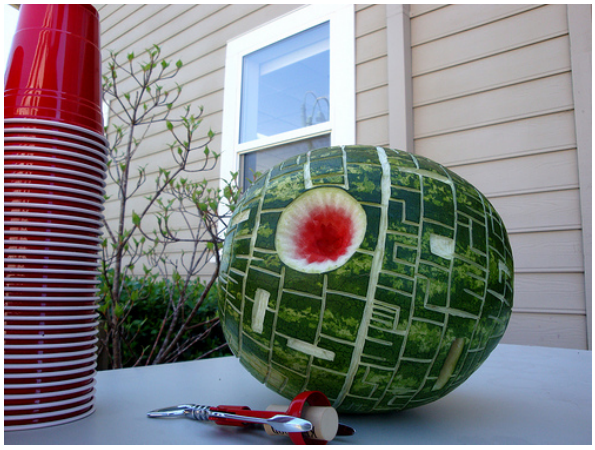

Out Of Bounds, 3-30-12

So today I'm getting off the Ohio Turnpike onto 480, and I am instantly greeted by the flashing red and blue lights of one of Ohio's finest. Welcome home, Lars, here's a speeding ticket to let you know you're back in Ohio!

Ugh.

Thing is, after a few brain-numbing hours on the Turnpike, you get kind of used to 70+mph speed limits and the associated 80+ mph speeds of traffic. The city of North Olmstead knows this, which is why they set the speed on 480 at a needlessly snail-like 60 mph. There is no way to avoid this, and they just print money from this trap. I'm pretty sure North Olmstead is saving up to build their own Death Star or something, because that is downright evil to tax innocent citizens unfairly.

Why are the speed limits so low in Ohio anyway? Sure, I get there is snow on occasion, but common sense tells you to slow down in that stuff. Everything is at least 10-15 mph below what any human would consider to be safe operating conditions. Drives me crazy.

Don't get me wrong. I don't pretend I drive like Miss Daisy is in tow. I've probably had at least 12 speeding tickets in my day (not even exaggerating he

One thing I never do is blame the cop who pulls me over. He is just doing his job, and his job sucks. He's like an air waitress, er, stewardess, er, *flight attendant* – there to enforce laws he

didn't make which make people angry. Constant stream of miserable people yelling at him for things outside his control. Oh, and sometimes they shoot at you. Terrible job to be sure.re), in Ohio, Texas, Illinois, Kansas, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island, that I can remember. Regardless, it is not the government's job to use the roads as a revenue collection device, no, the roads are there to enable commerce, and the government should not unfairly interfere. How many billions of dollars of industry would come to Ohio if commerce was able to flow more freely? How many trillions of dollars are wasted slowing down an extra 10-15 mph on the streets needlessly? How many lives could have been saved had the police been stopping real crime instead of assigned to traffic detail? Probably zero to all, but shutup. I'm on a rant.

I've found that by showing respect for law enforcement officers, you can occasionally get out of a ticket, so in an effort to stop the North Olmstead Death Star from being built, I present the Lars Hancock rules for getting out of a ticket.

1)Pull over immediately, roll down the window, turn the lights on inside the car, turn off the car, and place your hands on the dashboard. This shows the officer you respect him and the dangers of his job, and that you clearly pose no threat.

2)When told your speed, don't pretend it was wrong. Everyone knows you were going that fast. Be surprised at yourself for being so careless, because you never go that fast. But he is right. Yes sir.

3)Ask him if it is okay to do something before you do it. "may I go into my glove box to get my registration now sir?" Things like that. Again, you're making no moves that may startle him, and he is at ease you will not shoot him.

4)Even if he gives you a ticket at this point, apologize and thank him, because he has a shit job.

On a related note, the NASCAR season is just getting underway. I heartily recommend you get into it, even if only to provide background noise for a solid nap. The Browns, Cavs, and Indians aren't going anywhere, you may as well watch rednecks make 2000 left turns on your Sunday afternoons.

Seriously, it is good fun. I like being a contrarian fan, and rooting for the people that NASCAR fans hate. This is because most NASCAR fans are indeed racist inbred southern rednecks, and those people suck, so we want them to be unhappy. Drivers from north of the Mason-Dixon line are particularly injurious to them, so when Tony Stewart (from Indiana, a good Midwest boy) wins the Cup, it reminds them that the Union won the civil war. That is awesome, and since the bad guys usually do win in life, you'll be on the winning team for once.

I wrote about the strategy in Episode VIII or so, so I won't rehash it, but it is actually pretty good mental food if you let it be. Just avoid getting behind the wheel after watching a road race – trust me on this one – watching cars round corners at high speeds for hours isn't good when you hit the streets. And root for guys like Stewart, the Busch brothers, and Jeff Gordon, just to piss off your local good ol boy.

Anyway, off to the questions.

Why is cauliflower so disgusting? –CDT

True story.

There was a young couple once that went to the doctor because they were having trouble getting pregnant. Upon examining the woman, the doctor made a startling discovery – she was a virgin. Confused, he brought the husband in the room, confronted him with the discovery, to which the husband was incredulous, since they had been having relations three times a week for months. The doctor broke out some anatomical figures he had lying around, and asked the husband to show him exactly what they were doing, and the inability to conceive and "virginity" were instantly obvious.

"You're doing it wrong," proclaimed the doctor, at which point he took the dolls and explained the correct way of doing it. Naturally, the husband then punched the doctor, as he was completely humiliated and obviously of low education and/or intelligence. I'm pretty sure this happened in Pittsburgh. Hell, I'm pretty sure this happens weekly in Pittsburgh.

Like the Applachian lummox in the story above, your inability to enjoy cauliflower is because you're doing it wrong.

See, cauliflower is part of the cabbage family, meaning the basic flavor is that of a Polish cab driver's flatulence. If you just boil it to submission like your mother and every homemaker of the June Cleaver generation did, it tastes like ass. Same with broccoli, cabbage, and Brussels sprouts.

Ah, but should you really want to make a baby with it, you need to treat it a little differently. A lot of the bad taste is from the bitterness, and the best way to counteract that is with acid. You can get Draconian and pickle the crap out of it with some caraway, like sauerkraut, to get a delicious pickle condiment perfect for pork dishes, especially barbecue. Or just roast it and toss in some oil and vinegar with some herbs.

Roasting is pretty key to proper flavor development, as you need to induce the Maillard reaction to get proper flavor (the Maillard reaction is a fancy term for browning, so use it next time you want to sound like an elitist dipshit). That complex chemical reaction is critical to developing the proper flavor profiles – would you boil a chicken breast or a steak? Then why are you boiling cauliflower?

We can also break cauliflower down to its molecular components and find a proper flavor pairing in order to present it in a most appealing manner. Interestingly, when roasted, it shares much in common with cocoa, and that makes an excellent pairing. Make a savory cocoa sauce (a mole would work fine) out of cocoa powder, stock, cider vinegar, chipotles, peanut oil, and cumin, and toss the roasted cauliflower in that, and you're making babies that night, guaranteed.

You discover a time machine guarded by a mysterious being. He tells you the machine will transport you back to 1975-ish and that you will be allowed to watch one rock concert. Your choices are Aerosmith or Led Zeppelin.

So, do you see Aerosmith back in their prime? Or just get the Led out? I lean toward Zeppelin, but I was always curious to see Aerosmith back when they were doing enough drugs to make Keith Richards say, "Whoa, take it easy there son."

Follow-up: Do you ask to go back to 1999 and re-start the Browns? – justmebd

This is like asking if I would rather have a really good bowl of cauliflower tossed in a savory chocolate sauce, or if I'd rather have a pound of bacon. No matter how well you prepare cauliflower, it is still fucking cauliflower. And even the most average bacon is bacon.

The problem with Aerosmith in their prime is that they are still Aerosmith, and Zeppelin will always be Zeppelin. Aerosmith today is a boiled-Polish-cab-driver-fart cauliflower. Even if they were the most amazing cauliflower made at the hands of Thomas Keller back in the day, and even though that cauliflower is legendary, Zeppelin is bacon. Bacon from a pig so delicious it is extinct. I've gone to see Plant in concert, and Page, which is like normal bacon, but that perfectly cured bacon from that now extinct pig? Never had it, and I want it. Badly.

If I only get one date, though, I don't choose 1999. The Browns were doomed back then to the decade plus of shit we've experienced since then, and there would be nothing I could have done to change it. "Trade with the Saints! Don't hire Palmer! Don't draft Jeremiah Pharms!" I would have looked as crazy as Ron Paul, even though I'd be proven correct (as, scarily, Paul may be). No, I go back to 1994 where the city decides against building Art Modell a new stadium, which either forces his hand in a move, or allows him the moral justification to do such. As we all know, the city wound up building a new stadium anyway, and lost three full years of revenue in the process – brilliant decision boys! It is easy to blame and hate Art (and justifiable too), but if the city hadn't fucked up in 1994, it would have all been moot. Could one man have made that much of a difference in pre-internet pre-smartphone pre-twitter Cleveland? I don't know, but I certainly would have tried, and would have had a pretty fair shot of succeeding.

If you make me go back to '99, I'd want backstage passes to Aerosmith in '75 as a precursor. If I'm living through that again, I'm doing it as altered as possible.

Sicillian, Neopolitan (NY) or deep dish (chicago)? Why? - jb

Sicilian. Why? Well, to get to the right answer here we need to drop the religious arguments and have an objective discussion on the food value of the various pies. Everyone loves the pie they

grew up with, and like the Appalachian hillbilly above, most people will fight you if you instruct them their choice of pie is incorrect. This is especially true in Chicago and New York where, despite having multiple sports championships in recent memory and cities with phenomenal food and culture, the residents are still overtly hostile people for some reason. Seriously, people, if the Browns win a Super Bowl, the shores of Lake Erie will be like a giant Woodstock for years, why are you so angry? Be happy with life and appreciate what you have.

Anthony Bourdain was recently polled as to the worst thing he ever ate. This is a man that travels the world eating insects, entrails, food intentionally rotted, and God only knows what else, mind you, so his culinary experience is vast and the negative experiences are disproportionately disgusting. His response? A Cinnabon. I can understand his logic. Any item that has the literal equivalent of a whole stick of butter in it is just plain wrong (deliciously wrong if you have a hangover, mind you). It's excessive, and it loses the true art and beauty of a cinnamon roll.

The Chicago pizza is the culinary equivalent of a Cinnabon. Pizza is all about the bread – the Italians are horrified by the presence of so much as sauce on our pizzas. A Chicago pizza takes a overly dense bread, and throws giant slabs of meat, giant slabs of cheese, and a few quarts of sauce on top before we even talk about toppings. Delicious? Sure, but deep dish pizza is *Deep Throat*
where it should be
Citizen Kane
. Relying on your base desires is the wrong way to make great food. Free defibrillation with every slice!

New York style is the opposite. Nice thin crust, limited sauce and toppings, and a lot more elegant. The problem with your average Neapolitan pizza is that where your crust should be crispy and delicious, it is often, and quickly, soggy and sad. That's why there is a debate about folding it, because eating it is like trying to put a live fish through the eye of a needle. Plus, how many times do you blot the grease off the top of it? Unless it is executed perfectly and eaten directly from the oven, because of the heavy sauce to crust ratio, Neapolitan pizza quickly turns into a failure.

That leaves us with perhaps the perfect food: Sicilian pizza. Done right, a Sicilian pizza is a crispy delicious cracker with a cloud sitting on top of it, with just the right amount of topping on/in it to accentuate the flavor. Sauce optional. You can embed delicious treats inside the crust, like roasted garlic, zucchini, and sausage to give your mouth the culinary equivalent of an Easter egg hunt. And if you want a light condiment of sauce on the top provides a perfect

compliment. Sicilian pizza provides the perfect combination of crunch, bite, flavor, fun, and blank canvas for your pizza, no doubt about it.

And if you disagree, I'll kick your ass.

My uncle has a drinking problem, and is unable to shake off the hangovers as he once did in his youth. Would you happen to have any "hair of the dog" elixirs / recipes of which he may be of benefit?–pod

The best way to avoid a hangover is to drink only in moderation.

Ha, I crack myself up. You, er, *you're uncle* has had people say that to him, right? I know whenever some self-righteous asshole breaks that one out on me when I feel like I've been gang-raped by a pack of gorillas disguised as tequila bottles, I want to muster what little strength I have and beat him with my shoe. Or just vomit on him in reply. How is that helpful? And who can really apply that useless bit of knowledge? Yeah, I can be a Browns fan and not have a hangover. Or an Indians fan. Or a Cavs fan. Please.

There are three keys to ameliorating a hangover:

1. 1)Water. When you're on a bender, recognize the warning signs early. They can be as obvious as "am I in Las Vegas" or a subtle as "am I at my wife's high school reunion," but either way recognition is the first step to healing. When you're in New Orleans, and an ex-Marine has his massive hand on your throat as he's pouring tequila into your mouth because it is your birthday (this may or may not have happened to me), understand that as soon as he lets you up, you need to find a glass of water. Rule of thumb is one full glass of water every drink, and one full glass of water every time you get up to pee in the night, or two if you get up to puke.
2. 2)Vitamin B. Take two before you go out and get obliterated, and two when you get up. What if you have no intention of getting obliterated that night? Please, we all know your uncle and his willpower. Two B's please.
3. 3)Grease. Massive amounts of grease in the form of burgers, fries, hash browns, eggs, and milkshakes. Diet be damned – you're in triage mode. Eat like that fat Steeler girl is your personal trainer.

Take these to heart and you'll be right as rain.

And finally…

In your estimate what would it have cost to build a Death Star, in 1977? Also would the Death Star have been insured, if so, what would you estimate the premium, if not, why not? -The guy who took a wrong turn at Tatooine

Upon researching this, I discovered an amazing subculture of nerds that have created a set of facts around the fiction of the *Star Wars* series. In the movie, "look at the size of that thing" was as specific as they got, yet somehow internet dorks have banded together and decided it was 160 km in diameter. How the fuck they got to that number, I'll never know. Apparently it was also built via slave labor on a number of planets, including a number of wookies! Enslaved wookies made the death star!

(Aside to Star Wars dorks: that thing at the top of the basement? It's a "door". It leads to a "kitchen" that is likely filled with this stuff called "natural light". In there, there is another of these door things that leads to "outside". There they have things like "fresh air", "women", and "nipple clamps". I'm not sure what the hell you do with the last one, but the first two are rather nice. Give them a shot.)

Anyway, we will use this data to build us a Death Star. My estimation of a Death Star is that it is a sphere with a giant reactor at it's heart, and a full set of weaponry on the outside, with space to land many smaller aircraft. We will assume most of this will be on the surface, because what good does a laser inside the sphere do?

I think a good model would be to laminate a 160km diameter sphere in Nimitz-class aircraft carriers. The Dwight D. Eisenhower, CVN-69, was constructed in 1977 at a cost of $1.37B. It has a length of 332.8m, a beam of 76.8m, for a total surface area of 25,559 square meters. Now, using slave labor and unfair trade practices as we know the Empire to use, we can safely assume their overall cost will be about 25% of this, or about $13,400 per square meter.

Since a sphere of 160km has a surface area of 80.4 trillion square feet, we then calculate your average Death Star to have costed about $1.08 quadrillion dollars in 1977.

Note that with the national debt at $15.6 trillion dollars, using 2012 funds and fair labor practices, we could have build a Death Star 17km in diameter, or about the distance between Cleveland Browns Stadium and Melt in Lakewood. Instead, we just got a bunch of crapy public housing, some lame ships and planes, and a shit ton of government cheese.

When I run for President, I promise to build a Melt-to-CBS sized Death Star, to once again make America the most kick-ass nation on this planet. Lars 2012. Vote early vote often.

Please email questions to lars.hancock@yahoo.com , or DM them to me in the forae to LarsHancock.