

THE LIE-ONIC MAN

I was born in 1968 which makes me pretty old, especially if you calculate it in dog years. In dog years, I'm like, 310 which is roughly Mick Jagger's age in regular people years. I'm sorry, I know. You didn't think there'd be math.

As a side note, my first attempt at the opening sentence of this story had a typo in it, so my autocorrect had rewritten it as "ejaculate it in dog years." I don't know how you ejaculate in dog years. I'm guessing it's defined as one orgasm every seven years. This is also known as "marriage."

Continue.

When I was about ten years old in the fifth grade, I was just starting to figure out that people found me funny. I used humor as a defense mechanism against all the kids who made fun of me because I was fat and lazy. Humor was my only defense against bullies because I could barely walk three feet without getting winded and certainly couldn't afford a flame thrower.

Today if you tell your parents about a bully, they call the police. Back in the 70s if we told our parents about a bully, our dads would spend the next two hours teaching us how to surprise-kick someone in the groin while gouging out their eyeballs with a thumb and a dried stick.

Life lessons were different back then. I know several sterile blind men who can attest to that.

Being chunky, I was on the ass end of bullying quite a lot. My response would be to say something funny about them, subsequently humiliating them in front of everyone as they stood there without retort because bullies are stupid. Their eventual response was to look around blankly, furrow their brow, and then beat the piss out of me later during recess while calling me chunky.

Rinse, repeat.

One of my favorite shows as a kid was "The Six Million Dollar Man." I think everyone is familiar with this, but if you're not, it's basically the story of a guy named Steve Austin who gets mangled up in some kind of rocket crash.

PERHAPS I'VE SAID TOO MUCH

And instead of just, you know, pulling the plug, the government decides to invest six million dollars and give him all kinds of bionic parts.

Back then, everyone was all, "OH MY GOD, can you imagine having six million dollars?" but that's pretty much what Bill Gates made in the time it took you to read that last sentence so SCREW YOU, BILL GATES.



I appreciate your purchase.

I hate rich people. Unless this book makes me one of them. Then I like us.

Steve Austin had all these cool powers like bionic eyes that could see really far, bionic legs that made him run fast, and bionic arms that made him super strong. He was like the bastard child of Barry Bonds and Lance Armstrong. We can only guess if they also made his Mr. Wiggly bionic, and if so, there are probably women out there who could really use some "Get Well" cards.

"They found her labia three states away," said the sheriff.



When Steve Austin reaches climax.

Between schoolyard beatings, I honed my comedy skills. They started to take the form of storytelling - a process that took five years to complete since I could only work on it when my bullies got winded and needed snack breaks. The problem with storytelling is that, well, sometimes the story isn't all that interesting and you must embellish a little bit. Just a little. A teeny tiny bit ...

Kind of like this:

I was in fifth grade when, out of the blue one day, a bolt of Steve Austin inspiration struck me, and I began flexing my index finger like it was hurting. For some reason we had indoor recess, but this is New England and snow or rain or sleet or lava rocks falling from the sky are all acceptable weather patterns here on any given day so this was not abnormal.

Since we had indoor recess, the class was milling around and socializing and stuff while our teacher, Mr. Benjamin, sat at his desk.

"Ahhhh," I said, shaking my finger. "Oooh."

My good friend, Tim, came over.

Tim: "What's wrong with your finger?"

I looked around, holding my hand.

Me: "Okay" – *whispering* – "but you can't tell ANYONE."

Tim: "Okay, okay. I won't."



Billy has a secret.

Right here you can see a potential problem, because you cannot tell a child to **NOT** tell someone something.

However, as a child myself, I did not understand this concept.

If you tell a child to keep a secret, there is a 99.99% probability that said secret will be a headline in the NY Times or the top story on TMZ within an hour and a half.

PERHAPS I'VE SAID TOO MUCH

This percentage goes to a full 100% if the secret involves a birthday present for another child in the same household. You might as well give the present to the kid immediately because by the time you're halfway through saying "Don't tell Jimmy what I got him," Jimmy's already cleared a shelf in his room for it.

I motioned Tim closer and he leaned in.

Me: "I got a bionic finger over the weekend."

Tim backed up and leered at me sideways.

Tim: "WHAT?! Shut up."

Me: "Seriously. I had an accident on Friday night. They took me to the hospital and sewed a new bionic finger on. It still hurts a little."

Tim: "No they didn't."

Me: "Fine. They didn't."

BAM. There was the classic reverse-psychology technique of taking the ball home with you so others can't play. Want someone to believe something even if it's not true? Pretend you don't care if they believe you or not. I'm pretty sure this is how things like the Loch Ness Monster, Bigfoot, and the Tea Party Movement got footholds.

Tim: "Let me see."

Tim leaned in again, and I closed my fist but held out my index finger to show. As a parent, this is known as the "pull my finger" pose.

Now here's the part where I need you, the reader, to stop what you're doing and turn your palm face up. Now extend your fingers. You see RIGHT where the finger attaches to your palm? It's wrinkly with little pattern that looks like "XXXXXXX." You see that? Well ...

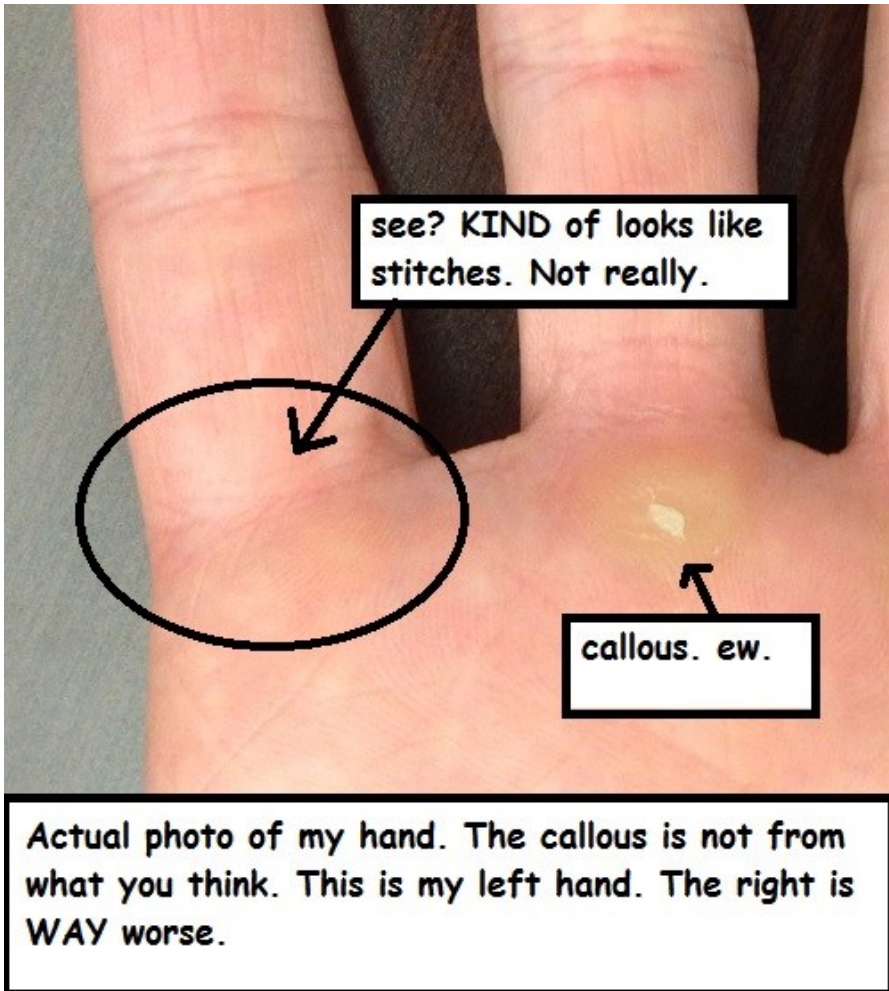
Me: "See? Those are where the stitches were. They attached it RIGHT THERE."

And as I said it, I pointed right to that little XXXXXXXX pattern on the base of my finger.

Tim's eyes widened.

BRAIN NUGGET

MAKING MY KIDS FILET MIGNON TONIGHT, BECAUSE I HAVEN'T SCREAMED AT THEM FOR PUTTING KETCHUP ON SOMETHING IN A WHILE.



Tim: "Oh my God. SHUT UP. REALLY?"

Hook and Line ... meet Sinker.

Me: "Yep. And listen ... if you listen really closely, you can hear the gears and levers moving inside when I bend it."

I don't know why I said that. The entire jig could have been up right there, but for some reason the liar in me just had to keep building it and building it, and well, then I was committed to somehow making Tim hear imaginary gear noises inside my fake bionic finger.

The "snowball effect" of my lies, referenced earlier, was in full bloom here, but instead of a snowball, this was pretty much a full-on deadly avalanche.

I held my finger up to Tim's ear and wiggled it a few times.