

## GETTING IT TOGETHER

### EPIPHANIES FROM MY SCHOOL YEARS

**A**s a young kid, I struggled in school. Hard to believe now, but I was deeply shy back then, and my family moving around the country didn't make it any easier on me. One summer, when my dad got transferred, we moved from our home in Joplin, Missouri, to Charleston, South Carolina, trading one kind of humid heat for another. I spent a muggy season there and my first few days of junior high (school was in a double-wide trailer with a huge floor fan that provided the illusion of cooling) trying to settle into a place where the mosquito is the state bird and the "water-bugs" are big enough to lasso.

Alas, South Carolina was not to be. The minute the moving bill was paid, my dad got transferred again, this time to Upper Arlington, Ohio. As a sensitive, unsure 13-year-old, I was uprooted for the second time in three months, plopped into a fresh set of circumstances, and sent off to figure it out. Those first few months in Upper Arlington were not my favorite. The kids around town all seemed to be in one big clique. If your family hadn't spent their entire lives there, you were an outsider. And I had a thick southern accent, for which I was teased mercilessly.

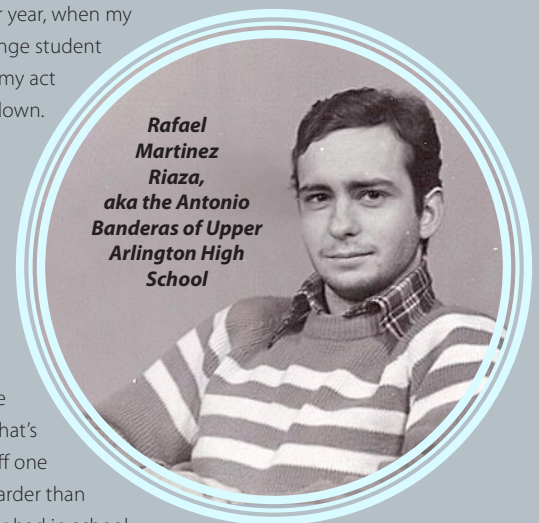
Luckily, over the months, I developed a close-knit gang of good buddies, including Eric Dougherty, the globe-trotting friend I wrote about last April. In our central-Ohio version of "The Goonies," I weathered the storm of early adolescence with my pals, riding our bikes around town, shooting pool in the basement, and swimming at the local pools. As we moved on to high school together, I got involved with the theater program, performing in "The Crucible" and "The Man Who Came to Dinner," among others. I joined the debate team, relishing the opportunity to flex my burgeoning argumentation skills. (Note: You married folks will understand when I say I still can't compete with my wife in this area.) We'd go to tournaments all over the state, arguing over the death penalty or similar topics. But with school, I clearly "wasn't applying myself," as they say. C's and B's were the norm for me, but I wasn't bothered. I occupied myself instead with working after class to earn money and camping and hiking with my crew.

It wasn't until my senior year, when my family hosted an exchange student from Madrid, that I got my act together and buckled down.

Rafael Martinez Riaza became a good friend, and he was a great guy — but even more importantly, he was an excellent student. The youngest of seven, I'd never had someone so close in age to compete with academically. So, that's what we did, ping-pong off one another and working harder than I'm sure either of us ever had in school.

And go figure — I suddenly realized that I was actually good at studying! When it came time to take the ACT, I blew it out of the water, to my own and everyone else's surprise. I got into the honors economics program at Ohio State, and from then on, I dove headlong into every new educational pursuit with gusto. Learning new stuff became (gasp) fun!

It's funny to look back at that shy, 13-year-old kid with a southern drawl and think about where he'd end up decades later. If you told him he'd eventually become an attorney who enjoys talking to new folks every single day, I'm guessing he wouldn't have believed you. I'm glad I broke out of my shell and figured out I could do more than I thought. I think that's a pattern we get to repeat our entire lives. As Andy Dufresne said to Red in "The Shawshank Redemption," "I guess it comes down to a simple choice: Get busy living, or get busy dying."



*-Jim Monast*



# PREPARE YOUR GARDEN

## AUTUMN STEPS FOR A BETTER SPRING GARDEN

With fall just ahead, it's a good time to think about your spring garden.

For a beautiful garden next year, begin preparing this fall. Here are a few ways to get a head start!

**PLANTING BULBS** If you want beautiful flowers in April, you should start planting bulbs now. Many flower bulbs need to be in the ground before winter settles in; this helps activate the bulbs' biochemical process that allows them to bloom. Getting the bulbs into the ground before it freezes allows their roots to grow deep enough to protect them from the biting winter weather. Among the flower bulbs you should plant soon are tulips, daffodils, irises, and hyacinths.

**CHICKEN WIRE** After you've planted your bulbs, there's a risk that uninvited guests will dig them up. There are a few ways you can ensure that your bulbs remain undisturbed throughout the fall. One way is to place chicken wire over your bulbs after they've been planted. This keeps rodents from digging them up and allows the plants to grow through the gaps in the wire.

**KEEP YOUR GARDEN TIDY** Once you've harvested your best fruits and vegetables, go back through and harvest the rest, even if you don't plan to eat them. Make sure your garden is clear of old vegetables, fallen leaves, and weeds. Leaving decaying plants in or on top of the ground can spread diseases into the soil and attract unwanted pests to your garden.

**HEALTHY SOIL** Pulling up weeds and all of your vegetables can help keep the earth free from rotting plants, but there are other steps you can take to ensure that your soil stays full of nutrients. Pick up a kit to test the pH levels of your soil. Most gardens thrive in soil with a pH of 6.5. Add compost to your soil supply now to give it time to break down during the winter months.



## CASE STUDY

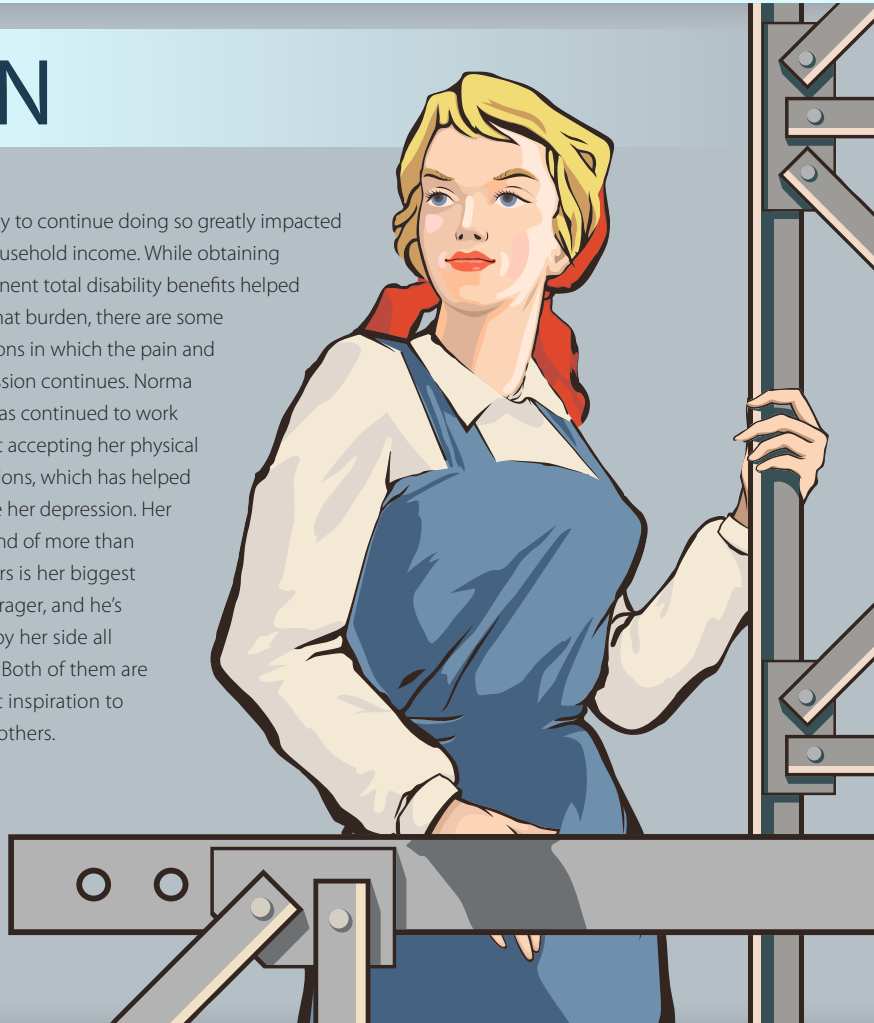
### NORMA JEAN

Norma Jean M., from Springfield, worked her entire adult life for an international business that manufactured fire protection and safety equipment, including automatic sprinklers. Small but feisty at 4-foot-11, she was conducting a product inventory one day. While lifting boxes above her head, she experienced severe pain in her lower back. Her claim was allowed for "acute left medial L5 disc protrusion with posterior and inferior slippage of L5 over S1, causing occlusion at the neurological openings at the L5-S1 junction; sprain and strain with myofasciitis of the lumbar spine and depressive reaction."

Previously an outgoing, cheerful woman, Norma Jean's injuries sent her into an emotional tailspin. She became despondent and thought often about death. Her physical limitations greatly restricted the social interaction she and her husband long enjoyed through work, church, and their friends. She was unable to play with her grandchildren and felt worthless and hopeless.

She took pride in her work (which involved lifting more than 75 pounds frequently), but her

inability to continue doing so greatly impacted the household income. While obtaining permanent total disability benefits helped ease that burden, there are some situations in which the pain and depression continues. Norma Jean has continued to work hard at accepting her physical limitations, which has helped reduce her depression. Her husband of more than 50 years is her biggest encourager, and he's been by her side all along. Both of them are a great inspiration to many others.



# WHEN YOU CAN MANAGE YOUR OWN CLAIM

## AND WHEN YOU SHOULDN'T

While you probably won't hear this suggestion from the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation or your employer, sometimes it's best to hire a lawyer to help with your workers' compensation claim. Your employer will probably discourage you from contacting an attorney with an assurance that you'll be taken care of following a workplace injury. And sometimes, they'll be right. But how can you tell whether you should press on alone or get a lawyer on your side?

As a long-time workers' comp attorney in Ohio, I can tell you there's not much I can do for you in certain situations. If the following are correct, you need not call me:

- **You suffered a minor injury,** with small medical bills and little need for ongoing treatment. In these cases, your workers' comp claim should be straightforward.
- **Your employer agrees the injury happened at work.** If you reported the injury properly and your employer doesn't dispute that the accident and injury happened at work, and agrees with your need for medical treatment, there should be no barriers to receiving rightful compensation.
- **You missed little to no work.**

However, if your medical costs and time off from work are likely to be significant, someone to guide you through the process can be a huge relief. If your claim was denied or isn't being paid promptly, your benefits don't cover all of your medical costs, your injury left you permanently disabled, or your workplace retaliates against you for filing a claim, you will want to get an attorney involved as soon as possible.

It's not always easy to go through a workers' comp claim. Employers, the BWC, TPAs, MCOs, and even coworkers may fail to understand how serious your injuries are and make you feel guilty or accuse you of being a slacker. If you're getting jerked around, you need an attorney who has seen it all when it comes to the antics of the BWC and Ohio employers. Give us a call at 614-334-4649 to ensure you get every penny of coverage you need.



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ANSWER



## ABBY'S APPETIZERS

### INSIDE-OUT GRILLED HAM AND CHEESE

*Want to take your grilled cheese game to the next level? This recipe calls for cheese both inside and outside the sandwich, adding a crispy crunch to the grilled cheese experience. It's a quick, delicious weekday dinner option the whole family will love.*

#### INGREDIENTS

- 8 slices of bread (Pullman works best)
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese (preferably Parmigiano-Reggiano)
- 8 ounces ham, thinly sliced
- 1/2 pound Swiss cheese, sliced
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 1/4 cup apricot preserves

#### DIRECTIONS

1. Butter each slice of bread on the outsides and sprinkle with Parmesan.
2. Layer ham and cheese evenly on top of 4 slices of bread.
3. Spread apricot preserves and mustard across the other 4 slices. Press sandwiches together.
4. In a cast-iron skillet or large sauté pan over medium heat, grill sandwiches until golden, about 3 minutes per side.
5. Cut in half and serve.

*Inspired by Food & Wine magazine*



Phone: 614-334-4649    [www.monastlaw.com](http://www.monastlaw.com)

5000 Arlington Centre Blvd. Bldg 2, Suite 2117  
Upper Arlington, OH 43220-2913

Monday - Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

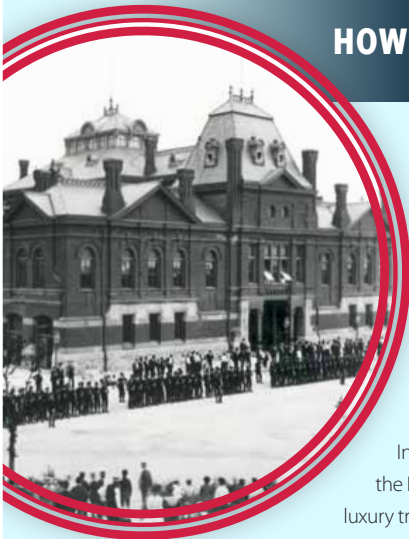
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## HOW A RAILROAD PROTEST LAID THE FOUNDATION FOR A NATIONAL HOLIDAY

### THE PULLMAN STRIKE AND THE ORIGIN OF LABOR DAY



Today, Labor Day mostly means a day off and the closure of public pools. But when it was first created, it was a president's desperate attempt to curb the tension after one of the most violent strike breakups in American history.

In the late 19th century, the workers of the Pullman Company, which manufactured luxury train cars, all lived in a company-owned town. George Pullman, the owner, lived in a mansion overlooking houses, apartments, and crammed-together barracks, all of which were rented by the thousands of workers needed for the operation. For some time, the town operated without a hitch, providing decent wages for the workers while netting the higher-ups millions of dollars.

But after the economic depression of the 1890s brought the country to its knees, everything changed. George Pullman slashed his workers' wages by nearly 30 percent, but he neglected to adjust the rent on the company-owned buildings in turn. As a result, life became untenable in the town, with workers struggling to maintain the barest standards of living for themselves and their families.

In response, the workers began a strike on May 11, 1894. As the event ramped up, it gained the support of the powerful American Railway Union (ARU). But Pullman, stubborn as he was, barely acknowledged the strike was happening, and he refused to meet with the organizers.

The tension increased when Eugene Debs, the president of the American Railway Union, organized a boycott of all trains that included Pullman cars. The strike continued to escalate until workers and Pullman community members managed to stop the trains from running.

Eventually, President Grover Cleveland sent in soldiers to break up the strike. Violence ensued, with soldiers making a great effort to quell the strike at its core. By the time the violence ended, 30 people had lost their lives and an estimated \$80 million in damages had been caused throughout the town.

A few months later, President Grover Cleveland declared Labor Day a federal holiday. Many experts believe that this act was an effort to build rapport among his pro-labor constituents after handling the incident so poorly.

This month, as you fire up the barbecue and enjoy your day off, take a moment to remember the workers who fought for labor rights in our country.