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KANYE WEST'S CONTROVERSIAL SAMPLING

German Artist Sues Over Unauthorized Track Use

Kanye West is no stranger to controversy. Many probably remember the iconic moment at the 2009 MTV Video Music Awards, when the rapper interrupted Taylor Swift's acceptance speech for Best Female Video to claim that Beyoncé deserved the award. West's behavior has only become more erratic and controversial in recent years. This past February, West was dropped by his talent agency after making countless anti-Semitic remarks on social media. His Yeezy website was also shut down after he sold a swastika T-shirt that violated Shopify's terms. Now, the rapper behind "Stronger" and "All of the Lights" faces a new lawsuit.

This past March, German artist Alice Merton and two German corporations filed a lawsuit against West for "unauthorized commercial exploitation" of the musical composition "Blindsight." In 2022, Merton released her track, "Blindsight," which West sampled



without authorization for his track "Gun to My Head." The public first became aware of the sampling in December 2023 when he debuted the song at an event in Miami.

As it became more well-known that West sampled "Blindsight," he and his record label finally approached Merton

to request approval to use the track, but Merton quickly denied the request. When asked for a reason, Merton's legal team stated, "Alice Merton was unwilling to compromise her personal beliefs and wanted not to be associated with [West] in any manner. Of significant concern to plaintiff Merton were defendant [West's] antisemitic, racist remarks, which were made publicly and continue to be made publicly." Merton is a German resident and a descendant of Holocaust survivors.

If you thought West's putatively illegal sampling was bad enough, some of his fans took it to another level. After the song was left off the "Vultures" album, West's fans started sending death threats to Merton. West has done nothing to stop his faithful legions from harassing Merton. The plaintiffs are seeking a jury trial to determine relief and damages.



I THOUGHT I'D NEVER SAY 'I DO' AGAIN

AND THEN I MET ROB

I'm getting married! Those are three words I wasn't sure I'd ever say again — but here we are. By the time you read this, the wedding will have already happened!

After losing my late husband, I found myself on the brink of the one-year mark: 11 months into grieving and quietly asking myself, "Am I really healing?" Everyone says grief has no timeline, and they're absolutely right. But I found myself wrestling with what it meant to "move forward." Was I ready? Was I supposed to be? Did I even know how?

And so, instead of waiting for the healing to finish before reentering life (which, spoiler, it doesn't really work that way), I began dating. Not because I was completely whole again, but because I wanted to feel a little more alive.

To my surprise, dating as a mid-50s widow with five adult children in The Woodlands, Texas, turned out to be a success.



I was honestly stunned at the genuine, wonderful people I met. While many people have horror stories from dating apps, mine were almost all positive. And then, six months in, I met Rob.

We connected over many things, including our shared love of the Astros, and realized we were *both* going to Game 1 of the 2022 World Series. We arranged to meet at the team store. On one hand, I remember thinking, "He's better looking than his profile picture." He, on the other hand, told me later he thought, "She's cute, but she's never going to go out with me."

Well, we did. And we kept going out. Now, over two years later, we're about to tie the knot.

This will be my third wedding and Rob's second, and given the full year of family milestones — graduations, weddings, and a grandbaby on the way — we decided on something private. We'll have a quiet elopement about a week from when I'm writing this.

We've already ordered the ring — a ruby, not a diamond, because why not? And even though everything's booked and the license is ready, we're still talking about whether we'll do a formal proposal. Romantic gestures don't have to follow rules, right?

Before deciding to get married, we tried living together. Originally, the plan was to alternate weeks between our homes. I quickly realized that it was difficult, and I

moved into Rob's place, where everything runs like a perfectly timed machine (his career is in logistics, after all). Meanwhile, I bring energy and chaos, and about 100 projects at once.

At first, I worried we'd drive each other crazy. But instead, I found myself feeling something I hadn't in a long time: settled and supported. I felt increasingly dependent in a way that made me realize I wanted more than a comfortable arrangement. I wanted a commitment.

I told him, "At the end of the day, I feel like we're playing house." I couldn't stand introducing him as my boyfriend or writing "emergency contact: relationship: boyfriend." It just didn't fit. I felt more, and thankfully, he was on the same page.

After the wedding, we'll take a fall honeymoon once life slows down and my daughter's baby arrives. But for now, we're focused on our simple ceremony, making it official, and stepping into this next chapter together.

They say love shows up when you least expect it — and sometimes, it finds you at the team store at Game 1 of the World Series. Who knew?

So, here we are, chaos and calm, together and in love. It feels just right!

-Ruby Bolton

When Serendipity Leads to Innovation

The Unexpected Discoveries of Everyday Items

Looking around your house, you’ll spot countless inventions you couldn’t imagine living without, from your television to the refrigerator. We like to imagine the inventors behind these ideas were intentional with their actions, but that’s not always the case. Sometimes, the latest and greatest discoveries occur by happenstance.

Play-Doh
Before gas and electric heating became commonplace in homes nationwide, many people used coal to stay warm. Unfortunately, this left the walls covered in soot. Kutol Products produced a soft, pliable compound that acted as a wallpaper cleaner to counter this.

As other alternatives gained popularity, Kutol Products saw their sales fall. A Kutol employee’s sister-in-law thought the product would be great for modeling. After testing it with kids, she found they loved molding it into various shapes. Thus, Play-Doh was born, saving a floundering company on the verge of bankruptcy.

The Microwave
In 1945, Percy Spencer, a self-taught engineer, was leading a radar project when he discovered a chocolate bar in his pocket had melted while testing a piece of equipment called a magnetron. Wanting to see if he could reproduce the same results, Spencer placed some popcorn kernels near the equipment. Within seconds, the popcorn popped. He tested it once more with an egg before confirming his findings. Understanding

that the magnetron cooked food quickly, he crafted a metal box around the device, creating the first microwave oven.

Potato Chips
Many Americans eat potato chips daily, but most don’t realize they’re simply an accidental product of spite. In the 1850s, George Crum was a chef at Moon’s Lake House in Saratoga Springs, New York. On one fateful day, shipping and railroad baron Cornelius Vanderbilt stopped in for a bite. He quickly complained that his french fries were too thick and soggy. Crum disagreed with Vanderbilt, but he remade the french fries — slicing the potatoes very thin and frying them until they were crispy and golden brown. Vanderbilt loved the new creation. Potato chips became Moon’s Lake House’s specialty until Crum opened his own restaurant. The rest is history!

CHEW ON THIS

Was Singapore’s Gum Ban the Right Move?

Have you ever walked through a parking lot and stepped on gum, causing your foot to stick to the pavement with every step? Or have you felt somebody’s disgusting, chewed gum on the underside of a table at a restaurant? Experiencing one of these situations is enough to make you wish gum were outlawed. While chewing gum will likely always be legal in the States, there is one country where you’d have difficulty finding a single citizen chewing gum. In 1992, Singapore officially banned the sale, importation, and manufacturing of chewing gum.

To understand the reasoning behind the chewing gum ban, you need to go back to the mid-1960s. Singapore had just gained its independence and was trying to find a way to establish itself on the world stage. Lee Kuan Yew, the country’s first prime minister, designed a plan to make Singapore a “first-world oasis in a third-world region.” The country quickly became known for its cleanliness, but chewing gum remained a problem.

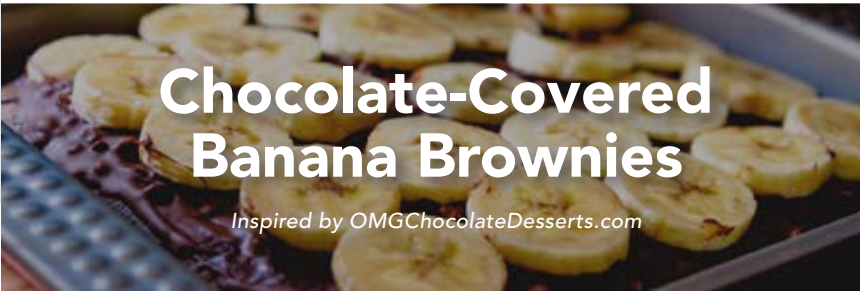
While some argued that chewing gum stuck to the pavement outside a business might mean a new burst of creativity was taking hold, Lee Kuan Yew felt differently. He stated, “Putting chewing gum on our subway train doors so they don’t open, I don’t call that creativity. I call that mischief-making.” He had a good point. The Housing and Development Board reportedly

spent \$150,000 in Singapore dollars each year solely to clean up gum litter. Furthermore, there were countless reports of vandals sticking chewing gum on the door sensors of trains, disrupting their services.

While citizens were divided over the chewing gum ban, it proved effective. In February 1993, there were only two chewing gum litter cases per day, as opposed to the 525 daily cases before the ban. While the ban remains in effect today, Singapore’s government partially lifted it in 2004 to allow dentists and pharmacists to prescribe and sell therapeutic gum such as nicotine gum. Even so, you shouldn’t expect to see many people walking around Singapore chewing gum and blowing bubbles!



TAKE A *BREAK*



Ingredients

- Banana Brownies**

 - 1/2 cup unsalted butter, melted
 - 1/3 cup light brown sugar
 - 1/2 cup sugar
 - 1/4 tsp salt
 - 1 large egg
 - 1 1/2 tsp vanilla
- 1/2 cup mashed banana
 - 1 cup flour

Chocolate Topping

 - 12 oz semi-sweet baking chocolate, chopped
 - 1 cup heavy cream
 - 3/4 cup creamy peanut butter
 - 3–4 large bananas

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 F. Grease an 8x8-inch pan with cooking spray.
2. In a bowl, whisk together melted butter, brown sugar, sugar, and salt. Add egg and vanilla and whisk. Add mashed banana and whisk, then whisk in flour.
3. Pour the batter into the prepared pan and bake for 25 minutes, or until the center has set.
4. Place chopped chocolate in a heatproof bowl.
5. Bring heavy cream to a boil, pour over chocolate, let it sit for 1–2 minutes, then stir until chocolate is completely melted. Stir in peanut butter until smooth.
6. Slice bananas and arrange over cooled brownies.
7. Pour chocolate mixture over bananas and place in the fridge for 15 minutes before serving.



Rivalry, Resolved

Help Your Kids Grow From Foes to Friends

Growing up with a sibling can be a magical experience. You have someone to share your experiences with who will always be there if you need someone to lean on or talk to. However, sibling relationships have their fair share of disagreements, fights, and arguments, which can develop into sibling rivalry. There’s a reason why sibling rivalries are infamous. Most people grow out of it by the time they reach adulthood, but knowing this doesn’t necessarily make things much easier for parents. Trying to navigate the complexities of a sibling rivalry can be overwhelming, especially if you’re juggling other responsibilities.

The truth is that you cannot dismantle a sibling rivalry quickly once it has formed. Getting your kids to see each other from a different perspective will take time and effort. You’ll need to make some adjustments. If you notice your kids are beginning to argue, you can’t rush in and join the fight. Stay calm and collected when intervening to ensure the situation does not escalate.

One of the biggest mistakes parents can make is comparing their children to each other. Teddy Roosevelt once said, “Comparison is the thief of joy.” This becomes even truer when children are involved. Your kids are their own individuals, and they will likely have different goals, passions, and interests from one another. Celebrate their individuality and help them explore their interests. You should also encourage your other children to celebrate their siblings whenever they accomplish something because it creates a much more cooperative environment.

Another important action you should take when involving yourself in a sibling dispute is to listen. You might not witness the events that led to the fight or disagreement, and your main goal is not to figure out which child is to blame or in the wrong. Instead, sit down with them and have them talk through their feelings. Listen intently to everything they say and be completely impartial whenever you need to say something. If you need to respond with punishment, do so privately. You don’t need to make it a spectacle.

Siblings should be friends, not rivals, and you can help them build their relationship through your actions.