

Out Of Bounds, Episode XXXIV: The Price Is Right

Written by {ga=larshancock}

Friday, August 24 2012 7:37 AM - Last Updated Sunday, August 26 2012 8:32 AM



I've got a plan to save over 30,000 lives a year. Guaranteed. 30,000 people that would otherwise die in 2013 will be saved under my plan, and it is foolproof. Is there any reason not to implement it?

The humanitarian inside you should say "no, if you can actually guarantee 30,000 lives be saved, then why shouldn't we implement it?" But the real you is thinking "okay, what's the catch". The catch is that we would need to outlaw driving any sort of motor vehicle in order to achieve these gains. If nobody had a car on the road, nobody dies, and 30,000 lives are spared.

Clearly, that is unacceptable. How inconvenient would it be if I had to walk or ride a bike or take a train everywhere! How much would the economy suffer should we not be allowed to operate motor vehicles! Such a plan is clearly folly, but it points to a truth we may not be ready to admit: every human life has a value that can be expressed in monetary form.

So we must ask ourselves, what actually is the price of a human life?

Some of that price you assign to your own life. If we think strictly in traffic terms, 16 out of every 100,000 drivers die in a year. Assuming you make \$50,000 a year, you (subconsciously) risk the .016 percent chance you die on the road going to and from work against the opportunity to make that \$50K, and therefore essentially value your own life at $\$50K / .016$, or \$3.1 million dollars, maximum, or you logically wouldn't make that tradeoff.

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Yeah, I know, you were told there wouldn't be math in this column. Relax, the painful part is over.

Let's put that in another way. For the \$5M the Indians paid to have Grady Sizemore not play baseball for them this year, two people would have made the decision to die to collect their share of that. Dolan could have paid two people to end it all, literally, instead of figuratively killing the hundreds of thousands of us night after night with an underperforming and apathetic team. And as a society we shouldn't be outraged by this spectacle, in theory, because that's the value we place on our own lives every day. Right?

This brings up an interesting ethical question: when should the government step in to protect lives? Banning all sorts of automotive transportation is obviously too far, but where is the line? Is it smoking? Assault weapons? Abortion? What is an acceptable statistically guaranteed number of deaths, weighed against societal benefits and costs, where the government should trust its constituents to make the proper decisions, or step in and mandate change? Is it more about the likelihood of death, or more about the level of individual responsibility a citizen can take to prevent death? Or is it anything that costs over a certain threshold, like \$3.1M per life, is totally worth it?

In reality the line has nothing to do with economics, despite my logically flawed argument. As men we have the free will to make our own decisions, and should be entrusted with the authority to make them. If we can and should reasonably be able to avoid death, then we should be entrusted with the authority to do such. Conversely, failure to accept the proper responsibility and causing the death of others should be punished appropriately, in order to ensure there is a consequence to your abdication of your responsibility to preserve life. You text and drive, fine, but you text and drive and kill someone, well then your lack of responsibility should cost you dearly – life in prison or worse. You drive 100 mph, fine, as long as nobody got hurt. The government shouldn't be in the business of preventing future crimes, like the extreme version *Minority Report* presented to us. It should be in the business of punishing those responsible for actual crimes, and as a result teaching us to take our responsibilities to preserve the safety of society more seriously. Anything else dangerously infringes on our rights as men, and fosters an abdication of responsibility in the general public.

I know what you're thinking – "Lars got another speeding ticket, didn't he". And well, you're wrong, but the fact I have to drive so slow in Ohio really does piss me off. What could we do with the resources we spend on cops to patrol every five yards of highway, allegedly protecting the street but instead impeding my rights to operate my motor vehicle in a manner I know to be

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safe? But I digress.

So let's apply this to the NFL. As a professional football player, on average you make about \$1.9 million dollars to play football for 3.5 years. Increasingly, we are seeing the long-term effects of such a career: recurring pain, dementia, and even death, effects that are becoming increasingly guaranteed to occur. Should we ban football and stop this?

Mathematically, and morally, the answer is no. You have a choice whether to play football or not, and players choose the risk, freely and in conscious knowledge of the consequence. Assume the average NFL career directly leads to certain death, and you find a professional football player values his life at nearly \$7M dollars, over twice what normal slobs like you and I do. We as a society allow a price to be put on our lives, morally, so why shouldn't we enjoy paying people to take us up on our offer to end their lives prematurely? They choose death willingly and enthusiastically, and the owners give them good value for their life vs. what the free market ascribes to life.

It's capitalism at its finest, so let's sit back, crack a beer, and enjoy the bonecrushing hits. Two weeks from football, and I'm pretty excited about the 11 win season the Browns are about to turn in!

Anyway, off to the questions.

My friend sends me an email with the subject line "Don't shoot the messenger". The email contains a link to a porno in which the girl bears a striking resemblance to my wife. While I know for a fact it's not her, this buddy of mine is convinced beyond a shadow of belief that it is.

My question is twofold:

1. Being that my friend thinks it's my wife in the video, should I keep him away from her as much as possible? After all, the entire time he'd be talking to her he'd be envisioning her performing illicit sexual acts.

2. Is it wrong that I can't bring myself to stop watching this video?

-CAVSTRIBEBROWNSin07!

And you ask this in the forae instead of sending me an email so I can examine the evidence, for purely scientific purposes of course, why?

First of all, it is very wrong your buddy thinks of your wife in that way. There's a line there that is getting crossed to be sure – you think you can't stop watching the video, can you imagine how often he is watching it? Definitely he needs to be kept on a short leash, especially because women have radar for these sort of things. He will chat with her, and while she'll be talking about the Olympics and he'll definitely be thinking of doing a pole vault of his own, and she will know (apparently we guys get this lummoX vacuous drooly stare going when we are thinking of sex). And then the trouble begins.

“CTB07, Timmy gives me the creeps.”

“What do you mean my love?”

“When he talks to me he doesn't talk to me. He just stares lasciviously. Like he's imagining me doing filthy sex acts”

“I, um, don't know what you mean.”

Note at this point, you're caught. Done. As soon as she accuses him of something to you, which she will, she will catch on immediately that you know something. CSI doesn't solve cases as cleanly as neatly as she will decompose you here. She'll grill you and press you and finally you'll admit it, and then you get the “SHOW ME”. And that's where things really go haywire. You'll hem and haw, say you deleted it, all kinds of stuff, and she'll persist and then you'll show her. We break down when our wives cross examine us, we're men, that's what we do. And then you get a “HOW COULD YOU” and she spends the next week or so crying in her room, and she

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treats you were the one that produced the video specifically to hurt and demean her. Oh, and she tells her mother, sister, and all her friends what you did, and you get the scornful look from every woman in town.

This scenario is 100% what will happen. So, yeah, your buddy never comes to your home ever again. Ever.

And as for you watching it, of course you would. What man doesn't want his wife to be more eager in the bedroom – with the video you can click on the fantasy that your wife is ready, willing, and able to perform at all times. Word of warning, however – don't let your mind adopt this stance, or the gap between real wife performance and fantasy wife performance will grow and cause discontent within you. Probably best to delete it now and try to put it all behind you, so you can accept and love your wife for who she actually is.

My cousin-in-law works in a real crime lab as a "forensic expert ", why does he have such disdain for shows as NCIS & CSI ? I thought it was common knowledge most crimes can be solved in an hour.-pod

I love the forensic shows of today, because they portray a bunch of people that have devoted their lives to science as perfectly groomed, sexy, and personable people. Everyone is gorgeous and interesting, yet they all are remarkably brilliant. Finally, someone nailed the stereotype for math and science driven people!

What is ridiculous, on the other hand, is the science itself. Finding a rare hair from a specific Yukon yak species on the body of the victim that would point to a specific porno director that has said animal as a prop carpet doesn't ever happen. Oh, sure the TV science is grounded in fact, like "they use a microscope to look at shit". But after that point it deviates significantly, most notably in probability.

For the most part, when someone dies, they know who did it – it's either the husband or OJ. And usually there is a mountain of completely obvious evidence, not yak hairs but pools of blood inside homes and vehicles and clothing. It's just not all that interesting. The crime lab is essentially told by the cops "OJ killed her" and they run a few basic tests that say "yep", and then they arrest OJ, he pays a lot of money on his defense, and good solid science gets

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debunked because there are cretins in the jury box that still believe in the sort of voodoo good defense attorneys spin to cause “reasonable doubt.” And in the end, whether you go to jail or is a linear function of how much money you have and not how clever you are at identifying the hair on species of yaks.

I’m sure Hollywood could create a spin on my life that made it more glamorous and exciting than playing Angry Birds on long and boring conference calls. Which would be amusing to see but wholly misinform the public about the realities of my existence. There’s a reason I’ve three-starred everything people.

Lars, if you could choose to become formidable in any of the most general forms of self defense (boxing, wrestling and martial arts) which would you choose if you could only choose one? –FUDU

If I could make pro-style wrestling a legitimate form of self-defense and become formidable in that, well, that would be awesome. Imagine a burglar breaks into my home and I dive off the top floor of my balcony and Jimmy Snuka him. I then whack him with a steel chair, and painfully put a figure four leg lock on him what holds him begging for mercy until the cops come. Woooooooooooooo. I get in a bar fight, someone breaks a bottle over the back of my head, but I, as a Pro Rasslin black belt, barely feel it. Instead, I turn around, give him the crazy eyes, and then chop him a few times until I wing him into the ropes, clothesline him, and then legdrop him unconscious. The bouncers evict my assailant, and I stand up, rip off my shirt and flex to the adoring crowd in all my awesomeness.

But that’s not real, unfortunately, so the answer I’d probably give is Brazilian ju jitsu (BJJ). I watched the first couple of Ultimate Fighting Championships and saw the physically unimposing Royce Gracie shred much larger and more menacing opponents quickly and easily by using the techniques in BJJ, and if you master it as an art, you can easily defeat any punk that comes near you and wishes to do you harm. Strike-based martial arts and defense techniques require distance between you and your opponent, and while fighting a striker does pose a threat to you, it is a threat that can be neutralized quickly by reducing the distance, and then he’s done. Just about any disturbance can be ended in under a minute, without taking any sort of punishment on my part. I have a friend that has been trained in it, and he demonstrated a choke hold on me once. He’s about 5’ 5”, 140, I’m 6’ 6” 210, and I was begging for mercy and on my way to night night land with a simply applied choke. BJJ is extremely powerful and designed to win close combat matches, regardless of size, and that makes it the perfect defense technique.

Fall is coming up and kick offs are nigh. It's almost chili con carne time. Advice?

Ps - Can you please not go all fru fru on me & gimme a damn recipe that is accessible and doesn't require some chilli's you can only get on the street from a vendor named Paco del Gato in Bogata or some Antny Bourdain shit?

Ah chili. For some reason, you just can't get good chili outside the home (I'm looking at you, Skyline), yet it remains one of the heartiest, homiest, and most delicious dishes you can eat.

Good chili is like a good woman. She requires time, patience, finesse, and continuously spicing things up. And chocolate makes her happier (I'll get to that later).

The first thing you need is meat. There is only one acceptable form of meat for proper chili, and that's beef. Get yourself about two pounds of stew beef in cubes, salt and pepper it, and brown it in a little oil. Toss in one large yellow onion diced, and stir until the beef is browned on all sides. As you know, this browning is the key to success, producing an array of chemicals that are the exact recipe for deliciousness. Toss in a clove or five of garlic at this point, minced (never want to burn garlic so be sure to add it late in the game), and then add a small can of tomato paste. It is important to cook the tomato paste over the high heat to add a little flavor for a few moments, stirring to coat. Deglace with a nice dark beer – Guinness works, or if you prefer something less roasted and more malty, like a Dogfish 90 minute IPA. But make sure the beer brings flavor to the party. Oh, sorry for the fru fru term – “deglace” means “dump liquid in and stir the yummy bits off the bottom”. Add one large can of diced tomatoes.

Cover the beer soaked beef with water, and add your first round of spicing. Proper chili needs three rounds of spicing to get the flavors deep into the mixture, as they will change over time in the pot. Your basic spices are commercial chili powder (Gebhardts is my favorite), onion powder, garlic powder, cumin, ancho chili powder, chipotle chili powder, and cayenne pepper. Note the traditional generic “chili powder” is a mixture of spices, where the other three are simple ground dried chili peppers. You can absolutely make this recipe with just the chili powder and cumin, but the other spices are there to add nuances you may want. Ancho chili adds a deep earthiness, and a rich red color to the chili, chipotle adds heat and smoke, and cayenne adds fire. So, depending on the flavor you want, add at least two tablespoons of the commercial chili powder, one tablespoon of cumin, and then adjust the texture with the other chili powders for this first spicing. Cover and simmer for an hour, making sure the liquid level covers the chili, stirring occasionally.

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The second spicing is like the first. You should taste the liquid for spice, salt, heat, and flavor – you have to be careful on salt to be sure. Assuming you're good there, add another tablespoon of cumin and chili powder, and whatever of the other peppers you feel it needs, and you can onion or garlic if it tastes like some body is missing. Simmer another hour (stirring occasionally) or so and then add a third spicing, with the same taste-and-spice technique. Let it go for a third hour, stirring occasionally) all the time ensuring the meat is covered with liquid (you can add more beer if you want, or add more beer to the chef, or both).

At this time, you're ready to finish it. Remove the cover and start to stir vigorously. Your meat should be in pretty good shreds at this point, and now it is time to drive off some of that liquid. At this point, you can call it chili, and it will be quite good once you get it to the right texture, or you can play around some more. Beans are acceptable here – I never understood the hate for beans in chili – they are delicious. A can or two of red kidney beans would be nice, or go with garbanzos. And if you're feeling really frisky, add a tablespoon of cocoa powder, or a square of 80%+ chocolate (milk chocolate will ruin the dish, nothing less than 72% chocolate please). It will add a little chocolate flavor which is actually an excellent savory flavor, and a subtle warmth which is quite enjoyable. In any case, cook and stir continuously once you've finished, add final salt if needed, and have at it. Serve with cheddar, or sour cream, or fresh green onions, whatever else you want.

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