

My Bad Day

I'm taking yet another diversion from writing about my great weekend to write about a bad day I had today – I need to vent. And yes, it involves Walmart – when *don't* my bad days involve Walmart?!? First, my husband's business clients blew him off, yet again. We were on the verge of a big business deal, but now the clients are stalling and becoming difficult to get ahold of – not a good sign. So I took the kids to Walmart to get them out of the house so my husband could have some peace when he called the clients – not that it mattered; they “weren't home”. Sigh. So anyway, at Walmart, I discovered that they finally did it – raised the prices on diapers. I knew it was just a matter of time; the diapers have been the same price since my almost 5-year-old was a baby. So after absorbing the reality of the price increase on diapers (I have two kids in diapers! Time to rush the potty training, I guess.), I go to check out, and I'm next in line, ready to put my stuff on the counter, and an employee says “I can help you on lane 6”. So I went over to lane 6, but it turns out, the employee was wrong. They wanted her to take over on lane 5 instead of **open** lane 6. So I went back to lane 5, right where I had started, and now someone has gotten in the line with a SUPER-full cart in front of me. Of course. And I had hungry kids who now had to wait in a line with all that candy at eye level. Have I mentioned that I hate Walmart?

Then I get home and starting making dinner, and I have a crying baby underfoot – I don't know why he *always* cries at home. He's the happiest little guy everywhere else, but when we're at home, he only wants to be held, and I can't hold him while I'm cooking, doing laundry, cleaning or blogging, so... he cries a lot. I guess I can get rid of most of the toys that are starting to take over my living room since no one plays with them! And all day I've been looking forward to a

nice hot relaxing shower, so after dinner, I went to do just that. But apparently running the dishwasher, giving the kids a bath and hand-washing a dinner pot drained the (new!) hot water heater, and my shower was lukewarm with a cold rinse at the end. Of course it was. I can only hope that my day turns around when the Cubs begin their season-opening game tonight – I've been looking forward to this for months, so hopefully my bad day wasn't a precursor to the tone of tonight's game. To quote Tom Hanks from A League of Their Own: "May our feet be swift, may our bats be mighty, may our balls be plentiful..."
GO CUBS!

Earlier this morning, we ruined our chances of sleeping in (since our oldest daughter is on spring break) by signing up to bring a pet to my second-oldest daughter's school – we forgot about spring break when we signed up for pet day for first thing in the morning, oops – so adding to everything is the fact that I'm tired today also. We let our little ones play at my daughter's preschool; they had a blast, and we had fun watching them. My husband read a book to the kids, and we brought the rats for pet day – and it was SO fun to see certain teachers pale and shriek with fright – hehe!

So I guess the day wasn't all bad; it was just Walmart getting under my skin, AGAIN. Oh, and get this – I saw the store manager (I'll call him Mr. Palindrome, since his last name reads the same backward and forward) park in one of the handicapped spots right in front of the store. To be fair, he does have a handicapped tag, but I know from my sources that the handicapped tag is not for him but rather his elderly mother whom he cares for. But I still think he should only be able to park in the handicapped spots when she is with him, and I definitely don't think he should take those spots away from his customers when he is perfectly able-bodied. Well, just my opinion, the guy irritates me because of all his dirty price games he plays at the Walmart and the small businesses the store pushes out of the way. Not that it's a small

business, but Kmart is the latest victim of Walmart in our town – it's closing for good in May. What a shame – and to think the Kmart in our town was opened as the test store to see if Kmart would work in small town America. The test was successful, but that was decades ago, and times have changed – just like Walmart's prices!

UPDATE – The Cubs are on, and they're winning – YAY! Soriano opened the game with a home run **on the first pitch of the game!** How cool is that? But, for some reason, the game is not on ESPN 2 like tvguide.com said. My husband bought me mlb.com, but that seems to be broken at the moment – they're showing video during the commercials and nothing during game play. Not only that, my husband's clients have called (but I guess that's a good thing), leaving me with the two little ones at their crabbiest time of day. So I have 2 screamers and no Cubs game. At least they are winning (I think). When I put the little ones to bed here pretty soon, I'm tempted to join them just so I can start over tomorrow – every attempt I make at relaxing tonight has just made things worse!

Country's Biggest Night!

After my extremely busy weekend (more about that in my next post!), I'm just not up to the task of doing a live blog about the Academy of Country Music Awards like I did last year. I had a lot of fun doing it at that time, but this year we were lucky enough to share our awards experience with friends at our house, and I want to be a good host (well, as good as I can be with both eyes and ears on the awards show!). It's bad enough that I had to practically kick out people who were here for our voluntary monthly organizational meetings so I could watch the awards show when it started at 8 – hehe. I was

accused of “chomping at the bit”, to get to the awards show – but then again, I did sacrifice and miss the entire red carpet coverage... so I guess a point was made – I WAS chomping at the bit, so to speak!

Watch the show we did, and it was great – although I didn’t win the tally for the most awards guessed ahead of time. My picks for winners of the most popular categories are following in **blue** with the winners in **bold** (the ones I got right are in **bold blue** and my commentary is in *italics*. I’ll let you know how our guests and I did at the end:

Entertainer of the Year

- **Kenny Chesney**
- Brad Paisley
- George Strait
- **Carrie Underwood**
- Keith Urban

Big shocker here, for real. Kenny has won this one for the past 4 years straight, so you can’t blame me for voting the way I did – SHOCKER he didn’t win tonight!

Top Male Vocalist

- Kenny Chesney
- Toby Keith
- **Brad Paisley**
- George Strait
- Keith Urban

Top Female Vocalist

- Miranda Lambert
- Heidi Newfield
- Taylor Swift
- **Carrie Underwood**
- Lee Ann Womack

Top Vocal Group

- Lady Antebellum

- Little Big Town
- **Rascal Flatts**
- Randy Rogers Band
- The Lost Trailers

A given – Rascal Flatts has a ton of talent and are one of my favorite bands!

Top Vocal Duo

- Big & Rich
- Brooks & Dunn
- Joey + Rory
- Montgomery Gentry
- **Sugarland**

Album of the Year

- Carnival Ride – Carrie Underwood
- Back When I Knew It All – Montgomery Gentry
- **Fearless – Taylor Swift**
- That Lonesome Song – Jamey Johnson
- Troubadour – George Strait

So there you have it. I didn't do so well, compared to past my past performances guessing on country music awards shows – I got 4/10 correct. But we had a great time watching... some highlights include Trace Adkins' performance with the West Point Glee Club, very moving, especially because the performance was introduced by a young veteran in a wheelchair. Another highlight, Carrie Underwood's humongous dress during her resurrection of Randy Travis' "I Told You So". (notice they didn't show her getting on or off stage in that dress – think she was "snapped" into it? That thing was HUGE!!!)... But I guess I'm a country fan-child of the 80's and 90's, sigh. The awards shows during that time period were so much more exciting to me because of the awesome music that was performed, unlike tonight. Just another sign that I'm getting old, I guess, since I much preferred our friends' conversation tonight to the live performances... just nothing special on the

modern country artists' part, I guess...

But congrats to those who won, and it was a great show to watch and predict, even if I didn't do so well. Until the CMA's in the fall – maybe I will do a LIVE broadcast for that one – we'll see!

Wagon 0' Cuties

With the return of warmer weather comes the return of our locally famous wagon o' cuties:

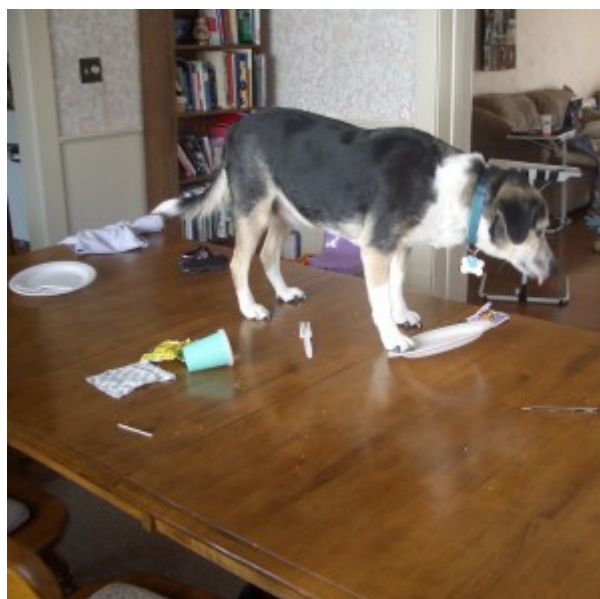


Except what's that in the wagon, a little red elf? Now I might be biased here, but that is the cutest elf I've ever seen! This is the first time I put that little sweatshirt on my son. I wish I had found it in time for Christmas last year – I don't think it'll still fit him by December for next Christmas. And it seems the kids are starting to overflow the wagon... Might be time to make our oldest walk or ride her bike...

My Dog Is Not A Cat

... but she thinks she is! We used to have a cat, but she passed away last year. We got our dog as a puppy just 4 months after we got the cat as a kitten, and they lived together for 10 years, so it's no wonder my dog thinks she's a cat. Despite her old age, she will jump on the furniture, and even walk on the top of the couch – very cat-like behavior. She is also more independent like a cat, and she'll only come when called to snuggle if she wants to, like a cat.

The other day, she decided she was done waiting for the kids to eat their lunch. We had left it out because the kids hadn't eaten well, and we thought they could come back later and have a bite – WRONG! Our dog Charity (the cat in disguise) took it upon herself to climb **UP ON** the dining room table and get their lunches. She is our spoiled rotten baby; what were we going to do, yell at the old lady? So we took a picture instead, note how she uses her feet to tip up the plates and hold them in place so they don't slide away while she's licking:



And Charity has such a personality; she hates being laughed

at, so I think she learned her lesson. Besides, once the motivation to get the food was gone (eaten), she was stuck up on the table. We wrestled with the decision to help her down; she is 11 years old and I didn't want her breaking bones or worse, but in the end she got herself down successfully. First she kind of growled and grunted around up there while we giggled at her from the living room, then she used her new vantage point as a barking stool, but just as I got sick of it and went to help her down, she got down herself. She is such a jerk but what a personality that dog has... We love you Charity!

And now you need to see how cute she really is, one blue eye and all. So here is one of my favorite pictures of her in a Chicago Cubs shirt – opening day is on Monday, so GO CUBBIES!!!



April Fool's!

As many of you may have found out the hard way, today is April Fool's Day. Thankfully, I was the victim of only two pranks, and one I kind of figured out... But the other one came out of left field and went something like this: my 9-year-old

daughter comes up to me and says, “Mom, Christopher (her 8-month-old brother) is bleeding!” She said it nonchalantly, but come on, something like that would just strike an instinctual panic button in any parent! So I dropped what I was doing and ran into the living room, and she let me off the hook – April Fool’s!

Obviously this type of prank is not cool, and my daughter and I had a little chat about the inappropriateness of jokes involving injury (I did tell her it was a good one though, since she didn’t know anything about prank etiquette when she thought of it).

But for future reference, I don’t make a very good prank victim anyway. I tend to be gullible in the first place, so I’m easy to get. And when I’m not being gullible, I’m cynical, so I might be paranoid I’m getting “got” or at least lied to. And most importantly, if you do get me, depending on the severity of the prank, I might get mad at you – I guess I don’t like to be fooled... So consider this your warning, and catch me on April Fool’s Day next year – at your own risk!

Dog Toys, Wires, and Tablecloths, Oh My!

My son is crawling – uh, oh. I don’t remember what his 3 sisters got into when they started to crawl, besides trouble, but my son’s favorite things seem to be dog toys (and the dogs’ food and water bowls, what a mess!), tablecloths (which he yanks on – I’m going to have to remove the one in the living room before he yanks it and pulls the heavy computer right down on his head!), and wires (I don’t think I need to

explain why he shouldn't be pulling and chewing on wires. If I do, let's hope you don't have any kids of your own). He smiles so sweetly when we say no-no; I think he likes the attention. A more stern NO just makes him grin widely and start waving at us. So how do you discipline someone so incredibly cute? I can't help but smile back when he grins – he's so cute with his little toothies sticking out from his bottom gums. Could **you** say no to this face?



The Haunting In Connecticut

We saw [The Haunting in Connecticut](#) at the movie theater for date night (after refusing pizza from “Carlos Zambrano” at the mall pizza shop – seriously, the guy looks just like the famously hot-headed Chicago Cubs pitcher!) and the movie made for a pretty good ghost story. I had heard it was based upon a true story, but after seeing it, here is my guess on what about the movie is true: a teenage boy has cancer, his family rents a house (a former mortuary) near the hospital where he is receiving treatments, and they had strange happenings while staying there; probably due to stress or lack of sleep or even just plain exaggerations but not hauntings, is my guess. This is the basic plot of the movie, but I left out many events

that could not have possibly happened in real life and would also be considered spoilers, so I will not go into details. I will say that the movie opens with all kinds of vintage photographs of deceased people – I know this because of my friend who attended a lecture on the subject. I had wanted to go with her, but we found out about it last minute and I reluctantly had to pass. But my friend went and came back with all kinds of interesting info which is how I knew what the pictures were that opened the movie. For instance, many people back then (the movie takes place in the 80's, but the pictures were from the early 1900's) didn't have their photograph taken often, so when a loved one passed away, they would get their family portrait taken *with the deceased* – better late than never, I guess? Not only that, sometimes they would pose as if the person was still alive – kind of morbid by our standards today, but then again, things are very different and taking pictures is so much more common; it's difficult to imagine past attitudes about this.

But *The Haunting in Connecticut* is a very entertaining, edge-of-your seat nailbiter with plenty of startles. To its credit, it's scary and creepy without the gore. Worth checking out, if you like that sort of thing, but not one of my favorites – it did give me some ideas for a haunted house though... Now if I can just remember them until 2010 when we actually have the time to DO the haunted house...

Monsters VS Aliens

We took the kids to see the Pixar movie [Monsters VS Aliens](#) last Sunday after church. The good news is, we didn't end up with any nude children running around the theater (see a previous post of mine; I forget which one, but I think this

happened more than once so take your pick – we haven't been to the movies in months, and now you know why!). The bad news is that I didn't think this movie lived up to the hype. But I couldn't be sure; I didn't get to see much of it. It seemed to me like they showed all the funny parts in the previews, but then again, once you read what I was doing instead of watching the movie, you'll see why I could be wrong...

Our family now takes up an entire row at the movie theater. Our oldest started pouting because she was stuck on the inside and complained that she couldn't see. To her credit, she got over it right away and ended up being the one kid of the four who actually stayed awake for the entire movie. The movie was about to start, and I felt something pelt my back – HARD. I turned to my husband and said, "I think someone just threw something at me, intentionally because it was hard and it hurt!". He said, "It probably was intentional – turn around and see who it is!" Duh – why didn't I think of that? I'm not the type to want to draw attention, so I figured it was some poor kid who was going to get in trouble if I turned around or something... so I turned around and saw some game-nighters grinning at us. "Good thing you finally turned around, " they said, "we were almost out of Junior Mints!" Haha – that was funny, and I learned my lesson, if you get pelted in the back at the movie theater, you should turn around to see who would actually throw candy at the movie theater – you might be surprised to find out it's NOT kids!

The lights dimmed, the previews came on, and my son dirtied his diaper. By the time I got back from changing him, I had already missed a preview – my husband and I love the previews. Oh well, better than missing the movie, I thought... little did I know we would be missing that too. So my son, who is 8 months old and just starting to crawl, didn't want to sit still for a movie. He was happy munching on things, but he was pretty rambunctious when I was holding him. So I spent most of the movie trying to calm him down and keep him busy.

My 2-year-old daughter, who is usually the problem (and the nudist) at the movies, actually fell asleep. My husband went to put her in her seat to sleep so we could enjoy the movie, and there was a horrible gushing sound followed by gasps from the people behind us. Apparently, my husband's pop had gotten knocked over, and wouldn't you know it, it was almost full and of course it poured directly into the lady's purse who was sitting behind us. OOPS! How can you possibly apologize for something like that, especially while trying to be quiet so others can watch the movie? All the commotion of course woke up my daughter, so now we had her to deal with again. Not more than 20 minutes later, my son made a lightening-fast grab for my drink, and I didn't catch him in time, so SPLOSH – another one bites the dust. At least this time it was in MY diaper bag and not the woman's behind me again – that would have been lawsuit-worthy! But now we were drinkless, had 2 rambunctious kids, and were only about halfway through the movie!

Well, we made it through, my 2 youngest daughters fell asleep before the movie was over, and my son was out about 10 minutes before it ended – he waited long enough to keep me from seeing the movie, and long enough to wake up when we left and screw up his nap cycle. But I guess I learned yet again that my kids are too little to go to the movies – at least all 4 at one time. And the lady behind us didn't say anything when she left, thank goodness. But I wouldn't take my word for it that Monsters VS Aliens isn't anything special – I didn't see most of it!

New York Trip Diary Volume 6 – The World Trade Center Chapter

NEW YORK TRIP – MARCH 20-23, 2009 – TAYLOR: 9 yrs, SAMMIE: 4 yrs, DISNEY: 2½ yrs, CHRISTOPHER: 8 mos

(continued from previous posts)

Sunday, March 22 – I already blogged about this day, but I had skipped the part about us visiting the World Trade Center site (aka Ground Zero) because it just didn't seem to belong in a happy family's trip diary. So consider this your warning; the following post will be emotionally heavy!

On the way there, I was just in visitor mode – on a mission to just get there. I didn't really stop to think about how emotional and how gut-wrenching the experience would be. I'm very glad we went, but man, was it emotionally taxing, to say the least. The site itself is a pit in the earth – not even a hole, they're already begun building new buildings, so really it just looks like a construction site, though if you look carefully, you can see that one piece of equipment has a hook painted like an American flag (click on the pic to make it bigger – actually I don't know that you can see the flag-painted hook in this one, sorry!):



There are fences all around, and it's difficult to even see past them until you go into the World Financial Center and look out a window and down into the site (click on any of my pics to make them bigger):



On the way to the site, we passed (yet another) street vendor, and this time, they were selling commemorative books about the 9/11 terrorist attacks. We flipped through the books, and they actually seemed interesting, so we bit and we bought. Those ended up being a great purchase though, because they contain some pictures of the catastrophe that I haven't even seen on the internet. One of the pictures in the books is of a cemetery located only a block or two from Ground Zero. The picture was taken on September 11, 2001, and the cemetery is covered in an inches-thick layer of ash and debris. We passed that same cemetery on our way to Ground Zero, and it was eerie to see what it looked like on that day. Across the street from Ground Zero, there is a statue of a business man with a briefcase; I guess it's supposed to symbolize the "every man" quality of the victims, I don't know, but there it was and here it is:



Also across the street from the site is a fire station, Ladder 10, which was heavily damaged by the attacks and collapsing skyscrapers – it actually served as a rest station for many wounded firefighters that fateful day, I later found out. The station has a memorial on the side, but we (regretfully) didn't stop long enough to take a picture. But the garage was open, and there was a firefighter who was more than happy to let our kids climb up on the fire engine, and he graciously posed with a picture of them – what a great guy! I wonder if he was with Ladder 10 during 2001 and how many of his friends were lost?



And then there was the museum. I was worried the kids would be bored, but they said it would only take 30-45 minutes to get through, and I can't be happier we went. First of all, the kids were not bored in the slightest. They enjoyed looking at the memorabilia: the damaged items, the kids drawings of support, and even the wall of "Missing" posters

that victims' loved ones had posted after the attacks. I figured September 11, 2001 is a day my kids should learn about, so why not start now? We did spare a few details, though, like the one about how people were responsible for all of it. If they had asked, I wouldn't have lied, but we just told them that planes crashed into the buildings. After we were almost through the museum, our almost 5-year-old asked me a question I'll never forget. She said, "Mom, can God put people back together?" I hugged her and explained that sometimes people get to go live with God, and that was good enough for her at that moment.

At least one thing I found cool about the museum is that they had a section about what Muslim-Americans went through after 9/11: the discrimination, the victimization, and the violence.

One thing I somehow didn't get a picture of from the museum was some silverware from the restaurant at the top of one of the towers – the spoon had a hole burned directly through it.

Here are some pictures of other things they had in the museum:



Above is a picture of an airplane window from one of the planes that hit the twin towers. Below is a picture of what was once an elevator plate labeling a floor in the Trade Center:



And below is a picture of some items that they found in the debris pile, a stuffed lamb they used to sell in the Trade Center – searchers who found him said “If he could be spared, why couldn’t the people?” Also pictured are someone’s car keys, IDs, and most eerie, a brochure from a meeting being held in the “Windows on the World” restaurant in the top of the building – note the dates say September 9-11, 2001. The thing on the right is just a melted mass of metal, concrete, and whatever else:



If you’re going to New York, I highly recommend visiting the Ground Zero museum. I don’t know the exact name of it, but it’s on Liberty Street across from Ground Zero. Bring tissues, but if you forget, they have some on the walls, and I was grateful for that. It was a very emotional experience, but I was fine until I saw a letter in a child’s scrawl dated 4/2000, before the attacks. The letter began, “My hero is my

daddy because he is a fireman..." The letter was written by a kid who lost his dad on 9/11, and that's when I lost it.

I can't imagine what those people went through, especially after seeing what happened to some of the objects that were once a part of the World Trade Center. A very humbling experience; one I will never forget...

God Bless the victims of the terror attacks of September 11, 2001 and their families left behind...

Some Things I Should Clear Up...

Whenever I take a road trip, I find myself wondering about random things. Since I don't have access to the internet while I'm on vacation to look up these random things, I make a list to look up when I return home. Here is some of my look-up list from the trip to New York we just took:

– Are there bears in Pennsylvania? YES! I was wondering this as we were driving through their beautiful wooded hills, but I was still surprised to learn that there are black bears (who aren't always black) in PA. In fact, bears can be found in 50 of PA's 67 counties!

– Where did the airplane land in the Hudson River a few months ago? As I was looking at the Hudson from our hotel room, I was wondering if we were viewing the very spot (or crossing it on the ferry) where the plane landed. I found that it was just north of where we were. We probably would have seen it happen from our room; definitely from the boardwalk behind the hotel, and definitely if we had been on the ferry.

– What was that story about the chicken who lived for many years without his head? I don't know how this one came up in conversation, but it did, so here are the details as printed in wikipedia.com: *On Monday, September 10, 1945 at 6:45AM PST, farmer Lloyd Olsen of Fruita, Colorado, had his mother-in-law around for supper and was sent out to the yard by his wife to bring back a chicken. Olsen failed to completely decapitate the five-and-a-half month old bird named Mike. The axe missed the jugular vein, leaving one ear and most of the brain stem intact. On the first night after the decapitation Mike slept with his severed head under his wing. Despite Olsen's botched handiwork, Mike was still able to balance on a perch and walk clumsily; he even attempted to preen and crow, although he could do neither. After the bird did not die, a surprised Mr. Olsen decided to continue to care permanently for Mike, feeding him a mixture of milk and water via an eyedropper; he was also fed small grains of corn. Mike occasionally choked on his own mucus, which the Olsen family would clear using a syringe. When used to his new and unusual center of mass, Mike could easily get himself to the highest perches without falling. His crowing, though, was less impressive and consisted of a gurgling sound made in his throat, leaving him unable to crow at dawn. Mike also spent his time preening and attempting to peck for food with his neck. Being headless did not keep Mike from putting on weight; at the time of his partial beheading he weighed two and a half pounds, but at the time of his death this had increased to nearly eight pounds. In March 1947, at a motel in Phoenix on a stopover while traveling back home from tour, Mike started choking in the middle of the night. As the Olsens had inadvertently left their feeding and cleaning syringes at the sideshow the day before, they were unable to save Mike. Lloyd Olsen claimed that he had sold the bird off, resulting in stories of Mike still touring the country as late as 1949. Post mortem, it was determined that the axe blade had missed the carotid artery and a clot had prevented Mike from bleeding to death. Although most of his head was severed, most of his*

brain stem and one ear was left on his body. Since basic functions (breathing, heart-rate, etc) as well as most of a chicken's reflex actions are controlled by the brain stem, Mike was able to remain quite healthy. Other sources, including the Guinness Book of World Records, say that the chicken's severed esophagus passage could not take in enough air properly to be able to breathe; and therefore choked to death in the motel. So Mike the headless chicken lived for about 18 months without a head.

– Kent State Massacre – We saw lots of signs for Kent State on the trip, and we decided there must be a few campuses. We were wondering where the massacre happened, what year, how many people were killed, and what happened to the murderer. Kent State happened in Kent, Ohio (a little bit outside of Cleveland and Akron – so that was the same Kent State University we saw signs for). 4 students were killed and 9 wounded, some paralyzed for life. But what makes this massacre significant is that the students were shot by the Ohio National Guard – not a lone gunman gone crazy. The 3 adults in the car decided that if Kent State would have happened in more recent times, it would not be nearly as historically significant because sadly, there are many more of these types of massacres nowadays. However, I don't think any of us realized that it was the National Guard doing the shooting – which I should have; I remember studying this in Sociology class, but apparently the knowledge didn't stick...

– Murder in Small Town X – Do you remember this reality show? It was basically like a reality show of a murder mystery; there were actors, witnesses and victims. I thought it sounded cool, but I didn't watch it when it aired even though I wanted to. I was in the middle of moving out of the state I grew up in for the first time and busy with my first 2-year-old. The show was cancelled, but what was significant about it was this: The final episode aired on September 4, 2001 – exactly one week before the infamous terrorist attack on the US

– 9/11. And the last contestant standing, the guy who won the jeep and the \$250,000 prize, Angel Juarbe, was a firefighter from New York who perished in the attacks one week after the final episode of the show aired.

– What the heck does “poppy” mean? In a bizarre episode I forgot to put in my trip diary, my husband pulled up to a full serve gas pump in New Jersey without realizing it. The attendant came out and tried to take the nozzle away from my husband, who said, “I already swiped my card.” – he had no idea what this guy was doing since he didn’t know he was in full serve. The attendant snapped, “Stop asking so many questions!” and proceeded to pump the gas and kept calling my bewildered (and very tired) husband “poppy” and “boss”. As we pulled away from the gas station, we noticed we had in fact been in the full serve area, but that still didn’t clear up the mystery of all the alleged questions my husband asked and what the heck poppy means. I remembered an episode of Cops I had seen where a perp kept calling the cop “poppy”, and the cop was getting extremely irritated. “Stop calling me Poppy!”, he said, to which the perp replied, “I’m sorry poppy” and it kept going on and on like that until the cop finally charged the guy with something and hauled him off to jail, probably because they guy really just couldn’t help himself from saying “Poppy”. So what does it mean? When I looked it up, all I found was stuff about flowers and something about a nickname for a grandpa (sorry Hon!). But I tried changing the spelling, because it seemed like the guy was speaking spanish, so I tried to spell it in Spanish, and I came up with Papi. When I looked that up, I was scared about the results – it was one of those wiki-answers places, so here is a direct quote: *“To me, papi means: Daddy, Baby, My Love...you say it to the boyfriends, husbands, and sons...if you are in a committed relationship. If you are single, then to a man you have an interest in getting to know alot better.”* Giggling, I read this quote to my husband, and his eyes got really wide and he insisted that I do further research on the

subject. I don't have a lot of time on my hands for this kind of stuff, so I found the fact that different cultures have different meaning for Hispanic terms, and apparently it's common for Dominicans to call other males "papi". But it seemed to be condescending when the attendant was saying it, and I'm not sure I even have the correct spelling of papi. Anyone want to offer any help on this? Any spanish-speakers out there? Mary, you love a good mystery, I hear ☐

Well, anyway, that's about everything on the list, or all I have time to put into a blog post, anyway. I hope you learned something, least of all the randomness 3 adults talk about on a very long road trip when the kids are asleep! Some day, I will probably have internet right there in the car with me to look up these things. In fact, I will probably be *blogging* on the road trip – let's just hope I'm not the one driving!