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THE SHOCKING TRUTH BEHIND SHERRI'S KIDNAPPING REVEALED

Sherri Papini vanished out of thin air in November 2016. The day she went missing, her husband, Keith Papini, came home expecting to see his wife and kids but found the residence eerily empty. Keith called the children's day care to ask when his wife picked them up, but they informed him she never did. While the kids were safe, Sherri was missing.

Three weeks passed before Sherri was finally found alone on a freeway nearly 146 miles from her home on Thanksgiving Day. She was cut and bruised, her long hair chopped short, and her back branded with a Bible verse.

When the police questioned Sherri, she was hesitant and frightened. She claimed two Hispanic women abducted her, took her to an unknown location, chained her up, and tortured her before planning to traffic her. The story horrified

the community and made many Hispanic women fear wrongful persecution.

At the time, male DNA was found on Sherri's clothing, despite her insistence no men were involved in her kidnapping. Years later, in 2020, the authorities used genetic DNA technology to track down the man, Sherri's ex-boyfriend, James Reyes. This was when Sherri's tale began to fall apart. Reyes was questioned by police, who exposed the truth about Sherri's vanishing act.

He revealed that Sherri told him her husband, Keith, was abusing her, and she needed his help to escape. She convinced him to brand her, but all her other injuries were self-inflicted. Reyes had no idea about Sherri's fabricated story involving two Hispanic kidnapers. At first, Sherri stuck with her story when questioned again but eventually admitted it was all a hoax.

In 2023, Sherri Papini was charged with false statements and mail fraud and sentenced to 18 months in prison for her long-winded lies that wasted police resources and federal financial assistance. Her story resulted in numerous innocent Hispanic women being wrongly questioned by authorities. But now, these women can rest easy knowing the case is finally closed.



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OCT.
2023

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LP Perspectives

THE RADIUM GIRLS: *A Jersey Workers' Compensation Story*

In 1902, Marie and Pierre Curie discovered radioactivity, named for the new element they discovered, which they called radium. The illuminous material created from radium was thought to contain miraculous health benefits. While it was used to kill cancerous cells, no consideration was given to the possibility that it could also damage healthy cells.

Similar to cigarettes, the medical community was quick to buy into promotional materials touting the supposed life-giving properties of radioactivity, without engaging in any longitudinal studies. The belief that radium was healthy became so pervasive that traces of the element were added to food, makeup, lotion, dishware, and countless other products.

Because it glowed, radium was also utilized to paint the hands and numbers on watch dials and equipment. The military found a use for these products during World War I to enable soldiers to see their instruments after dark. Because of the war, business boomed for the United States Radium Company (USRC)

The USRC's main plant was in Orange, New Jersey, where it lured young women with high salaries to work at the plant as "dial painters." Jobs at the plant were considered glamorous, as the clothing and skin of workers literally glowed with radium even after they left the factory. Many of the employees started as mere teenagers, who were thrilled to bring home sizable incomes to support their poor families. Dial painters were instructed on how to paint thin lines on watches by dipping their brushes into the radium paint and then smoothing it with their lips before painting.

By the 1920s, many of the dial painters started falling ill. Some employees experienced pain in their teeth and jaw; others had pain in their joints and back. The teeth of young women in their 20s were falling out, with their jaws literally crumbling in the hands of dentists who were dumbfounded at the odd symptoms.

When employees confronted the USRC with their suspicion that their occupations were contributing to their illness, they were derided as being frauds or ridiculous for questioning the "experts" who touted the health benefits of radium. The first woman to die was Mollie Magia, at age 24. Not only did she suffer an

excruciatingly painful death, but Mollie's reputation was dragged through the mud when she received a false positive test for the sexual disease of syphilis, which was believed to explain her death. It was only when one of the male lab technicians passed away that the NJ Department of Labor gave serious consideration to the possibility that radium could be the culprit.

"The Radium Girls," as they became known, struggled to pay mounting medical bills and could not afford to pay an attorney to prove that their illness was related to their employment. Initially, no attorney would consider filing a claim for these employees since, at the time, the NJ Workers' Compensation Act only permitted recovery for occupational exposure to a few, specific substances, which did not include radium. Five of the girls finally retained an attorney to bring a common law claim against the USRC, which eventually settled the case due to negative publicity.

Each woman received only \$10,000. All of the plaintiffs died within five years of the settlement. Check out the book and movie, "The Radium Girls," which details their plight.

These brave young women paved the way for amendments to occupational safety and workers' compensation laws to provide greater protection for employees exposed to dangerous products during the course of their employment. However, even today, occupational exposure claims are extraordinarily difficult to prove. Employees who are diagnosed with unrecognized diseases or those which could be attributed to multiple causes (i.e., chemical workers whose cancer is blamed on smoking cigarettes) face substantial legal hurdles in obtaining compensation for their injuries.



-Lisa Pezzano

FROM APPLICANT TO ARRESTED:

The Fugitive Who Applied for a Police Job

Even most criminals need traditional employment to pay the bills, but Zyeama Johnson looked for work in all the wrong places. Perhaps Johnson imagined her previous experience with law enforcement would give her a leg up in her application to the Hudson County Sheriff's Office in New Jersey in 2022. But unfortunately for her, all of Johnson's past and future involvement with the police would be on the wrong side of the law.

Johnson was looking for a legal way to earn a living when she applied for a job as a security guard at the sheriff's office. But her past money-making ventures allegedly involved fraud, and she had failed to appear in a Pennsylvania court on the charges. Presumably, Johnson did not realize a police station would perform a background



check before hiring — or that this office specializes in resolving outstanding warrants.

When processing her application, the Hudson County Sheriff's Office discovered the active bench warrant in Pennsylvania. The routine investigation also found 10 additional active bench warrants in Jersey City, New Jersey; Johnson had allegedly failed to appear on traffic charges.

Most employers in this situation would probably move on to the next applicant, but the sheriff's department decided to call Johnson in for an "interview" instead. Unsurprisingly, they had no intention of hiring her and arrested the fugitive on the spot. It gave the standard interview

question, "Where do you see yourself in five years?" a new meaning.

After taking Johnson into custody, the police proceeded to search her property. Incredibly, they found two credit cards in her possession they believed were stolen. Police added credit card theft charges to Johnson's already considerable rap sheet. To make matters worse for her, the sheriff's office also contacted Johnson's former employer, the United States Postal Service, which launched its own investigation into her conduct.

As of October 2022, Johnson was being held in a Hudson County jail awaiting extradition to Pennsylvania for the most serious charge against her. It's unclear why she thought applying for a law enforcement position with outstanding warrants was a wise career move, but at least she made her would-be coworkers' jobs easy that day.

TAKE A *BREAK*



THE REVENGE OF THE RONIN

Unveiling the Historic Massacre of Kira Yoshinaka

Never has there been a tale of revenge so blood-filled and epic as the 47 Ronin. Honorable and loyal to the end, these samurai warriors proved their dedication to their master in an incident that would become immortalized in Japanese literature, theater, and film. So, what led these samurai on a vengeful rampage?

It started in April 1701, when nobleman Asano Naganori, also known as the lord of Ako, was treated with complete disrespect and arrogance by Kira Yoshinaka, a court official. After holding back his anger, Asano finally snapped. Asano revealed his sword and attacked Kira in the middle of the palace's main hall. Although Kira lived to tell the tale, Asano broke court rules and was ordered to kill himself. Following the court's ruling, Asano ended his life on April 21, 1701.

After his demise, Asano left behind his faithful 47 samurai, whose status was lowered to ronin (samurai with no leader). Crushed by his death, the ruthless men created a plan. The 47 Ronin laid low for two years by dispersing and living in "retirement." The years passed, and the men were able to lower Kira's guard. At this point, one of the ronin had reached his 80s and could not participate in the vengeful plan. However, the remaining 46 men raided Kira's estate on an early January morning in 1703. They fearlessly battled Kira's samurai and decapitated Kira. The ronin then carried his head in a basket for miles to their deceased lord's grave.

Authorities were intensely conflicted on how to treat the vengeful massacre. While it broke the shogun's rules, the act followed the respected samurai warrior code. Yet, in the end, all 46 men were ordered to kill themselves via self-disembowelment, *hara-kiri*. The ronin ranged in age from 15 to 77 years old. After their deaths, the ronin became legends and were buried alongside their master, Asano Naganori. You can visit this famous site at Sengakuji Temple in Tokyo.



Unlock the Secrets of a Calming Bedtime Routine

Does it always seem like your kids get a burst of energy right before bedtime? After a jam-packed day, your child's pent-up stress and energy will likely spike when it's time to head to bed. The key is implementing a consistent bedtime routine to help them transition into sleep mode. Try therapeutic techniques to soothe your child for a full night of shuteye.

Squeeze 'em tight (add pressure).

Just like you would swaddle a baby, you should wrap your kids up like tiny burritos! When you add pressure that squeezes them tight, your child's tactile and proprioceptive senses are activated, which creates a sense of calm and relaxation. You can also do this with weighted blankets, tight cuddles, or by tucking them in nice and snug with pillows placed around them to add more pressure.

Get them warm and cozy.

Warmth is another element that can increase calm and signal bedtime! Put their

blankets in the dryer so they'll have them nice and warm when it's time to lie down. Additionally, you can give them a warm drink with a straw, as the warmth not only relaxes them but the straw also encourages sucking motions, which are incredibly soothing for children.

Create gentle movements.

Repetitive and rhythmic movements like rocking back and forth generate vestibular input for the nervous system. This will help your children feel comfortable and ready to sleep! You can try these motions by rocking them on a yoga ball for a few minutes, reading a bedtime story in a rocking chair, or sitting with them in a porch swing or hammock right before bed.

Turn the screens off.

We already know that looking at screens harms our sleep, so why would that be any different for children? Decrease screen time as the day advances and completely turn off any screens at least two hours



before bedtime. Not only do you want to cut these harsh lights, but you should also add comforting ones! Unwind in dim lighting as the day ends, and place lava lamps or a night light in your children's rooms to help soothe them. Also, adding a white noise machine or playing calm music can do wonders!

Combine these therapeutic methods to create the perfect bedtime routine that will have your energetic kiddos in bed without a hitch.



HOMEMADE PUMPKIN SPICE LATTE

Inspired by [AmbitiousKitchen.com](https://www.ambitiouskitchen.com)

Save money this October with this delicious homemade pumpkin spice latte that will taste better than any store-bought coffee.

Ingredients

- 2 shots espresso (or 1/2 cup freshly brewed coffee)
- 1 cup milk of choice
- 3 tbsp pumpkin purée
- 1–2 tbsp maple syrup
- 1 tsp pumpkin pie spice
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- Whipped cream for topping (optional)

Directions

1. In a small pot on medium heat, heat milk until simmering but not boiling.
2. Make your espresso (or coffee) and pour into a large mug or Mason jar. Add pumpkin purée, maple syrup, pumpkin pie spice, and vanilla and stir until well combined.
3. With a milk frother, froth the heated milk until foamy. Then, pour into your pumpkin espresso mixture and top with whipped cream. For decoration, you can sprinkle more cinnamon or pumpkin spice on top!