

Things that could only happen to Peck.

Missing Sock

In 2005, Lee Ann and I were enjoying the recent additions to our house--a new bedroom, bath and carport. I also planted 419 Bermuda grass in the backyard--the same grass that's on golf courses, and it was perfect for chipping a golf ball into a circle made with a garden hose. Our house was looking good!

Hurricane Katrina hit and we had to evacuate to Mississippi. We thought this would be like other evacuations, and we'd leave for a couple of days and return to normalcy. But it was several weeks before I could get into New Orleans, and several more before I could get into my neighborhood. Lee Ann remained in Alabama while I was assessing the damage.

When the police finally allowed me to enter the neighborhood, I had to crawl over large pine trees knocked down by the storm. Our house was difficult to recognize through the debris, it got 8-feet of water and a foot of mud. The refrigerator fell over and rats were eating all of the garbage. My perfect grass was dead, and in fact the whole neighborhood was a disaster. Everything was brown with dried mud and dead; there were no birds or squirrels anywhere. I found some old golf clubs that were in my utility room, and I did something I always wanted to do. I took a driver and hit a golf ball North, South, East, and West. What harm could it do?

It didn't look like anything could be saved in the house except the damn Mardi Gras beads in the attic. I've always heard that the reason houses sink in New Orleans is all the beads in the attic! I didn't know what, if anything, I could do with our formerly beautiful house; it made me sick to even look at the moldy structure. When Lee Ann returned, she had three legal pages listing stuff she wanted to get out of the house, I told her not to expect to salvage much.

I had one thing that I wanted to find, the \$500 golf gambling money hidden in my



sock drawer. I never talked to Lee Ann about how much money was won or lost on the golf course. All the doors in the house were swollen because of the flood so I had to knock them down with a shovel. I climbed over the broken muddy beds to get to the closet. All of my clothes and drawers had fallen down into the stinking mud. While digging around in the mud looking for the money sock, I found a leather belt and I was wondering if it was worth saving when I sensed somebody behind me.

It was Lee Ann and she said, "What are you doing?" I said, "I'm wondering if I can save this belt." Her voice choked, and I could tell that she was close to crying when she said, "I've got this long list of things we need to save, and you are looking at a F#CKING BELT??"

I started helping her with the list, but there wasn't a whole lot left to recover; and, I never found the money sock. Several months later we bulldozed the house and sold the lot.