



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## A holiday thank you

We would like to compliment all the people on Dublin Lane for the fine efforts with the Christmas decorations. We think the street looks beautiful!

Thank you and a very Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year to the neighbors on Dublin. And a very Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year to all the people in Cottage Grove!!

Barb and Dick Gilkison  
Cottage Grove

## OFFBEAT OREGON

Last "great" train robbery was a brutal, incompetent fiasco

PART 1 OF 2

By Finn J.D. John  
For the Sentinel

Few people realize it, but modern forensic detective work — the kind showcased on the "CSI" series on television — was born in southern Oregon, back in October 1923.

Before that fateful day, there had been a few crimes solved with the help of science, including some big ones. In Portland, the evidence given by Dr. Victoria Hampton in the 1904 trial of Norman Williams for murdering his wife and mother-in-law — proving that the long silver hairs found at the crime scene were human and had been violently ripped out of the scalp before death — sent Williams to the gallows.

But stories like that were outliers. At the dawn of the 20th century, most crimes were still solved with shoe leather and intuition, the old-fashioned way.

But after 1923, it would be very clear to everyone that a new day had dawned in crime investigation. And the breakthroughs made in southern Oregon that autumn would inspire, several years later, the founding of the FBI's legendary forensics division.

Of course, for forensic detective work to be pioneered, a suitably horrific crime had to be perpetrated. And on Oct. 11, 1923, one was — a crime so cold and gratuitously nasty that it shocked the whole

nation.

It was a train robbery — the last big train robbery in American history, in fact. It was perpetrated by three bumbling brothers: Roy, Ray and Hugh DeAutremont, the sons of a barber in Albany.

Roy and Ray were the older brothers, and they were twins. Of the two, Roy was particularly crazy, and probably led the others in the criminal enterprise; later in his life, he was diagnosed with schizophrenia and given a lobotomy.

The brothers had been sort of trying to get into the crime business since just after the First World War, when they had been caught up in the popular backlash that had followed the "Centralia Massacre" on Armistice Day 1919. The "massacre" was a gun battle that broke out between members of the International Workers of the World — the "Wobblies" — after a gunman hiding in the IWW hall opened fire on Legion members during a parade. The ensuing gun fight killed six people and utterly destroyed any respectability and effectiveness the "Wobblies" might have had, and was followed by a big law-enforcement dragnet operation. One of the "usual suspects" rounded up and thrown in jail was Ray DeAutremont — the less-crazy brother — and the experience in jail seems to have convinced him that the system was not worth saving, and that he might as well become an outlaw and grab what he could.

After his release from prison,

Ray rejoined his brother and the two of them journeyed to Chicago to try to join a gang. This did not work out for them, so they returned to the Pacific Northwest, where they were joined by their younger brother, Hugh, for their second attempt to enter the world of crime: A bank robbery.

This robbery attempt was foiled by one of history's most surprising coincidences. Just as the brothers were approaching the bank they'd picked out, a car full of gangsters pulled up in front of it, and they watched in astonishment as "their" bank was robbed by someone else, right before their eyes.

So the brothers took jobs on logging crews in the woods and started biding their time, looking for other opportunities to score.

They thought they had found one in the "Number 13 Gold Special" train. Years before, when the Gold Rush was still on, the Gold Special had carried plenty of "color" over the Siskiyou and into Oregon. The California gold fields had long since petered out for commercial purposes, but the train still had the cachet; and the brothers had some reason to believe it would be carrying something particularly valuable in its mail car on Oct. 23. So they started making their plans. And on the big day, they were ready to do the job.

The heist started at the summit of the Siskiyou, as the train crossed the border into Oregon. It had to slow at the summit for a brake check just before going into



a long tunnel — Tunnel 13, coincidentally enough — and when it did, Roy and Hugh jumped aboard the engine. Wasting no time, they leveled their weapons — a sawed-off shotgun for Roy and a .45 automatic for Hugh — and ordered the engineer, Sydney Bates, to stop the train right at the end of the tunnel. This was, it seems, to prevent passengers from seeing what was going on. (Ironically and tragically, it was to be Bates' last day on the job; he was scheduled to start his retirement the very next day.)

Once the train was stopped, the brothers were joined by Ray, who had been waiting at the end of the tunnel with a box of dynamite stolen from a mining operation, just in case it might be needed to open the mail car.

As it turned out, it was needed for that. The mail clerk, when he saw what was happening, barricaded himself inside the car and refused to open the door; so the brothers packed dynamite around the door and touched it off.

Unfortunately they had no idea what they were doing. The amount of dynamite they used wrecked the end of the car, filled it with smoke, and instantly killed the mail clerk, Elvyn Daugherty. And although they were now able to get in, it didn't do them much good; there was mail scattered everywhere, they couldn't see through the smoke, and the fire was spreading quickly.

Back in the train, of course, the passengers were starting to panic.

The train had stopped suddenly while they were still in the tunnel; then a huge explosion had rocked the car and probably broken out some windows, and the tunnel had started to fill with smoke and fumes. They were trapped in the tunnel like rats.

One of the train's brakemen, C. Coyle Johnson, started fighting his way through the smoke and flames to the front, trying to find out what was wrong. Unfortunately for him, he made it. Emerging from the fiery tunnel mouth, he startled the robbers, who wheeled and opened fire on him. Down he went, dead.

At this point, the brothers apparently switched their plan from "salvage something from this mess" to "escape at all costs." They ordered engineer Bates and fireman Marvin Seng to uncouple the engine from the mail car, apparently planning to have the engine take them down the mountain away from the scene of the crime; but the explosion had damaged the couplers, so it could not be done.

So the brothers simply gunned the two survivors down in cold blood. Sydney Bates and Marvin Seng were simply shot in the head as they stood there with their arms in the air, because the brothers wanted no witnesses left on the scene. And then they ran, dragging creosote-soaked sacks behind them to fool the bloodhounds.

The brothers hid out in a cabin in the woods for about a week and a half, waiting for things to settle down a bit. While they were hiding

out there, they noticed an unusual amount of activity in the air; in 1923, very few airplanes were actually in operation, but it suddenly seemed like every plane on the West Coast was flying low over the Siskiyou.

But they didn't figure out what those planes were doing until Roy hopped a freight train to Ashland to pick up some supplies. Sitting in a diner with a cup of coffee and a newspaper, he looked down and saw a photograph of himself and his brothers there, on the front page.

The manhunt was on. It had been on since a few days after the robbery, when authorities had turned to a university professor for help in figuring out who the robbers had been. And it was in the course of that manhunt that the modern science of forensic detective work was born. We'll talk about all that in Part 2 of this story, next week.

(Sources: Trail, Pepper & al. "Tunnel 13: How Forensic Science Helped Solve America's Last Great Train Robbery." Jefferson Public Radio, <http://jpr.org>; Joers, Lawrence E.C. "The Siskiyou Train Robbery." Great Moments in Oregon History. Portland: New Oregon Publishers, 1987; <http://tunnel13.com>)

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## Protect yourself from cold and flu season by eating right

By JOEL FUHRMAN, MD  
For the Sentinel

Between treatments, illness-compromised productivity, and lost workdays, it is estimated that the common cold alone costs the U.S. \$40 billion each year.<sup>1</sup>

We all know the basics for reducing exposure to cold and flu viruses—wash your hands, avoid touching your face, and avoid being exposed to people

who are already ill. As for the influenza vaccine it is important to know that it is not very effective.

An independent analysis of flu vaccine studies by Cochrane — a non-profit, non-government organization that organizes medical research information—found that under typical conditions, for every 100 people vaccinated only one person would avoid flu symptoms. The study showed that the flu vaccine did not significantly affect the number of people hospitalized or working days lost, and did not prevent flu-associated complications.<sup>2,3</sup>

Excellent nutrition can reduce our vulnerability to infection and reduce the length and severity of illness if we do become infected. Many micronutrients are required to support proper

function of the immune system, and phytochemicals from colorful produce have additional antimicrobial and immune-boosting effects.

Make sure your diet includes these immune boosting superfoods:

**Mushrooms:** Mushrooms have a unique ability to activate the body's natural immune defenses. Reishi and shiitake mushrooms enhance activity of natural killer (NK) cells, which attack cancerous and virus-infected cells.<sup>4,5</sup> Shiitake mushrooms protect against influenza infection in animal studies.<sup>6-8</sup>

It's not only exotic mushrooms; white button mushrooms enhance the activity of immune cells called dendritic cells, and were found to enhance immune defenses in mucosal linings such as those in the mouth and respiratory tract.<sup>9,10</sup>

Note that mushrooms should only be eaten cooked, because some raw mushrooms contain the mild toxin agaritine, which is reduced by heat.<sup>11,12</sup>

Cruciferous vegetables: The cruciferous family of vegetables includes kale, collards, mustard greens, arugula, watercress, broccoli, broccoli rabe, cabbage, cauliflower, kohlrabi, and more. The bitter, spicy or pungent flavors of these vegetables are provided by glucosinolates, which are converted into potent anti-cancer compounds, called isothiocyanates (ITCs), upon chopping or chewing.

In addition to their anti-cancer effects, ITCs also support the immune system and have

antimicrobial properties.

To maximize ITCs, chop cruciferous vegetables finely, eat them raw and chew them well; the enzyme that converts glucosinolates to ITCs (called myrosinase) is activated by disrupting the plant cells and deactivated by heat. However, you can still get ITCs from your cooked cruciferous vegetables: chop them finely before you begin to cook and add some raw cruciferous to the meal. For instance, if you are eating cooked broccoli, add some shredded cabbage to your salad.

Cruciferous vegetable phytochemicals may enhance interferon activity, which is an important component of the body's antiviral response.<sup>13,14</sup>

**Berries:** Berries are powerful anti-cancer foods that also offer protection against viruses. Antioxidants called flavonoids, which are abundant in berries, have antiviral activity.<sup>15</sup> In fact, if you do get the flu, taking anthocyanin-rich elderberry juice may even shorten the duration of your symptoms.<sup>16-18</sup>

Berries and grapes are also rich in resveratrol, another antioxidant phytochemical with strong antiviral effects—resveratrol has been shown to block the replication of influenza and other respiratory viruses.<sup>19-21</sup> Plus, strawberries are high in vitamin C, which protects immune cells from oxidative damage.<sup>22</sup>

**Onions & Garlic:** There is no convincing evidence for using garlic supplements for symptoms of the common cold.<sup>27</sup>

However, eating garlic and onions daily has clear benefits when it comes to cancer prevention, and may help to increase functionality of the cells in our immune system.<sup>28,29</sup> Plus, several phytochemicals in garlic have virus-killing activity against common respiratory viruses.<sup>30</sup>

Like cruciferous vegetables, the active compounds in onions and garlic are produced when the plant cells are disrupted, so it's best to chop them before eating raw and before they are heated when cooking.

Helpful supplements: Vitamin D and zinc are important players in immune function, so maintaining adequate stores of these micronutrients will also help to protect against colds and flus. Children given vitamin D supplements throughout the winter reduced the occurrence of flu compared to a placebo group, and taking supplemental zinc regularly was found to slightly reduce the number of colds caught by children.<sup>17,31</sup> Get your vitamin D levels checked, and if you since zinc is not highly absorbed from plant foods, supplemental zinc makes sense if you are on a vegan or near-vegan diet.

Treating treat cold and flu symptoms: Common cold remedies are ineffective, and some may even prolong the illness. For example, mega doses of vitamin C do not prevent colds or reduce symptoms, and fever-reducing medications actually hinder the body's attack on the infection. (In my book *Super Immunity*, I

evaluate a number of common cold and flu remedies.)

Don't be alarmed if your cold symptoms last longer than you expect. On average, patients report that their common cold symptoms last one and a half to two weeks.<sup>32</sup>

In time, the body will clear the virus on its own. Remember, over-the-counter medications merely mask symptoms, and may even impair healing. However, if you experience a sudden worsening of symptoms, especially including labored breathing, or a fever above 103 degrees for three days, then it is time to call the doctor.

This year, to protect yourself against cold and flu, get enough sleep, avoid putting your hands near your nose or mouth, and eat healthfully. As your diet improves, you will be less likely to become ill, and if you do, you will recover more quickly.

Dr. Fuhrman is a #1 New York Times best-selling author and a board certified family physician specializing in lifestyle and nutritional medicine. *The Eat To Live Cookbook* offers over 200 unique disease-fighting delicious recipes and his newest book, *The End of Heart Disease*, offers a detailed plan to prevent and reverse heart disease using a nutrient-dense, plant-rich eating style. Visit his informative website at [DrFuhrman.com](http://DrFuhrman.com). Submit your questions and comments about this column directly to [newsquestions@drfuhrman.com](mailto:newsquestions@drfuhrman.com). The full reference list for this article can be found at [DrFuhrman.com](http://DrFuhrman.com).

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Personal attacks and name calling in response to letters are uncalled for and unnecessary.

If you would like to submit an opinion piece, Another View must be no longer than 600 words.

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