

[Dylan Mullins]

I've heard this adage over and over again. "Necessity is the mother of invention." Frank Zappa references aside, I've never been entirely sure that I agree with that. The adhesive used to make Post-It notes was developed purely as a whim, without any application for it until several years after its conception. No one stood over Thomas Edison's shoulder, complaining about how badly everyone needed light bulbs. But perhaps more relevant, it's hard to imagine that anyone looked at a blanket and in seriousness said, "Well, it's pretty cool I guess, but what if it had *sleeves*?" And yet, the Snuggie stumbled into the world of its own accord and manages to find its way into people's homes somehow. So I suppose some stories are the invention of the lightbulb, some stories are the adhesive that reminds offices so frequently of important meetings and lunch orders, and others still are like a blanket with sleeves. In spite of being such a trivial thing, the Snuggie reigns supreme as the most famous of all linen-clothing hybrids. One very sweltering June day ascended to Snuggie status for me, an absolutely absurd victory that brought two friends closer together, and possibly alienated them from everyone else in a McDonald's. As would a large red, sleeved blanket.

Danny and I knew what we had come to McDonald's for that day. We had known for weeks. For this weekend and this weekend alone, twenty chicken nuggets could be purchased for five dollars. Calculators blazing, we quickly realized that one hundred chicken nuggets would then cost only twenty five dollars. And so we fasted for twenty four hours in preparation of the most ill-advised gourmand's quest of our young lives. Three miles of walking later, and we stood at the counter of McDonald's prepped for the ultimate struggle between alleged poultry, appetite, and sheer willpower. The restaurant was overcome with an eerie hush. No french fry moved, no

wrapper crinkled, and not a drip fell from the soda fountain. A tumbleweed probably blew across the floor. Sternly, the cash hit the counter. “One hundred chicken nuggets and two small sodas.” An audible gasp rang out from all corners of the room. “For here, or to go?” stammered the cashier, knowing in his heart of hearts what the answer would be.

“Oh, for here. Definitely for here.”

The cashier gulped as he clumsily attempted to figure out how much that would cost. Danny and I already knew. Exact change. The staff behind the counter frantically tried to figure out the best way to count out one hundred nuggets, and Danny and I stood, austere and severe, knowing that the real fight had yet to begin.

“Choose your weapon,” I said as we approached the soda fountain. Danny chose Dr. Pepper, flavorful, robust, but perhaps with just enough edge to help him overcome his fifty nuggets. I filled my plastic cup with the classic, coke. Tried and true, the bog standard of chicken nugget challenges. We each took a preliminary sip before approaching the ten boxes of warm cardboard nervously placed on the counter for us. If those nuggets could talk, perhaps they would quake in fear and beg for mercy. Perhaps they would taunt us and bravely hold their ground. Perhaps they would suggest the sweet and sour sauce. The one thing I know is that this day would be the last for one hundred chunks of white meat.

“Dylan.” Danny popped the lids off of his boxes.

“Danny.” I did the same.

“I just want you to know, there’s no one else I could ever imagine eating one hundred chicken McNuggets with.”

“No one else is that stupid.”

“I know.”

“Ready?”

“Ready.”

It began.

An interesting thing happens when you set out to eat fifty chicken nuggets. Time slows just a hair, the sound all but drops out of a room save for the valiant blaring of trumpets singing your struggles, you realize you only really wanted fifteen, and every dipping sauce tastes that much sweeter. As the minutes passed, nuggets descended from the heavens, diving into shallow pools of barbecue, sweet and sour, and honey mustard sauces. Other diners’ bewildered stares were deflected with curt glances in their direction. Regular breaks were allotted to refill our soda reserves. But these nuggets packed within their calories the secret weapon of fatigue, and this fight soon went from a one-sided saucy slaughter to an uphill struggle against the darkest dark horse of the culinary world.

Soon enough, Danny and I were taking each nugget harder than the last, and we each had at least ten uneaten nuggets each. Then, a pivotal moment shook the very foundation of our world. Forty-five nuggets in, Daniel Bonilla could not eat even one more nugget.

Some men would quit. Some men would accept defeat and go home humiliated by foodstuffs. Some men would resign to their couches and take a nap. Some men are weak. But today, I was the type of man who stares fifteen nuggets dead in eyes they don’t have and says, “Not today, McNugget.” Life gave me lemons, but I don’t want life’s damn lemons, and if I wanted lemonade, I’d have gotten it from the soda fountain. These nuggets had claimed my friend, and I was no longer fighting for my victory, but for Danny’s victory. Revenge is a dish best served with honey mustard.

“We’re going to do this, Danny. We’re going to make this happen. Today is a day we’ll long remember. A day of hope. A day of justice. A day of victory.”

Danny only nodded as the ninety ninth nugget disappeared from its box, and at that moment, Danny’s resolve returned to him. Danny lifted the final nugget. A couple across from us shielded their child’s eyes. A young woman let out a gasp and fainted. The manager of the restaurant shed a single tear. A concert hall of violins’ crescendo reached an impossible tense climax. Danny eyed the nugget with great deliberation.

And finally, victory.

Triumph in our hearts and chicken in our stomachs, we filled our cups with more beverage for the road and proudly left with our heads held high. We would now begin the bloated trek back home. A powerful fist bump proclaimed to the world that no obstacle could impede us, and no circumstance could diminish the impact of this victorious meal.

Not even as it started to rain.

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