

## Injured on the 4th of July

by Erik\_Deckers

Dear Doctor Taylor:I'm writing this letter to give you a better explanation of today's chain of events at my family's Fourth of July celebration which resulted in my appearance at your fine hospital. The anesthetic hasn't quite worn off, but the neck brace and bandages around my head are uncomfortable enough to keep me awake to write this. When I came in, I recall you asking what happened, and that I kept mumbling "Ray, Ray." But you said that didn't explain my broken nose, possible concussion, powder burns on my butt, and certain. . . male injuries. The day started, as you would expect, with the phrase "Hey y'all, watch this!" This was from my cousin, Ray, who had been drinking since 7:00 pm. The day before. At Ray's shout, I turned just in time to see him fire off a textbook golf shot with his Big Bertha driver and a croquet ball. Until that very moment, I had believed there was nothing funnier than a guy getting hit in the privates with a croquet ball. But as I writhed in agony on the ground, I could think of a lot of things that were much funnier, including wrapping a golf club around my cousin's skinny neck. As I chased Ray around the yard, I managed to step on -- you guessed it -- the very same croquet ball. The ball rolled out from under my foot, and I managed to land nose first into his kid's wading pool. You have to understand that Ray is what you medical types call "a complete moron." So it follows that his kids are too. Why else would his eight-year-old hellspawn, Little Ray Ray, think this was a great time to play Water Balloon Catapult with me as Target Alpha? I'm afraid I lost my cool, and was swearing a blue streak when I emerged from the water, blood gushing down my front. Given everyone's reaction, you would think they had ever heard language like this. But I know from personal experience that Ray has used worse language on many occasions, including church. However, I somehow managed to out cuss him, which shocked Aunt Evelyn so badly, she went into cardiac arrest. She's recovering nicely, two doors down. I've never had a broken nose, but Ray told me the blood flow and irregular shape "looked about right," so he reset it. I collapsed into one of the deck chairs, praying I'd make it through the night. It's about this time that Little Ray Ray started to fire off Roman candles. However, lacking a bottle -- Ray only serves beer in cans because "it's safer" -- Little Ray Ray used a tube from his mother's vacuum cleaner as the launch pad. After a few shouts of "fire in the hole," I took the tube away from him before we were all hit by tube shrapnel. So I guess it's my fault that Little Ray Ray decided to jam a Roman candle into the ground, tape a string of firecrackers to it, and light them both. "Sheer genius!" proclaimed Ray, calling the creation the Big Momma. (When you've set the bar as low as he has, anything looks smart.) What happened next I've pieced together from the paramedics, family members, and the beautiful light that told me it wasn't my time yet. The Roman candle fired from its makeshift launch pad, ricocheted off a low-hanging branch, and then floated lazily toward me in a sort of psychedelic slow motion. It was like being in *The Matrix*. I leapt out of my chair, took two steps, and stepped on -- you guessed it -- my old nemesis, the croquet ball. I landed head first on the deck, which caused my possible concussion. The Big Momma landed right on my butt and the firecrackers began to explode, which caused my powder burns. Hopefully this helps you better understand the cause of my injuries and why I mumbled "Ray" as my explanation for it all. Now I'd better close this letter, because I just spotted my moronic cousin walking this way, carrying a huge bouquet of flowers. (Doctor's note: Unidentified male, known only as Ray, was found in a patient's room with two black eyes, a broken nose, and a bouquet of flowers inserted in what can only be described as an "excruciatingly painful and embarrassing manner." Patient Ray was heard to mumble "Erik, Erik" as he was rushed to the ER. No further details are available at this time.) Laughing Stalk Syndicate, Â© 2006

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