



## ISN'T IT IRONIC?

It's hard to think, or even *conceive*, of a demise more ironic than that of poor **JAMES MOODY**, a 31-year-old who drowned to death in a New Orleans swimming pool in 1985. Although not a lifeguard himself, Moody was at a party attended by at least *one hundred* goddamned lifeguards. The party was being thrown in celebration of the previous year's record of zero drownings at local swimming pools. Still, those hundred-plus lifeguards were ALL apparently too fucked-up to realize that Moody had sunk like a stone to the pool's bottom.

**FELIX POWELL** was a British songwriter who'd won first prize in a 1915 contest for his nauseatingly positive "Pack Up Your Troubles in Your Old Kit Bag and Smile, Smile, Smile," described as "perhaps the most optimistic song ever written." Perhaps it was, but Powell killed himself in 1942. Although not as ironic as Powell's death, it's still quite funny that French composer **CLAUDE FRANCOIS**, who wrote "My Way," died while standing in a water-filled bathtub and trying to fix a lightbulb.

Described as "The Next Albert Einstein," Swiss mathematician **JOHANN UNDERWALD** died while bungee-jumping in 1999.

The purported mathematical genius decided to use a 300-foot bungee cord to make the 250-foot leap. That's almost as ironic as the fact that **HORACE WELLS**, a trailblazer in the field of anesthesia, became addicted to chloroform and used it to anesthetize himself before committing suicide with a razor in the 1840s.

I always think it's funny when people suffer due to their good intentions, so even though I like kitty-cats, I think it's funny as fuck that veterinarian **JAMES RICHARDS**, the author of the *ASPCA Guide to Cats* who had made it his life's mission to ensure feline safety and welfare, died in a motorcycle accident while trying to avoid running over a cat.

A hundred or so years ago, **BOB-BY LEACH** was a renowned professional daredevil who performed Evel Knievel/Steve Irwin acts of lunatic bravery such as becoming only the second person to go over Niagara Falls in a barrel. But in 1926 the stunt man slipped on an orange peel and died from the injuries. Speaking of **STEVE IRWIN**, was there anyone on Earth who didn't feel at least a *little* bit like he deserved to be killed by that stingray?

"PISTOL" **PETE MARAVICH** was perhaps the most naturally gifted Caucasian ever to dribble a basketball. He set all kinds of scoring records, especially in college, that I don't care to research at the moment. But in 1988 at the age of 40, he suffered a fatal heart attack while playing a simple game of street hoops with a Christian preacher.



## DIE, HEALTH NUTS!

**JIM FIXX** and his sweaty ass spearheaded the jogging craze of the 1970s. The author of *The Complete Book of Running*, Fixx found a way to make sure his heart was almost completely obstructed—an autopsy revealed one of his coronary arteries was 99% blocked, while another was 80% clogged and another crammed with fatty plaque to the tune of 70% or so. His savagely unhealthy ticker eventually led to Fixx's death at age 52 of a heart attack in Vermont—while jogging!

**EDMUND BURKE**, a bicycle enthusiast who served on the staff of Olympic cycling teams and authored books such as *The Complete Book of Long Distance Cycling* and *High Tech Cycling*, died of a heart attack... while riding his bicycle, of course.

Some of you assholes who are as old as I am will remember **EUELL GIBBONS** from the 1970s Grape Nuts TV commercial where he asked the viewer, "Ever eat a pine tree? Many parts are edible." The author of *Stalking the Wild Asparagus* who boasted that he never willingly exposed himself to toxins, Gibbons died of a heart attack in 1975, which I find funny.

**ROBERT ATKINS**, the "Atkins diet" jerkoff responsible for the supremely annoying "no-carbs" mania of a few years ago, died at age 73 of heart failure. At his death, Mr. No Carbs was a small whale who weighed 258 pounds.

Perhaps the most spectacular health-nut death was that of

**JEROME IRVING RODALE**, massively successful publisher of health-food books and *Prevention* magazine. After having boasted that he was going to "live to be 100 unless I'm run down by a sugar-crazed taxi driver," Rodale appeared on *The Dick Cavett Show* in 1971. When it appeared that Rodale had fallen asleep in his chair, Cavett asked him, "Are we boring you, Mr. Rodale?" If so, he had been bored to death, since he died of a heart attack while the show was filming. To my disappointment, the show never aired.

In 1991, vegetarian jogging fanatic **VICTOR VILLENTI**, a South African who forced his wife and family to follow his strictly prescribed rules regarding food and exercise, was killed—while jogging!—after being struck by an eight-pound frozen leg of lamb that had fallen from someone's third-story window.

## DEATH WHILE BEING MACHO

When **WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON** became the ninth US president in 1841, he delivered what is thought to be the most long-winded inaugural speech in our fine nation's history. It was an exceptionally cold March day, but to prove he wasn't a pussy, Harrison delivered his epic soliloquy without wearing a coat. He developed a cold and died a month later from pneumonia.

Arizonan **DAVID GRUNDMAN** thought it would be cool to grab his shotgun and go out "cactus plugging" with a friend one day in 1982. He blasted out a 26-foot Saguaro, a huge prickly slab of which fell and smashed him to death.

Star of the highly disturbing and vastly amusing documentary *Grizzly Man*, **TIMOTHY TREADWELL** devoted his life to befriending wild Alaskan bears and, it must be said, attempting to "pass" as a bear himself. Treadwell, who looked and acted like the blond fellow on *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, lived with Alaskan bears over 13 *very* lucky summers until inevitably being killed and eaten by his furry adopted friends.



The attack was recorded on audiotape and I'd *love* to hear it, because I'd probably laugh my ass off.

## MISCELLANEOUSLY FUNNY

Famed Swedish astronomer **TYCHO BRAHE** died from being pee-shy. Attending a dinner party in 1601 and reportedly drinking *way* too much while there, he was too embarrassed to excuse himself from the banquet in order to retire to the little boy's room and "drain the main vein," as they say. His bladder burst as a result, and he died eleven days later. In 2007, **JENNIFER LEA STRANGE** croaked from water intoxication while participating in a Sacramento radio station's "Hold Your Wee for a Wii" contest.

According to what may only be a legend, Greek philosopher **CHRYSSIPUS** joined the Choir Invisible in 207 BC after laughing himself to death at the sight of his drunken donkey eating some figs. But in 1975, British bricklayer **ALEX MITCHELL** laughed himself to death while watching an episode of comedy show *The Goodies*. According to Mitchell's wife, he hooted, hollered, and guffawed for an uninterrupted twenty-five minutes before finally keeling over from laughter. What's *really* funny is that I've seen *The Goodies*, and it simply isn't that funny.

"Christo" is an archetypically pre-entious "conceptual artist" who pulls stunts such as gift-wrapping entire islands. In 1991, he did an insipid "installation" of 20-foot umbrellas in the California desert and Japan, leading to deaths in both locales.

In Cali, a strong blast of wind pulled one of the monster umbrellas up from the ground, whereupon it flew straight into art enthusiast **LORI RAE KEEVIL-MATTHEWS**, crushing her to death against a boulder. (Maybe she deserved to die merely for hyphenating her last name.) In Japan, construction worker **MASAAKI NAKAMURA** died from electrocution while attempting to remove one of Christo's umbrellas with his crane.

I've always found it absolutely hilarious that Yardbirds lead singer **KEITH RELF** fried to death of electrocution because his guitar was improperly grounded. It serves as further proof that lead singers should never play guitar.

In 1991, five-year-old **CONOR CLAPTON** splatted onto a New York sidewalk after falling fifty-three stories from an open window in an apartment owned by his superstar daddy, rocker Eric Clapton. Although the death itself was not particularly humorous, I've always found it hysterical that Conor's father managed to wring a Grammy out of the situation.

And it probably goes without saying (but I'm going to say it anyway, which sort of renders the preceding "it goes without saying" phrase *entirely* unnecessary), I will always laugh at the fact that **SONNY BONO** died after crashing into a tree while skiing. I enjoy imagining the sound of his final desperate screams in his inimitably scratchy tenor. That's just the way I am. Anyone who's ever heard him sing "Pammy's Got a Bummer" knows he's a performer of distinctive vocal range and lyrical genius, so step the fuck off with your judgmental attitudes.



# hilarious DEATHS

real cases of human lives which ended in ways i personally find funny