

The PACKARD PRESS

A collection of thoughts and stories to educate, entertain, and inspire.

Bored of Post-Thanksgiving Turkey Sandwiches?

Try My Turkey Gumbo Instead!

If you walk into my house this Black Friday, the first thing you'll notice is the smell. The heavenly scent of something spicy, savory, and herby will be in the air drifting from room to room. If you follow your nose, you will find me in the kitchen at the stove doing the same thing I do every year the day after Thanksgiving: stirring a big pot of homemade turkey and sausage gumbo!

I've been making gumbo from my Thanksgiving leftovers for about 15 years now. It all started when I was in college. I came home for the holidays to find my stepmother, Nancy, in the kitchen surrounded by mountains of sausage links and chopped vegetables.

"Nancy, what are you cooking?" I asked as I took in the scene. "It's the day after Thanksgiving, Michael," she said. "So it's the right time to make some turkey gumbo!"

Nancy is from Louisiana, and when she and my dad got married, she introduced our family to the wonderful world of Cajun cooking — and we loved it! She made gumbo, crawfish, boudin balls (fried balls of Cajun pork-and-rice sausage), jambalaya, blackened catfish, and mayhaw jelly. It was the best food I'd ever tasted, but it never occurred to me to try *cooking* Cajun food until that Black Friday when I was visiting from college. Nancy's turkey gumbo was so good that I had to have access to it year-round. That meant I needed to learn how to make it!

When I returned to school, I was determined to master the art. I spent hours on the phone with Nancy and other family members working on step one: making a roux. It's a slow, tedious process that involves cooking flour and butter for hours over low heat. You have to slowly stir the roux the entire time to keep it from burning. I soon

learned to plan for at least four hours at the stove. (Mainly because I kept starting over after burning the roux!)

All that time in the kitchen was just too much. I needed to find a shortcut. For the remainder of college and all through law school, I was on a side quest to find a better, faster way to make a roux — and



I succeeded! All it took was a few packets of gumbo mix from the Louisiana Fish Fry Company. Since then, I've used those packets in every batch of my now-famous gumbo. My kids say that no one in the family makes it better than Daddy. Even my in-laws from Arizona are head-over-heels for my gumbo.

Of course, Nancy and a few of my brothers disagree — they all think *their* gumbo is the best. They can say whatever they want, but deep down inside, they know the truth. So, if you want to try something new with your Thanksgiving leftovers, here is a quick guide to making Michael's World-Famous Gumbo.

1. Buy some Louisiana Fish Fry gumbo base packets from H-E-B or Walmart (look for it in one of those cardboard kiosks by the fresh seafood).
2. Saute the "holy trinity" of Cajun vegetables: bell peppers, green onions, and celery (including the leaves). The more vegetables, the better! I don't measure anything, but use enough to fill the pot.
3. In a separate pot, make the gumbo base following the directions on the packet, but only use half to three-fourths of the recommended amount of water. I usually use two packets. This concentrates the base and makes for a thick, flavorful gumbo.
4. Brown some smoked sausage in a separate pan until it gets a little crispy, then add it to the gumbo base along with your leftover turkey. Also, add in the sautéed veggies once they are finished. (I usually overdo it and end up with two pots, so don't worry if it all doesn't fit in a single pot.)
5. Simmer the gumbo on the stove for anywhere from 30 minutes to several hours — it doesn't matter exactly how long. Then, serve it with a side of rice, and maybe some potato salad. Have some Cajun seasoning on hand in case people want it spicy.

Happy holidays and happy eating!

—Michael Packard

Hang On — The FBI Robbed a Bank?

The Story Behind a Mind-Blowing California Raid

“This was the largest armed robbery in United States history, and it was committed by the FBI.” That jaw-dropping statement came from Robert Frommer, an attorney representing *several hundred* people whose safe deposit boxes were emptied during an FBI raid in 2021.

The story is wild from start to finish. On that fateful day in March, armed FBI agents stormed a California strip mall and burst into a U.S. Private Vaults bank branch. They searched 1,400 safe deposit boxes and confiscated the contents of many of them — making off with roughly \$86 million, plus valuable collectibles like coins, gold, and jewelry.

Why would the agency do this? Well, after a two-year investigation, the FBI suspected U.S. Private Vaults was catering to drug dealers and other criminals hiding cash in Los Angeles. So, the agency obtained a warrant and raided the bank to look for proof.

And apparently, they found it. After the raid, U.S. Private Vaults pleaded guilty to conspiracy to launder drug money and closed its doors for good. However, that wasn't the end of the saga.

Remember attorney Robert Frommer? Roughly 400 people who kept their money at U.S. Private Vaults hired him to get the contents of their safe deposit boxes back from the FBI. They said they weren't criminals and wanted their money back.

One of those people was Joseph Ruiz, who lost \$57,000 in savings during the FBI raid. He filed a lawsuit, claiming the raid was unconstitutional. When the FBI accused Ruiz of making his money through illegal drug sales, Ruiz showed proof of his income, and in August 2021, the FBI agreed to return his funds.

However, not every U.S. Private Vaults customer has been so lucky. In September 2022, a judge ruled that the FBI raid was legal under civil forfeiture laws and dismissed the depositors' class-action lawsuit. An FBI spokesperson also said the agency was putting a process in place to return items to innocent owners, but as of March 2023, at least one person still claimed she hadn't gotten her money back — even though she wasn't criminally charged.

If this story ever becomes a Hollywood movie, we'll be first in line at the box office.



Win a FREE Turkey for Your Table!

ENTER OUR ANNUAL THANKSGIVING GIVEAWAY

Thanksgiving just isn't Thanksgiving without a turkey at the center of the table. However, sometimes, getting your hands on a bird can be expensive and complicated, especially if you're dealing with an injury or illness. **To make things easier for you this holiday season, our office is giving away THREE Thanksgiving turkeys, absolutely free!**

There's just one catch. To enter, we ask that you share **three things you're grateful for this year**, one for each turkey in the giveaway. You can put your name in the hat by **texting your thankful list to 210-756-5399 or scanning the QR code on this page**. Just make sure you do it before **Sunday, Nov. 19** (if you haven't already)! You can also invite your friends and family to enter by sharing this newsletter. Everyone is welcome.

Once you send in your entry, keep an eye on your phone, email, and our Facebook page for an announcement of the winners. We'll draw names on Monday, Nov. 20, and work with you to ensure you get your turkey by Thanksgiving. You can find us on Facebook at **Facebook.com/ThePackardLawFirm**.

As we said in our last newsletter, you don't need to overthink your thankful list. If you're grateful for your son's smile, your morning coffee, and your new winter jacket, share that with us — small things are worth celebrating, too!

When you're ready to enter, text your gratitude list to 210-756-5399 or scan the QR code on this page. We can't wait to read your lists!



'Tis the Season for Rear-End Collisions

3 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW BEFORE YOU DRIVE

The holidays are almost here, which means every time you get into your car, you need to think about one critical thing: distracted drivers. Hundreds of people are driving back and forth to holiday parties thinking about Thanksgiving shopping, Christmas lists, and Mariah Carey on the radio, so you're at a higher risk of getting hit!

With that in mind, here are a few important things you should know about rear-end collisions, one of the most common car wrecks we see this time of year.



- 1. Rear-end collisions can cause serious injuries.** People often think of rear-end collisions as "minor" car accidents that aren't worth a trip to the doctor, but that's not always the case! Even a low-speed fender-bender can cause a serious injury. We've seen people get whiplash, spinal cord injuries, and even traumatic brain injuries in rear-end collisions. If you've been in one, you should visit the doctor immediately.
- 2. Rear-end collisions aren't always caused by distracted driving.** Yes, someone could run into you because they were busy fiddling with the radio or eating a Christmas cookie behind the wheel. But there are other causes of rear-end collisions, too. Drunk driving, speeding, and defective brakes can also lead to a rear-end collision. You're also more likely to end up in a collision if your tail lights are out, so check your car's rear bulbs regularly.
- 3. A lawyer can help you secure a bigger insurance payout after a rear-end collision.** Insurance companies have made it difficult to get compensation without the help from a lawyer, so don't go it alone. If you call our firm, you'll increase your odds of collecting the money you need to cover your medical bills, lost wages, and pain and suffering.

We hope you, your friends, and your family stay safe from rear-end collisions this holiday season. As much as we'd love to represent you, we'd rather see you at home with your family, enjoying the holidays injury-free!

TAKE A BREAK

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Ballot	Maize	Shopping
Cornucopia	Pilgrim	Stuffing
Cranberry	Politics	Thanksgiving
Districts	Raking	Veteran



Stuffed Pepper Soup

Ingredients

- 2 lbs ground beef
- 6 cups water
- 1 28-oz can tomato sauce
- 1 28-oz can diced tomatoes, undrained
- 2 cups chopped green peppers
- 1/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 2 tsp salt
- 2 tsp beef bouillon granules
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 2 cups cooked long-grain rice
- Chopped fresh parsley (optional)

Directions

1. In a Dutch oven over medium heat, cook beef until no longer pink, breaking it into crumbles; drain. Add beef back to the pot and stir in all ingredients except the cooked rice. Bring to a boil.
2. Reduce heat. Simmer uncovered until peppers are tender, about 30 minutes.
3. Add cooked rice and simmer, uncovered, for about 10 minutes. If desired, sprinkle with chopped fresh parsley.



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The Packard Family Is Here to Help Your Family! *Personal Injury | Social Security Disability | Car Accidents | Special Needs Planning*

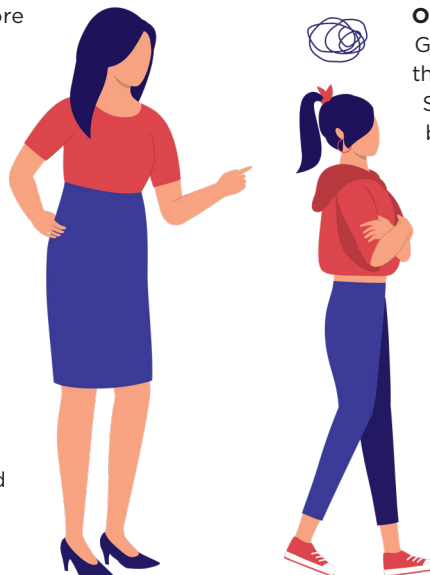
Transform Power Struggles Into Learning Moments With These Techniques

One of the common challenges parents face with their young children is power struggles. When you ask your child to do something, and they refuse, you could spend countless hours and endless energy trying to get them to comply.

Sometimes, the more persistent you are, the more resistant they can become. However, several strategies exist to avoid these arguments with your strong-willed kids. Here are two methods you can adapt to fit some common parenting scenarios.

Ask critical-thinking questions.

Sometimes, kids don't understand the consequences of their actions — they lack the appropriate problem-solving skills to help them understand why you're making certain requests. Instead of telling them to do something, ask questions that make them think critically about the situation. If they leave their toys outside before a storm, ask what could happen to them and how they could prevent that. When your child understands that leaving toys out during a storm could damage them, they will realize that putting them away is a good idea.



Remember, when children are forced to do something they don't want to do, they will focus more on being angry at you rather than learning a lesson or new habit. Encouraging them to develop their own conclusions will help them better understand the impact of their decisions.

Offer choices and the opportunity to choose.

Giving your children choices helps them feel like they have some freedom over what they get to do. Sometimes children refuse to comply with requests because you've offered them no other option. If you want your child to clean their room, don't demand that they do it. Ask what they want to start on first — make the bed, put away their toys, or hang up clothes. Providing alternatives and allowing them to make a choice will not only get the job done faster but will also increase their confidence in knowing you value their opinion.

Navigating power struggles with children can be a challenging aspect of parenting. But implementing effective strategies can make a significant difference in maintaining harmony at home. So give these methods a try and watch as your relationship with your child grows.