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JAMES BLAKE'S STORY



Andre Agassi and James Blake of the 2006 U.S. Open

At the 2006 U.S. Open, James Blake and Andre Agassi played one of the best tennis matches in history. Blake's performance in the match was impressive, but his life story is even more impressive.

James Blake began to play tennis when he was very young. But when he was 13, he got a serious illness called scoliosis. Scoliosis makes a person's back crooked. Blake had to wear a back brace 18 hours a day for the next four years. But that didn't stop him. In a few short years, Blake was the best college tennis player in the United States. Then he left college to become a professional player. Because Blake was handsome and polite, the media loved him. People magazine named him "world's sexiest athlete."

Everything was perfect until May 6, 2004, when Blake had a terrible accident. He fell down during a tennis match and broke his neck. Luckily he wasn't paralyzed, but he couldn't play tennis. But that was not the end of Blake's troubles. Two months after he had his accident, his father Thomas died of cancer. Then, a few days after his father's death, Blake woke up in terrible pain. He couldn't move his face. All the hospital, the doctors gave him some bad news. He had an illness called amter. The doctors said that he got sick because he was upset about his father's death.

But Blake remembered his father's words. "If there's a problem, you're going to fix it." So as soon as he recovered, Blake started to play tennis again.

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LIGHTNING STRIKES SEVEN TIMES!

Some people say that lightning never strikes twice. But sometimes, it does! Just ask Roy Sullivan, a park ranger from Virginia, survived an incredible seven lightning strikes.

Six of the strikes hit Sullivan at Shenandoah National Park. The first happened in 1942 when he was standing in a lookout tower. It blew off one of his toes. The second strike occurred in 1949 while he was driving. It burned off his eyebrows. The third strike came in 1970 as he was walking across his front yard. It burned his shoulders. The fourth, in 1972, hit him when he was standing in a ranger station. That strike burned off all of his hair. The fifth, sixth, and seventh strikes all occurred within just four years. The fifth strike happened in 1973. Sullivan was at work when he saw that a storm cloud was forming. He got in his truck and tried to outrun the cloud. As soon as he was sure that he was safe, he got out of his truck. But that was a mistake.

"I actually saw the lightning shoot out of the cloud this time," he said. "It was coming straight for me." The strike set his hair on fire and traveled down his leg. Then it blew off his shoe. The sixth bolt came in 1974 as he was checking a compass. Finally, the seventh found him in 1977 while he was fishing.

Before he died at age 71 (not from a lightning strike), Sullivan survived damage to both his body and his relationships. After people heard his story, they were afraid to be around him. "Naturally, people avoid me," Sullivan told a reporter. "I was walking with the chief ranger one day, and lightning struck way off to the side," he said. "I'll see you later, Ray."

[illegible]

THE BILINGUAL CHILD



If you live in an English-speaking country but your first language is not English, what language will you speak to your children at home? What if you and your spouse speak different languages? Which language will you use with your children? If your child hears both languages at home, will he have problems when he gets to school? Here is some information that might help to answer these questions.

First, which language should you use with your child at home? At birth, all children can hear the sounds of any language. However, if you speak to a child in just one language, after about six to nine months, he will only hear the sounds of that language. If you want a child to have two first languages, he will need to hear each of them at least 30% of the time when he is a baby. If you and your spouse speak two different languages, you may each decide to talk to your baby in your first language, or you might choose the language that the child will not hear in school. In both cases, your child will benefit.

Second, how will do bilingual children do in school? When a child grows up with two first languages, he will sometimes confuse them. If he can't think of a word in one language, he might use a word from the other language. However, this will stop as soon as the child learns enough vocabulary. It is also true that a bilingual child might learn to read more slowly than a monolingual child. However, he will soon catch up. Then he will be able to read, write, and speak two languages for the rest of his life. And that is a wonderful gift to give any child.

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