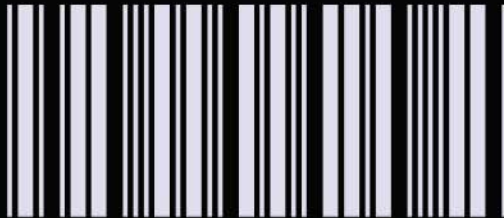


P U T



A



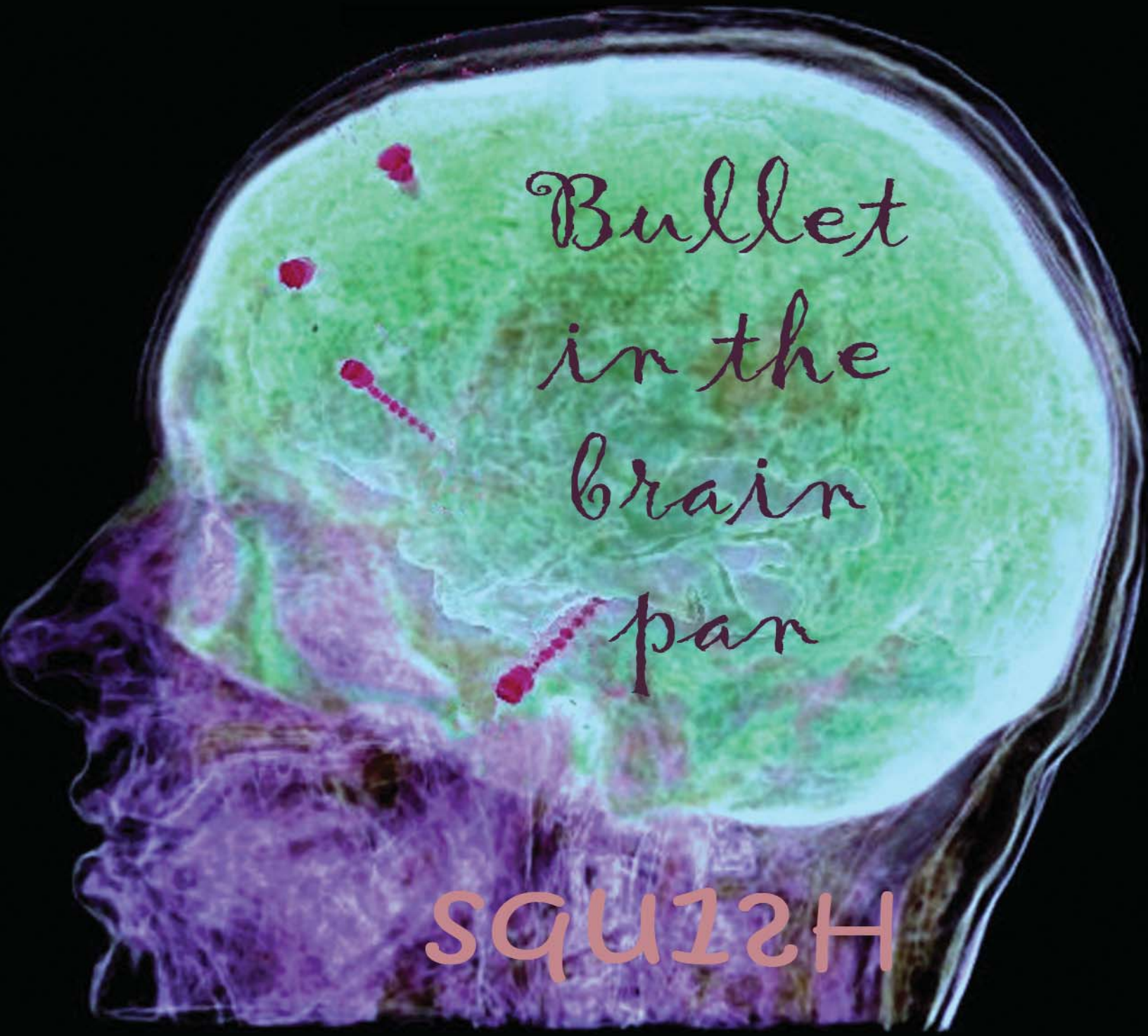
B U L L E T



T O



M E



Bullet
in the
brain
pan

SQUISH

JWR – 4.19

Put a Bullet to Me

I always liked Numbers.

I count. Too much. I count my fingers. I know how many there are, but I still count them. Over and over. I touch my thumb to my pinkie (1), then to my ring finger (2), then to my middle finger (3), then to my index finger (4), then to my index finger again (5) because it's actually the index finger touching the thumb. The thumb needs to be counted so I hit five. I count the letters of random words, names and phrases. Sometimes I'll do it on my fingers. "Paging" has six letters so I spell it out in my head, each letter releases a finger from the fist of one hand. P – Thumb. A – Index finger. G – Middle Finger. I – Ring finger. N – Pinkie. G – Thumb again, starts all over. I keep going until I end on the pinkie, an open hand. I spell "paging" five times in a row to make it work. 1 2 3 4 5 6 - 1 2 3 4 5 6 - 1 2 3 4 5 6 - 1 2 3 4 5 6 - 1 2 3 4 5 6. Five is a good number. I like to end on five.

I count my teeth with my tongue. Twenty-eight teeth. Fourteen on the top. Fourteen on the bottom. Seven in each quadrant. I mourn the loss of my wisdom teeth. I count where the teeth meet, too: twenty-six places to floss. Then I can't decide if I should count the back side of my last molars to make it thirty. They don't have a tooth bordering the back side of them, so they're not quite the same. I don't count them as often. I also don't floss them as often. I sometimes count over and over until my tongue gets numb and scratched up to the point where I can't feel where one tooth ends and the next begins.

Ten is an amazing number. Now I know why they tried to convert to decimal time in France. With my fingers I'll direct like a conductor: up, down, left, right, northwest, southeast, northeast, southwest, forward and back. The Cardinal directions and the z-axis. The z-axis is important, although sometimes difficult to accomplish depending on free range at the moment. I'll do the ten-directions with my toes, too. And my tongue, too. That's a good one because unless I'm talking people can't tell I'm doing it. I like to do it twice, once and then in reverse of the first time. Twenty is a good number, too, but it isn't anything without ten. I don't actually count the number of times I do it. Sometimes I'll only do it once or twice, sometimes I'll do it until I'm satisfied it's done correctly. I don't know what that means. Sometimes I'll do the ten-directions with my hands and feet or my feet and tongue at the same time.

Never all three at once. What does that mean? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10.

I count stairs when I'm going up or down. I thought everyone did. I especially do it on stairs I use frequently so I know when I'm near the bottom as if the number of stairs will change at some point. There are twenty-four stairs at work: nine, then a short, straight landing, then fifteen more going up. I don't like taking an extra step on the landing. Luckily I'm tall. Although twenty-five would be a better number, it's not legitimate because there are only twenty-four stairs. I'll often spell out a word or a phrase that's in my head with each step. Rarely am I spelling something that multiplies to twenty-four evenly. When it does work out as with "Hello, I am John," (twelve letters, twelve twice is twenty-four) nothing has changed but I feel like I accomplished something. Cross it off my task list. "Helloiamjohnhelloiamjohn."

Do I count the spaces and punctuation? Sometimes I do. They're not letters, but they're there. They matter. A space is empty, but it has as much meaning as a letter. If we didn't have punctuation, we'd all sound like Christopher Walken. Sometimes I do count spaces and punctuation after I didn't on the same trip. That just doesn't feel right.

There are thirteen stairs to my basement. They're no fun.

I do some graphic design and page layouts at work. The graphic design isn't a problem, but I use QuarkXpress for the layouts and I get caught up in making the layout mathematically perfect. I like eighths of an inch because one eighth is 0.125. The text and picture boxes should be sized in increments of eighths of an inch, the spacing between a box and other boxes and the gutter and the margins should be incremented in eighths of an inch. I literally spent the majority of a week a few months ago tweaking the layout of a sixteen page booklet nobody gives a shit about. One page (page eleven) bothers me because it has three rows, each row has

multiple tables, and I couldn't wrap my head around the math to make it look neat and equal in font size and table size and yet still obey my eighths of an inch rule. I guess it's more of a guideline. I noticed another mistake just the other day. I can't believe I missed it; the one box has got to be off by a thirty-second of an inch, maybe as much as a sixteenth.

Colors are always a problem for me, too, especially with that sixteen page booklet. It's a yearly schedule for technical courses and I try to use different colors every year. To get my font colors I generally invert the colors of an image I am using so they're opposite, but I know they're related. If I start from there, I'm generally happy. If I need different shades, I change the black value percentage by tens in the CMYK levels. Ten is a good number. I could just use black, I guess.

- 1 - [wo]man vs. nature
- 2 - [wo]man vs. man
- 3 - [wo]man vs. the environment
- 4 - [wo]man vs. machines/technology
- 5 - [wo]man vs. the supernatural
- 6 - [wo]man vs. self
- 7 - [wo]man vs. god/religion

I have a shredder at my house. I shred every piece of mail with my name on it. I shred envelopes and offers and free address labels and credit card applications and Val-pak coupons. I rip the page off catalogs and magazines that has my address so I can shred it. Sometimes catalogs have an order form in the middle of them with my address preprinted on it. Those get shredded, too.

The shredded papers stay in their own bag. They don't get mixed in with regular trash. If someone finds a bag of my trash, I don't want them to be able to trace it back to me. If someone finds a bag of my shredded papers, I don't want them to have access to my trash.

I get stuff delivered to my house. My name and address are on the boxes. I don't break down the boxes and put them in with my regular trash. They stay separate. Sometimes I'll get a padded envelope with one book or one DVD in it. They can't get shredded, too thick. I can't tear off the address label to shred because they never come off cleanly enough to go through the shredder to my satisfaction. They get stuck inside a box, separate from the trash, separate from the shredded papers. It has to be separate. If someone found a box or envelope with my

name on it in my shredded paper bag they would know all those shredded papers were mine without doing any work.

I use utility scissors to cut up expired credit cards, health insurance cards, and other cards too thick to get shredded. I cut them into thin strips; usually I get about a dozen strips with my first cuts on the credit card the long way. Then I cut those strips up into small, square-ish pieces. I like cutting up more than one credit card at a time so if someone wanted to piece it back together it would be that much harder. The pieces get thrown in with the shredded papers, not in the trash and certainly not with the boxes. My hand tends to get sore from the unfriendly design of the scissors.

Yes, I recycle.

I also separate my Legos.

I have two Tupperware bins. One hold the bricks and plates, the other holds all the other pieces.

In the bin with the bricks and plates, the bricks and plates are separated by size and color. All the white 2x4 bricks are stuck together, all the red 1x4 bricks are stuck together, all the blue 1x6 plates are stuck together, etc. There are always a few bricks of each size in low quantities. Those get put with a similar color of the same size. So I may only have three 2x4 brown bricks. They get stuck with the 2x4 black bricks.

The bin with all the other Lego pieces has them separated by similar characteristics into bags. The easy ones are the wheels or the people figures. The more difficult ones to categorize are the odd pieces where you only have a few of each. Or I have dilemmas where I put all the windows into one bag, but do windshields go with the windows or with the car parts?

Yeah, this is why you can't play with my Legos. Because you won't put them back right when you're done.

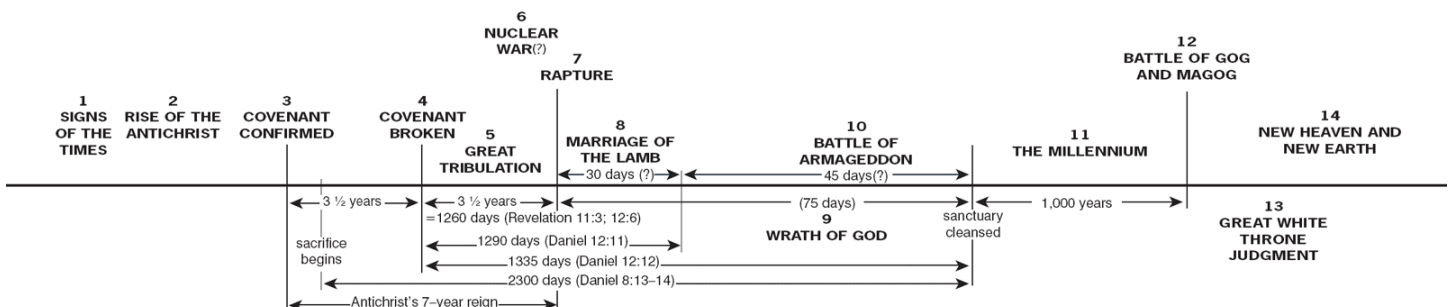


Chart unrelated

A couple weeks ago I was working at my company's warehouse and during my visit, I used the bathroom. I zipped up; washed and dried my hands. I walked to the door and stopped. The door handle is metal. I stood looking at it, hesitant to touch it. I just washed my hands; now I have to touch a bathroom door handle to pull it open? I thought about the germs on it. I thought about ways to open the door without touching it. The handle didn't extend away from the door enough for me to use my foot, which is how I would have preferred to do it. I thought about grabbing a paper towel and using it as a protective layer between my hand and the handle, but once I open the door, I would want to get rid of it and the garbage is around the corner in the bathroom, so to throw it away would mean the door would probably close before I was able to get out. Not only that, but a paper towel is porous; the germs would just come right through it like it wasn't even there. I could use my sleeve, pull it down over my hand and use it in the same manner as the paper towel method, but the same problem of porousness comes into play and unlike the paper towel, I can't just throw my shirt away. I would have door handle germs on my shirt, possibly forever. What if I rubbed my face on my shirt sleeve later? I could get door handle germs in my eyes. I considered waiting for someone to come in the bathroom and slip out without touching anything like a ninja, but there was no telling when someone would need to use the bathroom. After a few seconds of debate, I grabbed the door handle with my hand. But I did it quickly. And then I wiped my hand on my pants. I've never stopped and not been able to simply walk out of a bathroom before.

Am I worse than I was a few years ago? It's hard to tell. I've never quite categorized myself, but I guess I exhibit some signs of compulsive behavior... such as my compulsive behavior.

I know I used to make clicking sounds in my throat. Over and over. I've been able to move away from that. But I have this feeling...

Things are going to get much, much worse.

32 letters. 41 letters, spaces and punctuation. 9 syllables. 8 words. 1 loaded sentence.

John