



Urban Times

**ARCHIVES**

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This document contains these stories from  
past issues of Urban Times  
(or its predecessor, The Lockerbie Letter):

**FROM JUNE 2006**

Page 2: Part 2 of “Confessions of a Jeopardy!  
champion.” (Part 1 can be found in the May  
2006 archives.)

From June 2006:

# Confessions of a Jeopardy! champion

*When last we left Ed Angleton, the Cottage Home resident had finished telling us about the events that led up to his appearance on Jeopardy! and the game-one victory that extended his appearance on the iconic television game show. Now, our modern-day Ulysses continues his Homeric saga.*

## Second of two parts

**5** **THE SECOND GAME.** GAME 1 IS OVER. THERE IS NO TIME FOR SAVORING THE victory. We rush back to the Green Room and I grab my garment bag and pull out another shirt and tie. I have 15 minutes to change into my “Friday” clothes.

We were advised to bring three changes of wardrobe to the taping. Nobody remembers on Friday what you wore on Monday. I change and have my make-up retouched. I transfer the photo of my dog, Magic, to the new shirt.

It’s back to the set and time to defend my championship. I am given podium one, the champion’s podium. It feels good. I’m ready to face off against Lars and Louise.

As returning champion I pick the first question in the category “Quotable Cinema” and the clue is revealed. It’s easy. It’s a meatball hanging in the middle of the strike zone. I’m ready to bat this one out of the park.

Only one problem: Lars has rung in first. Lars continues to ring in first and runs the category. That was my category! I knew every answer in that category and I was shut out. The Buzzer hates me. I am reduced to the status of spectator until the 14th clue is revealed. Watching the game at home when it aired, my wife asks, “You really did win didn’t you?”

At the first break, the scores are \$4,200 for Lars, \$2,600 for Louise and a paltry \$1,000 for me. During the interview Alex asks me about how Jenny and I met. It’s a cute story that boils down to one word: Fate. And fate was about to bounce back into my corner again. I started to gain ground on the leader and at the end of the round I was trailing by only \$800.

The roll continued in the Double Jeopardy! round, helped

out by incorrect Daily Double responses by both of my opponents. Lars found the last Daily Double. At the time he had \$9,600 and I had jumped out to an impressive \$15,200. Lars wagered \$6,000 and missed, dropping him out of contention. I missed the next clue and ended the round with \$13,200.

We reach Final Jeopardy! Neither Louise nor Lars could wager enough to catch me. It’s a lock game. I wager enough to not lose if I get it wrong: \$3,200. The category is “Historic Names,” and the clue is “When Alexander Hamilton & James Monroe nearly met in a duel, this man interceded & defused the situation.”

The Jeopardy! writers love irony. The answer is “Who is Aaron Burr,” the same man who would kill Hamilton in a duel 12 years later. It was even more ironic from a personal standpoint. The weekend before, my wife and I had hosted our annual Mardi Gras party. We try each year to invite a diverse group of people, and as a result had two guests on almost total opposite sides of the political spectrum. I remember remarking that evening that if it had been 200 years earlier they would be in the back yard settling their political differences with pistols at 20 paces, exactly the way Hamilton and Burr settled theirs.

I win my second game. Again my knees are weak and I feel completely drained. No time to savor the victory as everyone wants to go home. I hurriedly change into my traveling clothes, throw my jacket and dress shirt in my bag and rush to catch the taxi they’ve called for me. The coordinators tell me they’ll send plane reservations for next week’s return trip by e-mail. I head for my cab and tell the driver to take me to the airport.. I’m taking the red-eye back to Indy (by way of Detroit).

**6** **HOMEWARD BOUND.** I arrive at the airport and check my bag. Since I’m about four hours early for my flight, there’s no crowd at the security check point and I whisk through. I find a relatively quiet spot near my gate and call home. Jenny answers on the second ring. I ask, “Is the good luck candle still lit?”

“Yes, why?” she responds. “Well, you you’d better blow it out because it looks like we’ll need it again next week when I come back here to defend my status as returning champion.”

For the next few minutes all I can hear over the phone is a series of shrieks and screams. When she’s calmed down I give the details as I can remember them and

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tell her the shows will air March 23 and 24. I tell her she can tell whoever she needs to, but that she shouldn't give out any of the details.

I suddenly realize that I'm getting very hungry. I pay far too much for a burger and fries. I return to the gate and wait for my flight.

The flight home is full. Among the passengers, about 30 recently minted Marines going home from training in San Diego. Let's see someone try something on this flight. The flight attendants begin the beverage service. I buy a cocktail hoping that it will help me get a little sleep on the crowded plane. While I'm sitting there in the almost dark of the cabin the realization of what I've accomplished finally starts to set-in. I'm a two-day Jeopardy! champion. A very large smile creeps across my face. It never occurs to me that I'm still wearing the make-up from the taping.

**7 THE HOME FRONT.** I arrive home early Wednesday morning. Jenny picks me up from the airport. I'm tired beyond belief. She asks if I want to get some breakfast. No, I just want to sleep. We go home and I sleep till noon.

When I arose I checked my e-mail. The reservation information is there. The show pays the airfare of the returning champion. I called the hotel and made a reservation for the following week. Returning champions must still pay for their own lodging. The rest of the day is spent relaxing at home with Jenny and Lucy, our three-month-old Basset Hound puppy. As much as Jenny and I loved Magic (who died just before the first trip to Los Angeles.), we found that we really needed another hound to partially fill the void his passing left.

Thursday was back to work day. Everyone had a thousand questions. I really couldn't tell them much about it, but did inform them that I would be using a few vacation days the following week for a return trip to L.A.

The weekend is a blur. We celebrate a belated birthday with my father and my sister's family. Pick up the dry cleaning. We run errands here and there. Sunday comes and I pack for the return trip.

**8 ALL HAIL THE RETURNING CHAMPION.** Monday morning I departed for L.A. This time the flight left a little later than my previous flight west, and I arrived in L.A. in mid-afternoon. It's raining again. I check-in to the hotel and do some reading before dinner.

Being somewhat superstitious, I order the same meal as last week. At dinner I once again try to play spot the Jeopardy! contestant. I identify two likely suspects. I return to my room to watch the show and relax before going to bed.

The next morning I rise early and head down to the restaurant for breakfast. I spot the two people from last evening there. Yeah, they're contestants. They have no idea



Ed Angleton and Jenny Elkins-Angleton in front of their Cottage Home residence. In Part 1 of "Confessions of a Jeopardy! champion," Angleton wrote: "There's a short interview. I tell them about my 112-year-old house in Cottage Home. They ask what I would do with the money in might win. I tell them about my 112-year-old house in Cottage Home."

that they're going to face the Jeopardy! machine named Ed.

Back up stairs I change into my battle gear — dress slacks, dress shirt, tie and navy blue blazer. I'm even wearing the same socks I wore the previous week. I wonder if maybe I should not have washed them. I load two more shirts and ties into a garment bag and head downstairs to catch the shuttle.

Since the taping schedule this week is Tuesday and Wednesday, I'm staying over on Tuesday night this time. My flight home is scheduled for Wednesday. I'm confident that it will need to be rescheduled for Thursday or late Wednesday evening. I intend to sweep the competition before me and emerge as a 12-day champion. I am Conan the Quizmaster! At least that's the plan.

Again there's a small group of people dressed in appro-

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priate Jeopardy! fashion. I wander over to where they're gathered; more small talk. I neglect to inform them that I'm the returning champion and the person who will be ending their dreams of Jeopardy! glory. We ride to the studio. It has the same feel as last time. I call my wife to confirm that the candle is lit. It is.

All is well with the world. As we're waiting in the parking garage, someone brings up the question of who the returning champion is. Rats! I was hoping to keep the suspense going just a little while longer. "Uh, that would be me," I reply, trying my best to look unimposing. Maybe I can lull them into a false sense of security. The contestant van pulls up before anyone can ask any further questions.

We get to the Green Room and I'm given the place of honor — the returning champion's chair. I find that the returning champion's chair is not as comfortable as it looks. It sits too low to the ground and, having no arms, is hard to get out of. The glory is fading already. The returning champion's chair should be a grand, imposing piece of furniture, not some refugee from a hotel lobby. It should be throne-like with perhaps a couple of skulls mounted on the back.

We go through the same routine as last week, filling out forms and taking the pledge not to "Quell the Mo." Once again the rules are explained and the spelling rules for Final Jeopardy! are emphasized.

It's practice time. We go out to the set. I take my place behind podium one, the Champion's Podium, my podium. This morning I've got it all going. I'm ▶▶

▶▶ lightning fast on the buzzer. I jump from category to category effortlessly. I do so well, that during my second practice time, the coordinators ask me to stop ringing in so they can get checks on the other players.

Oh my God! They're quelling my Mo! No I can't stop. I can't let up. These people need to see how hopeless their situation is. They need to know they're playing for second place! "Um, OK," I respond and set the buzzer down on the podium. The first two victims are chosen and it's time to play.

**9 GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG (THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS).** I take the stage, advance to the Champion's Podium and sign-in, being very careful to sign-in as close the way I did it the previous week. Very superstitious.

My opponents are Nemanja Dundjerovic and Trisha Murai. I pick Onomatopoeia for \$200. Nemanja rings in first. OK, great, this is starting off like the last game. He gets it right. He stays in the category with the \$400 clue. I get in first and answer correctly. I'm on my way.

I run off five correct answers and one incorrect response before anyone else can ring in. At the first break I've got \$1,800 more than Trisha and \$2,600 more than Nemanja. During the interview Alex and I discuss how my house came to be named Runnymede. A very nice story; Alex is

impressed.

The first round continues and I continue to dominate. I'm leading with \$5,800; Trisha has \$1,200 and Nemanja is in the red with -\$800. I've gotten 14 right and four wrong, which means that I rang in first 18 times.

The Double Jeopardy! round begins. Nemanja, by virtue of being in last place, starts off. The first question goes unanswered. I ring in, but it's too late. Trish gets the second question. I get the third. Nemanja begins to climb back into the fight. My timing on the buzzer suddenly decides to leave me. I only ring in first a total of nine times — seven right, two wrong.

More importantly, I get none of the Daily Doubles. By about the 20th question, Nemanja catches up with me. I get the next one wrong. OH NO!! I'm losing. I'm behind. Trisha, who up until this moment had not been much of a factor, rings in on the next two and gets them right. What is she doing? I need that money to regain the lead. I grab the last question as time runs out and two questions are left on the board — two high-valued questions which I needed. The scores at the end of Double Jeopardy!: Nemanja, \$10,300; Trisha, \$3,200; and myself with \$10,200.

Alex reveals the Final Jeopardy! category. Oh my God! It's Military History. I love Military History. Military History is one of my hobbies. I play games based on Military History.

I'm so excited I could wet my pants. From off to the left I hear a male voice say, "Oh, no." Nemanja doesn't like the category. This could work out after all. Bring it on Alex! Let's have something from the Hundred Years War, the Thirty Years War, the Seven Years War, the Napoleonic Wars. Anything, just bring it!

I wager \$10,000 without blinking an eye. Finally the clue is revealed. "In 2005 a single sapling was planted at an army barracks in Australia to mark the 90th anniversary of this battle..." Oh, this is so easy. It's the Battle of Gallipoli. Mel Gibson even made a movie about it. Wait, Mel Gibson made a movie about it? It's not obscure. It's pop culture.

Maybe Nemanja and Trisha didn't see it the 5,000 times it's been on TV. Time's up. Trisha's answer is revealed first. She saw the movie. It's Gallipoli. She finishes with \$4,399.

Next it's my turn. My answer is revealed. It's Gallopoli.

Oh, no. I didn't. Yes — I did. I misspelled it and that changed the pronunciation. It's wrong. I'm in shock. I don't believe this. My category and I finish with \$200.

Nemanja gets it right. He saw the movie, and finishes with \$10,500. Well at least it didn't cost me the game. Losing my timing and letting Nemanja back into it cost me the game. Otherwise, I would have been far enough ahead that I could not have been caught and Final Jeopardy! would not have mattered as I would not have bet enough to lose on a miss.

I stay to watch the next two games being taped. Nemanja loses in the next game. I don't know whether that makes me sad or happy. It dawns on me that Nemanja is originally

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from Serbia and the Battle of Gallipoli was fought during World War I, which of course was started, more or less, when a Serbian national assassinated the Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria. I suddenly develop a newfound empathy for Franz.

I return to the hotel and lay around the rest of the day feeling dejected. I don't even watch that day's episode of Jeopardy!. I return to Indy the next day.

**10** **PARTY TIME.** As the time for my first episode to air approached, I had shaken off my minor funk at having my dreams of conquest and glory cut short.

My incredible wife, Jenny, and I had discussed having a viewing event long before we knew whether or not I would even get a call to be on the show. Now that it had happened — and, even better, I had won two games — we needed to make it a reality.

We called around to various venues, but nothing was working. Finally, I called Champs! Downtown in Circle Centre. The manager was happy to accommodate us, all 85 of us. We invited our families. We invited our co-workers. We invited our friends. We invited our neighbors. Champs! gave us one entire section and at 7:30 p.m. two of the large screens were switched to Jeopardy!.

My Jeopardy!, my first win, my first major TV appearance. I was introduced first during the opening and everyone cheered. My opponents were booed. Everybody was into the game. I answer correctly and cheers erupt. The first commercial break comes up, I stand and take in a thundering ovation. I'm a hit.

Meanwhile in the other sections of the restaurant, people are noticing what's going on in our section. The connection is being made. The guy standing there in the middle of the crowd with his arms raised in a victory salute is the guy on the screen. A couple of smaller screens are also switched over. No small feat considering the NCAA tourney is on. The place is rocking as I roll over my opponents. When I'm crowned as the new Jeopardy!, champion the crowd goes wild.

I watch the Friday game at home with my wife and her mother and stepfather. On Monday nights, my wife and I bowl in a league from St. Luke's Methodist church at Woodland Bowl. My mother-in-law brings a cake and food for a small celebration. At 7:30 p.m. the TV in the lounge is turned to Jeopardy!. I watch my brilliant first round, my sluggish second and my disastrous Final Jeopardy! Everyone present is shocked that they didn't allow my Final Jeopardy! answer. I explain the rule, but disbelief still reigns.

**11** **THE WRAP UP.** Overall, my Jeopardy! experience is one that I'll always treasure. Yeah, I know that seems trite, but it's true. Along the way I met some very wonderful people, accomplished feats that many

others have only dreamed about, realized my 15 minutes of fame and managed to pick up \$26,599 doing it.

What am I going to do with the money? Well, you see, I've got this 113-year-old house. ■