

#PLANTS

They Clean Too

Houseplants Proven to Clean Air and Promote Better Health, Study Finds



In an age where indoor air quality is becoming a growing health concern, two common houseplants, English Ivy and Lavender, are emerging as natural, low-maintenance solutions for cleaner, healthier homes.

A 2005 scientific study (PMID: 20947134) revealed that English Ivy (*Hedera helix*) can significantly reduce airborne contaminants in a matter of hours. According to the research, the plant was shown to eliminate 94% of airborne fecal particles and 78% of airborne mold in just 12 hours.

In addition to tackling biological pollutants, English Ivy has been found to remove several volatile organic compounds (VOCs), commonly found in indoor environments. These include:

- Formaldehyde, a carcinogenic gas emitted from furniture, carpets, and cleaning products.
- Benzene, often present in household cleaners.
- Xylene, used in paints and solvents.
- Trichloroethylene, found in degreasers and dry-cleaning agents.

However, experts warn that English Ivy contains triterpenoid saponins, which are toxic to pets if ingested. Homeowners are advised to keep the plant out of reach of cats and dogs. Meanwhile, lavender (*Lavandula spp.*) is gaining popularity not just for its fragrance but also for its health-enhancing properties. Often placed in bedrooms, the lavender plant acts as a natural pest deter-



Salvage workers recovered the bodies of three sailors from the wreck of the U.S.S. West Virginia (far left) months after the attack.

Bonds didn't recognize the logbook's significance until last year, when he moved in with his fiancée, Tracylyn Sharrit, in Hemet, California. She was helping him unpack his books when she noticed the mysterious volume. Every page that had been filled in featured a stamp at the top, which read either 'Pearl Harbor' or 'Pearl Harbor, T.H.,' short for Territory of Hawaii.

● Verna Mохон

In the 1970s, Oretta Kanady was working at the Norton Air Force Base in San Bernardino, California, when she noticed an old logbook in the trash. She didn't know what it was, but she asked her superiors if she could keep it. They said yes.

When she got home, she gave the tome to her teenage son, Michael William Bonds. He never examined it closely, but he kept it.

"I've had it ever since," Bonds, now 65, tells the Washington Post's Michael E. Ruane. "In the last few years, I've moved here, moved there. It's just been in a box."

The volume turned out to be a logbook from the naval base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. Now, half a century later, the National Archives has recovered the text, which includes records from before, during and after the attack on December 7, 1941.

At more than 500 pages, the logbook contains 'regular, handwritten entries from March 1941, when war in Europe was raging but prior to the entry of the United States, to June 1942 at the Battle of Midway,' according to a statement from the National Archives.

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The logbook recorded the baro-

metric pressure, air temperature, water temperature, wind direction, wind force and weather every four hours, as well as the names of the ships that came and went each day. It also featured a section at the bottom of each page titled 'remarks.'

On December 6 and 7, 1941, the 'remarks' sections contained the following notes: "At 0637, unknown submarine (Japanese) attacked, was attacked, and sunk near entrance. At 0755, Japanese aircraft and submarines attacked Pearl Harbor and other military and naval objectives on Oahu."

Sharrit was stunned. Could this kind of contemporaneous account be valuable? The couple contacted experts at Whitmore Rare Books in Pasadena, California, to find out.

"When someone reaches out and says, 'Hey, we've got the station logbook during the attacks of Pearl Harbor,' your ears perk up," Dan Whitmore, the founder of the company, tells the Washington Post, which first reported the discovery. "That's a significant cultural object."

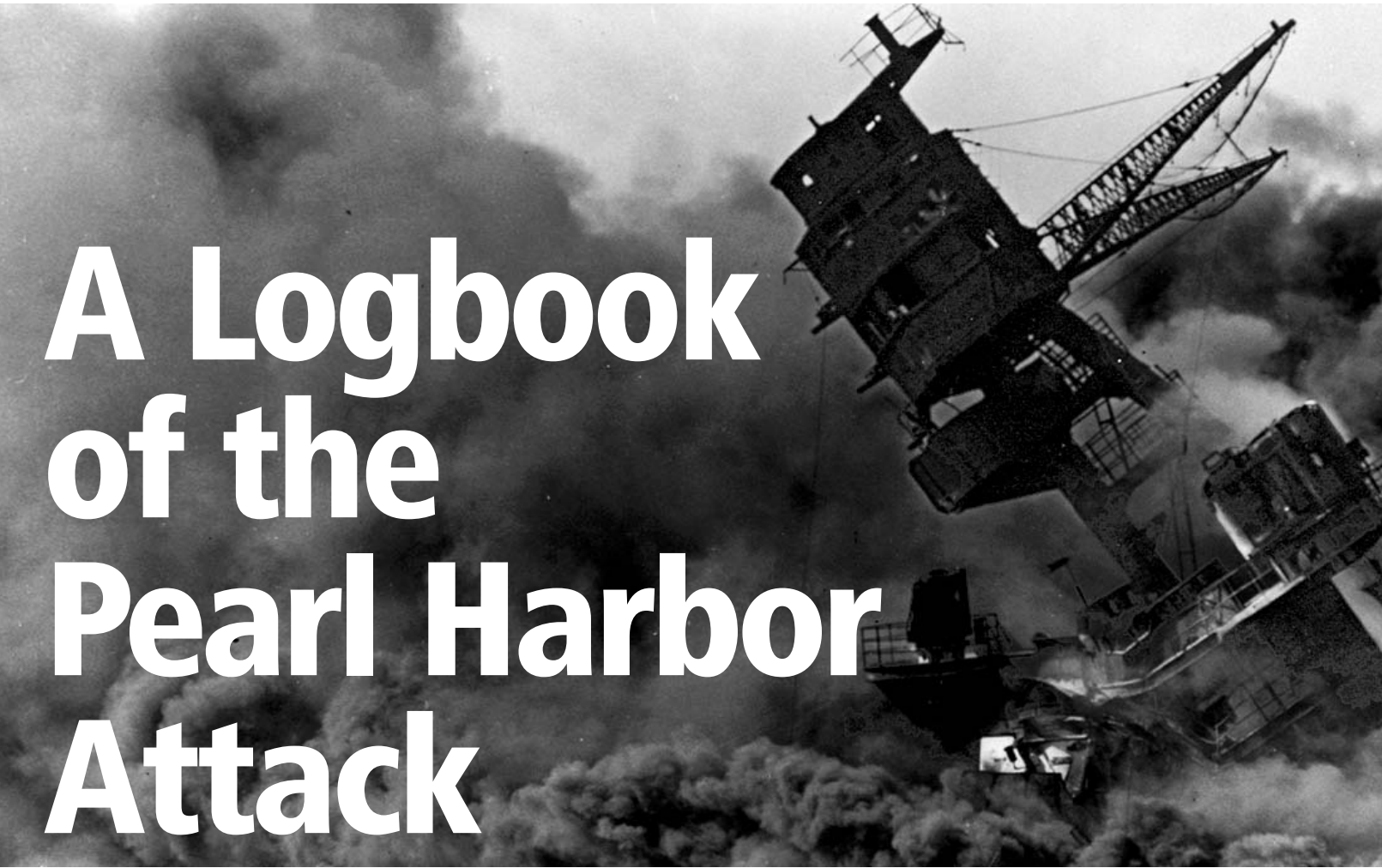
Whitmore wasn't sure how much it was worth, though he wondered if it could be a lot, maybe even six figures. But there was one complication: He worried the book could still be considered government property.

When Whitmore contacted the National Archives, he learned that his hunch had been correct. A special agent with the National Archives flew to California, and the couple handed over their discovery. As gratitude, they received two National Archives T-shirts.

Bonds wishes he could have gotten some sort of compensation for the discovery. After all, without his mother's keen eye, "it would have been gone and nobody would have ever seen it again," he tells the



A total of 429 Oklahoma crew members died as a result of the attack.



A Logbook of the Pearl Harbor Attack

#HISTORY



David Walker, 19, was a mess attendant aboard the USS California.



Julio De Castro (seated, second from left) poses with his family. De Castro and his fellow naval yard workers rescued 32 men from the capsized U.S.S. Oklahoma.

Washington Post. "All I got was a T-shirt so far."

But officials are thankful that the logbook has returned to the National Archives, where it was formally unveiled in August. The digitized pages, along with typed transcriptions of the entries from December 6 through 14, 1941, can be found on the archives' website.

Navy logbooks from World War II have been a vital resource for researchers in recent years. In 2017, the National Archives declassified a trove of 192,500 pages of U.S. naval records. Many of them had been written by sailors based in Pearl Harbor during the 1940s.

In 2023, thousands of volunteers helped researchers digitize the data, which has helped scientists learn more about the climate during the war years.

"The greatest respect must go to the brave servicemen who recorded this data," said lead researcher Praveen Teleti, a climate scientist at the University of Reading in England, in a 2023 statement. "War was all around them, but they still did their jobs with such professionalism. It is thanks to their dedication and determination that we have these observations 80 years on."

When Julio De Castro, a civilian worker at Pearl Harbor's naval yard, reached the capsized U.S.S. Oklahoma on the infamous morning of December 7, 1941, he heard the sound of frenetic tapping of sailors trapped within the hull. Hours earlier, during a surprise assault on the Honolulu military base, Japanese forces had bombarded the American battleship

with torpedoes, sending it rolling onto its side, with more than 450 men still below deck.

Over the next two days, De Castro, a caulker and chipper, labored almost nonstop in a valiant effort to reach the imperiled seamen. The Hawaii native and his fellow naval yard workers ultimately rescued 32 members of the vessel's crew, an act of bravery cited in "Infamy: Pearl Harbor Remembered," a new exhibition at the National WWII Museum in New Orleans, marking the 80th anniversary of the attack.

"As a civilian, De Castro acted on his own initiative, organized a group of individuals, got tools and equipment, and then kept going deeper into the ship," says Tom Czekanski, senior curator and restorations manager at the museum. "They were risking their own lives to rescue these men."

Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor began just before 8 a.m. on December 7. Over the next hour and 15 minutes, Japanese forces damaged or destroyed 19 American ships, leaving the normally peaceful Hawaiian naval base awash in fire and fear. The United States' total death toll from the bombing was 2,403 soldiers and civilians.

In accounts and commemorations of Pearl Harbor, soldiers like Dorie Miller, an African American cook who earned the Navy Cross for shooting down two Japanese airplanes, and Aloysius Schmitt, a Navy chaplain who received the Silver Star for sacrificing his life to help 12 sailors escape the Oklahoma, are widely remembered for their bravery. But few today

recall the contributions of De Castro and his civilian colleagues.

As the Honolulu Star-Bulletin recounted in March 1942, De Castro and his crew came to the scene with blowtorches, pneumatic chipping guns, compressors and other tools needed to break through the ship's thickly armored hull.

"They first tried cutting torches, but the compartment below them caught fire," says Czekanski. "Cork was often used as an insulation in those compartments. The oil-based paint used on ships at the time was so thick that it would burn. The paint on the steel would catch fire."

Next, the rescuers turned to chipping guns. Fitted with chisels, the tools use pneumatic pressure to rapidly hammer away and cut through steel, a slow, laborious process.

"Many battleships of the day had 16 inches of armor on the sides for protection," adds Czekanski. "On the bottom, though, it's closer to a quarter inch, but it's steel. Basically, they are cutting through steel plate with a hammer and chisel."

Adding to the danger was the fact that the workers didn't know what lay beneath them. For all they knew, their chippers could be breaking into fuel tanks, powder magazines, ammunition bunkers or other explosives.

Fortunately, Commander E.P. Kranzfelder had a solution. Assigned to the U.S.S. Maryland, which was moored next to the Oklahoma, he located a manual with schematics and details for the overturned battleship. The Booklet for General Plans of the Oklahoma

would save time and lives as workers tried to break through the keel and rescue the sailors inside.

Even with the booklet, the rescue was long, hard work. The crew labored through the hot day into the cold night, trying to breach the hull. "The Arizona was still burning," De Castro told the Honolulu Star-Bulletin. "I threw a light on us as we worked. And for about an hour, there was antiaircraft firing all over the place. But we kept on working. If the firing got too hot, we'd flatten out against the hull and hope nothing would hit us."

Stephen Bower Young was one of the sailors trapped in the Oklahoma. He and ten fellow seamen were below a gun turret near the bottom of the ship when it capsized. Now, they were stuck near the top of the vessel. With air supply failing and water rising in the pitch-black compartment, Young and the others took turns banging out 'SOS' in Morse code with a wrench.

"We had no knowledge that any attempt at rescue was even being made until the first sounds of the air hammer were heard as dawn came over the islands," Young later wrote in *Trapped at Pearl Harbor*.

As the rescuers began to make headway with the hammering, another problem arose. Their cuts allowed air to escape from inside the ship, sending water rushing into the compartment below. The trapped sailors scrambled to plug up the openings, but they were soon knee-deep in water.

At long last, the work crew managed to break through the hull. Yard worker Joe Bulgo reached in



Rescue boats head towards the USS West Virginia and USS Tennessee after the attack on Pearl Harbor.



The capsized hull of the U.S.S. Oklahoma (right) is visible next to the U.S.S. Maryland.



Sailors attempt to extinguish fires on the U.S.S. West Virginia.

and started pulling out sailors. One pointed to the adjacent compartment and said, "There are some guys trapped in there."

Called the 'Lucky Bag,' this neighboring hold was used to store peacocks and personal items. According to Young, who was stuck inside, De Castro replied, "We'll get 'em out." It took Bulgo an hour to break through the bulkhead. He made three cuts in the steel, then yelled, "Look out for your hands, boys," as he used a sledgehammer to smash through the wall. Young and the ten sailors scrambled to safety.

All told, De Castro and his co-workers rescued 32 men from the Oklahoma. Of a total crew of nearly 1,400 officers and sailors, 429 died as a result of the attack. Navy divers located the last of the sailors' remains in June 1944.

The sinking of the U.S.S. Arizona accounted for around half of the attack's total death toll, with 1,177 officers and crewmen killed and 355 survivors. The battleship's wrecked hull was left in place and now is the site of a national memorial.

Similar rescue efforts at Pearl Harbor failed to mirror De Castro's success. Because the Oklahoma capsized, that team had better luck reaching survivors at the bottom of the ship, which was now above the surface. For ships that sank keel first, it was more difficult and dangerous to reach sailors trapped underwater.

On the U.S.S. West Virginia, tapping from deep within the ship continued for more than two weeks. Rescuers tried to reach the sound, but the damage was too severe. Months later, salvage workers recovered the remains of three sailors, Ronald Endicott, Clifford Olds and Louis Costin, in an air-

tight compartment. On the wall was a calendar with 16 dates crossed off in red pencil: December 7 through December 23.

"A diver had nearly died trying to rescue men from the U.S.S. Arizona, which is one of the reasons they didn't go into the West Virginia," says naval historian Michael Lilly, a founding director of the U.S.S. Missouri Memorial Association and author of the book *Nimitz at Ease*. "The Navy decided it was too dangerous to try and extract them."

The former Navy officer pauses adding, "It would haunt me if it was one of those sailors who heard those guys banging around down there for two weeks. It would never leave me. It's despairing to think we couldn't do anything to bring them up. It's a sad, sad tale."

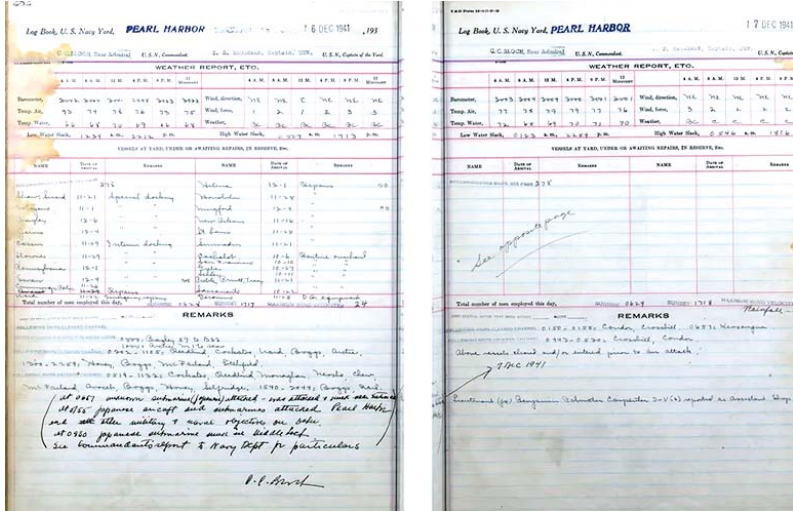
De Castro, for his part, was honored with a commendation by the commandant of the Fourteenth Naval District. He died in 1984. Asked about De Castro years later, Young simply said, "He was a leader of men."

Reflecting on the rescue mission in 1942, De Castro told the Honolulu Star-Bulletin that he received an unexpected request upon returning to the naval yard the night of Monday, December 8.

"Somebody came up to me while I was changing clothes," he said. "I was all in and hungry and wanted to get home. This guy asks me, 'Why didn't you fill out this overtime slip?' I looked at him and said, 'Christ Almighty!'"

"Then, because it was blackout and no transportation was available," the newspaper reported, "De Castro walked five miles through the uncertain second night of the war to his home."

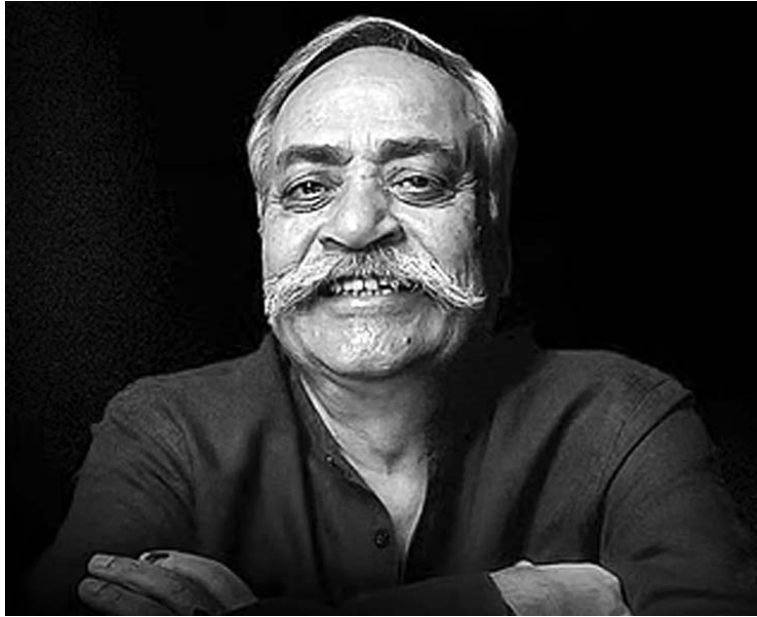
rajeshsharma1049@gmail.com



Pearl Harbor log.

#OBITUARY

"Mile Sur Mera Tumhara"



● Kaku Mathur

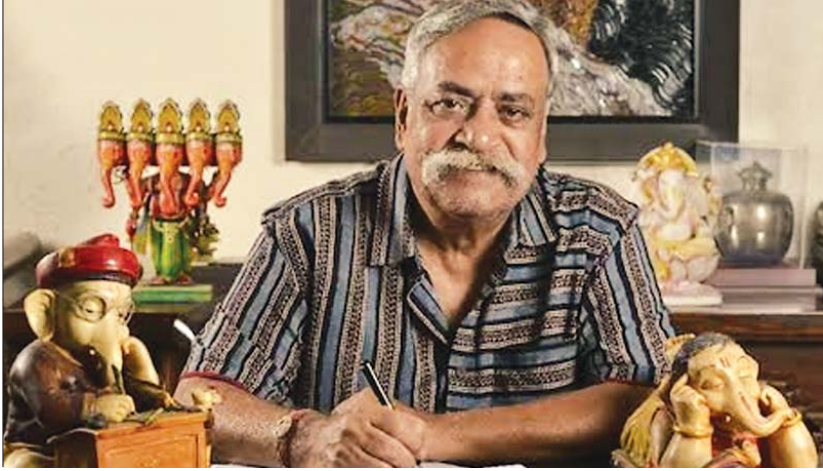
Padma Shri Piyush Pandey was a man of many parts, wielding the willow and the pen with equal dexterity. He was a master of contrasts, equally passionate about the gentleman's game of cricket and the art of a well-executed prank, a duality captured perfectly by the very twist of his moustache.

At the St. Xavier's Jaipur cricket nets, where a Mr. Marshall stood observing the boys from a backward short-leg position, Piyush always played on the front foot. He went on to play cricket for St. Xavier's, St. Stephen's, Delhi University, and Rajasthan teams, besides a few first-class games.

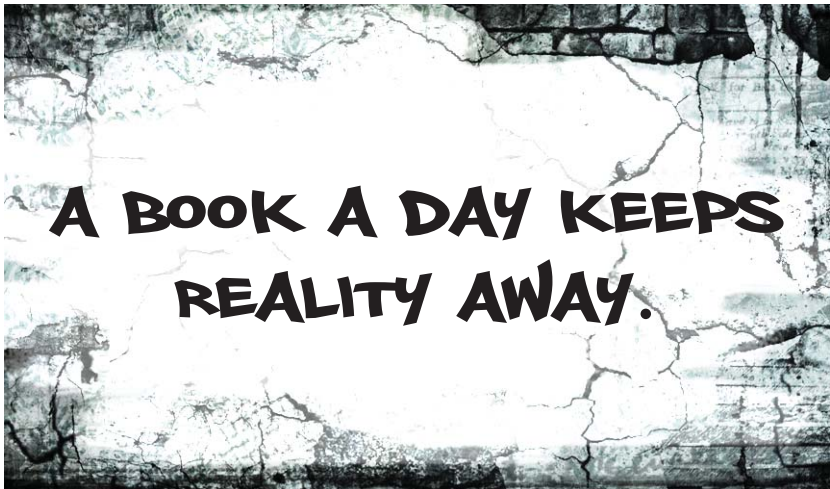
Piyush truly believed "All the world's a stage." He was always up to something. A former senior official in the Government of India, who was his neighbour in the St. Stephen's residence block, remembered him for his "bad-mashi." Blockmates at St. Stephen's recall their room door panes being broken while he played cricket in the corridors with Arun 'Piggy' Lal. He was Vice President of Games at St. Stephen's and a caring leader of the sports community. He was a serious participant in dramatics and was part of the St. Stephen's College Shakespeare Society's annual production of *Anthony and Cleopatra*, doing full justice to the Bard's masterpiece where one finds passion and pain in equal measure. As one would expect of a man who was always where the action was, he also appeared in the Surjit Sircar film *Madras Café*. It is believed that he topped the BA program in his final year at Delhi University.

After completing his education, he moved to Kolkata. He joined the tea industry and spent some time as a tea taster. But something more exciting was brewing. As Ishita, his niece and Ila Arun's daughter, put it, "Piyush Mama came to Bombay because my mother thought his talent was wasted in Calcutta." In Mumbai, Piyush discovered his favourite cup of tea: advertising. At Ogilvy, he transitioned from the client servicing team to the creative department. Over the next 40 years, he revolutionized advertising by infusing it with everyday idioms and relatable, earthy humour. His Fevicol ads, for example, are widely remembered for their brilliance by marketing professionals and home-makers alike. Other memorable works include the Cadbury's "Kuch khas hai hum sabhi mein" campaign and the pug campaign for Hutch, which made the brand and its 'ambassadors' popular with families across the country. He also helped create the iconic campaigns "Mile Sur Mera Tumhara" and "Do Boond zindaagi ke," which became more than just taglines, but emotions woven into the fabric of Indian life, elevating and uniting hearts and minds. His remarkable career at O&M led to him becoming Chief Creative Officer Worldwide and Executive Chairman India.

What truly distinguished him was his joie de vivre and his irrepressible sense of fun. His colleagues reminisce about his booming laughter and how he was always the first to laugh at his own jokes. He famously said, "No audience is going to see your work and say 'how did they do it?' They will say 'I love it.'" While his work certainly made people say 'I love it,' he was also left to wonder, "How did he do it?"



THE WALL

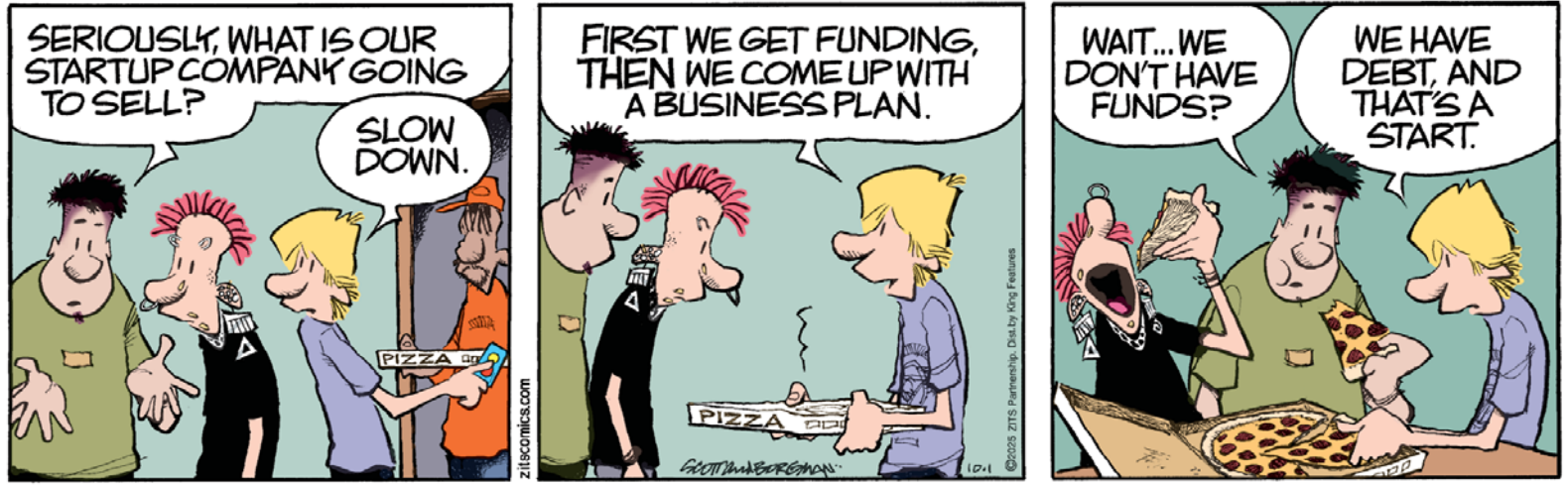


BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman