

NEWS YOU DIDN'T KNOW YOU NEEDED

Carla Cotropia



I AM NOT PROMOTING STEALING BUT THIS IS INTERESTING

BY CARLA COTROPIA

I recently read a fascinating book about Doris Payne. The book is *Diamond Doris, True Story of the World's Most Notorious Jewel Thief*. Doris herself, with the help of Zelda Lockhart, wrote the book. Doris, born in 1930 and now 89, is still confident and felt there was no reason not to "tell it all".

The book starts off slow but the early chapters are important because Doris explains how her thieving ways started. She was born to a poor coal miners family, with a dad that beat her mother. Times were tough and she swore she, because of how her dad treated her mother, would never be dependent on a man. She also saw how in the 1930s and 40s the way America treated Blacks and she decided to never let that stop her from advancing. Her stealing started as a way to get groceries for her family. Next she was looking at watches at age 13 and a white customer entered the store and told her "to run along". Doris left the store but was still wearing the watch.

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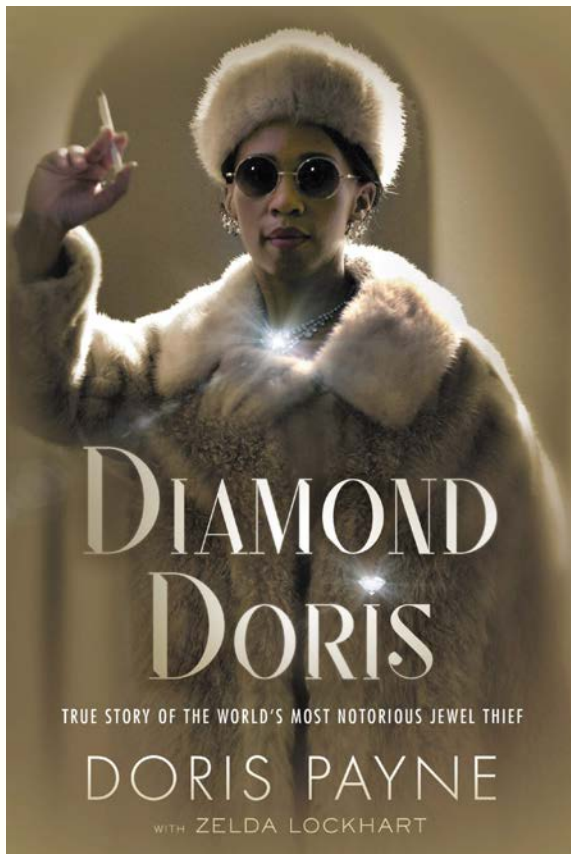
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She went back into the store and returned the watch but the idea had hatched. She realized that she could make people forget and if they noticed she could always say she forgot she was wearing the item. Doris was smart and savvy and began to develop a way of engaging the store clerks to distract them from her fast moving hands.

Doris, as a child, was fascinated by fashion and jewels. She, in the beginning, had her mother sew her clothes, but as she became more successful stealing, she bought expensive clothes to better play the part.

Doris quickly moved away from stealing groceries and focused on her love of diamonds. Her first heist was a \$22,000 ring. She pawned it and got a pittance so she then figured out she needed someone to take her stolen jewels and take care of the selling part.

Doris was always confident and most likely got a thrill out of the experience. She found a partner, whom would take care of the selling part. She also figured out the jewelry stores didn't want the publicity or needed the insurance money and often were reluctant to turn in a claim. Doris would sashay into the best jewelry store in town, Cartier was a favorite, dressed to the nines, and proceed to ask about numerous different rings while coquettishly charming the clerk.

As Doris' heists became more and more successful, meaning more and more valuable jewels were taken, she would upgrade the jewels and clothing she wore when she performed her heist. This went on for six decades. When she would get caught, her partner in crime, would fix it with his political connections. This was before the internet so she remained somewhat faceless for a while. When she did get noticed publicly, she traveled to Europe for her heists.



SETTLING CASES TWO SNEAKERS AT A TIME



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Her biggest heist was in Monte Carlo in the 1970s where she lifted a 10-carat diamond ring valued at \$545,000, which would be worth \$3,500,000 in today's world. Doris became an expert in selecting only the best diamonds. She made a mistake early in her thieving career when she didn't realize the emerald-cut diamond she stole was actually very valuable even if it didn't sparkle as much. She never made that mistake again.

Doris finally got busted, served some time but was released early because of her age and health. Doris tells an incredible story from her proud perspective. As I said, I am not promoting stealing, no way, but this is a very interesting read.



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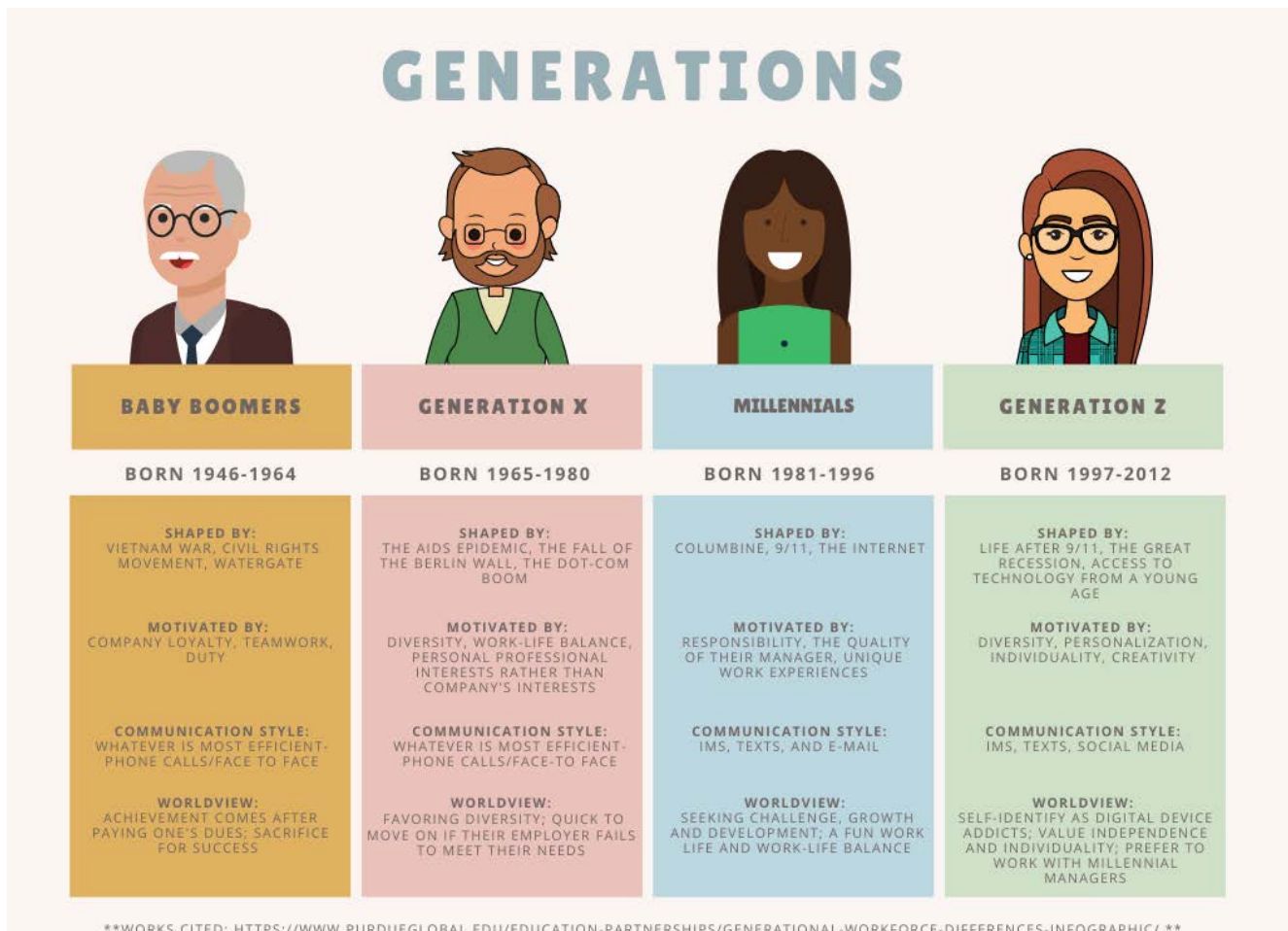
BOOMER BACKLASH

BY CARLA COTROPIA

It finally happened. Generation Z is taking aim at the Boomers, which includes me. In case you don't know Generation Z are kids and young adults born between 1997 and 2012, (ages 7 to 22). The approximate age lines differ but basically anyone born between 1981 and 1996 (ages 23 to 38) is considered a Millennial and anyone born between 1965 and 1980 (ages 39-54) is Generation X. Generation X is a smaller group than Boomers or Millennials and Generation Z, so they aren't making the waves that Millennials and Generation Z are.

Boomers are constantly complaining about Millennials. They say things like, "I am sick and tired of hearing them talk about Quality of Life", or "I can't say anything to them, especially about their work product, without their feelings getting hurt" or "They aren't loyal and will leave in a flash to take a different job". I actually provide a training for Boomers on how to manage Millennials.

So recently when I saw an article in the New York Times by Taylor Lorenz about a new sweatshirt aimed at Boomers, I was interested. I am now officially warning Boomers if a Millennial or Generation Z says to you, "OK Boomer", just know you have been slammed.



According to Lorenz’s article ,“OK Boomer” has become Generation Z’s retort to Boomers in response to Boomers complaining about the Millennials and Generation Z. The article described how a Virginia senior class posed for their senior picture with duct tape plastered across their chests with the words “OK Boomer”.

You can now buy a hoodie on the internet that says, “OK Boomer, Have a Terrible Day.” Yikes, this is starting to make me nervous. I have tried to point out to complaining Boomers that “but for the Millennials”, we wouldn’t have Amazon Prime and Door Dash because Millennials don’t like to drive. Personally I love Amazon Prime and Door Dash, so thank you Millennials.

According to the article, the Millennials and Generation X have been good sports about the Boomer complaints, but Generation Z is putting their collective feet down. How, you ask? By going to the internet to blast us.



For example, every movement needs an anthem and the undisputed Boomer backlash hymn is a song written and produced by Jonathan Williams, a 20-year college student. Titled, “OK Boomer”, the song opens: “It’s funny you think I respect your opinion, when your hairline looks that disrespectful.” Ouch, Boomer alert, no comb-overs, Generation Z likes bald heads!

“OK Boomer” is the perfect response because it is blasé but cutting. It’s the digital equivalent of an eye roll., and a touché because Boomers so frequently refer to younger generations as “Snowflakes”.

The final volley/warning in the article refers to Boomers as being in a Stuck State of Mind because allegedly Boomers don’t like change. Hey, not me! Well, Ok, so maybe I don’t recognize most Grammy nominated songs, and OK so maybe I never got rap, and OK so maybe I like going to the same restaurants over and over and OK so maybe I don’t get the desire to have a tattoo but if I ever do, it would be a pair of red lips on my ass, “For Kiss My Ass”. OK Boomer!!



SETTLING CASES TWO SNEAKERS AT A TIME

QUOTE OF THE MONTH



SETTLING CASES TWO SNEAKERS AT A TIME

A VISIT TO BIGFORK AND WHITEFISH, MONTANA

BY CARLA COTROPIA

I thought I would share the recent trip Tom and I took to Montana. We flew into the Kalispell airport with a connection in Denver. Denver is notorious for causing travel delays but we made it through without a hitch. Kalispell is an okay town but not worth staying there in my opinion. Once we got the rent car, we headed for Bigfork 18 miles away.

Don't you just love a town with the name Bigfork? The name Bigfork comes from the fact that the town is on a fork where two rivers, the Flathead River and the Swan River, flow into the Flathead Lake. Bigfork Montana has 4,270 in population and has a picturesque historic downtown. Both Bigfork and Whitefish are very close to Glacier National Park which has to be one of the most beautiful national parks.

Montana has the big sky like Texas with the added bonus of a backdrop of mountains with minimal people. No crazy drivers in Bigfork running red lights like they do in Houston.

Bigfork was named one of the 100 best small art towns in the nation. We stayed at the Bridge Street Cottages. It was right on the Swan River. The cottage was quite large with a spacious living room with fireplace and TV, a kitchenette and big bathroom and a large bedroom. It worked perfect because Tom could work in the living room and I grabbed the desk in the bedroom. It had a nice porch that overlooked the rushing waters of the Swan River.



VIEW FROM PORCH AT BRIDGE STREET COTTAGES



SETTLING CASES TWO SNEAKERS AT A TIME

Walking distance from the cottage is the historic downtown and a very nice hiking trail that went along the river for approximately two miles. I actually did the hike two days in a row but this necessitated a trip to the chiropractor, Dr. Whipple, whom I found quite good. Even better was the massage/rolfer that I found in his office. Kelly Ware saved me with her hands removing my creaks and rusty hinges, also known as tight spots, from my back.



VIEWS ON THE BIGFORK HIKING TRAIL

Kelly also gave us some insider travel advice. Seems there is a little known hot spring that the locals frequent. Tom and I decided to take the challenge and went to a neighboring town appropriately named Hot Springs. This little tiny community didn't even have cellular service or at least our Verizon phones didn't have any. It was definitely a hippie throwback and I had to take the picture below of someone's views on society. I especially loved the way he decorated a satellite dish.



SETTLING CASES TWO SNEAKERS AT A TIME

We were starving so we checked out the Camas Organic Market in Hot Springs. This was another amazing place. When you entered the small wood building it was a grocery store packed with all kind of things, including a big collection of herbs. As you walked towards the rear of the store, past the pot belly stove, you find a tiny little kitchen with a few chairs. The food was incredible. They even had kombucha on tap. After our lunch we went on a search for the Wild Horse Hot Springs. A friendly gal in the grocery store gave us directions and after traveling down several dirt roads turning this way and that, we found it.



CAMAS MARKET (TOP), SATELLITE DISH (BOTTOM), ROAD TO HOT SPRINGS (RIGHT)

The Wild Horse Hot Springs is -putting in mildly—very rustic. Until recently it was mostly abandoned but now there is a slow attempt to upgrade it. The springs were discovered in 1911 and produce 1,200 gallons of hot water per minute. There is a small changing room with paper thin walls so you have to put your coat on over your bathing suit as you make your way to an individual plunge pool. Once you are in, your body is nice and toasty while your head is in open air which at the time was 30 degrees. The water ranges from 110 to 120 degrees and is laced with lithium.

According to the internet, lithium water, when used to soak in, stabilizes mood swings and relaxes the mind. I figured I definitely need a big soak to unwind my mind.



SETTLING CASES TWO SNEAKERS AT A TIME

I loved the fact it was so rustic and primitive and the fact that it wasn't packed with people and the view was fantastic. I loved it! This is a pretty special off-the-grid place.

I can't leave Bigfork without mentioning the restaurants. We had a very nice meal at Shaffer's restaurant, the Echo Lake Café and the Bigfork Inn. The Big Fork Inn is no longer an inn but is a very good restaurant.

I loved the "mountain motif decor" with Elk heads and bears and big lamp shades covered in birch bark (pictures below). The Bear has a Santa Hat in its mouth.



WILD HORSE HOT SPRINGS

The history of Bigfork Inn is interesting. In 1937 a major fire struck Bigfork and Bigfork Inn burned to the ground. At that time it was an inn and the patrons staying there hauled out the beer barrels trying to save them from the fire. The only problem was it was 20 below zero and the beer barrels froze instantly.



BEAR AT BIGFORK INN



OUTSIDE BIGFORK INN



XMAS DECOR IN BIGFORK



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Neighbors brought garden hoses in an attempt to put out the fire, but the water just froze. The owner was determined and rebuilt the inn as a Swiss chalet style building. It operated as an inn until 2005 when the hotel portion was phased out.

My favorite shopping site was also in Bigfork in a little spot up a winding county road called Kehoe's Agate Shop. When I walked in, I gasped when I saw the treasure trove of minerals and fossils. The rock hound in me was in heaven. Kehoe's was started in 1932 as a family affair and still is. The building is made from the timber from the Helena, a steamboat that traveled along the Flathead River during the 1890s through the 1920s. Jack Kehoe took the Helena apart to build the agate shop. The beams and planks became the frame, floors and walls of the shop. The collection of minerals and fossils made me hyperventilate. The only thing holding me back was the weight limit on my suitcase.



KEHOE'S AGATE SHOP



SETTLING CASES TWO SNEAKERS AT A TIME

Next stop was Whitefish Montana. Whitefish is another small mountain town. We like to stay at the Whitefish Lodge. The Lodge is a big resort type hotel with cozy rugs, elk and moose heads on the walls and they always have a big fire going in the lobby. The fire is made with wood, not gas logs, so it makes nice pops and snaps as you sit next to it. I had to have my picture taken with the grizzly bear.



INSIDE WHITEFISH LODGE



ME & THE GRIZZLY BEAR

We were there for Thanksgiving and the Lodge goes overboard with their Thanksgiving buffet. I exercised restraint and only had two desserts. One night we made S'mores over an outdoor fire. So when is the last time you did that? The front desk handed us a small sack containing the marshmallows, graham crackers and chocolate and a long wooded stick to roast the marshmallows over the fire. My childhood Carla kicked in and I remembered how I liked to roast marshmallows as a kid. My preferred style is to get the marshmallows charred black—burning them until they catch on fire, which turns the insides to sticky glue.



SETTLING CASES TWO SNEAKERS AT A TIME



THANKSGIVING AT WHITEFISH LODGE

I was pleased with this concoction as I wrestled the sticky marshmallows onto the graham cracker with the chocolate. Only problem was my sticky marshmallow made contact with Tom's jacket. Oops, he was a good sport about it. It was a big sugar hit but the kind of decadence everyone needs once and a while.

We enjoyed our stay, eating and drinking too much but hell what are vacations for.....I will go into my self-imposed Betty Ford rehab when I get home so I can get ready to do it again for the holidays!



SETTLING CASES TWO SNEAKERS AT A TIME

SANTA CLAUS SITUATION

My sister, Kimla, has young kids which are always good for making me laugh. The latest involves Santa Claus. Kimla has been determined to keep the Santa Claus myth going as long as possible for her kids.

When Kimla asked her seven year old daughter Annabel what she wanted for Christmas, her quick response was a phone and a computer. When Kimla said no, Annabel replied, "Don't worry Mom, I will just get Santa to bring it. I will ask him for all the expensive stuff!" When Kimla told her that Santa doesn't bring things the parents don't approve of, Annabel reduced her request to one thing---"Access to the Internet". Kimla has her hands full. She said she hates it when her kids try to outsmart her.

Merry Xmas and HO HO HO!



SETTLING CASES TWO SNEAKERS AT A TIME