

# Perspective

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## Locked keys in the car

In the mid 1980s, I was a new FBI agent, often referred to as a FOA (First Office Agent). I had the good fortune to be assigned to Phoenix, Ariz., where all new agents were sent to the Bank Robbery/Violent Crime Squad under the supervision of Steve Chenoweth, one of the finest supervisors I was to have in my 24-year career.

All new agents started on Steve's squad because they made a lot of arrests and the senior agents on this squad were good mentors.

After 6-8 weeks on Steve's squad, FOAs would be assigned to a permanent squad. Of course, most FOAs would cut off their right-arm to remain on Steve's squad, but this seldom occurred.

When it was time for me to be assigned to another squad, Steve asked me where I would like to be assigned. After I told him I would love to remain on his squad, Steve replied, "Well, I have some bad news and some good news for you. The bad news is that you're not assigned to my squad. The good news is that you're being assigned to the Foreign Counter-intelligence Squad and the best supervisor in the Division runs this squad, Bill Hajeski."

It turned out that Steve was partially right. Bill was a darn good supervisor who put up with my sense of humor for four years, but I would say that Steve and Bill were neck-and-neck as far as being good supervisors.

During the time I was on Steve's squad, he assigned me to a Field Training Agent (FTO) named Mike. FTOs are supposed to act as mentors and they take you by the hand and demonstrate how to complete the many tasks required when an agent conducts a federal investigation.

### So there I was

By Pete Buckley  
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Mike was the poster child for being a special agent with the FBI. He was a former fighter pilot, SWAT Team Leader, handsome as a movie star and the envy of all FOAs. Mike was a terrific agent, but he had little time to babysit the likes of me. In fact, I seldom saw Mike at all.

One problem I encountered early in my career was my lack of official transportation. Like most FOAs, I was not assigned an FBI car, known as a Bucar, and took the bus to and from work. In order to cover my leads, I begged and borrowed Bucars from other agents on the squad since Mike was never around.

Mike's car was seldom available because he had real important cases to work to conduct, such as serial bank robberies or violent fugitive investigations.

However, one time Mike actually allowed me to borrow his Bucar. It was a very nice, highly waxed, 4-door Chevy that was as clean as an operating room. I drove that car as carefully as I did driving my wife home from the hospital with our new born baby. Unfortunately, after covering my lead, I discovered I had locked the keys in the ignition.

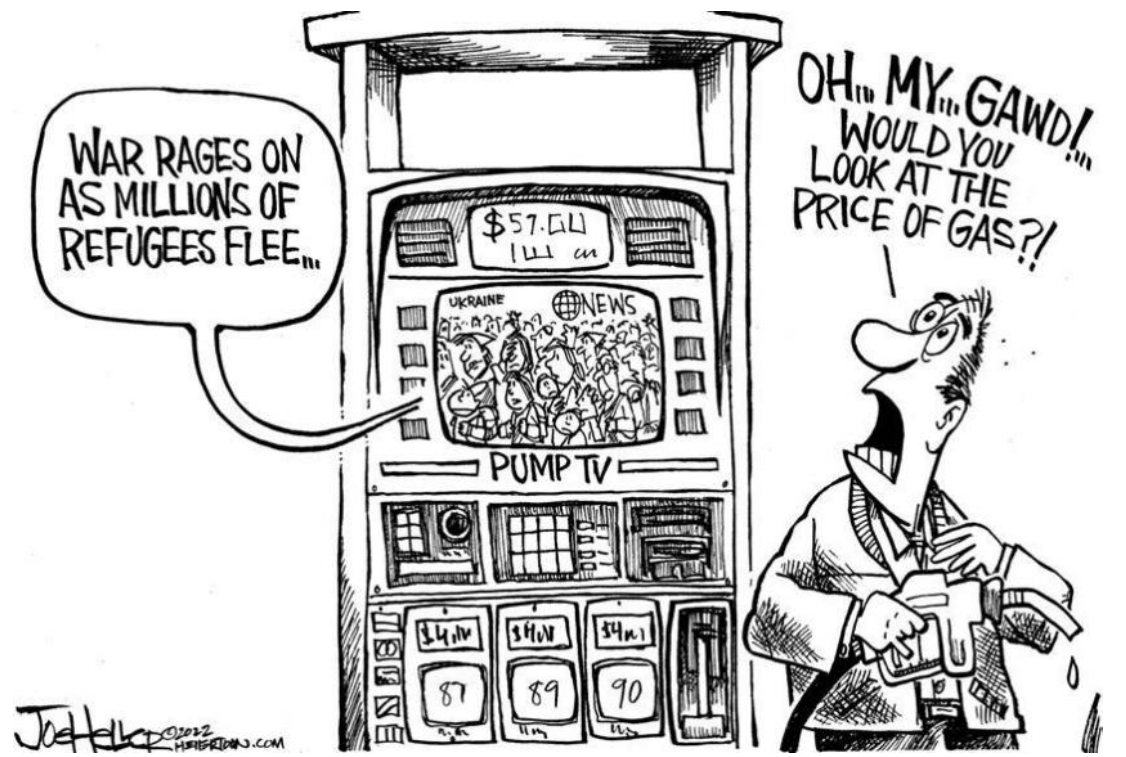
There was no way on God's green earth that I was going to tell Mike (or any other agent)

that I had locked the keys in Mike's car. Therefore, I dug through a dumpster and located a coat hanger that I manipulated into a hook and used this hanger-hook to slide down between the glass of the window and the rubber seal holding the window in place. I tried dozens of times to lasso the push-up lock and pull it into the open position, scratching the heck out of the door with the coat hanger before finally achieving success in unlocking the door.

When I returned the car, fully gassed and washed, I threw Mike the keys and never mentioned the incident. For the next four years, Mike never mentioned the car scratches. Years later, while I was assigned to Chicago, Mike retired from the FBI and I sent Mike a note confessing my crime.

One other comment about Mike. FOAs were directed to respond to all bank robberies during my time in Phoenix. On my first bank robbery, I wrote a lengthy, detailed report (sort of like this story) and when Mike reviewed it, he shook his head, tossed my report into the trash and hand-wrote for me a concise bank robbery report to use as an example.

I kept that hand-written report for my entire career and referred to it whenever I responded to a bank robbery.



## Look beyond the sound bites

Everything is not always as it seems. In politics, I'm not sure anything is as it seems.

The talk in the cigar shop turned to gas prices and President Joe Biden was thoroughly vilified for driving up prices at the pump. Maybe you've seen those stickers on gas pumps with a picture of Biden pointing toward the price with the words "I did that."

I know the president has little impact on gas prices, but it's not my area of expertise so I tend to stay out of those conversations. I was sitting next to Ronnie, who was also avoiding the discussion, but I could see the discern on his face, and he was subtly shaking his head.

So, of course, I asked him what was eating him. He was reluctant to get involved but commented that he wished people would do a little research instead of simply repeating the talking points they heard the night before from the talking heads on TV.

Someone in the background was ranting about Biden stopping the Keystone pipeline and stopping oil leases on federal land.

Ronnie leaned in and almost whispered, "These clowns have no idea that Biden's administration has approved more oil leases than Trump did in his first year."

I didn't know that, so I tapped a few keywords into my phone. The first search response stated that Biden had pledged to put a stop to oil leases. But the next entry, an article from The Washington Post, said that the administration had resumed oil leases. Toward the bottom of the article, it stated that the Biden administration had approved more than 3,500 oil and gas drilling permits in its first year — almost 900 more than the Trump administration in its first year.

Plus, the administration set

### Ramblin' Man

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a record for the largest offshore lease sale last year in the Gulf of Mexico and plans to auction off 200,000 acres of drilling rights in western states and 1 million in Alaska.

While it sounds like Biden isn't the environmentalist that he claims to be, it's more complicated than that. A court ruled that the president doesn't have the right to block the leases.

So, with all those drilling permits approved, why are gas prices so high, I asked Ronnie.

First, Ronnie said, we've seen higher gas prices. When you consider inflation, gas prices are a lot lower than a lot of other commodities. "It cost more for a gallon of milk than a gallon of gas in many places," he noted.

But gas prices have more to do with supply and demand, he said. Demand was down during the first year of the pandemic, so that caused prices to fall. It fell so much that some companies went out of business. Now that demand is increasing, production lags behind.

To verify his comments, I went back to the internet and found an article from CNN that explained that producers are reluctant to ramp up production out of fear that demand will fall again. It also said that oil companies are facing the same problems that other businesses have due to the pandemic — they can't find workers and they can't find the

equipment they need to increase production.

In the meantime, they're paying bigger dividends to please investors. With the pandemic's drop in demand and the president's pledge to move away from fossil fuels, oil stocks apparently have become less attractive to investors.

The article further explained that oil companies are investing in exploration, albeit at a rate lower than 2019. But if that exploration results in new wells, it could take 6 months or longer for increases in production to show up at the pump.

The article quotes an industry expert as saying it will be 2023 before production peaks again and that the emphasis now is on the quality and profitability of the product, not on the volume of production.

It's an easy temptation to apply simple answers to complex questions. I don't pretend to have all the answers, but half an hour spent reading a few articles did provide a lot more nuance to the issue.

It would be nice if people did a modicum of research before sounding off. And before voting.

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## 36 and... thriving?

The entire day of my last birthday, for reasons that I can't begin to explain, I thought I was turning a year older than I actually was.

This might sound odd but I wasn't surprised when it suddenly hit me in the evening, as I was driving home from the store after buying my own generic cake. You see, somewhere between the ages of 31 and 34, I couldn't remember what my age was.

I know it sounds like the classic woman thing to do but that's not why I didn't know my age. It was just such a busy and blurry few years with young children. Our lives changed so much in those 3-4 years, between new jobs, a new house, big vacations, and a new baby, we were always up to something. So anytime someone asked my age I would struggle with the right answer. I knew I was older than 30 and younger than 35! Thankfully, my husband is only 12 days older than I am. To his annoyance and utter confusion, I would ask him multiple times a year, "How old are we?"

Turning 35 was great because it's such an easy number to remember. I'm almost entirely sure that I never once asked how old we were that year.

Then my birthday came again and I had forgotten about not knowing my age. While no one asked me how old I was turning all day, I would say to myself how now that I was 37 I was pretty close to 40, and that 3 and 7 make 10

### Margie's Mess

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and that's a cool number. Hello other math geeks out there!

When I got home from that store run, my husband met me at the door to help with the bags and I flatly said, "I'm an idiot."

I had been doing random math in my head (doesn't everyone do that?) while driving and was calculating how old my mom was when I was born when it hit me that I had been celebrating the wrong birthday all day.

The worse part about my complete amnesia when it comes to my age is that I 100% do not get hung up about it.

Yes, I do wholeheartedly believe that after 30 your body starts to fall apart. Because of hair growing in odd places and other hair turning gray, I've invested in a pair of tweezers in each bathroom and vehicle.

If you didn't know yet, the natural lighting works great with your visor mirror to get that stray whisker.

I'm also working on a conspiracy theory that the more you go to the doctor, the more

things start to go wrong with your health. And I've learned in recent years that conspiracy theories don't have to make an inch of sense so I'm running with it.

Every so often I'm reminded of how my children's lives feel like they are on fast forward. Their childhood is quickly turning into the preteen years and their dinner reports of school have included who was caught kissing who.

I'll be honest, in writing this out loud, I'm secretly hoping it becomes the thumbtack on my brain that I'm 36 this year. Nothing too special about 36, except that it's the smallest composite number with 9 divisors, and some of its subsets can be summed to equal it.

36 is also the perfect ACT score.

There are 36 races in a NASCAR race season.

It's the atomic number of krypton.

William Shakespeare wrote 36 plays.

And finally, 36 multiplied by any other number always produces a number with digits that will sum up to 9.

