

How are you wired? (Best of)

Have you ever had your weight or your age guessed at the county fair by a clown posing as a soothsayer? I've got news for you... the carnival clairvoyant is not just pulling a number out of thin air.

These hucksters look for signs on your person that might give them clues as to how old you are or how much you weigh. These signs are known in the trade as "tells."

For example, the information peddler might look for the date on a high school class ring to give some indication of how old you are. Or, if guessing your weight they might look to see if you are leaving permanent impressions in the asphalt or concrete where you are standing.

I, too, possess this remarkable ability to read "tells." In fact, I can discern everything about you merely by counting the number of wires on your fence. Show me your fence and I'll write your life history.

For example, if your fence consists of one smooth wire electrified by solar energy, I can tell you are extremely optimistic, have more money than brains, are well educated, believe in the tooth fairy and probably have a gullible banker. You'd probably pay some clown good money to guess your weight and age, information you should already possess.

You adapt easily to new technology and probably have an expensive mobile phone hanging on your ear at this very minute. Your horse is named "Honda" and every cow on your place has a proper name. Your ranch does not border a stocker steer operation, a nudist colony or a sheep camp. You live in a sunny climate and are studying to be a half-wit if you think one slightly warm wire is going to hold or stop anything.

Three loose wires... You are an extremely poor or lazy cattleman with few good points. Your neighbors don't speak to you and you receive frequent calls from the local police department

It's the Pitts

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because your cows routinely get on the road by walking through your fence like it was made of cobwebs. Your calves are probably sucking the neighbor's cows right now. Your ranch is overrun by wildlife including bikers, joggers and EPA officials.

Five rusty wires... You are a typical cattleman who hasn't put up any new fence since your great-grandfather homesteaded the place in 1880. You are afraid to mess with the fence now because the wires are actually holding up the posts that are rotted off in the ground. Antique barbed wire collectors covet your fence.

Three new wires on top a tight mesh fence... You are a conniving cattleman who got the government or the Nature Conservancy to pay for your fence.

Ten wires... Five of the wires on your fence are old rusted wires that have been in place since the Zachary Taylor administration and five are fairly new, only 50 years, or so, old. This indicates you are either single or divorced. If you had a wife you would have had her roll up the old wire before putting up the new.

Twelve wires... You border one of Ted Turner's ranches and have trouble sleeping at night. You would prefer Ted keep his buffalo on his side of the fence.

19 wires energized with 210 volts... You are a young, naive individual who thinks that such a fence can keep out the neighbor's trich infected bull and assorted government bureaucrats. You will be sued in the near future by a Sierra Clubber who trespassed on your property by straddling your highly charged fence. You will lose everything you possess in court but it will be almost worth it.

No Wires... You live in a big mansion behind a plastic coated white board fence. Judging by your tight cinch, the wrinkles around your eyes and the smile on your face I'd say you are 65 years old, weigh 350 pounds and have a teenage wife. You raise fainting goats, miniature llamas and do not make your living in the livestock industry.