

### Who Died? (Best Of)

□ There are words in the English language that excite the reader or listener like no other. I am referring to phrases such as “estate sale,” “complete dispersal” and “clearance sale.” But it has come to my attention that people are misusing these phrases.

□ Take the words “going out of business sale,” for example. There seem to be quite a few of these now a days, but many of these sales do not offer the bargains they imply. I am getting sick of driving into town to go shopping, expecting to get bargains, only to find that the store the night before jacked up their prices by 10 percent and is now offering a going out of business sale price of 10 percent off.

Do they think we're idiots? We must be, because by the time the retailers get ready to close their doors the only things half-off are extra large sizes, store fixtures and the employees.

□ In the livestock business no term is more misused than the phrase “complete dispersal.” The words are supposed to mean that the stockmen is selling everything he owns related to his livestock operation and because we all love a bargain, such events attract buyers like ants to honey. People come to buy the good stuff that otherwise wouldn't normally be for sale.

So I was surprised at one “complete dispersal” I went to in Texas where hardly anyone bothered to attend. I asked a buddy of mine why there wasn't a crowd and he said it was because it was the owner's fifteenth annual complete dispersal!

There is something in our DNA that makes us salivate at the possibility of getting a bargain, especially if that something is an old piece of junk that belonged to someone you never knew. I don't know about you, but I get a euphoric feeling after I buy a big bucket of rusty bolts and washers for only fifty cents! I think we enjoy sorting through the refuse of other people's lives because it's like a big treasure hunt.

I wish I lived in Colorado or Nebraska because it seems like they have the most farm and estate sales. And they do it the right way: at auction. When my junk collecting days are over I have specified in my will that I want my valuable collection of motel stationery sold at auction. And you're all invited. It will be a complete dispersal.

We don't have estate auctions where I live. Instead, we have estate sales that drag on for three days. The real serious collectors among us always get there a couple hours early on the first day so that we have a better chance of getting the good stuff. On the third day everything is half-price but the pickings are usually pretty slim by then.

Some unscrupulous cheaters noticed that these estate sales attract huge buying crowds so they got in the habit of advertising their small garage sales as 'estate sales.' This irritates the heck out of professional junk collectors like me.

Woody is the acknowledged King of Junk in our neck of the woods and I idolize the man. He has an encyclopedic memory for the value of all things antique. Woody attends all the estate sales but he was especially excited about one that sounded promising because the advertisement said it was an “80 year accumulation.”

□ Because it sounded so enticing Woody showed up at five in the morning for a sale that would open at nine. He was the first one through the door, only to discover that we'd all been scammed. He screamed at the host, “I got up at four this morning for this 'estate sale' and all you have for sale is a set of tire chains, an assortment of mismatched Tupperware containers and used Christmas wrapping paper. I want to know who died?”

The frightened lady at the cash box replied, “Wha-wha-wha-what do you mean?”

“For it to be an estate sale, someone had to die,” said Woody with a wild and menacing look on his face. “If no one died then you have to!”

## It's the Pitts

Written by Lee Pitts

---

You'd be surprised how Woody's temper tantrum has reduced the number of "estate sales" in our area.