

# Entertainment Outlook

## We lie an average of 5 times a day

**News Item:** A recent magazine survey shows that the average person tells a lie approximately five times a day.

This is truly shocking. If this is correct, then the average person lies 35 times a week, 150 times a month, and 1,825 times a year. Ultimately — assuming that the average life-span is 75 years — this means that the average person lies just 136,875 times in his entire life.

Obviously, there is just one conclusion that can be drawn from this. We live in a society that is dangerously, dangerously honest.

Now, let me hasten to say that I am not trying to claim that lying is a moral virtue. Not at all. Well, not exactly, anyway.



**Weir's View**

**Ryan Weir**

parents would not punish you for being honest.

I discovered this the day I put a hockey stick through the front window while practising for the Olympic javelin competition, and owned up to it.

My confession brought two responses. The first was: "This is an honest boy. Good for him." The second was: "This is also the wretch who put the hockey stick through the window. Bend over, unhappy youth."

This led, eventually, to a pre-pubescent suspicion that all things were relative.

When Greg threw a rock at a police car and you were asked who did it, the proper answer was "Greg did". However, when YOU threw a rock at a police car and were asked who did it, the proper answer was still "Greg did".

In any case, let me repeat that none of this is an argument in favor of dishonesty in general. Still, the whole thing does raise an alarming possibility: Imagine how disastrous our lives would be if everyone ran around telling bare-faced truths.

Oh, I'm not defending the really big lies — the ones which begin either "Honestly, dear, I didn't..." or "As your elected representative, I would like to assure you..."

No, no. We're talking about the millions of small lies which hold the fabric of civilized life together.

To start with, you know exactly what someone is going to say when he begins, "I'll be perfectly honest." He is going to give a detailed analysis of how and why you are a nimrod.

Naturally, such truth-fanatics are universally despised — and it only stands to reason.

Imagine how impossible social intercourse would be if you did not lie through your teeth and reply "fine" whenever someone asked "how are you?" Or imagine what would happen if parents ever started being truthful to their children.

A parent has two options when his daughter asks if he would like to attend her violin recital. He can remember George Washington, and tell the truth: "I would rather be devoured by Doberman Pinschers." Or he can lie like a sonovagun: "I'd love to!"

Worst yet, imagine if husbands and wives started being honest with each other. Relationships depend upon a sturdy foundation of benevolent lies — ranging from "yes, your hair really does look quite nice that way" to "no, of course my mother doesn't really hate you, Fred."

The moral of this is perfectly clear. In everyday life, remember that the truth is too precious to be used indiscriminately.

And when things get really tight, remember that Greg did it.

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It goes without saying that our society places high value on honesty. Or, at least, on not getting caught — which, as moral philosophers unanimously agree, is almost exactly the same thing.

Even as Canadians, we were raised on the story of George Washington, who admitted to chopping down the cherry tree. By so doing he won a reputation for honesty, and grew up to be president.

Now that we are adults, we can understand how completely different George's life would have been had he lied. He would have gained a reputation as a crafty pragmatist... and grown up to be president.

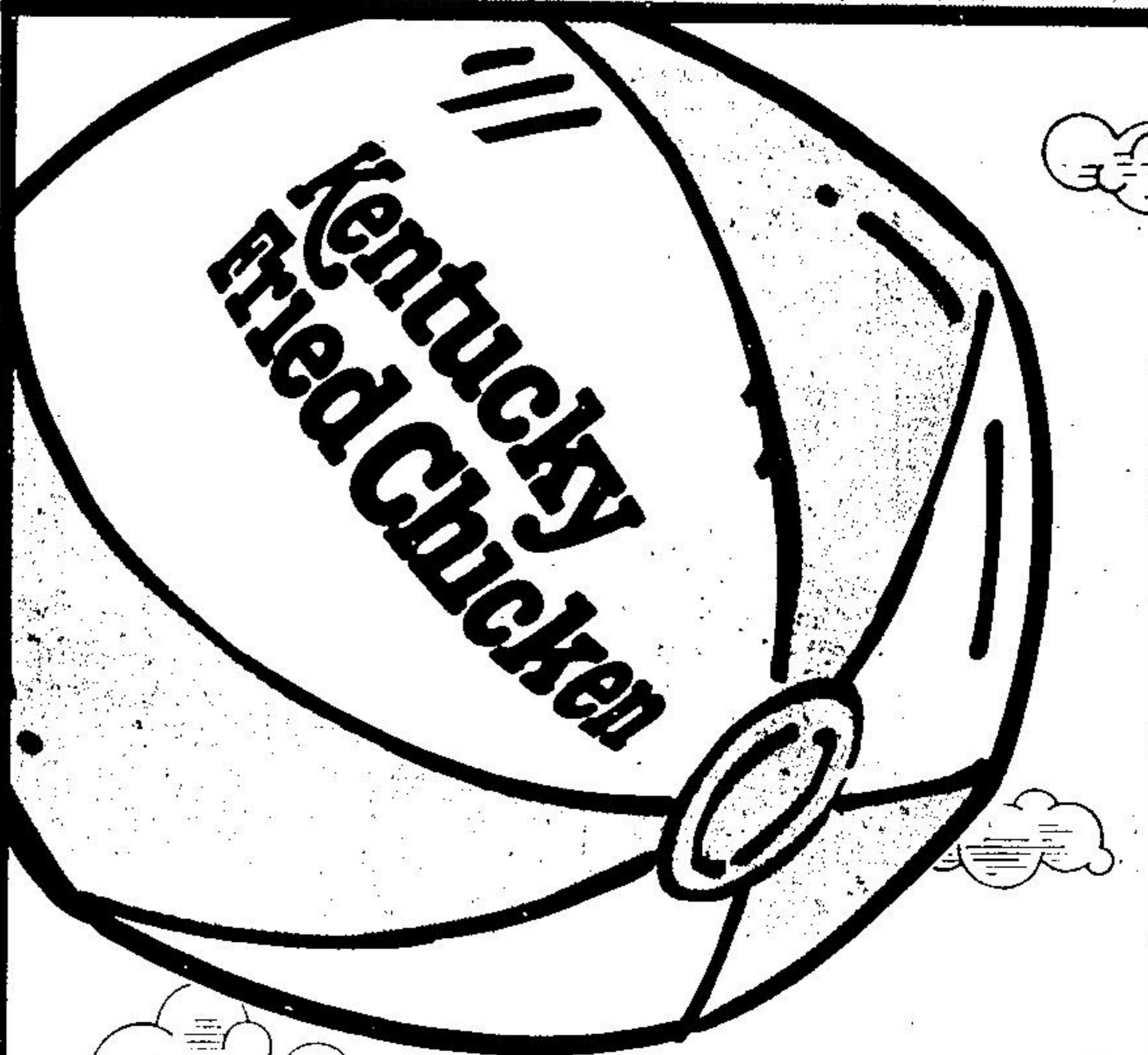
I was certainly raised to believe that honesty was a prime virtue. I would never, my parents stressed repeatedly, be punished for being honest.

And, indeed, the early events of my life confirmed the value of honesty. For instance, there was the day that my friend Greg threw a rock at a passing car, which turned out to be an unmarked police cruiser.

The policeman leaped out of the car, collared us both, and demanded to know which one had thrown the rock. As a deep believer in the value of honesty, I forthrightly replied: "Greg did."

Greg got into a whole lot of trouble and I got off almost completely scot-free, which proved conclusively that you should always tell the truth.

But gradually it began to appear that the situation was a bit more complex. To begin with, it turned out to be only technically true that your



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