

# You can take this feng and shui it!

## off the RECORD

r. michael johnson  
editor/publisher



Being eight years younger than my nearest sister, the youngest of four children and the only boy in the family, I used to hear those six words more often than not.

"Some day, we'll get you back."

My sisters - especially my oldest sister Sheryl - used to bellow those words at me on an almost daily basis during my childhood.

Did I deserve this kind of treatment as a kid? Should I have had to live in fear? Was it right for them to literally hold my life in their hands?

Thinking back on it - yeah, I probably did deserve everything I got...and more.

After spoiling numerous dates, selling certain "unmentionables" belonging to my sisters to my friends and spilling the beans about curfew violations and teenage loves to our parents, I'm not only sure I deserved less-than-delicate treatment from my sisters - I'm lucky I lived past my 12th birthday.

I can recall one such occasion when my eldest sister came to me threatening my life if I told our folks about the fact that she burned her leg while riding on the back of her boyfriend's Harley Davidson - something she had been forbidden to do.

Being the caring and loving 9-year-old little brother that I was, I decided that for her own health and well-being, I should rat her out.

That's when I heard those words again, "some day, we'll get you back."

It's taken almost four decades, but my sister has finally found a way to exact her revenge upon me.

A method of revenge so heinous that even Himlar refused to use it during the second World War.

An act of revenge so grave the United Nations Security Council considers it a crime against humanity.

Revenge so nasty that Buddhist monks are currently setting themselves alight in protest.

That unspeakable act, that deleterious action, that epitome of vengeance can be summed up in two words - feng shui.

It's actually such a nasty treatment that I don't even completely understand it - don't want to understand it.

Actually, feng shui (pronounced fung shway) is this oriental art that deals with architecture, decorating and living so one can be harmonious with the universe.

Mainly, it's a communist plot to keep all of the men in the United States busy moving furniture so we'll ignore their plans for world domination.

Anyway, this feng shui stuff has to deal with the elements of nature - fire, earth, wind and water - and their relationship to us in our daily lives.

If you have a wind chime at your front door, that's good. But, if you have one at your garage door, that's not so good.

If you leave your drains open during the day, that's not good.

(Apparently, having a flooded bathroom is a sign of prosperity to the feng shui people.)

If your bed faces a certain direction, that's good and if it faces another, that's not good.

They even have this stuff called qi (pronounced chee which is both good and bad.

If you leave the toilet seat up, that's bad for the qi. If you put the toilet seat down, that's good for the qi.

If you paint your entire house in pastel colors with Laura Ashley paint, that's good qi.

But if you want to hang a dead buffalo skull on the wall of your home office, that's definitely bad qi. Get the point?

So, as an unadulterated act of revenge for childhood slights, my oldest sister decided to introduce my lovely bride to feng shui.

I'm a guy. I like sharp corners, brightly lighted rooms and toilets with the lids up - at all times.

I like open drains, overstuffed recliners, loud music, documentaries on the Mafia and satellite television.

I also like having a dead buffalo skull hanging on the wall - right next to the boxing glove, autographed as a gift to me from Muhammad Ali's fight doctor.

I'm not a fan of wind chimes, lots of flowers or pastel colors of Laura Ashley paint. (Besides that, has anyone priced the stuff? Jeff Gordon doesn't even spend that much painting his Rainbow Warrior car with the most expensive car paint DuPont makes.)

But I digress. Back to my situation.

There are pay-per-view television programs you can order to show how feng shui works. There are entire libraries full of books on feng shui.

(I've met some of those authors - two words: rubber room.)

And, of course, there are the people who specialize in coming to your house to teach you feng shui so you can live a happy and prosperous life.

With all due respect to my wife - whom I love dearly - horsefeathers.

My feng is just fine, thank you

And as for my shui, let me sit in my recliner - with the aforementioned dead buffalo head hanging over me and all the lights in the house on at once - and it'll be just fine.

This is where I put my foot down.

This is where I show her who wears the pants in this family.

This is where I smoke a Cohiba cigar in the living room, should I so choose.

This is where I assert my manlihoodness - once and for all time.

At least until she gets home.

*R. Michael Johnson is Editor and Publisher of the Bloomfield Free Press and writes Off the Record as a weekly Opinion Page feature.*