

OFF HER TREE

A two-minute monologue

BY JANE CAFARELLA

Comedy

BARB, 30-65, a high-school English teacher, explains to an angry parent why she failed her son.

Yes, I failed your son – for abusing the English language.

Why do people have so little faith in a word that has well and truly earned its place in our lexicon – a word that requires **NO addition**?

You take the picture *off* the wall. Not **off of**! That is a redundancy.

He fell **off** the roof, not **off of** the roof.

Honestly!

What? How dare you quote *Henry VI* to me! So what if Shakespeare wrote that Simpcox was lame after he fell '**off of** a tree'.

That doesn't make it correct. He was obviously making the point that Simpcox was uneducated.

To quote Simpcox: 'Ay, God Almighty help me!'

Mark Twain was simply following Shakespeare's example when Huckleberry Finn says he borrowed two or three dollars '**off of** the judge'.

Twain knew that Huck would have borrowed two or three dollars **from** the judge.

However, your son was correct when he said I was going '**Off** my tree.' Not **off-of**.

Although technically, I was not **on** a tree. (*Almost to herself*) An apple can fall **off** a tree, but a man or woman cannot. A woman can only fall **from** a tree, because technically, unlike an apple, she's not **on** the tree, although she could be **up** the tree or **in** the tree. Depending on the tree.

The point is, I am delighted that your son is so **affected** by his failure. He should be. **Affect** means to influence or bring about change. I hope he will learn. I hope the **effect**, which means **result**, will be a deeper respect for the English language.

So, no! I will NOT withdraw my decision to fail your son. To my point: that particular abuse of the English language really pisses me **off-of**!

289 spoken words

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