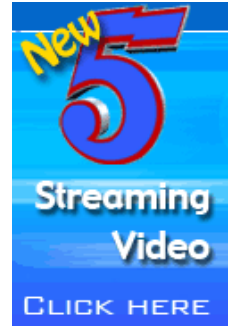




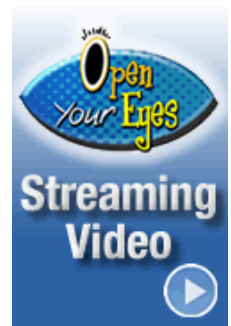
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The Headlines for Thursday, December 17, 2009
With your news I am Marleni Cuellar

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Viewers please note: This Internet newscast is a verbatim transcript of our evening television newscast. Where speakers use Kriol, we attempt to faithfully reproduce the quotes using a standard spelling system.

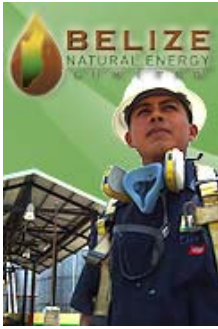
TRIALS

Belize City Mayor wins court battle against U.D.P.



In a dramatic decision handed down by the Court this morning, Justice Minette Hafiz granted two of three injunctions requested by Mayor Zenaida Moya-Flowers in her legal challenges against her own party. In the first, the Court is prohibiting the U.D.P. from continuing to exclude her from meetings of the National Party Council. On October third, the U.D.P. took a decision to expel Mayor Moya Flowers from the N.P.C. and kept her out of subsequent meetings of that body. The Court also granted an injunction telling the Central Executive of the U.D.P. that it cannot act on a referral of the N.P.C. requesting it to investigate Moya Flowers. News Five





spoke to her Attorney Godfrey Smith on Moya's sensational victory.

Godfrey Smith, Attorney for Mayor Zenaida Moya Flowers

"As attorney for Mayor Flowers we went to look for three things. The first was an injunction telling the U.D.P. that they could not continue to exclude Zenaida Moya Flowers from meetings of the N.P.C. She got that injunction against the U.D.P. Secondly, she asked for an injunction that the matter of her conduct which was referred by her National Party Council, by the U.D.P.'s national party council to the Central Executive of the U.D.P. asking them to review their behavior; that the Central Executive could not act on that referral. She got that injunction. And thirdly she wanted a more omnibus injunction saying to the central executive that they could not at all inquire into her supposed conduct as they had put it. But the court did not grant that final injunction."

Jose Sanchez

"Okay, but with the second point, that could have led to a total expulsion from the party right?"

Godfrey Smith

"Well certainly, but the question of her total expulsion is still a live issue. What the court has said is, you know what U.D.P., based on what you've done and handled this matter with the Mayor Zenaida Moya Flowers so far, you probably got it wrong. We did put an injunction pan unnu, fi stop you from proceeding with what you've done so far. It is still open to the U.D.P. to say you know what we're starting from fresh, we're coming after her again. This time we'll dot our i's and cross our t's and we'll get it right. She will then be entitled to full representation there and to make sure and to insist that all her rights are accorded to her in the process of attempting to discipline her if indeed the U.D.P. decides it wants to follow through on disciplining her."

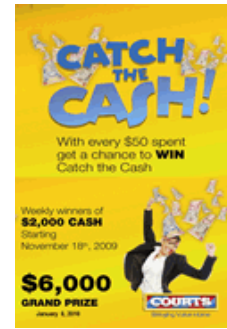
Jose Sanchez


"And that would be within the party or the court?"

Godfrey Smith

"Well that's an interesting point you raised. Well hitherto, there was a feeling that even when this claim was brought among some people and even some lawyers who said but where are you going with that? You can't take a political party da court. That's a political matter, an internal family matter. The court can't investigate or look into that. Obviously that is a wrong view, the mere fact that the injunction's had been granted is a landmark in the sense that Zenaida bringing this case establishes, for the first time in the legal history of Belize, that a political is amenable, is subject to review by courts of law in this country and that is a good thing."

Smith says that assuming the U.D.P. continues with actions to discipline Moya Flowers, she has the court as an option if her rights are not respected during any future disciplinary process.



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TRIALS

Chief Justice gives Telemedia 48 hour deadline to hook up Smart



There was another remarkable decision in the court today and it has to do with the government controlled Telemedia and Speednet. Last Thursday executives of the country's two telecommunications providers faced each other in the courtroom of Chief Justice Abdulai Conteh. The CJ ruled then that the injunction that Speednet sought against Telemedia, the dominant telecom provider, would be upheld. The C.J. directed that Telemedia would no longer engage in activities to interrupt Speednet's services. Telemedia was also obligated to restore all the services that had been disrupted prior to coming to court and to reinstall all equipment that had been removed from Speednet's antennas located on Telemedia compounds. But Telemedia didn't comply and Speednet's attorneys had to return to court this morning. Speednet's attorney, Andrew Marshalleck, says that this time Telemedia has forty-eight hours to comply with the Chief Justice's order.

Andrew Marshalleck, Attorney for Speednet

"The trouble that we had since last week Thursday when the orders were made, the things that the court ordered B.T.L. to do, they had not yet done. So we went back to court to have the court fix a firm deadline within which everything that is required to be done is done. And the court made that order this morning and ordered that all the services and facilities that were provided prior to the disruptions be restored and that they be restored within forty-eight hours of today's ruling. So a firm deadline has been set and B.T.L.'s explanation has been they have certain difficulties with the wording of the order and that the court also sought to clarify and made clear that it's the very services that Speednet enjoyed prior to the disruptions that had to be restored. What was being proposed by B.T.L. was to offer some alternative services."

Jose Sanchez

"What alternative services?"

Andrew Marshalleck

"I'm not familiar with the technical aspects of it, but they were offering instead of the unfiltered E1 service, some international direct line which is apparently a different thing. The court made clear this morning, however, that they are to go back to the same service that Speednet enjoyed that service was E1 international services."

Jose Sanchez

"What about the Smart equipment at St. Thomas?"

Andrew Marshalleck

"The equipment that was removed by B.T.L. are also to be reinstalled"

and that must be within the same forty-eight hours.”

Jose Sanchez

“So by weekend everything will be back to normal.”

Andrew Marshalleck

“Hopefully. What that does then is set the stage for contempt or other court proceedings to follow in the event that there is noncompliance, not withstanding this very clear deadline. I think that thinking as commercial people do, the holiday season, the upcoming week is a very busy season for telecommunications. I think the dragging of feet has to do with those commercial considerations.”

Marshalleck says that Telemedia offered to reconnect Speednet to towers in Ladyville and Benny’s for a fee. Well, we’ll see what the next move is since the Public Utilities Commission has been on the airwaves declaring illegal the contract between Speednet and Telemedia, even while it claimed it had not seen it.

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TRIALS

**CJ also gives D.O.E deadline to monitor
Chalillo and Macal**



CANDY GONZALEZ

Speednet is not the only organization that has had to return to the court to get compliance. Almost like a case of déjà vu, a grass roots association from Cayo also had to make another trip to the chambers of Chief Justice Abdulai Conteh to have a judgment enforced. As in the case with Speednet, the C.J. also put a time limit on the offender. Back in 2008, The Belize Institute of Environmental Law and Policy (BELPO) launched an offensive case against the Department of Environment to enforce laws that it felt that BECOL, the owner of the Chalillo dam, was not complying with. BELPO won the case in September 2008, in which it suggested that many of the more than two hundred terms in the Environmental Compliance Plan had been ignored by BECOL and the Department of the Environment, BELPO’s president and Cayo resident Candy Gonzalez was concerned about the lack of mercury level testing in the Macal River; water quality analysis; and limited public awareness of the exit plan for residents in case of a dam break. This afternoon, Gonzalez said, via phone from Cayo, that she hopes this time the D.O.E. will clamp down on BECOL.

Candy Gonzalez, President, BELPO

“The particular areas that we were concerned about was that people weren’t aware of the amount of mercury in fish that they eat and that it be tested on a regular basis and people are informed as to the harm mercury can do to the body, especially children and pregnant women. That water quality be tested and people informed and of great importance, was that we still had no dam break or early warning

system set up in the downstream communities of the Chalillo Dam.”


Jose Sanchez

“How many people live downstream?”

Candy Gonzalez

“If you just want to stop at villages at the beginning of the Belize River, you can say about eighteen or nineteen thousand, but as the release of the sedimentation in August of this year showed that really the damn has an affect all the way to Belize City, because the sedimentation that was released from the damn reached all the way to the Caribbean sea. The judge set out specific time limits, which he didn't do in the first decision. So it's not just a matter of them saying we're going to get around to it; he set out limits like the emergency preparedness plan be put in the libraries in Santa Elena and San Ignacio and with the Village Council of Cristo Rey and that that be done within two weeks of the ruling, that the fish be tested and that people be made aware of the amount of mercury and that that be an ongoing thing. And he gave limits in terms of when things like that should be done.”

During the case, Gonzalez appeared on the behalf of BELPO, while Senior counsel Michael Young appeared on the behalf of BECOL. Crown Counsel Pricilla Banner represented the Department of the Environment.

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AGRICULTURE

Delayed sugar cane season finally opened



It is one of Belize's top exports and while production has declined, today's reopening of the sugar cane season has brought relief to cane farmers in the sugar belt. That's the good news, the bad is the delay has created a real possibility that payments may be late and not in time for Christmas. The late start was caused by work at the Belize Sugar Industries compound at Tower Hill in preparation for the Belize Cogeneration Project, which is scheduled to come on stream on January first. B.S.I. officials told News Five's Marion Ali that they are doing their best to expedite payment.

Marion Ali, Reporting

The mill at the Belize Sugar Industries Limited started processing sugarcane late Wednesday night after a lengthy delay at Tower Hill. The imminent introduction of the Belize Cogeneration project prevented any kind of factory work for the past couple of weeks. But while the delay was necessary, Chief Executive Officer of the Belize Cane Farmers Association, David Madrid says it has created a real problem for the cane farmers at this time of year.

David Madrid, C.E.O., Cane Farmers' Assn.

"This is detrimental to the farmers because they need the Christmas money. They have debts that they have to pay and usually when you budget yourself like they do in a seasonal activity, they were depending on the money to start coming in mid December."

The late start was compounded by heavy rains that have inundated cane fields. But there is hope, according to Factory Manager of B.S.I., John Gillett.

John Gillett, Factory Mgr., B.S.I.

"We started to receive cane yesterday. We received just over nine hundred tons of cane and depends on what the farmers deliver, they will be paid. So some revenue will be coming in before Christmas."

With the financial constraints being imposed by the European Union on developing countries like Belize, coupled with a decrease in local yield, the sugar industry has endured its share of challenges in recent years. But Gillett says the horizon looks promising.

John Gillett

"What we need to do at this time is get up the production so as to offset any reduction in revenue, but unless we have the cane available. This year we expect to be milling maybe about one point one million tons of cane and we would hope that the production would be around a hundred and eighteen, hundred and twenty thousand tons of sugar."

Marion Ali


"What are you using now as an alternative to the core sampler?"

John Gillett

"As far as I know, nothing. There should have been a quality improvement program. The farmers should have taken that on. I have not seen any replacement for that yet."

That replacement is expected to take place in the coming year. Sugar production was down in 2009 but just in case you were wondering, Gillett assures that there will be sufficient supply of sugar for Christmas. Reporting for News Five, Marion Ali.

In the most productive year, a hundred and twenty-three thousand tons of sugar was produced in 2001. But this year the crop only yielded ninety-two thousand tons. Belize earned just over a hundred million dollars in revenues from sugar cane exportation.


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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Tension rises along Belize/Guatemala border

The settlement of the Belize/Guatemala dispute may one day land before the International Court of Justice in the Hague, but that does not mean the end of incursions or conflict along the borders. And this is what prompted a meeting in Washington between the Foreign Ministers of Belize and Guatemala this past Wednesday. Both Wilfred Elrington and Haroldo Rhodas met under the umbrella of the Organization of American States which administers the Adjacency Zone along the western border. Guatemala recently raised concerns over an observation post built near the Guatemalan village of Machaquilla, south of Caracol. News Five is also reliably informed that the Guatemalan military continues to stop B.D.F. vessels in the Sarstoon and that as recent as this past Tuesday there was a standoff which only ended when the B.D.F. vessel withdrew and returned to sea under Guatemalan escort. The high tensions led to the urgent meeting in Washington, which has now agreed that the OAS would deploy a team to evaluate the confidence building measures and further that a high level group would be mandated to deal with controversial issues that may cause tension along the border.

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CRIME

Police say crime is down... but is it?



CRISPIN JEFFRIES

Earlier this week, part of a study called the **Male Social Participation and Violence Study in Belize**, was released. The research will not be completed until June 2010 but the initial findings of the group led by Doctor Herbert Gayle of Jamaica showed that with a statistic of thirty four murders in 2008, the jewel is not a good or safe place. 2009's murder count as of Tuesday was thirty-three. The murder of Dwayne Lopez takes that count to thirty-four. It's a tie with 2008, and the bad news is that 2009 is not over. With Gayle's unsettling report out, the police department released its own statistics and believe it or not, the cops say crime is down. Duane Moody reports.

Duane Moody, Reporting

According to Commissioner of Police, Crispin Jefferies, there has been a decrease in crime when compared to same period last year. Jefferies says that the crime rate is down by nine percent—which is one percent shy of his promise to reduce crime by ten.

Crispin Jefferies, Commissioner of Police

"I can boastfully say that we are very close to that ten percent and I can also boastfully say that murder is down; down by more than ten. But it shouldn't be boastfully said about because when I look at Dr. Gayle's statistics of the region, we are not there yet. We actually had a small argument on the side—myself and Doctor Gayle—whether we will be below thirty percent this year and I said when you come back I'll collect on that bet."

While there has been an increase in the number of burglaries and robberies Jefferies says there is a decrease in murder cases.

Crispin Jefferies

“Economic crimes, the crimes that impacts the most on the value of properties stolen or recorded damaged continues to rise. That is because we look at two areas of crime; burglaries, aggravated burglaries, thefts. You will see there are several categories of thefts and I don’t want to go into it in a lot of details because we’ve done this several times before and you are aware of where it goes. And then there are crimes of robberies. Robberies are at five hundred and ten and burglary is one thousand one hundred and ninety-six. Volume crimes—these are crimes of violence and disrespect. You will see harm, aggravated assault, wounding and damage to property, they will number the highest in our statistics monthly, annually because we are a society who has lost some of the values. So a little bit more respect in our society we will see some of the volume crimes decrease. However, if we can make that effort to successfully arrest and prosecute some people then we can continue to see further reduction.”


The police figures show that the period with the least crime was in October to December. May, on the other hand, topped the charts with seven hundred and fifty eight crimes reported.

Crispin Jefferies

“Between January to now, the word diminish or decline applies, as you can see continuous reduction 2141, 2049, 2006, and then to the marginal figure of 1525. There is an interesting comment made by Doctor Gayle and that comment is that when we see an increase in economic crimes, we see a decrease in violent crimes and he said to me that he attributes the reduction in murder to the spate of increases in economic crime and I am frightened by that statement because when I look at my statistics, my economic crime has seen marginal increase and I am wondering now if I am living in false times because it is likely that the considerable substantial increase that I have seen in reduction in the murder rate is short lived.”

Jefferies says that the police department has been working with government agencies on projects to minimize the level of crime. Duane Moody, reporting for News Five.

At the national level, the statistics reveal that the Eastern region, which includes the Belize District and the cayes, are the hub of approximately forty percent of monthly criminal activity. The Cayo District or the Western region generates about twenty-percent of crime, while the two northern districts account for about twenty percent as is the case in the Southern Districts.

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CRIME

Guyanese national charged in US for human

trafficking via Belize

Belize's strategic location makes it a common port for transnational smuggling of illegal drugs, weapons and human trafficking. According to international reports, a Guyanese National was charged in the United States on Wednesday with Conspiracy and Alien Smuggling for her role in attempting to enter four Indian nationals into the US via Belize and other Central American countries. Annita Devi Gerald, also known as Annita Rampersad, managed to fraudulently obtain Belizean visas for the nationals in November. They were brought to the Jewel where Gerald provided accommodations while their next move was arranged. One of the Indian nationals made it across the Mexican border where he was met by Gerald's associate, who has not been identified. From there, he was handed over to another smuggler who was paid to take him across the Mexico/US border to meet a co-conspirator in Houston. It is known that the Houston based accomplice was paid prior to releasing the Indian National. But his freedom was short-lived because the illegal immigrant was detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials. Gerald now faces a possible jail term and fine of up to two hundred and fifty thousand US dollars. Meanwhile, the whereabouts other three Indian nationals is unknown, which means they may still be in Belize. Authorities in Belize have not commented on this latest bust.

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TRIALS

Con-artist goes to prison for theft and deception



A con-artist, who goes by the names Gina Conorquie and Gina Jordan, ran into more trouble with the law on Wednesday despite five previous convictions under her belt. Well, Gina will now be spending Christmas at the Hattieville Prison. She has been found guilty of Theft and sentenced to six months for her latest offense. On April ninth, Gina offered to assist Ingrid Willoughby to secure visas for her two daughters. Willoughby paid her a fee of three hundred and seventy-two dollars and handed over passports belonging to her daughters, Denay and Gaylene Bevans. But five days later Gina visited Willoughby and returned the passports with no visas and no cash. She was also bold to ask Willoughby to lend her a blouse, which she took about ten minutes to change into. That's because while in Willoughby's room, Gina was helping herself to a gold chain and bracelet valuing one thousand two hundred dollars. Gina returned the jewelry to Willoughby's daughter later that day and turned herself in to the Crime Investigation Branch at the Police Station. She was charged with Theft for the stolen jewelry and Obtaining Property by Deception for the money she collected for the visas. She pleaded guilty to the deception charge and was fined a thousand dollars and ordered to repay Willoughby's money. But for the theft conviction, the six month sentence was

imposed because of her loaded rap sheet.

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CRIME

Shooting victim passes away at hospital



Sometime around five this morning, twenty-eight year old Dwayne Lopez died while receiving medical treatment at the Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital. Lopez was admitted last Monday evening after he was shot in the lower back while standing with a friend at the corner of Supal Street and Kut Avenue. Despite several surgeries he did not survive the shooting. Lopez's mother, Bernadette Whyte, was not in the country when her son was shot. She returned just before he succumbed to the bullet wounds. Whyte says that she has lost both her sons to gun violence and she wants justice.

Bernadette Whyte, Mother of Deceased

"The cause of the death ih had blood clot due to the gun shot."

Duane Moody

"Why someone would shoot at him or shoot him?"

Bernadette Whyte

"That's the reason I want to find out right now."

Duane Moody

"Was your son in a gang?"

Bernadette Whyte

"My son wasn't in any gang."

Duane Moody

"What did he do when he was alive?"

Bernadette Whyte

"Stay at home watch TV, tend to ih kids, help ih father do mechanic."

Duane Moody

"On that day I understand he was at the corner of Supal Street and Kut Avenue, what was he doing there?"

Bernadette Whyte

"He was talking to a friend when the gunman come up and fired several shots and one caught him in the back. He was not the target it was a stray away bullet."

Duane Moody

"Do you think the gunman wanted to actually catch the friend that he was talking to and mistakenly got to him?"

Bernadette Whyte

"I don't know."


Duane Moody

"What is it that you want now that your son has passed and no one has been arrested or charged for the crime?"

Bernadette Whyte

"Well what comes around goes around and I put everything in God's hand. Dwayne was a loving child; like run joke, like play with nephews, ih niece. He always had something to say to make your smile and laugh."

Lopez leaves behind five children including his youngest who turned two months today. Police say that they are currently investigating the matter.


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CRIME

Robbers target Quality Poultry delivery truck

But the driver of a Quality Poultry delivery truck was more fortunate. Just after three p.m. today two thieves approached the vehicle, which was delivering chickens and turkeys for an upcoming wedding in Hattieville, and fired several shots at the occupants. None of the bullets hit their target and while one of the men ran into the customer's home for cover, the driver was knocked unconscious with a gun. Both assailants, who wore masks, then tried to enter the house but were locked out by one of the residents. The customers called 911, but everything was over before the police arrived... even though the house is a stone's throw away from the station. Nothing was stolen during the ordeal, which was reported to our newsroom by a witness whose name will not be revealed for safety reasons.

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HEALTH

Healthy Living walks to the doctor's office in high heels



Earlier this year there was an event called "Walk a mile in her shoes". It called on men to don a pair of women shoes and show solidarity for victims of gender based violence. But here's a bit of advice, if she wears more than two inches in heels you may want to think again.

This week's Healthy Living looks at an issue that has been long

speculated, the effects of wearing high heel shoes.

Marleni Cuellar, Reporting

In the early fifteen hundreds a fourteen year old girl, slipped on the first formal pair of high heels. Catherine de Medici, who was a little less than five feet, found a way to detract attention from her short stature by lengthening her physique and adding an alluring sway to the way that she walked. Whether people found her more attractive is yet to be said but one thing is for sure, the addition of inches to a woman's length by high heels took off like a wild fire. In these days, heels come in every shape, color and height, all fitting the different personalities of the women who wear them.

The reasons for why women choose to wear heels vary. Some feel it completes the professional look. Some love the assumed sex appeal that is tied to it and some wear them for the same reason as Catherine did in the fifteen hundreds, to increase their height. The underlying fact is that a woman is deemed to be more attractive if she is "well heeled."

Dr. Francis Smith, Orthopedic Surgeon

"In today's corporate world, most women think that they may be very intelligent persons they stand a better chance if they look attractive meaning that they have sex appeal. So lots of exhaustive studies have been done which show that men think that the average woman whose height is about five feet, four inches looks better when the measurement taken from the top of the inner thigh to the heel is thirty and a half inches, which is actually five percent longer than your normal height."

Dr. Francis Smith is a practicing orthopedic surgeon. He explains why the balancing act of wearing a pair of stilettos is actually a hazard to your health.

Dr. Francis Smith

"There is much reason for concern and it is terribly damaging to a woman's body. Problem is that the damage is insidious it takes a long time, so its years before you're going to see the results of wearing high heels shoes. It increases the lordotic curve which is that natural curve you have in your back and increases the lordosis, which is a cause of back pain and especially so with pregnant women. It provokes you're center of mass or your center of gravity to be thrown forward so again you have to lean forward, your knees have to bend a little and so it affects your knees as well and it produces, over a period, of time scarring down or a flexion contracture of the knee. Which simply means that you're hamstrings at the back tighten, scar down, and after twenty/thirty years of wearing high heels, we see women who can't straighten their knees. It's so tight."

The heels also cause the muscles of the calf, thigh and the gluteal muscles to look firmer but that's not necessarily a good thing, ladies. The strain on the muscles results in scarring. This means the loss of flexibility in the muscles and ligaments. It strains the calf muscles, shortens the Achilles tendon, which is the cord at the back of the heel and this same scarring of the connective tissue on the bottom of the foot leads to what we commonly know as heel spurs.

Dr. Francis Smith

“With the natural foot there are tendons, muscles, ligaments that keep your bones in perfect alignment. When you’re upon high heel shoes, this alignment is not there. It’s totally abnormal so it will produce pressure on your metatarsals heads. It will deteriorate them which means they will become a bit arthritic, the cartilage wears out and it will produce clawing of your toes.”

Also corns and calluses are the body’s reaction to the pressure on the skin; the thickened skin is scar tissue. While they can be removed, it would not address the underlying cause.

Dr. Francis Smith

“These things the option may be surgical but whenever we can make the foot look beautiful again but we take away some function. So your foot becomes nice looking but stiff perhaps. So for those people who like dancing or jogging you won’t do with a non-functional foot. My recommendation would be to switch now because you’d want at least to be switching when these changes in your foot are reversible. After twenty/thirty years the changes are irreversible.”

And if you absolutely cannot give up the allure of a few more inches to those legs, here are some recommendations from Dr. Smith.

Dr. Francis Smith

“Try to avoid high heels that are more than two inches. If you’re at work, you can use it when you’re outside your office to engage the public but when you’re inside you can perhaps change them and put on something more comfortable. If you need to wear high heels perhaps not more than two inches and you want a toe box that can accommodate the entire metatarsal area.”


Marleni Cuellar

“Which is the front of your shoe?”

Dr. Francis Smith

“Exactly. You don’t want these pointed shoes that are very much in fashion because those are the most damaging. You’re sure to end up with hammer toes and mallet toes especially on your fourth and fifth toes with the shoes that are pointed.”

Lastly, Dr. Smith emphasized that if you do currently wear heels you must ensure that you do heel stretches everyday after removing your heels. Tip-toeing and heel stretches will help to assist the muscles in maintaining normal anatomy giving back your tendons and your ligaments their stretch ability so it won’t tear so easily.

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TONIGHT'S NEWS WAS PRODUCED FOR BROADCAST BY
AMALIA MAI AND PREPARED FOR THE INTERNET BY
DELAHNIE BAIN.

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