

## Nyad's Lies in [Seize the Yay](#)

(26:57) **Sometimes I read people's versions of my life and say, yeah, they don't have it quite right. Because you can, you know, if you want to tell your life, you tell it yourself.**

Diana Nyad is the [least reliable narrator of her own life story](#). Her tales Here are some examples from Nyad's *Seize the Yay* interview with Sarah Davidson.

### Olympics

(27:10) **So people have written about, oh, I had this heart disease, which I did. . . . But the truth is, I wasn't one of the best swimmers in the world. I wasn't one of the top sprinters in the United States. . . . So I can't ever say — it's been written about me that I would have, maybe could have made the '68 Olympic team. It's not true. I wasn't in that elite category. . . . I did my best to try to make it to the trials, not the team, just to the trials of the '68 Olympics. Didn't make it there.**

Nyad has written and said that [she won a U.S. national title and held a world record](#) despite never coming close to doing either of those things. She has said that she could have — even should have — made it to the Olympic Trials and onto the Olympic team but for her illness.

What's more, here are two examples of Diana describing in detail her experience swimming *at* the Olympic Trials. In the first instance, [she tells the story to two genuine Olympians](#). The second shows her unspooling her elaborate lie in [a commencement address at her alma mater](#).

**Note:** When Nyad describes her sixth-place finish at the Olympic Trials, as she does in those two examples and others, she steals that honor from Laura Novak (now Laura Artemenko), [a 14-year-old kid from Michigan](#).

### Intro to Marathon Swimming

(28:16) **And then I went to graduate school. And a friend of mine said, "you know, there's this sport called marathon swimming. I've seen you." I was just swimming laps for exercise in the Columbia University pool. And he said, "my God, you've got this beautiful gliding perfect stroke. . . ." Why aren't you in that sport? And so I joined that sport.**

Nyad entered graduate school at NYU in 1973 but began marathon swimming in 1970. That summer, she was a counselor at camp Ak-O-Mak in Ontario, Canada. Buck Dawson, the founding director of the International Swimming Hall of Fame, also happened to be the camp director's husband. He suggested Nyad take up the sport for reasons other than her "beautiful gliding stroke. See [this 1970 letter from Dawson to promoter Joe Grossman](#). Grossman clarifies matters in [his response](#) (legible [transcription here](#)):

Your news about your young Greek mermaid hits me just right. This may be the biggest glamor year marathon swimming has ever known.

Also, see [this page from \*Legendary Locals of Lake Forest\*](#), which gives Nyad's graduation year.

## Doctorate

(24:15) **I started a PhD in my 20s in comparative literature . . . and I swam around Manhattan Island in the middle of that degree. It became a big deal and all of a sudden . . . and so I left that degree behind.**

**Has that bothered me? My whole life, have I been saying, "I've got to finish that PhD in comparative literature. I can't be unsuccessful"? No, I don't care about it.**

In [another interview just a few months ago](#), Nyad claimed to have a PhD. She [can't settle on a story](#).

## Cuba

(28:54) **Now I will say that the Cuba swim was a big dream of mine. I was nine years old.**

In Nyad's first memoir, *Other Shores*, she writes about how she first learned about the Cuba swim when she was 27:

In April 1977, I spread all the nautical charts of the world across my living-room rug. I spent three weeks making lists, checking mileage and water temperatures, eliminating some projects, reassessing others. I finally came up with the ideal swim. A swim in the Hellenic concept of sport—impossible yet somehow possible. Come July 1978, I am going to start off on the longest open-water swim in history. I will swim nonstop from Cuba to Florida. Nonstop from Havana to Marathon Key. One hundred and thirty miles in the open ocean; sixty hours of continuous swimming. (p. 154)

(30:25) **Havana is just across the horizon, right there. As a matter of fact, it is so close. You, you little champion swimmer, you, you could almost swim there.**

Standing on that Fort Lauderdale beach, Nyad's mother would have been pointing at the Bahamas. What's more, in *Other Shores*, Nyad says nothing about her mom's providential pointer finger. Nyad told fewer fibs in *Other Shores*.

(31:00) **. . . since 1950, the great marathon swimmers of the world — and many are from Australia — had tried to swim from Cuba to Florida, it became the Mount Everest of the Earth's oceans to a swimmer.** There are a lot of great swims, you know, in Tasmania and, you know, off Cannes and the English Channel and all over. **But the Cuba swim has been called the Mount Everest of the earth's oceans.**

## Cuba (cont.)

No one but Nyad has ever called the Cuba swim “the Mount Everest of the earth’s oceans.” What’s more, [only five swimmers besides Nyad](#) have attempted solo swims from Cuba to Florida. Three of the five hail from Australia: Susie Maroney, Penny Palfrey, and Chloë McCardel. Maroney completed a successful crossing in a shark cage in 1997. Palfrey and McCardel made unsuccessful attempts in 2012 and 2013, respectively.

After Palfrey and McCardel ended their swims, Nyad couldn’t contain her glee. “Each time a swimmer would make an attempt at the Cuba-to-Florida crossing and fail,” she wrote in *Find a Way*, “I would do a little happy dance, alone in my living room.” (p. 117)

At least she was honest.

(39:38) **In this particular case, nobody even went to the second attempt. Most people who tried this when there’s so much danger out there, it’s grueling. They just say I’m never coming back.**

Nyad likes to implicitly denigrate those who only tried it once. Cf. [Her English Channel attempts](#) and the [bunches of sour grapes](#) she proffered afterward.

(41:16) **And there wasn’t one person on that team, who I don’t think wouldn’t have gone back for a sixth, and a seventh, not one of them ever paid a dime, no money.**

At least one crew member, [Darlene Meadows, had a paid staff position](#). It’s hard to tell if others got paid and how much. Please see [“More Signs.”](#)

## Touching

(32:57) **And by the way, you’re never allowed to touch the boat.**

Here’s Nyad [grabbing her guideboat during her 2012 attempt](#). Under any extant set of marathon swimming rules, this would have been grounds for disqualification.

## Only a Matter of Time

(33:20) **Not only did we have four previous attempts, each one about as long as that one: 51 hours this time, 48 hours another time.**

She swam for long stretches, but not as long as she says:

1978     [42 hours](#).

2011(I)   [29 hours](#)

2011(II)   [37-42 hours](#) (depending on the source)

2012     [approx. 41 hours](#)

(Nyad and her crew waffled about how long she spent in the water versus how long she spent on the boat.)

# Silly Stuff, But Lies Nonetheless

## Grandparents

(17:59) **And I didn't get to know my grandparents, but I understand that they lived to be into their early or mid 80s all of them.**

None of Nyad's grandparents made it into their 80s. Her maternal grandmother, Jeannette Glass, got close — 79 — but none of the others did. Her maternal grandfather, George W. Curtis, lived to 58. Her paternal grandparents, William Lent Sneed and Marion Stokes, lived to 60 and 62, respectively.

## *Nyad*, the Motion Picture

(45:14) **It hasn't been shot yet. So when I say upcoming, you know, who knows if it'll be a year or two from now when it actually gets made.**

According to [movieinsider.com](http://movieinsider.com), “many in the industry believe about one out of every 30 projects announced gets made.” I've also consulted three friends who work or have worked in the industry. They tell me that the movie has little chance of ever reaching screens.

(46:31) **And in this movie, it's not a lesbian movie — Bonnie and I are you know, not in that relationship, or we're not playing that role in this movie.**

This is just weird. Given Nyad's status as an LGBTQ icon, why would she assure the Davidson and her audience that “it's not a lesbian movie”?



## Winner of the Grand Prize for Strangest Bit of Dishonesty in the Interview

**SD:** (7:09) I definitely put you on a pedestal. But what would you say is the most relatable thing about you?

Well, I don't mean to lay this on you. But this is about as normal and relatable as it can get. This Sunday, so it's only a couple of days ago, I had to say my final goodbyes to my beloved hound dog. . . . **But I've been hearing — not that I even have put it out there far and wide, you know, in terms of Facebook and all that.**

See the Facebook screenshots on the next page. Again, it's just weird. Why would she bother to lie about this?

**Diana Nyad** July 30 at 7:00 AM · 🌐

**Farewell My Teddy**

I just can't stop crying. A river of tears. My Teddy and I have said our final goodbyes.

None of us can live forever and Teddy was sixteen, very old for an 80-pound dog, age 112 in human years. With his hind legs slowly failing over the past couple of years, through the injections and laser therapy and all manner of meds, I thought I was all the time saying a long good-bye. But I was kidding myself.

With Teddy every day, every night, since the pandemic swept the world in March 2020, I had the exquisite privilege of ushering him through the twilight of his life, instead of calling into the dog sitter from afar to see how he was doing. I will never forget this special year and a half of hugging his warm body, laughing at his wide smile, feeling the joy that came with having Teddy as my constant, loving, funny, fey companion. Every time, every single time he would walk by, I'd exclaim: "OMG, how I love that dog!"

Teddy wasn't the cloying type. He didn't demand attention. But he was always close by. When I was in the gym working out, there he was, napping on the rug, waiting for me to finish. While in the office working, there he was, curled up on the Hemingway chair. When I was in the kitchen, he kept his eye on me from his little dog couch, hoping that a treat would come his way.

He filled this house with his loving presence. For sixteen years, he made this house a blissful home. And now that he's gone (wait...I can't quite get that...is he really gone?), the emptiness, the silence, is staggering. I feel as if I'm floating above the ground. Every place I walk, I say to myself: "You're not here anymore, are you, Teddy? Where are you, my Teddy?" I stop and look at his bed. I can see him. I turn to the kitchen door. There he is, reminding me it's breakfast time. I take the leash from the hook and here he comes, ears flapping with happiness to go on our daily walk.

The decision came last Thursday night. He had already been wincing in pain every time he went to lie down. That was going on for about two months. And all through the nights he wasn't able to get comfortable. I was up most of the nights with him for those two months. But last Thursday that wincing escalated to howling. It was the end.

I arranged for the vet to come Sunday 11am. And for those three days, you can imagine the heightened emotions. He was eating with a robust appetite. His fur was fluffy and shiny, not at all the fur of a very old dog. He was fine while standing or walking. Sunday morning we took a fairly brisk walk all around the neighborhood. But once he was down, he could no longer get up. I would rush to him when I heard him cry and gently coax those hind legs up.

So there was never any waffling about the decision. Once he was in pain, we had come to the end of a wonderful, very long life. But all that calm, doing the right thing, exists in the grey matter between the ears, while the heart is in deep pain. The first injection was a sedative. Those are ten minutes I will never, ever forget. I lay down with him, cuddled his beautiful speckled paws, kissed his forehead and ears and nose and eyes. I thanked him for all the love he gave me. I lifted each ear and whispered, as I had been doing multiple times daily for many months, "I love you, Teddy." He would groan with pleasure. And I asked him to let me love him just one more minute.

I frankly have never been a big John Denver fan but in staying up all night on our last night, Saturday, the television on in the background, the famous Denver song played and that last line put me over the edge of grief: "Come let me love you. Come love me again."

These past few days have me in a somewhat surreal state. I fulfill my obligations. I receive kindness and compassion from both friends and strangers. And then I break down, again and again, and sob with the anguish of missing my loyal companion. And I cry aloud, "Teddy, come let me love you again."

I don't know if you've ever heard the expression but it's apt for this moment in time. "The best defense of atheism is that, were there a God, our animals would live the same lifespan we do." Yet we go through this profound loss every decade or so. Or, if we're truly lucky, we get sixteen years. Again, my head and my heart are not in synch here. I can be clear about sixteen being an extraordinarily long time for a big dog. I can nod my head in agreement with my vet, that we should only be lucky enough to make these compassionate end-of-life decisions for humans. But my heart is wrung out with missing one of the great loves of my life.

I want to reach out to you all to help me through this. I can just bet that you not only have gone through it, but that some of you are going through it right now.

I am going to host a Zoom call this Saturday, July 31, at noon PT/3pm ET.

Please join me. Lend me your wisdom. Share in my grief, will you?  
SIGN UP for the Zoom Call using this link: <https://vpculture.as.me/dianaandteddy>  
You can also read my farewell to Teddy on Medium by clicking this link (or the picture below):<http://mmt.us/m1238446>



MEDIUM.COM  
**Farewell My Teddy**  
I just can't stop crying. A river of tears. My Teddy and I have said our final goodbyes

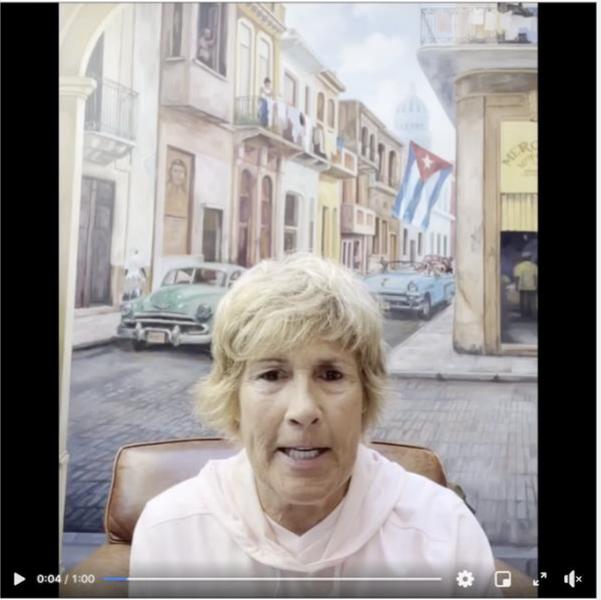
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