

Tragedy curtains holiday tradition



**Bill
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CONSUMER WATCH

For many people, Christmas dinner is really just the prelude to mouth-watering, legendary desserts. Yes, we love a good turkey or ham, with stuffing or dressing, accompanied by casseroles and other sides. But really, if we're honest about it, we really long for the desserts.

No Christmas dinner is complete without a scrumptious pie, created with love, an old family recipe, and no small amount of pecans, cherries, apples or one of a dozens of other orchard specialties. Growing up, our family's Christmas meal often reached its denouement with a mouth-watering pecan pie, topped with a floret of whipped cream.

In the old days, that whipped cream was whipped with a mixer, but since the 1950s many cooks have quietly put a can or tub of whipped cream (such as Reddi Wip, Cool Whip and other brands) into their baskets, resulting in a new holiday tradition. But this Christmas, many consumers may find themselves having to get out the mixers again; there's a shortage of canned whipped cream this year. It's already been dubbed the "Great Reddi Wip Crisis of 2016."

And while it may not be the Griswoldian undoing of the perfect family Christmas tableau, it's an interesting story and a reminder of how the interconnected nature of nearly everything we buy makes it vulnerable to unseen, unexpected — and sometimes tragic — forces.

It all started with an explosion back in the summer near Pensacola, Florida, where a tanker carrying nitrous oxide exploded while being refilled at a site

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Reddi Wip dairy whipped topping is in scarce supply this holiday season.