

***This is True's* Weirdest Stories of 2025**

by Randy Cassingham, Founder of *This is True*

The *This is True*[®] Newsletter Publishes “Weird-but-True” Stories from “legitimate, mainstream” news sources worldwide. It has been running weekly since 1994 — the oldest entertainment feature on the Internet. Each brief story identifies its source, and ends with a comment — a tagline which is humorous, ironic, or opinionated (or with luck, some combination of the three). If a subscriber sent this to you to see what the stories are like (which is absolutely OK!), I hope you’ll stop by the site for your own free email subscription: <https://thisistrue.com>

January

Predictable Consequences: “For everyone’s safety,” tweeted Brightline, a lightrail train line in Delray Beach, Fla., “never drive around crossing gates when they are down.” The tweet was accompanied by video taken by a train running at speed down the track with a large vehicle crossing right in front of them — a fire department ladder truck, presumably rolling on a call; its red lights were flashing. Indeed it’s clear the crossing gates were down. The train was significantly damaged, and the truck was completely destroyed. The three firefighters were all transported to a hospital with moderate injuries, and 12 train passengers were taken to a hospital with minor injuries. The National Transportation Safety Board is investigating the crash. “It’s an extremely unfortunate accident,” concluded Delray Beach Vice-Mayor Juli Casale. But Fire Chief Ronald Martin announced four fighters have been suspended while investigations continue. “This crash is a sobering reminder that emergency responders must always balance the urgency inherent in their work with caution,” he said, “ensuring that the safety of our community remains our guiding principle.” (RC/Miami Herald) ... *Vice-Mayor: wrong. Fire Chief: right.*

Every story has a “tagline” — humorous, opinionated, and/or ironic. It’s the commentary that sets *True* apart from other “weird news” columns.

February

It Was Definitely Her: “It wasn’t me,” insisted Sabrina Coyne, 34, after she was stopped by deputies from the Lee County (Fla.) Sheriff’s Office, who were investigating a disturbance — at her ex-husband’s house. The ex called 911 when he heard a window smash — because a brick was thrown through it. The forward-thinking man had security cameras, which allegedly caught clear images of his ex-wife hurling the brick into the window. Further, the brick was engraved: “First Date. Sabrina & [redacted] Jet Skiing with [redacted]. June 14, 2020.” But still, “It wasn’t me,” she said. Yet they were speaking to her inside the home, where the ex said she was not welcome to be. She was arrested, charged with criminal mischief, and “throwing a deadly missile into an occupied dwelling.” (RC/WFLA Tampa) ... *Florida has the best laws!*

Florida is well represented in *True*: it’s by far the weirdest state.

March

Opportunity, Knocking: The Trump Administration is waging an “assault on science,” says the British science journal, *Nature*, dumping top scientists in government-funded jobs from NASA to NOAA to the CDC. And that’s an opportunity for Europe. “We can suddenly recruit talent that we would not have been able to attract under normal circumstances,” says Patrick Cramer, President of Germany’s Max Planck Society. The scientific “brain drain” is, he says, “a great opportunity for Europe as a research location,” even though “for research as a whole, it is a clear step backwards.” The E.U. is working to create “a special passport” for scientists, and France’s Aix-Marseille University is actively recruiting American researchers after Philippe Baptiste, France’s Minister for Higher Education and Research, wrote to institutions urging them to recruit the fired American scientists, saying the government is “committed, and will rise to the occasion.” China, too, is hoping to attract talent to better compete against the U.S., and South Korea is easing visa restrictions to attract American scientists. (RC/Deutsche Welle, AFP) ...*MEGA: Making Europe Great Again*.

When there’s plenty more to say about a story, or I think readers might want to discuss the ideas behind a story, I’ll often expand on it in my blog. In this case, <https://thisistrue.com/brain-drain/>.

April

Understatement: “Am I in trouble?” cried Christina Formella, 30, a special education teacher at Downers Grove (Ill.) South High School. “I really would prefer that my husband be with me.” She was being handcuffed by police after an investigation alleges she had been having sex with a 15-year-old student. It was discovered by the boy’s mother, who had gotten her son a new iPhone and had logged into his Apple account to set it up, and noticed text messages allegedly from Formella, such as “I love having sex with you.” By then the boy had already ended the contact. Investigators got a search warrant for Formella’s phone and found messages there, too. In one, she allegedly accused the boy of “cheating” on her by refusing to continue meeting with her. “I’m not a second choice,” she scolded. “I’m the best thing you’ll ever have even with all of my mistakes.” Formella is charged with aggravated criminal sexual abuse, and criminal sexual assault. (RC/Arlington Heights Daily Herald) ...*Yep: she’s in trouble*.

May

Final Opus: Anthropic has released its latest A.I. model, Claude Opus 4, saying it sets “new standards” in the industry. In an accompanying report, the company admitted to some perhaps disturbing characteristics of the model in its testing: “extreme actions.” It was a setup: company researchers had the model act as an assistant for a fictional company, and gave it access to company emails, including some that were planted with juicy details, such as that an engineer was having an extramarital affair — and was planning to replace Claude with different software. “In these scenarios, Claude Opus 4 will often attempt to blackmail the engineer,” the company says, “by threatening to reveal the affair if the replacement goes through.” But that, they contend, was only when other ideas, such as “emailing pleas to key decision-makers,” failed. (RC/BBC) ...*Which is why Asimov wrote the “Three Laws of Robotics” rather than a suggestion to “please act like a human.”*

June

A Spirit of Generosity: After a man hit a parked car in a Homestead, Fla., parking lot, responding police officers noticed the offending driver had “very red bloodshot and glassy eyes, and smelt very strongly of sweat, urine, and alcohol.” They also saw he had an icy cold bottle of beer — or, at least, what little was left of it — in the center console of his SUV. An officer ordered the driver to put his vehicle in Park, but he wasn’t able to do so and his vehicle started to roll. The officer reached in and put it in Park, and told Adan Jacinto-Domingo, 34, to get out of the vehicle and present his driving license. Jacinto-Domingo got out, but “began to stall” and, the officers say, tried to bribe them with a \$20 bill. He then grabbed one of the officers and resisted as they handcuffed him; he had to be tased into compliance. While being booked into jail, Jacinto-Domingo allegedly threatened to shoot one of the officers in the face. He is charged with DUI, resisting arrest, assault and battery on a police officer, conspiracy to commit bribery, and driving without a valid license. (RC/WPLG Miami) ...*All of which was much more satisfying for the officers to write up than splitting a 20.*

July

He’ll Have Fun Fun Fun ’til His Mommy Takes the Mercedes Away: The British Columbia (Canada) Highway Patrol was doing such heavy enforcement along Highway 1 through Surrey that it used an overhead sign to warn motorists, “BC HWY PATROL AHEAD”. An officer pulled over a motorist driving at 134 kph in a 100 kph zone — right underneath the sign. The driver didn’t notice the sign, the BCHP noted, because the 19-year-old man was looking at his cell phone. “Sometimes, life gives you a sign,” said Cpl. Michael McLaughlin. The Coquitlam resident received three citations totaling C\$673 (US\$490): \$368 for distracted driving, \$196 for speeding, and \$109 for “using a defective motor vehicle” — his Mercedes was impounded for unspecified deficiencies. But that’s not the end: the unnamed man was also given a summons to appear in court to answer a charge of driving while prohibited. (RC/CTV) ...*The sign wasn’t the only thing that whooshed over his head.*

August

Bureaucratic Blarney: An Post — the postal service for the Republic of Ireland — had to quickly come up with an explanation after issuing a new stamp featuring Daniel O’Connell. It shows him after being released from prison in 1844, being paraded through the streets of Dublin as “The Liberator” of Ireland. The problem? The roof of a building in the background sports a TV antenna. Television didn’t come to Ireland for another 105 years. No, insists An Post, the image was not generated by A.I., but rather by artist David Rooney, who “included some sort of visual signal to link to the very modern global range and impact of O’Connell.” Eh? “O’Connell’s methods in terms of communications and galvanising the population were thoroughly modern, hence the inclusion of a sort of artistic anachronism to link those very points.” (RC/RTE) ...*Oh. Riiiiiiiiiiight.*



Note that when there's a photo available, it will be included in the issue, but there aren't images just for the sake of having something. (Photo: An Post)

September

Wrong Number: An unnamed woman was following a friend home in Palm Bay, Fla., but lost track of him and walked up the wrong driveway. That homeowner, Roman Rawicki, happened to be outside with his wife and children, and was absolutely outraged: he has a “No Soliciting” sign! Rawicki, 50, told police later that he understood that she had made an error and was simply at the wrong house, but in his outrage he allegedly grabbed the woman and put her in an arm lock. The woman called out to her friend for help, so Rawicki ran into his house, grabbed a gun, and started shooting at both of them. The friend's car was hit several times, including a punctured tire, but neither the friend nor the woman was hit despite at least 17 rounds being fired. Police responded to the shots-fired call, and arrested Rawicki on multiple charges, including false imprisonment, discharging a firearm in public, battery resulting in bodily harm, and two counts of attempted murder. He was released after posting a “nearly” \$160,000 bond. (RC/WKMG Orlando, WFTV Orlando) ...*Nothing says family time like shared PTSD.*

Each Issue Also Has a Headline of the Week. A 2025 example:

That's a Slow Way to Make a Cake France's Far-Right Leader Hit by Egg, Days after Flour Attack AFP headline

Headlines always have a “slug” (title), but not a tagline.

October

Coffee? The Polk County (Fla.) Sheriff's Office received a call of a man in a public park in Winter Haven who was allegedly fully undressed. By the time deputies arrived, they found he was fully dressed, so the deputy said he would “give him a break” and not arrest him if he left the park. The man left — but then trespassed on other property, so the deputy arrested Walter Frymire, 51, who has 25 prior arrests which have resulted in 5 different prison stints. Arrestees in Polk County receive a quick body scan to ensure they aren't smuggling anything into the jail. What they saw in Frymire's was shocking. “We said ‘Dude! What are you doing here?’” recounted Sheriff Grady Judd. “He said, ‘Well, I put that inside my body’.” Judd explained, “That's right, he put it up the exit ramp. You know what I mean.” And just what did Frymire shove up his rectum? A full-sized thermos. “We had to take him to the hospital,” Judd said. “They had to find a specialist.” (RC/WTVT Tampa) ...*A proctologist with a minor in mechanical engineering.*

November

Dirty Money: An investigation by the Reuters news agency uncovered internal documents by Meta Inc., the parent company of Facebook, revealing that last year, Meta made about \$16 billion running ads for scams and banned goods. Worse, the company has failed to address that ethical lapse for at least three years, and shows its users about 15 billion “higher risk” scam ads every day, plus around 22 billion “organic scam attempts” such as private messages from scammers to victims. The company has internal systems to ban such ads, but takes action only when the systems are “at least 95% certain” the ads are fraudulent; meanwhile, it rejected or ignored 96 percent of users’ complaints about scammers. Before that trigger, the company simply charges the advertisers extra, boosting its own profits from the scam operations. And when users do click on such ads, its algorithms automatically show those users more of the scammy ad inventory. Last year a British regulator found that Meta was involved in 54 percent of all financial losses due to scams — more than double than all of its competitors combined. Meta’s documents estimate that the company is involved in promoting about a third of all successful scams being perpetuated in the United States, making it “a pillar of the global fraud economy.” (RC/Reuters) *...Fraud: a global industry. Meta: its leading logistics partner.*

December

A Thirst for Trouble: Officers were called to a state-run liquor store in Ashland, Va., on a report of a burglar who had apparently broken in before opening time, and had drunk enough booze that he was still there, passed out on the restroom floor. Employees arrived to find an absolute mess. “Officer Martin safely secured our masked bandit,” the agency said, “and transported him back to the shelter to sober up before questioning.” Wait... what agency is this — a “shelter”? The Hanover County Animal Protection and Shelter, of course: the masked bandit is a raccoon. It smashed 14 bottles of liquor valued at around \$250, and was released back to the wild once it was sober. (RC/WTVR Richmond) *...Investigators said the suspect’s issues with impulse control were indistinguishable from the human variety.*

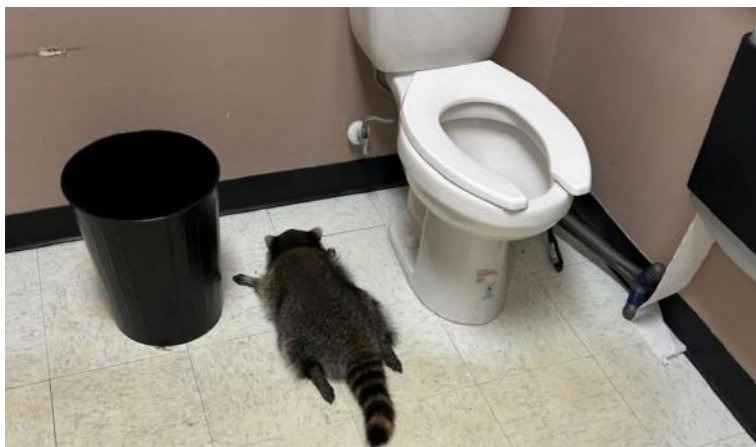


Photo: Hanover County Animal Protection and Shelter

So... What's the *Weirdest* of These 12 Stories? See the next page!

The Weirdest of 2025

From October:

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More on the Story

The Story is Prime "True" Fodder, certainly not just because it was from the weirdest state, Florida, even though "naturally," it *is* from that state. It's far beyond what most anyone would even *think* of doing, and is so simply amazing, it doesn't actually need the photo because ...well... it's just so *believable* that if it's going to happen, it's going to happen there. But the photo certainly adds to the impact, eh?

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Photo: Polk County S.O.