

## ***This is True's* Weirdest Stories of 2019**

by Randy Cassingham, Founder of *This is True*

**The *This is True*<sup>®</sup> 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**

**Dragon Attack:** A new restaurant “coming soon” in Keene, N.H., promises “Creative Vietnamese Cuisine”. Pho (pronounced “fuh”), a popular noodle soup in Vietnam, is also a major American fad. Owner Isabelle Jolie put up a sign in the window with her chosen name, as noted on the lease signed last April: “Pho Keene Great”. Not so fast, says City Manager Elizabeth Dragon: not only does the name sound like a profanity, Jolie didn’t have city permission for a sign. “They were informed the name would be problematic” before Jolie signed the lease, Dragon said — effectively the restaurant’s landlord as it’s housed in the same city-owned building as city hall. Jolie, who says the name is not a problem if pho is pronounced properly, has removed the sign, but the city and owner are still at a stalemate over the name: “We plan on opening the business and not changing our name,” Jolie says, but Dragon says Jolie has postponed a meeting with her. (RC/Keene Sentinel) ...*Jolie’s delay is due to coming down with a pho cough.*

### **February**

**Suspect of the First Order:** California Highway Patrol officers trying to pull over a speeding car in San Diego ended up in a chase when the driver refused to pull over. After changing freeways and then exiting, the driver skidded to a stop and he and his passenger jumped out and ran; they were quickly chased down and arrested. Meanwhile, there was a “tense standoff” with another passenger ducking down in the back seat. Officers with their guns drawn ordered the passenger out, but he wouldn’t move. After carefully approaching, officers discovered that the passenger was actually a life-sized Star Wars stormtrooper costume. (RC/KGTV San Diego) ...*Don’t worry about a shootout with him: those guys can never hit anything.*

### **March**

**Let’s Get Out of Here!** A driver involved in a fender-bender on New York’s Long Island tried to escape the consequences of his actions by driving around the lowered warning arms at a railroad crossing. No, he was not hit by a train. He was hit by two trains, one with 100 passengers going eastbound, and another with 800 passengers going westbound. Not surprisingly, Jesus Hernandez, the dairy manager at a grocery store a block away from the crossing, was killed — and so were two other men he worked with who were riding with him. Several train passengers were injured, two cars derailed, and there was “significant” damage to the tracks. (RC/WABC New York) ...*But hey: he got away from the fender-bender*

## April

**Unsupported:** Toni Anderson was awarded child support when her husband left her, but he decided to go to Canada so he wouldn't have to follow the court order, she says. That was in the early 1970s, and "I kind of put it on the back burner and just kind of forgot about it over the years," she said. Anderson raised her young girl herself, and had to rent out a room in her house to make ends meet. Now that she's retired, she learned that her ex had moved back to the U.S. "I realized in the middle of the night one night last year," she says, that "hey, there's no statute of limitations on child support." She dug up the old court order and sued him for what he still owes. "He was only supposed to give me like a 160 dollars a month," she says. "Well, that was 50 years ago. That today is a lot more money." Adding interest, the \$30,000 total is now more than \$170,000 — and he settled for \$150,000. (RC/KGTV San Diego) ...*It's no big surprise she had to settle for less: she did when she married him, too.*

## May

**Quick! Hop to It!** "I am the type of person to avoid fights by any means necessary," said Antoine McDonald, 20, "but in that situation, I would fight any day." He was bar-hopping in Orlando, Fla., wearing a head-to-toe white bunny suit and, while walking to the next bar, spotted a man attacking a woman on the sidewalk. "I just ran over there," he said, and by the time he arrived the man was on top of the woman. McDonald started hitting the man to help the woman — call them rabbit punches. Or, as the *Tampa Bay Times* put it, he "unleashed a flurry of furry fists to defend a stranger," and in the process, it added, "reached peak Florida." There were no arrests made, though police say McDonald is a suspect in several unrelated robberies. (RC/Tampa Bay Times) ...*Two rights (and a couple of lefts) don't unmake a wrong.*

## June

**Torch Song Felony:** After a house fire in Del City, Okla., investigators were suspicious that it was arson. While poking around after the fire was extinguished, they noticed that the next door neighbor had security cameras. They asked Annie Durham, 59, if they could look at the recordings, and she willingly gave up the password so investigators could see them. Sure enough, one of the cameras caught a clear image of someone throwing something burning into the vacant house's open door: "A stick with a rag or towel wrapped around it," says Del City Fire Chief Brandon Pursell. "It had some lighter fluid poured on it." And the image was clear enough that a suspect could be identified and arrested: Annie Durham, who had been in an "ongoing dispute" with her neighbor. "She caught herself on camera setting the fire," Pursell says. (RC/KFOR Oklahoma City) ...*She got the cameras to catch obliviots who were up to no good — and they worked!*



**Note That When Pictures Are Available,** they're included with the story — usually fairly small, and with the ability to click and see them larger. Since that's harder to do here, this photo is a bit larger than usual.

## July

**Really Milking It:** “This is energy in my hand, energy that produces milk!” says John Maxwell, a dairy farmer in Donahue, Iowa. The special additive Maxwell feeds his cows to help them produce milk is an “oddball ingredient,” he admits, but “dairy sustainability defined for me is good for the planet, good for the people, and it’s profitable.” A half pound per day is mixed in with their hay, fruit, and vegetables. What is it? Artificial coffee creamer, which is better than the previous special ingredient he used to use — powdered cake mix — because it has more sugar. He can usually buy it past its “best by” date at a discount, and it’s delivered in one-ton bags. “It does sound a little cannibalistic,” Maxwell says, “but that’s not true at all.” (RC/WQAD Moline, Ill.) ...*Right: if there’s anything that’s not in “creamer,” it’s dairy.*

## August

**No Parking:** Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency in Nova Scotia, Canada, responded to a structure fire, but a car was parked right in front of the hydrant they needed for the water to fight it. The only way to hook up their very inflexible feed line was to smash it through the car’s windows — so they did. It is illegal to park within 5m of a fire hydrant, even if it’s not marked with a red curb. The stubborn fire took four hours to extinguish; police left the car with a parking ticket, and the fire department posted a photo of their solution online. (RC/CBC) ...*As a warning. Which won’t work.*



## September

**A Nose for Business:** When Joshua Jack, who worked for advertising company FCB in Auckland, New Zealand, was summoned to a meeting in his boss’s office “to talk about his future with the company,” he knew it was bad news — especially since he was told he could “bring someone along for support.” Jack, who is a comedian on the side, hired a “support clown” for NZ\$200 (US\$127) to accompany him. The clown, dressed in traditional clown costuming, was silent during the meeting, but mime-cried when Jack was officially “made redundant.” (RC/New Zealand Herald, Magic Talk Radio NZ) ...*Jack’s successor will have some mighty big shoes to fill.*

**Each Issue Also Has** a Headline of the Week. A 2019 example:

Left Behind  
**Man Arrested in Theft of 12 Right foot Shoes in Redding**  
Sacramento (Calif.) Bee headline

## October

**Mischief:** A New York, N.Y., “product design company,” MSCHF, has introduced a new take on Nike’s Air Jordan shoes. Instead of air in the sole for a cushiony walk, they pumped the space full of a different kind of Jordan: water from the Jordan River, which is billed as “real holy water.” Since the shoes thus allow the wearers to “walk on water” they dubbed them “Jesus Shoes”, which are marketed with a modified version of the Papal seal, and sport a crucifix hanging from the laces. The company claims the shoes are a statement about “collab culture” — promoting businesses on limited edition shoes, which sell briskly to “hypebeasts,” young adults who want to impress their peers. “We wanted to make a statement about how absurd collab culture has gotten,” claims the company’s “head of commerce,” Daniel Greenberg. The Jesus Shoes are just the first of the company’s “biweekly drops,” he says. They made “about two dozen” pairs, and when they “dropped” they sold out within a few minutes — at \$3,000 a pair. (RC/New York Post) ...*It won’t appease the “That’s blasphemy!” crowd by calling them cross-trainers.*

## November

**Jesus Saves:** When Tyler Moon of Eden Prairie, Minn., signed up to run in the Medtronic Twin Cities Marathon, he chose to have a different name printed on his runner’s bib: “Jesus Saves”. Along mile 8, Moon, 25, collapsed onto the ground unconscious: he was having a heart attack. The man running behind Moon just happened to have been a certified registered nurse anesthetist, who started CPR while telling a race official to call 911. Paramedics arrived and used a defibrillator — which was probably made by Medtronic, since it has the largest market share in the world for the lifesaving devices — and saved Moon. The name of the nurse who saved him? Jesus Bueno, 43. (RC/St. Paul Pioneer Press) ...*Good lord!*

## December

**Pacifier:** Veronica Alvarez-Rodriguez was shopping with her husband at a Goodwill thrift store and spotted a Baby Einstein’s bouncer at a bargain price. “It was like the perfect gift for the baby shower,” she said, so she paid \$9.99 for the unopened box and took it straight to the shower in Crestview, Fla. When the father-to-be opened the gift, he exclaimed, “You guys got me a gun!” Sure enough, that’s what was in the box: an “assault” style .22 caliber rifle. The Mossberg 715T semi-automatic was even loaded. “Goodwill has the best treasures for \$9.99,” Alvarez-Rodriguez said. Police are investigating, and as long as the gun isn’t stolen or evidence in a crime, the recipient can keep it. (RC/Northwest Florida Daily News) ...*And remember, dad: it’s not for you, it’s for the baby.*

## So... What’s the *Weirdest* of These 12 Stories?

Next page, please!

## The Weirdest *This is True* Story of 2019 is January's:

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## More on the Story

**The Story is Prime “True” Fodder** for showing the utter obliivacy of “following the rules” without thinking. That’s where *This is True* comes in: it’s designed to be “Thought-Provoking Entertainment” — using stories like this to not only point out the absurdities of humanity, but to give our kids real-world examples of people being stupid and the consequences they suffer. That is an effective way to help children develop common sense!

**There is More Commentary**, updates (the restaurant won), and many reader comments on this story on my blog, [Pho Keene Controversy](#).

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