

***This is True's* Weirdest Stories of 2020**

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

Strike Three, He's Out: First, Joshua Babiy was two hours late when he showed up at the Niagara Detention Centre in Ontario, Canada, to start serving his sentence for meth possession, which he was allowed to do on weekends. Second, upon routine search, jailers found a vial of crystal meth in his pocket. And third, the next weekend, Babiy didn't show up at all. Babiy, 34, of Welland, was taken back to the Ontario Court of Justice in St. Catharines to face Judge Harvey Brownstone. Babiy claimed in court he did show up for the second weekend, but when he found “the gates were closed,” he left. “Some judge took a chance on you and gave you weekends,” Brownstone said, “and you screwed it up.” The judge observed that “you and drugs do not get along,” and added a \$1,045 fine and two years of probation to his sentence. “I feel like I'm punishing you for being stupid,” the judge added, “because it was a stupid thing to do.” (RC/Niagara Falls Review) ...*How is that different from any other workday, Your Honor?*

February

Make Cheating Wrong Again: The Georgia State Patrol fired all the August 2019 trooper academy class graduates after state investigators found all 33 of them cheated on an exam. Investigators found that the troopers coordinated — via a Snapchat group called “Unruly Troopers” — to “get their stories straight” as they were being investigated, violating their oath to “uphold professional conduct and standards.” Georgia Department of Public Safety Commissioner Mark McDonough called the scandal “a punch in the gut” and said more firings might be forthcoming. He was correct: Gov. Brian Kemp forced McDonough to retire. “The person at the head is ultimately responsible,” McDonough said. (RC/WMAZ Macon) ...*Sounds noble until you realize he means the governor.*

Each Issue Also Has a Headline of the Week. A 2020 example:

<p>Keep Digging — There's GOT to be More! Homicide Detectives Investigating after 3 Bodies Found at Cemetery in Perris KABC Los Angeles (Calif.) headline</p>
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March

Worse than Daytime TV in the U.S.: State television in China is doing a series of reports on the “heroes” in the fight against the COVID-19 coronavirus, but they’re backfiring. One showed nurse Zhao Yu treating patients in a hospital in Wuhan; Zhao is heavily pregnant. “Can we stop all this propaganda?” complained a viewer on Weibo, the Chinese equivalent of Twitter. “What is this, a show for political purposes?” another asked. Another report sparked even more complaints: it shows nurses weeping as their heads are shaved bald to “make it easier” for them to wear “protective head gear” as they treat patients. Viewers complained that there’s no reason to shave the women’s hair completely: if needed for “protective head gear,” surely simply cutting their hair short would be more than enough — just as it is for men, who weren’t similarly shaved. (RC/BBC) *...People who have been ordered to sit at home for weeks have lots of time to think.*

April

I’d Like to See the Manager: John-Paul Drake, the Director of Australia’s largest independent grocery chain, Drakes Supermarkets, posted a video online telling the story of a customer who asked for a refund. The unidentified customer used 20 people to shop for him to stockpile goods ahead of the COVID-19 pandemic arriving in the country. But, the customer told him, his eBay store had been shut down — presumably for price gouging. So, he continued, could he return and get a refund for 150 packs of 32 rolls of toilet paper, and 150 1-liter bottles of hand sanitizer? In the video, Drake demonstrated his response to the man by lifting his middle finger, commenting, “That is the sort of person that is causing the problem in the whole country.” (RC/7 News Australia) *...Once the guy left, Drake needed to use one of his cleansing wipes.*



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.

May

Does He Get the Girl? NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine has confirmed the agency will cooperate with a plan to film a movie starring Tom Cruise on the International Space Station. Plot details are still under wraps, but private rocket maker SpaceX is also involved. SpaceX is soon to launch astronauts, bringing human launch capability back to the U.S. for the first time since the Space Shuttle was retired. The 56-year-old actor is known for doing his own stunts. (RC/CBS) *...Spoiler alert: the scene where Cruise jumps onto the Falcon Heavy booster seconds before launch, manages to climb up and jump onto the Crew Dragon capsule before the boosters separate, pries open the hatch and tosses the bad guy out before sealing the hatch and taking the newly vacant seat, is the best part.*

June

Drip, Drip, Drip: The Canadian Forces — the country's military branch — is sick and tired of its internal reports being leaked to the media. Leaked information that the military knew about abuse in long-term care homes well before they did anything about it seems to be the straw that broke the camel's back. "Any suspected non-compliance might be investigated," warned the Department of National Defence in a confidential internal email, "and consequences will be commensurate with the circumstances and in line with DND/CAF's usual process for dealing with disciplinary or administrative matters." Just how do we know about the confidential internal email? Someone leaked it to the news media. In 2013, Canadian Forces' National Investigation Service probed the Ottawa Citizen newspaper for publishing "classified information" about Canada's involvement in an international military exercise. After more than a month, it said it found how that information leaked: the U.S. Navy had distributed it in a press release — just as the newspaper said in its reporting. (RC/Ottawa Citizen) ...*That combination of paranoia and incompetence shows the Canadian military is right up there with other countries' forces.*

July

Loaded: Santa Cruz County, Calif., sheriff's deputies responded to a report of a man firing a gun. An update came in: the man had carjacked a Honda and was heading south on the coastal highway. Deputies spotted the car and gave chase at more than 100 mph, but the driver wouldn't pull over. As they got to town in Santa Cruz, the deputies backed off for safety, and the local police spotted the car — and watched the man drive over a cliff into the rocky surf below. Amazingly, the driver not only survived, he climbed back up the cliff, where he was taken into custody at gunpoint. John Kenyanjui, 56, of Portland, Ore., was charged with felony carjacking, felony evading police, hit-and-run with damage, and unlawful weapon use, and is being held on \$100,000 bail. (RC/Santa Cruz Sentinel) ...*Deputies are now demanding the department exchange their Ford Police Interceptors for Hondas.*

August

On Target: Pennsylvania State Police are investigating the circumstances behind an unnamed man's gunshot wound. A trooper says the man was target shooting in Allegheny Township, and "attempted to gain a better grip on the gun." But in the process of that, he "unknowingly placed his left index finger in front of the muzzle," and when he fired the next shot, the bullet went through his finger. The news report notes, "The extent of the man's injuries are unknown." (RC/WJAC Johnstown) ...*It's just a guess, but probably he's missing a chunk of his left index finger.*

September

Polly Wants a Reward: A man in Brockville, Ont., Canada, heard his parrot in the front room say "Hello!" — but he ignored the greeting "because it isn't always a reliable source of information." Sure enough, an intruder had slipped in through an unlocked door, found the homeowner's wallet, took a credit card, and left. A neighbor was a bit sharper: they noticed the stranger and took a photo of him — which matched security camera footage of the man using the card at a nearby store. The unnamed 33-year-old burglar was arrested. (RC/CTV) ...*If you need a burglar alarm, buy one that doesn't need to be fed.*

October

Everyone Does It: “Your license is suspended,” an officer told Emily Owings, 28, of Enid, Okla., after pulling her over for a traffic violation. “I didn’t know that,” Owings told him, but she really needed to go, because she ...well... needed to go. “I have to poop so bad,” she said. “Where do you think I was going?” the cop replied. When he told her she was under arrest for outstanding warrants, she yelled “F--k you guys!” and sped off, leading a pursuit at over 70 mph. When officers finally got her stopped again, she surrendered when she saw they all had her at gunpoint. Once in handcuffs, Owens had one last question: “Can I poop in your car, man?” (RC/KFOR Oklahoma City) ...*If she didn’t do that when she was at gunpoint, it’s not really an emergency.*

November

Got Goosed: People picky about their traditional Thanksgiving turkey turned to Whole Foods for fresh feathered foodstuffs. But shoppers “throughout the south” weren’t happy with what they got: the gallinaceous gobblers were seriously spoiled. When Stacey Haskell of Charlotte, N.C., got hers out to prepare, “my husband walked into the kitchen and said the turkey smells.” More accurately, other customers say, they simply stank — and they had to immediately improvise a replacement repast after chucking their foul fowl into the trash. In a statement, Whole Foods said while the putrid poultry “didn’t meet its high expectations for quality,” the terrible toms “did not pose any known health risks.” (RC/WSOC Charlotte) ...*For some reason, it comes to mind the inconvenienced individuals should get their dollars doubled.*

December

As Easy as 1, II, C: Shortly before the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved the first vaccine for Covid-19, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Operation Warp Speed ran an exercise to test vaccine distribution procedures. Colorado was one of 10 states participating: two boxes were shipped to the state. Colorado’s Department of Public Health and Environment still called the test “successful,” even though only one box arrived; the other was found in Kentucky. (RC/Denver Post) ...*Wow: that really is a realistic outcome.*

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

Next page, please!

The Weirdest *This is True* Story of 2020 is February's:

Make Cheating Wrong Again: The Georgia State Patrol fired all the August 2019 trooper academy class graduates after state investigators found all 33 of them cheated on an exam. Investigators found that the troopers coordinated — via a Snapchat group called “Unruly Troopers” — to “get their stories straight” as they were being investigated, violating their oath to “uphold professional conduct and standards.” Georgia Department of Public Safety Commissioner Mark McDonough called the scandal “a punch in the gut” and said more firings might be forthcoming. He was correct: Gov. Brian Kemp forced McDonough to retire. “The person at the head is ultimately responsible,” McDonough said. (RC/WMAZ Macon) ...*Sounds noble until you realize he means the governor.*

More on the Story

The Story is Prime “True” Fodder for showing the utter obliivocry of officials that are given the power to call out those who do wrong. The tagline, in turn, is not only funny, but points out a truth: isn't the governor “ultimately responsible”? 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 it enables parents to give their kids real-world examples of people being stupid and the consequences they suffer. That is an effective way to help children develop common sense!

This story was expanded into a longer editorial: <https://thisistrue.com/cheating-wrong/>

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This Document Is Very Similar to the Premium edition: about a dozen stories (always at least 10), and a headline of the week. The free “basic” edition has five stories (and the headline of the week).

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