

***This is True's* Weirdest Stories of 2018**

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

Why So Jumpy? Michael Scott Wilson, 32, of Palm Coast, Fla., has been charged with attempting to harm his pregnant wife. His scheme came to light when his wife went to visit family, and told her stepfather that Wilson told her “to use the front door of the home because the garage door isn’t going to open” — and she shouldn’t let any children touch the front door. The stepfather called the sheriff; a deputy found the door so suspicious that he kicked it in — which resulted in electrical sparks. Wilson, investigators allege, had wired up the door with a “booby trap” to electrocute anyone who tried to open it normally. They showed the setup to an electrician, who said that the way it was rigged would cause a person an 80 to 100 percent chance of “suffering death or great bodily harm.” Another clue: Wilson had already changed his Facebook relationship status to “Widowed.” (RC/Daytona Beach News-Journal) ...*What Facebook really needs is a status of “Incarcerated.”*

February

Radical: “Well, that looks like a pistol!” said a student at Oberlin (La.) High School as he looked at another student’s work. In math class. The other student had drawn a $\sqrt{\quad}$, or square root sign, which doesn’t look much like a pistol. But other students heard the comment, made less than a week after the shooting at a high school in Parkland, Fla. Then, the “ol’ morphing of information” — aka the “telephone game” — took hold, “morphing” the comment into rumors that a mass shooting was being planned at the school, said Allen Parish Sheriff Doug Hebert. Sheriff’s deputies searched the home of the unidentified student who made the comment, but found no evidence of weapons or intent to go on a murderous rampage. “He did not commit a crime,” Sheriff Hebert said. “He did not commit anything remotely criminal, nothing to remotely suggest any intent to do actual harm.” Still, in response to the incident, the student who made the comment has been suspended pending an expulsion hearing, and the school board set a new policy: any student who “talks about guns” or school shootings will be removed from school, the sheriff will be sent to do a “home visit” with the family, and “we’re going to conduct a threat assessment on the student,” said Allen Parish School District Superintendent Michael Doucet. (RC/KATC Lafayette) ...*Which raises the overreaction to ∞ .*

March

Don't Horse Around with the Cops: A motorist on the 91 freeway in Long Beach, Calif., called 911 at 1:00 a.m. to report something remarkable on the roadway: a man riding a horse — a white Arabian. An officer arrived as the horse had taken the next exit, and the cop says that its rider, Luis Alfredo Perez, had a blood alcohol level of more than twice the legal limit. It was Perez's 29th birthday, and he was arrested for — yes — “DUI on a horse.” He was booked on \$10,000 bail, and Perez's mother arrived quickly to pick up the horse. (RC/KTLA Los Angeles) ...*Although she couldn't pick up the horse's ass until she posted his bail.*

April

Uniform Provided: “We're not clothing-optional,” says Jim Johnson. “We found over the years, with clothing-optional places, you get more gawkers, people who just want to show up and look.” Thus, “We're a nudist campground.” Johnson runs the Dyer Woods Nudist Campgrounds in Foster, R.I., which has a job opening for a lifeguard for their pond swimming area. They must be state-certified, and can wear a swimsuit if they really want to — but he doesn't quite see the point of that. (RC/Providence Journal) ...*Best part of the job: you get to watch closely. Worst part of the job: you have to watch closely.*

May

Can You Identify Yourself? While doing the paperwork at a car dealership in West Palm Beach, Fla., to buy a Fiat, Marci Robin says the sales rep put one extra piece of paper in front of her. It was the printed out “reCaptcha” as often seen online. He wanted her to use a pen to check the box to confirm that she is “not a robot.” Robin, a magazine writer, was fairly incredulous, but the rep was serious. “He handed me that page — with literally nothing else on it — and just matter-of-factly said, ‘And this one is just to ensure you're not a robot,’” she says. She took a photo to document the request. A dealer employee confirms it's “common practice” to get customers to check the box. On the other hand, the sales rep said even if she was a robot, he'd sell it a car “if it had a social security number and an ID.” (RC/Tampa Bay Times) ...*But only if it could check the box.*



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, the photo is a bit larger than usual.

June

Goes Around, Comes Around: A new Arby's roast beef fast-food restaurant is opening in Bethlehem, Pa., in the location of a former Taco Bell. Meanwhile, half a mile down the same street, Taco Bell is building a new restaurant, in the location of a former Arby's. (RC/Easton Express-Times) ...*It's nice to know the lengths some companies will go to in order to screw with drunks on late-night snack runs.*

July

Where There's Smoke, There's Fire: Robert Quigley, 25, was cruising at 75-80 mph on Interstate 80 in Citrus Heights, Calif., and apparently didn't notice traffic in front of him had stopped. He slammed into an SUV, and his car burst into flames. Quigley escaped uninjured, but he went back to his burning car. "Yeah I'm not afraid of fire," he told the Highway Patrol officer who responded to the crash. "I deal with this kind of stuff all the time." The trooper noticed Quigley's eyebrows were singed. And what was so important that Quigley needed to go back to his flaming car? He wanted to lean in to light a cigarette. He was arrested on a charge of drunk driving — his second such charge in a week. (RC/KTXL Sacramento) ...*He "deals with this kind of stuff all the time" because his entire life is a flaming wreck.*

August

That's Just Nuts: A man called police in Karlsruhe, Germany, for urgent help: he was being chased by a wild animal. When officers arrived the animal was still chasing him — a baby squirrel. Shortly after their arrival, the exhausted rodent fell asleep, and police posted a photo to social media of "Karl-Friedrich" snoozing in a nest of paper towels. A police spokeswoman said young squirrels will often fixate on a person if it has lost its mother. "It can be pretty scary," she said, and the man "was certainly feeling a bit threatened." The animal is being cared for by an animal rescue organization. (RC/BBC) ...*And the man was set free to fend for himself.*

September

He Was Left Extremely Thor: Josiah Wiedman, 13, headed toward his El Mirage, Ariz., home because it was starting to rain — and was hit by lightning. "As we were walking, I got struck," he said later, "sending me 9 feet into the air, making me bounce on my head and then flip over to my back." The jolt also stopped his heart, and Cory Cieszynsky, who lives nearby, ran over and did CPR until medics arrived. The boy was hospitalized for five days, but is expected to fully recover. "I was dead for, like, 15 minutes!" he says. "Dang. I beat death." Yet he's disappointed so far: he's waiting for the "superpowers" he expects from the lightning to kick in anytime. "I haven't felt my powers yet," he told a reporter, "but I will soon." (RC/KSAZ Phoenix, ABC) ...*The real superpower in this story already manifested: Cieszynsky's.*

October

He was Still Packing: An unnamed 22-year-old man going through security at the airport in Baltimore, Md., was pulled aside. Screeners watching the x-ray machine's scans couldn't miss what was in his carry-on bag: a .40 caliber rifle. The man, from Hagerstown, claimed he had no idea the gun was in his bag because, he said, his mother packed his bag for him. He was arrested anyway, charged with illegally possessing a firearm, violating airport security procedures, and having a weapon in an airport. The only consolation: the gun wasn't loaded. (RC/Baltimore Sun) ...*But I'll give even odds that his mommy was.*

November

Keystoned Kops: A police officer in Toronto, Ont., Canada, radioed "10-33" for emergency help for himself and his partner. Multiple officers raced to the scene and found Constables Vittorio Dominelli and Jamie Young "appeared to be in distress," and rushed them to a hospital. The cause of the problem was, Dominelli admitted later, he and Young had raided a marijuana shop, kept three of the confiscated pot-laced chocolate bars, and shared one — on duty; they freaked out when they got high. Dominelli, 36, pleaded guilty to attempting to obstruct justice — for stealing evidence from a crime — and resigned. It's unclear the fate of Young, 35. In accepting Dominelli's guilty plea, Justice Mary Misener pronounced Dominelli "a complete idiot." (RC/Canadian Press) ...*Wow, she really is a good judge of character.*

December

A Sticky Situation: Robert Somley, 52, a landscaper in Monroe, Conn., was working at a house with a 48-year-old woman when Somley said he needed to take a break. When he wasn't back after 20 minutes, the unnamed woman went looking for him, and told police she found him in the house, completely undressed and watching "adult" video on a laptop computer. She went back outside, but decided she needed a break too and went back in. And then it gets weird. She says Somley was now dribbling maple syrup on his body. She decided that was a "turn on," and "demanded" to participate. So why was the woman talking to police? Because he allegedly took video of the tryst, and the woman said he refused to delete it. Somley was arrested on several charges, including voyeurism, and violating a restraining order for allegedly threatening to name the married woman in public. (RC/Connecticut Post) ...*Let's hope she doesn't think a restraining order is a turn-on too.*

Each issue also has a Headline of the Week. A 2018 example:

<p>The Best Thing Since I Don't Know When! Missouri Bill Would Mark Official Day for Sliced Bread AP headline</p>
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So... What's the Weirdest of These Stories?

Next page, please!

The Weirdest *This is True* Story of 2018, from May:

Can You Identify Yourself? While doing the paperwork at a car dealership in West Palm Beach, Fla., to buy a Fiat, Marci Robin says the sales rep put one extra piece of paper in front of her. It was the printed out “reCaptcha” as often seen online. He wanted her to use a pen to check the box to confirm that she is “not a robot.” Robin, a magazine writer, was fairly incredulous, but the rep was serious. “He handed me that page — with literally nothing else on it — and just matter-of-factly said, ‘And this one is just to ensure you’re not a robot,’” she says. She took a photo to document the request. A dealer employee confirms it’s “common practice” to get customers to check the box. On the other hand, the sales rep said even if she was a robot, he’d sell it a car “if it had a social security number and an ID.” (RC/Tampa Bay Times) ...*But only if it could check the box.*



More on the Story

The Story is Prime “True” Fodder by showing the utter obliovicy of “common practice” based on a lack of thinking. *True* is designed to be “Thought-Provoking Entertainment” — using stories like this to not only point out the absurdities of humanity, but to provide real-life examples of people being stupid and the consequences they suffer. That’s a terrific way to help children develop common sense!

Interestingly, a tweet by Marci Robin, a contributing editor (frequent writer) for several magazines, had gone viral prior to this: in 2016 she observed that a cat available for adoption at the SPCA in Monmouth County, N.J., bore a bizarre resemblance to *Star Wars* (etc.) actor Adam Driver. That story also got picked up by news outlets all over the world.



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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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