

The Last Word™

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Broken toys no child's play

By the time you read this, many a toy received by children as holiday gifts will already be in smithereens! Santa Claus will probably wish he'd gotten them the cosmetic dentistry sessions instead.

In my day, if I got a few simple toys for Christmas, I thought I was king of the world! But even back then, some toys were very fragile, not built to last (as Men At Work would say). You may have read my piece about Domino Rally—a toy containing dominoes with snaps that broke off, rendering them useless with the tracks that came with the toy. When I was about 6, I got a red toy ambulance that broke about 5 minutes after I got it—even though I wasn't abusing it. It was designed to zip across the floor when you pushed down on it, but that was too much for it. You may have also read my account of my Magna Doodle, which was decimated when someone stepped on it because the orange and blue toy somehow blended in with the celery green carpet. And I can't count how many Slinkys got hopelessly tangled when they were practically new.

Who can forget my account of a neighbor kid hurling his brand new toys down the steps and getting yelled at? Or the story I found on the Internet of a Stretch Armstrong being cut open on Christmas when it flew across the room and smashed an antique lamp? Or the account I found of a kid throwing a brand new Close 'n Play record player down the steps? I once saw a video on YouTube of a boy unwrapping a soccer ball bank. Right away, his baby sister reached over, knocked it out of his hand, and shattered it.

Grazing on the public Internet, I still find stories of toys getting ru when they're fresh out of the package! A woman posted that when her husband was growing up, he managed on Christmas Day to accidentally break every single toy he got. She said that several years ago her kids broke 3 toys within 15 days of Christmas. One of them was something called Flitter Fairy. Her daughter had it on the top of her Christmas list yet broke it on Christmas morning. The other broken toys included a Batman mask and a telescope.

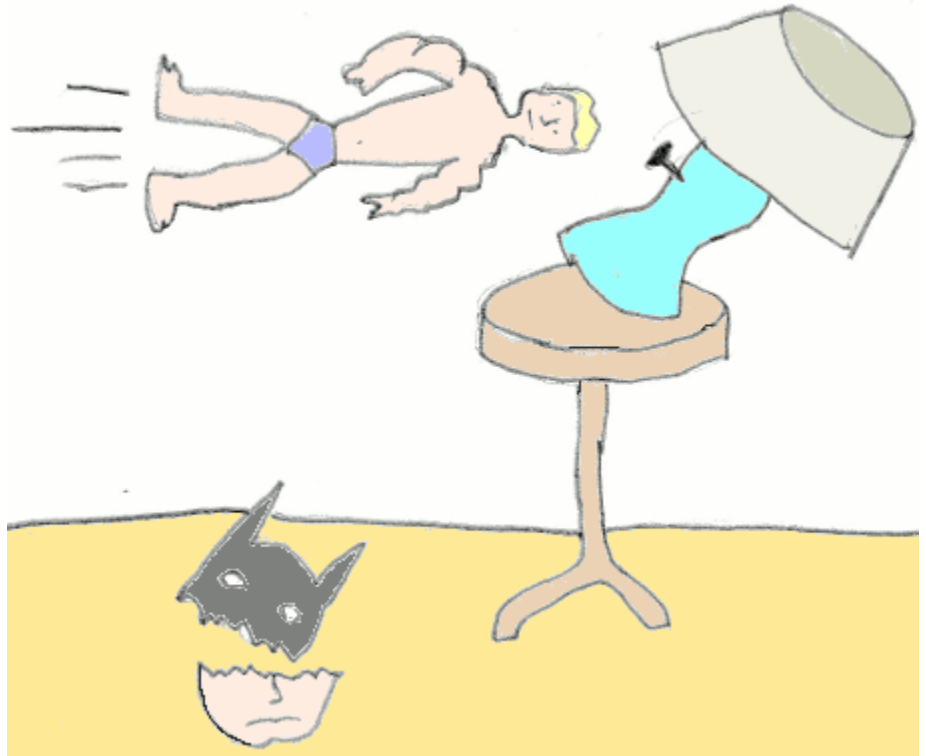
A video on YouTube showed a little girl receiving a flying doll, and the first thing that happened is that it flew into the fireplace and was completely incinerated.

On another website, I found a story from a parent talking about their kids stealing each other's Christmas toys, including an owl necklace, which they lost. Plus, 2 Nintendos got intentionally broken, but the offender claimed it was an accident. Pages were torn out of a favorite book. A Fijit toy was deliberately broken by one of the children diving from the top bunk of a bunk bed onto it.

One feller said he received a Super Toe for Christmas growing up, and his dad accidentally broke it immediately. Another said his dad threw away his brother's new Super Toe because he kept using it to kick the football into the TV, the living room window, and irreplaceable antique ornaments on the Christmas tree—breaking them all. Another commenter said he got Rock 'Em Sock 'Em Robots for Christmas one year, but it got accidentally taken out with the trash after being buried in all the used wrapping paper in the box.

It isn't just toys and it isn't just gifts that are destroyed in a sad spectacle when they're brand new. My stereo that I purchased myself around 1994 still works like new, except that the remote control that came with it never worked at all. Ever. I didn't return it, because I'd have to return the whole stereo, and wouldn't be able to listen to Y-96, Channel Z, or the Point.

Perfectly good toys got ru.



Good grief! Right to watch Peanuts specials isn't in Constitution

Aaugh!

A person got mad because you can't watch old classics on over-the-air TV anymore and have to pay extra for streaming services, and someone replied saying there's no constitutional right to watch them. But the first person has a point. I've been infuriated at this trend for a long time—ever since popular TV shows began moving from over-the-air to cable. Nobody wants to spend \$200 a month just to watch their favorite episodes of *Country Crack-Up*.

After it was announced that *Peanuts* specials were being moved to PBS, someone posted on the Interpipes that she can no longer pick up the top PBS station in her area since the forced switch to digital, and that the station told her to just pay for the PBS streaming service instead. She pointed out that her tax dollars were already funding PBS, so why pay twice to watch it?

Someone replied...

“I guess you're out of luck then. The right to watch the Peanuts specials isn't guaranteed in the Constitution. You'll live.”

Watching *Peanuts* cartoons isn't guaranteed in the Constitution? Who knew?

How did Charlie Brown and the rest of the *Peanuts* kick-ass crew end up on PBS? Recently, the streaming service Apple TV+ acquired exclusive rights to all *Peanuts* specials. This would have forced people to subscribe to Apple TV+ just to watch these specials, and nobody has Apple TV+. Since the Constitution doesn't guarantee the right to watch *Peanuts* cartoons, why would it guarantee exclusive rights to *show* them? But there was such an outcry over this deal that Apple TV+ agreed to let PBS pick up at least some of the specials, including *A Charlie Brown Christmas*.

I hope you have a good antenna!

Let's tune in to this radio switching story!

At least the music system at Kroger will sometimes play a Thompson Twins song you haven't heard in years. But I can't reach up and change the station if I'm in more of a Wang Chung mood.

I remember some businesses where the radio was readily accessible to prying young hands. I recall a waiting room where I always switched the station because there was usually nobody else around. But I think the best station switching story occurred when I was about 13.

There was a sporting goods shop on the northwest edge of Cincinnati. One rare sunny day, my family went to this store for some reason. I noticed the stereo in the store was tuned to a Reds game on WLW or some other sporting event. Even better, I saw that this radio was on a shelf that was just low enough for most people to reach the tuning dial.

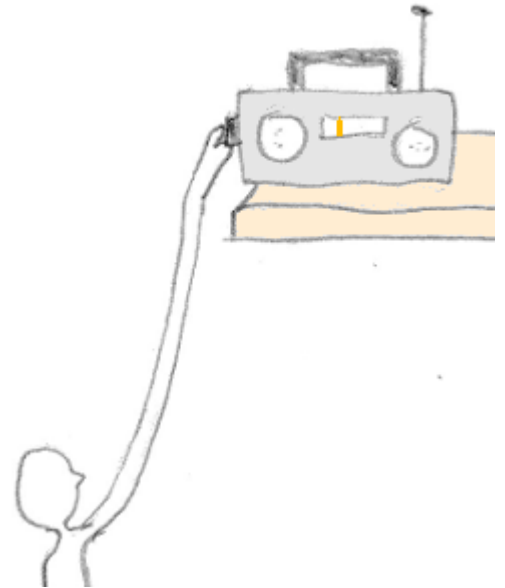
I thought to myself, *What if?*

When my parents weren't looking, I muttered something about changing the station. I looked over at my brother, and he just snickered a bit. I decided to go for it! After all, I'm part of the risk-taking generation.

When nobody was looking, I reached up and spun the tuning knob! I think it just landed on static. Almost everyone in the store appeared stunned, as they thought there must have been some mass casualty event at the stadium that knocked the game off the air.

But my parents knew right away what was up. They scowled at me and my brother, and I gave that typical 13-year-old stifled laughter look. They made us go wait in the car until they were done shopping.

This was back in the days when a man in that part of town had a huge display in his front yard attacking Kroger. I don't think it was because they wouldn't let him change the station.



A person overflowed the tub and ruined rare comic books

Comics got ru! Comics got ru! (Sung to the tune of the theme from *Studio See*.)

We're takin' you back to the bubble gum bustin' year 2014 for this chart-topping smash from the ruined comic books greatest hits collection! I was peeping the public Internet, and I found another story about rare comic

books getting wasted.

A person said they came home from work and found that the carpeting in their “comic room” was soaked to the bone. They feared the worst. Their worst fears were realized when they found their comic book collection to be every bit as waterlogged as the rug was.

It turned out the upstairs neighbor passed out in the bathtub and left the water running. The upstairs apartment was flooded and the water leaked downstairs. The post asked for suggestions on how to dry the comic books without spoiling them for good. The commenter said they had already set up a hair dryer, but someone replied saying that would just make things even worse. The respondent outlined a detailed process to properly dry them in a sealed plastic box.

The original commenter then said they needed 18 boxes to try to save these comics, which included some “midgrade Hulk books” and other goodies. Another commenter said a leak from their upstairs neighbor once caused a flood “ruining collectibles, books and clothes” and that “many of my old action figures and toys got ruined.” The magic word! Another person said they once had a flood that pulverized 50 whole boxes of comics.

I can’t find any follow-up post about whether the comic books in this story were saved, but I think I know the answer, and it ain’t good.

I had a similar experience at my old apartment. A neighbor 2 floors up—a grown man, no less—threw a tantrum and kicked the wall, breaking the pipes. This flooded his apartment and caused water to collapse part of my ceiling and cascade all over my living room. I remember watching a ceiling panel sag lower and lower until the inevitable occurred. It also flooded the apartment right above me. The woman who lived there wasn’t home when it happened, and I recall waiting in the driveway for her purple Saturn to pull up so I could tell her.

Things got wasted.



My teacher broke an antique china cabinet

People on the Internet break shit a lot. But when your teacher does it, that’s big news!

When I was a junior or senior in high school, my teacher told me a funny story of something she did in her youth. Nope, she didn’t bubble, for she once mentioned that she never tried gum until she was an adult. Rather, she busted up some shit!

She said that one day, she was playing with her brother in the dining room. Her brother was being as annoying and weenieistic as humanly possible. My future instructor could take no more. So she grabbed a billiard ball and threw it at his head.

But he ducked. The ball soared through the air. It smashed right into an antique china cabinet—shattering the glass to shards. That was the end of that cabinet!

One of the first things I ever did in that teacher’s class was break a bookshelf in her classroom by knocking the whole thing over. This was one of the shelves that held the dictionaries and *National Geographic* magazines that kids ruined by sticking stickers on the pages, spitting on them, or throwing them. Sometime later, when the class got a new aide, the teacher told her that there was once a bookshelf there but it “got broken.” She didn’t go into detail.

Boundaries not always clear in gum county collecting

You may be familiar with county collecting—the pastime of trying to visit every county in the nation or equivalent jurisdictions in other countries. Bubble gum poppin’ people have their own variants of the county collecting game!

I was reminded of this recently when I saw a woman blowing a bubble with bubble gum in two cities at the same time. I was trudging up O’Fallon Avenue when the woman walked across the street from Bellevue into

Dayton. A bub was expanding from her mouth just as she crossed the midpoint of the roadway. If she was collecting incorporated places in which to bubble, she got two for the price of one!

With the gum mania that has loomed large on the Internet since the late '90s, gummers have tried counting how many different countries, states, counties, or cities in which they've bubbled. One person suggested that people try to get a photo of themselves bubbling at a famous landmark in each of the 50 states and D.C. I got an image in my mind of people bubbling in front of the Hollywood sign, the Statue of Liberty, and the Boll Weevil Monument.

This elicited new questions about what counts. There were the usual concerns about checking maps to make sure you were really in the right jurisdiction, but bubbling raised new issues. One question that came up was what would happen if you were standing near the border and blew a bubble big enough that it crossed the border. Thus, you could bubble in a foreign country without even entering that country. Would that count? How many places would it even be possible? Many national borders are heavily fortified. Some may have a barbed wire fence that would burst a bub. Are most borders even precise enough that we'd know if a bubble crossed it? The Purple People Bridge has a sign marking the state line, but some jurisdictions aren't very accurate. Some boundaries are defined by old surveys that say things like "a line running for threescore furlongs at 38.25 degrees from the pile of dog shit on Lemuel Cabarrus's farm." Do they mean the *center* of the pile of dog shit or the *edge* of the pile of dog shit? What point along the edge? Is the center defined as the intersection of each axis that divides the pile in half on a two-dimensional plane, or is it where the pile would balance without falling over?

Someone also said they wanted to make a count of every bubble they blew in their entire life. They wanted to start counting the first time they ever bubbled. One website says 374 billion pieces of gum are sold worldwide each year, which works out to about 49 pieces per person. So the average person chomps about a wad a week. But it's unknown how many bubs each piece yields. So it would be hard to estimate how many bubbles a person has blown in their life. Plus, if they puffed out a Dallas/Fort Worth, would that count twice?

Gum is cool.



Signs of the times

People have learned a new trick to protest the ridiculous mass hysteria surrounding the pandemic!

As I was at an important family gathering on Thanksgiving Day, I received an urgent e-mail informing me that a new fad was sweeping Dayton, Kentucky. After yet another state-mandated closure of bars and indoor restaurants, these businesses placed signs on their doors to that effect. After they did so, somebody went around town and ripped the signs down.

That's because stuff was closed, folks. The state shouldn't have still been closing places like this after **8 months!** It's a simple concept really.

It isn't just Dayton! It's going on everywhere that has such an order. Grazing on the public Internet, I noticed that a guy was talking about how he was doing the same thing to fight the "new normal." He collected a stack of signs a half-inch thick, and he placed a note on each one detailing when and where he got it. He announced that he planned to place these signs in a special album someday.

A bunch of autographed items got wasted

If someone ruined any autographed item that I have, I'd make them replace it lickety-split. If the celebrity who autographed it was dead, I'd make the ruiner dig up their body and move their arm to sign the replacement item like a marionette.

I've found more stories of people on the unambiguously public Internet saying their autographed memorabilia got ru. A man said his puppy destroyed his prized football autographed by Ahman Green. A woman said a storage facility flooded and everything in it was demolished: "All my DVDs got ruined. My autographed copy of the Heathers screenplay (signed by none other than Daniel Waters the screenwriter) RUINED." The magic word!

A woman posted that a subcontractor for a moving company not only delivered her items 11 days late but reduced many of them to shambles. She said that "all the boxes look like someone played baseball with them" and that "there are things ruined that were family heirlooms." An entire box of pictures was lost or stolen, and other

irreplaceable things were “either gone or ruined.” This included an autographed guitar. Later, the company demanded that she remove her bad review or else she wouldn’t be compensated. Of course, compensation is impossible for irreplaceable items.

One person wrote that the turntable of a brand new stereo ruined a rare autographed record. That’s completely believable, as anyone who has experience with turntables knows. Another charged that UPS lost some very valuable autographed posters they owned. They said that “all ups had to do was put them in the goddamn box. Did ups do that? No they didn’t!” The blame was shared with Boston University for kicking everyone out of campus housing. Another commenter said their autographed Dizzy Gillespie photo was lost when they moved.

Other folks have said they had books that were signed by Barbara Bush and Judge Greg Mathis destroyed in fires or floods. One person lost his Nolan Ryan autographed baseball in a move. Another said they lost an autographed Leonard Nimoy photo. Still another said they had autographs of *Dennis The Menace* cartoonist Hank Ketcham and comedian Flip Wilson, but—you guessed it!—those are lost too. Another commenter said he lost his signed Jerry Lewis photo. Another said their dog ate their autographed Jimi Hendrix album.

Are you experienced? Some people are experienced—at letting autographs get ru!



A bunch of kids vandalized some shit

The San Francisco Bay Area is on fire!

As summer vacation is effectively stretching into January, the kiddos are getting bored. But no bother! They can just bust up a bunch of shit!

Loitering and graffiti are growing, according to Internet reports. Gangs of 12-year-olds have been roaming around on bicycles. A group of about 20 teens was seen smoking marijuana in a park.

Hooligans have also invaded a skate park, where they drink, start fights, set fires, and sell dope.

Why? Because it seems better than remote learning or anything else most American schools are offering. They’ve just decided to take a gap year from junior high and call it a day. Gee, I can’t wait to drive on bridges built by engineers who were forced to miss a year of school because their school wouldn’t open. Surely, the schools wouldn’t be arrogant enough to make everyone repeat the whole year when it was the schools’ fault—unless they’re like that school district in Alabama that made students repeat 8th grade because the school lost their records.

I read an article around this past March that warned darkly that the next 12 to 18 months would be a lost era in which America’s young people would miss all school and be locked in their homes the entire time. It looks like our youths have split the difference and only complied with the part about missing school.

A person spit bubble gum onto a computer keyboard

It used to be a novelty when schools had computers—especially around here, since we were a little behind the times. I remember when I switched schools for 5th grade, my parents said my new school would be better because it had more computers, even though it only had about 3—which was more than my old school had (zero). All through high school, we didn’t have much more than 3. I remember one of few times we were allowed using computers in high school, it was a monochrome orange screen, and they only let us play a *Sesame Street* game.

Even in college, computers were pretty new to local campuses. During one of my classes my first semester, the professor took the class to the computer lab, and it seemed like a whole new world. There weren’t enough computers for all of us, so 2 students had to be assigned to each one. While computers were pretty new here, bubble gum wasn’t. Gumming was a time-honored tradition. The classmate I was paired with chomped this neat to eet treet. She probably even bubbled!

Inevitably, the class got rowdy, and students began acting up and telling jokes. My computer partner burst out laughing! When she did so, guess what happened?

You guessed it! The pink wad of beegum tumbled out of her mouth and landed on the edge of the computer keyboard—right in front of the space bar. She didn't seem to notice she had lost her gum—much less see that it was resting on the keyboard.

Whoever used that computer after us was in for a rude awakening!

Magic: The Gathering cards got wet

The only time I ever hear about Magic: The Gathering is when someone posts on the Internet that their rare cards got ruined!

In 2018, someone made a Reddit post titled “Whats the protocol when an opponent accidentally damages a card?” They didn't ask what to do when someone *purposely* damages a card. But, suffice it to say, their cards were roodledy-doodledy!

The post asked, “Are they obligated to replace it even if it was an accident? Can they replace it with a different version, same version, cash?” The message went on to inquire, “What happens if the person either refuses to replace the cards or claims they cant replace them for some reason.”

One respondent said a player “spilt a cider” all over their cards, wasting them. Another said many of their cards were ruined when a player spilled a beverage on a table. This commenter made the offender sign a document admitting they spoiled the cards and would replace them. It's sort of like the time I was forced to sign a statement confessing that I ruined pink construction paper by drawing a stupid picture of a guy blowing a bubble. Another said a player bent 4 of their cards while shuffling the deck. Another said a Pepsi bottle exploded all over their cards.

Somebody also used rare cards from the '90s to make a box to store their cards. Some of the cards that were torn and glued for this project were worth tens of thousands of dollars. Reddit users were horrified.

Forever ru is.

More golden times in the Golden State!

Who knew lockdowns can be so much fun?

Ya know, back before this past March, I was a stickler for public health orders. I met enough slobs in high school to appreciate why regulations are necessary. But placing whole cities, states, and countries under solitary confinement wasn't in any pandemic playbook before, and it's hard to take pandemic rules seriously when the FDA deliberately delayed release of the vaccines, and when public officials who issue the rules don't even follow them. One of Oregon's top health officials actually read a list of deaths while wearing a clown suit. I swear I'm not making this up.

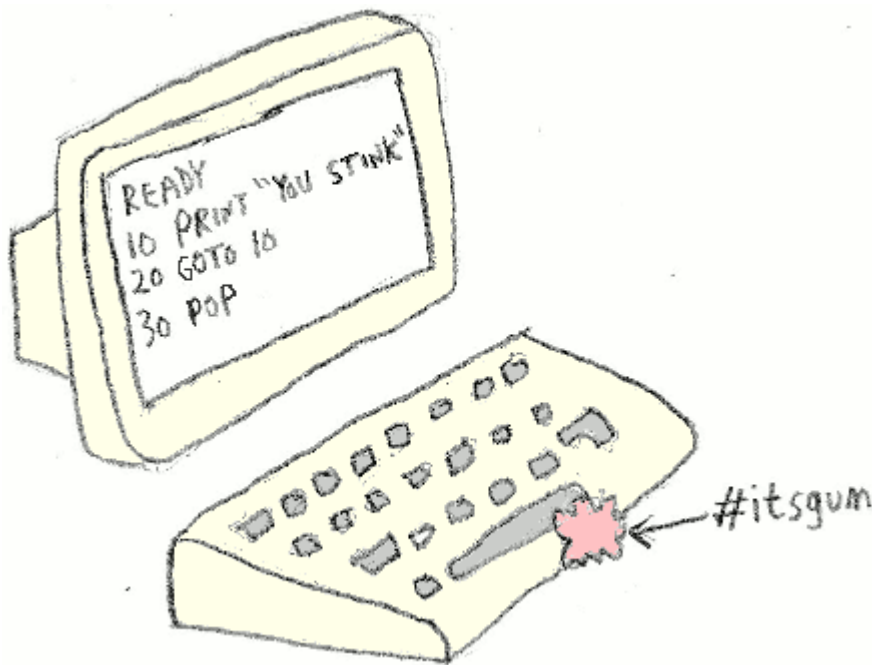
The fact that authorities clearly don't take the pandemic seriously is a main reason why nobody obeys lockdowns anymore. Most jurisdictions didn't dare issue a second lockdown, but Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti didn't learn shit from the failures of the first one, because he's not too bright. So he issued a second lockdown that seems even stricter than the first.

And it lasted about 5 seconds before almost everyone in the entire city disobeyed it.

It was another Snap Map day! It didn't take long after the order was issued that somebody set fire to a big pile of garbage in the middle of the street. At a pocket park on the lawn of a police station, some fellas drank alcohol and chucked the bottles into the grass. A man flew a drone in a parking garage. Another man smoked marijuana inside a Vons supermarket.

The roads were *absolutely packed*—even by L.A. standards! And how about that huge rave with about 100 people? That punker woman won my heart! (New York had a good rave too!)

Shortly thereafter, Gov. Gavin Newsom (an idiot) issued what amounted to a second lockdown for the whole state of California. Gruesome Newsom was mad because he got caught red-handed at a dinner at a fancy restaurant where he defied orders he had already enacted. California had one of the longest lockdowns earlier in the year, and if the reward is another lockdown, what was the point of the first one? Why should people obey this

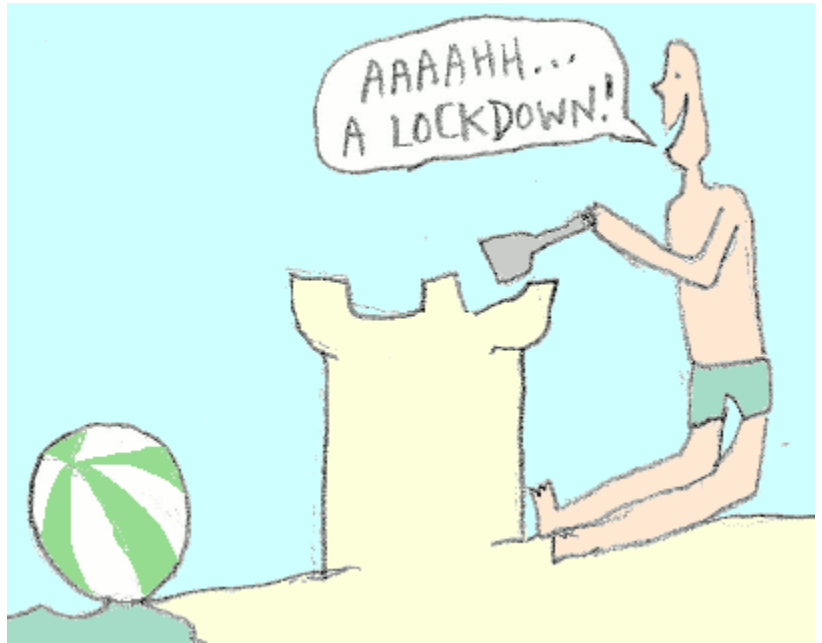


one when the first one was so ineffective? Why should people trust *anything* our public officials say?

Some counties such as San Mateo have said they won't enforce the new lockdown, but even in counties that haven't said this, folks aren't staying home. This new lockdown order was followed up by people burning cardboard and an old blanket in the middle of a suburban L.A. street. At San Francisco's famous Mission Dolores Park, families defied the playground closure, and the kiddos played like any other day! A young man urinated in the hallway of an L.A. hotel. But that was before Los Angeles County also vowed noncompliance with this shutdown. I'm not sure about Napa County, but the only reason I'm mentioning Napa is so you get that "All the right farts in all the right faces" jingle stuck in your head.

A Reddit commenter from an unspecified California county said people ripped down all the signs and caution tape only a day after they went up. Another said they put studs on the soles of their shoes to shred social distancing stickers on the floor.

Will this ever stop? If poo. When will it stop? When the bubble gum busts. How will it stop? By...bipping!



Are you gonna stay with the same dry dog food...

The 1980s hit song "The One You Love" by Glenn Frey gets a whole article all to itself!

We've always called this tune "The Dog Food Song" because of the belief that there was a dog food commercial that used a similar song. I only had a very faint memory of the commersh. But, buy gum, I think I've found it on YouTube, and it was for Gravy Train...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0sFqUy3p5s8>

"The dog you love only gets one meal a day..." Then maybe you shouldn't have a dog. You'd think a dog food commercial would encourage people to buy *more* dog food, not *less*.

I had a dog back then, but he wouldn't have been too excited about lugging wood around like the dog in the commersh. Instead, my dog would have made a good lawyer, because he was good at finding loopholes. For example, one evening, we had a red camping tent set up in the backyard. While it was set up, we found a fresh log of shit in it. Fingers were pointed at human suspects, but make no mistake, it had a canine source. The dog assumed that defecating in the tent was a legal move, because dogs were only allowed to poop outdoors. The tent wasn't set up indoors, so it technically was outdoors. Ergo, the dog considered it permissible to poop in it.

CMA critics let mask slip

I'm not the Unified Command, so I can't issue orders on the exact time, place, and manner in which a mask must be worn, or what type of mask, or whether you may bubble while wearing it. After the media lied us into an illegal war in Iraq and hawked Ritalin snake oil, I don't have much trust in anything they say, so I wouldn't feel very safe following them.

But if a mask is to protect others, why are professional opinion havers now saying you should wear it just to set an example, regardless of if it protects anyone? People are still rambling about the lack of masks at the Country Music Association Awards, and some nobody was reeing about it on Twitter. The show tested everybody before they attended—so you could rest easy that nobody there was infected. But the annoying Twitter gadfly said that didn't matter. She posted that although everybody was tested—making the event safe—they should have worn masks anyway. She said not doing so set "a horrible example" that encouraged viewers to "use it as an excuse to copy that behavior."

That's like saying kids in the 1970s ate pipes because Cookie Monster did it.

When someone babbles about setting an example even when an actual threat has already been removed

from a specific situation, it's no longer about safety. It's about optics and control. Why should people take extra precautions in a setting where a threat has been kept away? Is this like the "role model effect" that some right-wing jurists made up as an excuse to make high school students take a drug test even though it didn't stop drug abuse? That's like if YouTube bans videos that show people violating social distancing. I'd love to see a scientific poll on how many people would actually support that—just to see if the "law and order" scolds support it.

USA Today ran an insufferably long article demanding that celebrities wear masks in public even when nowhere near anybody else—again, just to set an example, not because it does any good when they're not near others.

Another clue about the real intent of the virtue sigmunds is that—even after public officials assured everyone that a bandana is a good makeshift mask—places began prohibiting bandanas, solely because they think it makes wearers look like gangsters and pirates. You don't get to require masks and then complain about the kind of mask people wear. Beggars can't be choosers. The likelihood of a type of mask being acceptable to the wearer is inversely proportional to the chance that it will be allowed—which is proof that our corporate overlords care more about control than safety.

Control is not the **Last Word** way. That is not who we are. We're not here to create a society paralyzed by dread. That's just not the way it's going to be. It's one thing to impose rules based on something that might be an actual threat, but these rules can't be justified when the threat isn't around. That's not science. With a bit of critical thinking, we can see how this program is orchestrated: For a long time, elitist media outlets have honed propaganda into an art. They've spread economic, military, and medical ideas that are all centered around the same core of totalitarianism. Clinging to the horseshoe theory, however, they portray their ideas as political middle ground. Their support of strict limits on people's behavior in the name of setting an example is part of a long-term program designed to last long after the pandemic ends. Why do you think they still keep boasting that mask orders will be needed long after the vaccine is given out? They don't have an exit strategy because they want this state of affairs to continue forever. I have absolutely no doubt about that.

"Temporary" TSA hassles at airports still haven't expired 20 years after 9/11, so why would we think the Unified Command would want to give up its pandemic powers?

I want to read really bad books really bad

With the pandemic winding down, I'll soon be able to invest the mental energy to dig further into my backlog of good books to read.

But there's also a couple really bad books I want to read really bad. There's a catch. I'm embarrassed to buy them at any in-person bookstore (assuming any still exist). I also don't want to borrow them from the library—for the same reason. I don't want any friends or family to get them for me, because I'd be embarrassed to let them know I want to read them—and I don't want them to be embarrassed buying or borrowing them. I don't want to order these books online, because buying them at all finances them. If the library had a program that let me borrow a digital copy, I'd be afraid people who work at the library could see I borrowed it—or that the government could access this information and the media would blab it everywhere. (The past few months have shown that the media has no ethics.) In the unlikely event I notice that a Little Free Library has one of these books, I'd be embarrassed to be seen walking down the street with it.

I feel like the man who shoplifted feathers because he was embarrassed to buy them.

More mask bubs!

Because bubble gum busting is a big craze these days, it was inevitable that folks would bubble while wearing a mask. This is the latest batch of stories of people doing just that!

A woman on Facebook wrote...

"I blew a bubble while wearing my mask in public today. It made almost as big of a mess as the day I made sure I wore lipstick for my new annual catalog open house."

So it would have made less of a mess if she had worn it in private?

A man on Twitter announced...

"Blew a bubble today...while wearing a face mask. That's cool."

As opposed to an elbow mask, a pancreas mask, or a butt mask?