

The Last Word™

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School district just can't hack a hacker attack

Because this is a day ending in *y*, we can report on yet another Campbell County Schools scandal.

I haven't attended their right-wing schools since I was 12, but with them, it's never over. You had to be there.

In the latest outrage, the school district did such a pitiable job of safeguarding personal information of teachers and students that the data was taken in a ransomware attack. Files containing employees' names and Social Security numbers were taken after the district's computer network was hacked, and students were affected too.

There's a zillion other school districts all over this big, mean, stinky world, yet Campbell County is the one that hackers succeed at breaking into? Actually, it was one of 3 in the same attack. Still, 3 out of a zillion is a mighty slim number. The authoritarian Campbell County Schools have already foisted so much disrepute on the county that we once got laughed at in the middle of Utah for having a Campbell County license plate. But the district was probably targeted by these hackers because it was too easy to do.

The hackers posted information on students, teachers, and parents from each of the 3 targeted districts. This confidential poop included students' official photos, special education status, assessments, COVID test results, and other data. Teachers at the 3 districts found their salaries, disciplinary records, and copies of their driver's licenses and passports posted.

Of course, any average person out there can be hit by a ransomware attack—and we have. The difference is that school districts are supposed to have better resources to prevent it. Plus, authorities refused to go after those behind the ransomware attack that afflicted us many years ago—so it's *de facto* legal.

The Campbell County Schools aren't the only terrible school district in Kentucky, but I'm waiting for the day someone hires a smart lawyer to challenge these districts for violating the Kentucky Constitution's mandate for common schools. That's in addition to their well-known violations of IDEA and the ADA, but suing under the ADA may be futile, because a bizarre interpretation of the ADA has emerged lately in which this law is held to mean the exact opposite of what was intended. These districts are essentially charter school districts: They are publicly funded but have been allowed to arbitrarily exclude or punish students who live in their district. I even discovered years after the fact that Campbell County High School listed me as a student when I wasn't allowed to enroll—so the school got taxpayer money on the back of a student who didn't go to school there.



Amusement parks not amused by guests who get kicked out

Large amusement parks have turned into an acrid stew that blends together big corporations, wokewashing, discrimination, and even some actual amusement. But lately they've become less amusing and more of the other things. Major parks are increasingly geared to people who buy everything they're told to buy, because those who might question endless commercialism are not profitable enough. My youth was on the edges of a couple different chronological eras, and on the

edges of several different geographic community types, and I wasn't able to relate to the suburban "dream" marked by serial phoniness and bullying. At some point, I began to refuse to view it as acceptable.

Much of the amusement industry has seamlessly somersaulted from one shameful kookout to the next. One of its most aggravating was when major parks began banning "overweight" guests from rides. Recently, an online commenter said they were "asked to leave" a Kings Island ride even though they weighed only 200 pounds. Another commenter said they had to wait 2½ hours to board a ride at an unspecified park only to be turned away because of their weight. Another said they waited 6 hours to go on a ride at a Harry Potter-themed park only to be told they couldn't ride despite being only a size 18.

But now I've found a few brief accounts on the public Internet of people being kicked out of amusement parks for an assortment of reasons. They're rapid-fire, they're here, they're in your face! So read 'em and peep!

A guest of a Six Flags park said they were kicked out because of what they did on a ride that drops you hundreds of feet downward. They put a quarter on their knee to see if they could grab it while it was suspended in the air as the ride dropped. Instead, the quarter hit another customer.

A teenage guest at a Las Vegas water park was banned from the park for life because of his underwater sexual activity. He was caught when a little boy with a snorkel and scuba mask saw him. The park closed for good not long after.

A visitor of Cedar Point saw a guest being expelled for whipping out their cellphone on a ride. Lots of folks responded saying they were glad the park began enforcing this rule, because they had almost been hit by phones flying out of riders' hands. One respondent said a youngster successfully smuggled 2 phones onto a ride where he wasn't supposed to have them.

A commenter said that when they were 14, they were banned for life from a Six Flags park for shoplifting t-shirts from shops there. But they managed to buy a season pass the next year.

An employee of an amusement park was banned for life from park employment because he gave his family tickets for the park, and one family member was kicked out of the park for fighting.

A Cedar Point guest gave the park a bad review because she was kicked out for having her cellphone out on a ride. She and her family had just arrived in Ohio after driving all the way from Canada, but they were already thrown out of the park by 10:30 AM.

Someone on another site said a water park in their area prohibits metal or plastic clasps or rivets that are found on almost all swimwear. Guests who show up with noncompliant trunks or swimsuits are required to cut the rivets off with scissors or buy a swimsuit from the park.

It wasn't only parks. A commenter said they were thrown out of a Chuck E. Cheese when they were 7 because they kicked a costumed mascot in the knee.

These stories at least are more interesting than the "family vlog" videos of the 2010s in which people visited amusement parks and didn't do anything except throw their ice cream cones on the ground—thereby wasting them.



Google has no use for Usenet

It must be Opposite Day at Google.

Back when Usenet was known as the world's reeking armpit, Google promoted it. But now that there's been a renewed interest in Usenet because there's so much censorship on social media sites, Google will be dropping Usenet access in February.

I'm not going to relitigate others' decades-old grudges and crybaby shenanigans that they chose to hash out in public. If they want to be like Donald Trump stewing over old grievances, I'm not going to coddle their egos. The problem today is censorship by big social media sites like Facebook and

Google-owned YouTube. It's one thing for a site to establish reasonable thresholds of conduct. It's another to delete users just because they posted the "wrong" opinion or factual information.

And it's never enough. Facebook started Threads to compete with Twitter just so they could avoid reading opinions or facts they disagreed with. hilariously, nobody uses Threads.

But social media censorship and totalitarianism are so bad that people have begun to discuss Usenet as an alternative. It's pretty bad when Usenet is actually considered a better choice. Naturally, Google is throwing cold water on these plans.

YouTube is known for censoring COVID wrongthink, including facts that represent what was the scientific consensus before 2020 and continue to be backed by other countries' health agencies today. Twitter was practicing this same censorship, and it was discovered that the federal government was colluding with Twitter in this aim. This begs a trenchant question: Is the government behind Google dropping Usenet? Given its recent track record, one has to assume the government is colluding with Google to censor wrongthink by dropping Usenet.

Bolstering this assumption is the fact that a recent version of Google Chrome made it impossible for Substack writers to post a title for their entries. Substack is a frequent target of the establishment bubble because of its refusal to censor content. There were so many complaints about this version of Chrome that Google had to rush out a new version that corrected this problem.

Authoritarians such as Big Pharma have been playing the long game. It goes back further than anyone even cares to remember, and it isn't just Big Pharma's medical mafiosos, as various authoritarian elements have been conniving with each other.

This is a key reason why zines aren't as prominent or as edgy as they were 30 years ago. You might think the rise of the Internet would have fostered the growth of zines by creating a new medium for distribution. Indeed, when the Internet became popular, it was touted as a great, uncontrolled frontier. But by the late '90s, it was clear that was a Big Lie.

Because of this, anyone who produces a small press publication today has to tailor its content so it does not get censored. In the days when zines could only be distributed in person, you could tell it like it was. The biggest risks were run-ins with your local campus graybeards or a few corporate cranks. They couldn't shut down your whole website. But in-person distribution is much harder than it used to be, because both private and public transit have become much more limited. Much of that is because of price gouging and laws that were backed by some of the aforementioned conspirators. Limiting movement has been among their goals for decades, and they've largely accomplished it.

And, believe me, there are lots of things that need to be said—but nobody is allowed to say them.

Life of electric razors has been shaved down

Let's log on to the public Internet and look up how long electric shavers last.

According to the first website that comes up, electric razors last 5 to 15 years.

Hahahahahahahahaha! That's a good one! Five to 15 years! Hahaha, that's funny!

I think I've only had one that's lasted more than 2 or 3 years. It's almost a coin toss whether a shaver will last more than a year. They've gotten progressively worse over the years. My backup shaver is 30 years old, but I think it's the only one that lasted over 2 or 3 years. And things were already getting bad 30 years ago, because if I bought one then, the one I was replacing couldn't have been very old.

The protective cover for the head of one of the first shavers I had was lost (probably stolen) by idiots being incompetent, but I don't think that's what did it in. Later, when I took a college trip to Gatlinburg, the shaver I had then stopped working during my trip. The one I bought to replace it is now my backup. After I made it my backup, none of the ones I've had since then have lasted very long. They would usually simply stop working altogether. I had one that suddenly caught on fire, as smoke began rising out of it as I was using it. One just didn't cut, even after I replaced the blades. I think one or two of these electric razors lasted only a few months at most.

I remember burning a dead shaver at one of my famous bonfires (alongside all the light bulbs).

The all-time worst was one I bought 4 years ago. It was also the most expensive. It barely even



cut, and it didn't even have a precision blade. Now it's my backup to my backup, but I don't count it as lasting 4 years, because it was always so bad. I count it as lasting zero years.

The one I got to replace it met its demise recently. It actually worked properly for quite a while, but then a part inside the head mysteriously broke so the blades wouldn't stay in. This model now sells for \$290, which is a mighty steep price for a shaver that breaks that quickly. I know it didn't cost anywhere near that much when I got it, or else I wouldn't have gotten it.

In any event, another \$45 has sailed down the port-a-popper replacing it.

This is like how I've had to go through calculators, cameras, and bike lights so quickly. Sometimes it was because these items were stolen or maliciously destroyed, but it was usually because of poor quality. One of few cameras I've had that was of good quality is the Eyewitness Cam. It still works after 16 years, and I still have it as a backup. It began getting a dark spot on each photo, but apparently this was from debris under the sensor, and I was able to remove it. But you wouldn't believe the bad luck I've had with other cameras. That includes the 35 mm camera I had that was stolen about a year after I got it. Everyone talked about what a great camera it was. It may have been good for its time, but I couldn't figure out how to load the film, and it cost a fortune. Somehow, I was blamed for it getting stolen. I also had a bike light I never got to use because when I tried moving it from the Peace Bike to the ill-fated Road Ruiner, the fastener broke because of its bad quality. The light was brand new at the time. I also had a bike mirror that was so poorly made that it fell off and shattered the first time I used it. Another mirror was stolen. Years ago, I got a rear bike rack, and the strap broke the first time I used it, rendering the rack completely useless.

But shavers are supposed to last 5 to 15 years. I'm still laughing about that! Maybe next month, we'll find a website that says with a straight face that space heaters last 100 years.

Wipin' boogers on the wall...That don't bother me at all...

Thursday, March 14, 1991. The #1 record in the land was "Someday" by Mariah Carey. I was a junior in high school. People seem to look back at high school as the greatest time in their life. (This joy has generally been robbed from recent high schoolers, but that's another epic story.) It wasn't so bad for me when I was a junior and senior, since I had been kicked out of Brossart by then. But it wasn't great either. The school I attended after Brossart was really just a daycare for teenagers. We didn't learn anything, as they just gave us a couple books and told us to just do some busywork from them. To compensate for not learning, we mostly just goofed off.

Recently, I dug up a few pages from a 1994 ish of **The Last Word** that recounted my junior year. One of the most detailed entries was for that March 1991 day. That was the day one of my classmates taped his own mouth shut with "Support Our Troops" stickers. The class also had a meeting to decide "levels." Each student had a "level" that controlled what "privileges" they had. (These "privileges" were commonly known as "rights" elsewhere.) During this meeting, the aforementioned classmate got in a big argument with the counselors and social worker types who ran the school. It started when one of them refused to raise me to level 2.

Social worker #1 (to me): "When anybody else does something inappropriate, you laugh at them."

Classmate (to me): "Like when I do something inappropriate, you laugh at me."

Teacher: "Don't interrupt."

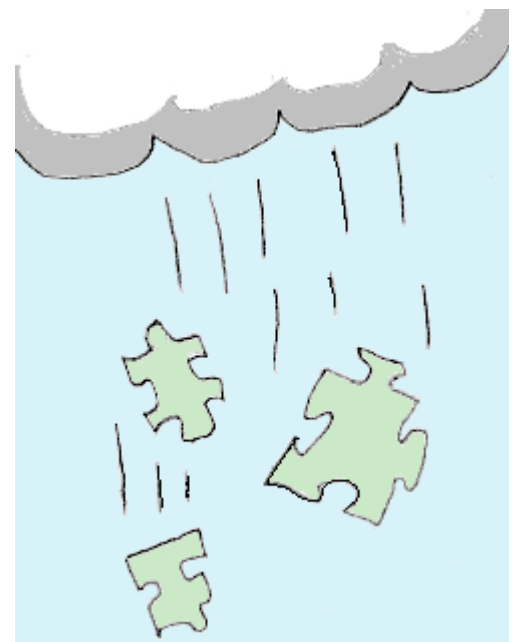
Classmate: "Up yours!"

Social worker #2: "I think you need to take a time-out."

Classmate: "No way! I'll destroy everything in this room before I take a time-out! I'd rather go to ISS!"

Social worker #2: "You're not allowed to go to ISS because you'll just yell and scream and carry on. You have 2 minutes to go to time-out. Or else, we will call the police."

Calling the police just because a student argued about going to time-out is unthinkable in



America. But this was not America. This was northern Kentucky in 1991.

After my schoolmate relented and went to time-out, the meeting turned to the topic of how items around the classroom kept getting torn up. Then a curious commentary emerged from the time-out corner: "Like wiping boogers on the wall. Or eating puzzle pieces."

Police were called, but they never showed up.

That student had also been sent to time-out 2 days earlier. While he was in the time-out corner, something sailed through the air and landed on my desk. Why, it was a piece of a jigsaw puzzle! I looked over and saw that my classmate was throwing handfuls of puzzle pieces across the room from behind the divider. "It's raining puzzles!" he yelled.

According to that **Last Word** account, this was also the school year when someone put cigarette butts in a teacher's coffee. We played Monopoly and kept blowing on each other's money. After another student got sent to in-school suspension for chewing bubble gum, he smoked in the suspension room. During an outing to the Carew Tower, a security guard made all of us leave because a student spit off the outdoor observation deck. The guard yelled, "Yer outta here!" I think this was also the year some kids passed along a cigarette in class and got caught by the teacher. But I don't know if this was the same year someone clogged a toilet using a Bert and Ernie flashlight.

Likely the funniest incident during my junior year (that didn't involve torn underpants or a piece of shit on the floor of the school bus) took place on December 7, 1990. That was when the teachers took us on an outing to downtown Cincinnati and we walked through the Lazarus department store to see the holiday decorations. The same student who argued with social workers and threw puzzle pieces pushed the revolving door so fast that it nearly knocked over a customer. This prompted our teacher to admonish, "Making a spectacle of yourself in public is not a good way to have fun."

As we were leaving the store, the student approached a man looking at a shelf full of merchandise in the middle of the aisle, slapped him on the back, and declared, "Hey, look at this dummy!" My classmate thought the man was a mannequin!

Our teacher became furious and screamed, "If that man had turned around and hit you, I would've stood there and cheered! Congratulations! You just dropped to level 1!"

We didn't have a student press to cover these events when they happened. We had a teacher press—which was the "student newspaper" that had one issue that we threw together as the teachers were hovering over us and telling us what to write—but that was it. At least that's not as bad as when Brossart made us sign a full-page newspaper ad demanding a constitutional amendment to overturn *Roe v. Wade*.

Junior year was also the winter of that annoying Toy Money commercial, which pops into my head every time I think about that year.

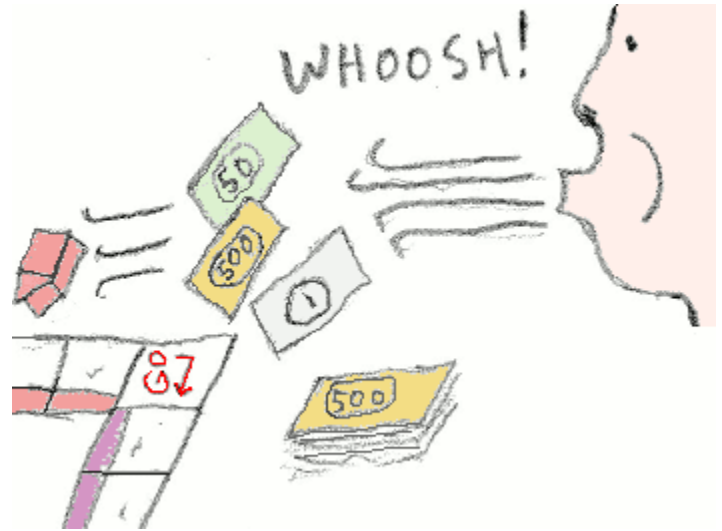
Brossart chalked up a broken blackboard

Suppose you attended the dreaded Bishop Brossart High School after 1988-89. Suppose you had a class in a certain room down the hall from the office. I believe this classroom was next to a smaller office used by a priest who taught there, across the hall from the library and the audiovisual room.

The High Ceiling Made It Expensive To Heat Even If The Tired Old Boiler Lasted Another Year™.

If you were in that room, you probably noticed that the chalkboard had a huge, mostly horizontal crack in it, about 4 or 5 feet above the floor.

Know how the blackboard got cracked? Well, that was the room where we had sophomore religion class. I was there when it got cracked.



One afternoon, we were filing into the classroom, when two students got in a big fight in the front of the room near the chalkboard. No teachers had entered the room yet, but I was already sitting at my desk. One of the students who was fighting shoved the other right into the blackboard.

It was over. The board tumbled upward and into the sky. It was no more.

Actually, the chalkboard was still there. But it now sported a huge, jagged crack about 3 or 4 feet long. The kids who were fighting didn't seem to notice. But another student who was already sitting down saw the damage right away. He gasped in shock and started snickering.

Unlike the time a student punched me and broke a window, nobody got in trouble for this. Actually, the only person who got in trouble for the broken window was me, even though I was the victim.



Phantom stop sign sends mixed signals

Silly me! In the go-go 2010s, I actually thought I could Make Money by briefly writing about paper streets as part of one of my great literary adventures, or if that failed, publishing a guide in PDF format full of maps that show disused streets, accompanied by incisive progressive commentary. I had to keep relearning that I can't expect to earn a living by writing for people who don't have any money themselves.

As Diamond Rio would say: It's a hard, hard lesson, but we're gonna have to learn it. It's a long, cold swim up against the Kermit.

The PDF endeavor at least proved that I know how to make maps using QGIS, which the Tea Party didn't. Schools emphasize fields that lilt along, but this is a nice, clunky skill that actually has practical use. As I continue to hone my skills, it's time for a fresh exposé on paper streets.

My hometown of Highland Heights may be the paper street capital of the world—except its paper streets weren't always paper streets. Most of them appear to have once been real. Highland Heights officials will periodically insist that these roads were planned but never built. But most were indeed built. Most no longer exist because new highway construction was plopped in their path or because no houses were ever built there and the roads were abandoned. Some of these streets did have some houses but were disappeared anyway. Some of the lots on these streets were subjects of lawsuits that took decades to decide.

Public rights-of-way still exist where many of these streets were. In these cases, the paths themselves belong to the people but are often overgrown or otherwise inaccessible. There are still some parcels whose addresses are on these streets.

Here's an example of some paper streets that were indeed real and lasted into the 1970s: Ziegler Road and Peebles Road. Ziegler ran off Three Mile Road where I-275 east now crosses over I-471 north. It ran southwest, then northwest, before reaching Peebles. These stretches appeared as an unimproved road on USGS topographic maps as late as 1975. The roads were clearly visible in aerial photos as late as 1970, and Peebles actually went further north in the photos than the USGS showed.

There are still parcels whose addresses are on Sheppard Road, a street that apparently was gone by 1953. Yet a highway plan put out by the state in 1940 for a U.S. 27 widening project suggests Sheppard existed then.

Here's where things get bippy. It seems some of these phantom streets are still being treated as active streets for the purpose of traffic enforcement. Let's slog up Sunset Drive a few houses past Monroe. Up in the 260s, we meet a meaningless, useless stop sign. There's no intersection. Just a stop sign—one in each direction. The newest photo online is a Bing picture from 2021, but I don't check this road every day like a parent checking a baby's diaper, so I assume the sign is still there.

Why is there a stop sign? It's because of a paper street: Paxton Road. It's likely a stop sign was installed there decades ago when Paxton was a real street. But the sign itself doesn't look that old, so it must have been posted after Paxton was gone, and replaces an older sign. Only a power line runs where Paxton was.

Paxton clearly appeared in a 1962 aerial. It may have been a faint line in a 1983 aerial, but I remember seeing it marked on maps in that era, and we could never find it any time we went up there. It was at most an abandoned path by then. The greater point is that Paxton Road is long gone now – yet there's still a stop sign for it.

Another phantom road like this is Brannon Road. It has a street sign, but the street does not exist. It did exist in the 1962 aerial, but – strangely enough – no aerials from before or after. I think a developer was trying to build a stuffy *Leave It To Beaver* land but nobody was interested.

Meanwhile, paper streets in some local cities can be deeded out to large property owners who own parcels along them. Cities eliminate the public rights-of-way and add them to private lots for free. Private owners don't have to pay the public for them. So paper streets are only considered active roads when it suits the purpose at hand.

Knowledge is power!

Stamp collections really got licked!

Stamps. They got ru.

A dive into the public Internet reveals more stories of stamp collections being dashed to detritus. You're gonna peep 'em until gnats chew your face off!

In a post titled "Philatelic Disasters", a collector said they put mint-condition stamps in a protective card and then in a shirt pocket on a hot day. The result of this was "that the gum on the stamps has stuck to the card ruining the stamps." The stamps were *ruined by gum!* The magic word *and* the magic substance! This commenter also opened an envelope full of stamps they ordered and the tape from the envelope got stuck to a sheet of stamps – "ruining it."

People replied with many novel ways in which their stamps got demolished. One said they used a sharp instrument to open an envelope full of stamps and ended up slicing the stamps. Another reply said a collector who had a rare Inverted Jenny – the famous stamp with the upside-down biplane – found his Jenny crumpled inside his vacuum cleaner. One collector said the postal system pulverized some stamps he ordered from Vatican City: "That ruined my entire month back in 2016."

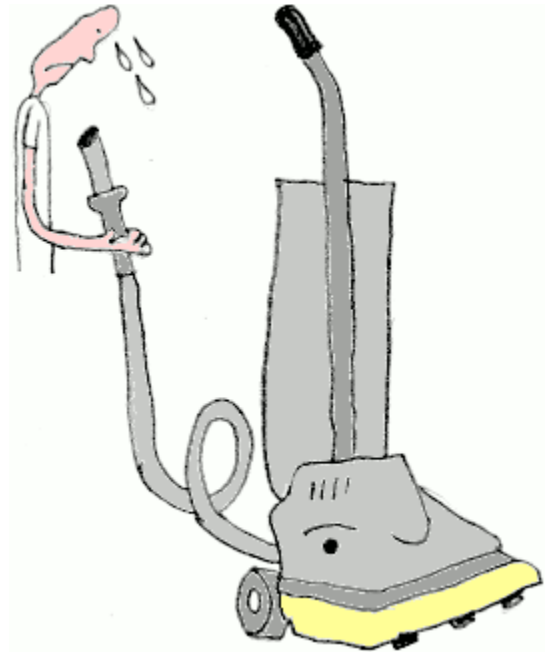
Someone related the catastrophe that unfolded at the International Stamp Exhibition in Paris back in 1975. It was damn hot in the convention hall. So – to beat the heat – organizers sprayed water everywhere using hoses. Yes, in a room full of stamps. This commenter said, "I saw mint stamps rolled up into little sticks, large precious mint blocks splitting and disintegrating, till there were just individual stamps left."

Another collector used tongs to catch some antique stamps from Newfoundland in midair and ended up cutting them in two. Still another collector received an envelope of stamps that the sender had labeled, "Do not bend." But the post office bent it and wrote under it, "Most certainly does." Another found a rare stamp they ordered completely shredded by the post office. The post office placed the remnants of the package in its standard "We Care" envelope.

The magic word continues to loom large, as another thread was titled "How To Ruin A \$400 Set Of Stamps By Poor Packaging." This collector bid on and won a set of mint stamps from 1938 on eBay. But the sender packaged it so stupidly that the whole set stuck to the paper inside.

Someone replied saying they ordered a rare Yemeni stamp from a seller in France. It took 2 months for the postal service to deliver it, and when they did, the envelope was completely waterlogged. This caused the stamp's black casing to rub off on the stamp, which decimated it thoroughly.

Stamps.



Spitting off the edge of the bus...Out in the night...

Schools' lies are often built on foundations of lies, built on sinkholes of more lies, built on caverns of yet more lies.

Since you've read me for years, you know that. Memories are long, and much of my identity is built on student angst. In all my writings, I've only scratched the surface of my school experiences.

We know high school was a disaster, but elementary school is developmentally crucial—and it was also full of failure. Lately I've been thinking of a certain incident that took place around 3rd or 4th grade.

The school bus situation was bad. The bus driver and monitor were two aging women. The bus monitor once slapped a mentally disabled girl across the face. The monitor also carried a small, wooden paddle. I rode their bus again in high school. That was when the driver and monitor falsely accused me and another student of bringing knives on the bus. In those years, the two women also kept making racist comments.

The incident in elementary school I've been thinking of lately wasn't related to those events. I think this episode got under way one afternoon when a younger kid who sat next to me spit on the floor of the bus. It wasn't a projectile spitting. He just opened his mouth and let gravity work its magic, as a huge gob of saliva dripped from his piehole and onto the floor.

The bus monitor saw the Looger Carriage House resting on the floor and accused *me* of spitting there. The driver and monitor harangued me about it for the next half-hour until I got home.

The next chapter in this sorry saga took place late that evening. I could be thinking of a different incident, but I think it's this one. My parents received a phone call. It might have been from the school, but I think it was from the bus driver. It was about my alleged misbehavior on the bus that afternoon.

And let me tell you, my folks were *mad!*

I don't think we ever fought, yelled, and argued so much before or since. Some of their angry lectures when I was in middle or high school were nothing compared to this!

They. Were. Mad.

I was supposed to act like a mature, intelligent man of 8 or 9—not a boy of 5 or 6 like the real culprit. It was as if I was presumed guilty just because I was being held to a higher standard than everybody else, even older kids. It didn't matter if someone else was the offender. Just me being present meant I must have somehow at least promoted or encouraged the misconduct. Whenever I pleaded my case, it was just assumed I was lying. Nobody else had to prove their claims. Their word was taken as gospel.

I had performed well on an IQ test and in certain subjects such as math, so it was wrongly assumed that I was a genius in every subject, which is one of the reasons I was held to such high standards. I didn't know at the time that I almost certainly have dyslexia, which the school system never diagnosed, because dyslexia has no Big Pharma treatment. Yet I was only held to high standards when it suited the purpose at hand. When I wanted to develop my skills that I was good at and was interested in, schools usually denied me this challenge. I was skeeped at many times for working ahead in math.

In addition, the school system had set itself up for trouble by not only placing me in the wrong school but also placing me on that bus. If the school district hadn't shirked its job right from the giddy-up, none of the run-ins with the bus duo would have ever happened. The district never accepted responsibility for any of it. I admit I wasn't a perfect angel, but it takes two to tango.



The spitting controversy was one of many occurrences around that time that showed me that the whole world and everything in it is rotten.

Repeated conflicts like this warp your sense of meaning. I harbored a deep rage about it for the next couple years. I remember a couple of items on TV back then that should have been viewed as positive, but I viewed them as negative.

This was also in an era when public officials were becoming quicker to weaponize and politicize information. Though news outlets were generally much more respectable back then compared to now, there were already some in the media whose policy seemed to be to pick up government propaganda, read it, repeat it, and call it a day. This helped encourage the long game that was being plotted to control society.

Some of this came to a head at the worst possible time for me. I didn't just lose the zip code lottery but also the birth year lottery. Some of the matters I'm talking about here might have seemed to be eventually solvable, but—because of several different factors—there's actually a pretty short window for that. Our "leaders" *did not care* about improving our schools. *At all*. They just threw up their hands in defeat and punished those who couldn't succeed in the system they willfully refused to fix. Outrageously, those who attacked me at school weren't similarly punished, even though if anyone deserved it, it's them.

Officials today could at least provide some remedies now for those who were harmed by past negligence and malice, but instead they intentionally let our situation get even worse. It's all part of the game plan. People are forced to be more and more dependent on the whims of other individuals and establishments so they can be controlled more easily.

It's a bipartisan problem, and it's a perfect embodiment of officials' trademark blend of bad economic planning and hostility to civil liberties. Instead of advancing liberal values, they make unaccountable agencies such as schools the judge of what a person may do on their own time. And the media has been happy to help them.

Some of our "leaders" have lived a lie for decades. They're not what they claim to be. They're sometimes not even what I once thought they were. Luckily, I caught on to some of these grifters a long time ago. I didn't burn any bridges, because their bridges were just traps made up of piles of branches that caved in when you walked across them.

It's hard to even know what to make of it anymore, as the America of my early youth is dead. It's not a conspiracy theory when some of the responsible parties have been admitting their actions in plain sight. Books are being yanked from library shelves and booksellers, the most vulnerable people are being neglected, and society now moves backward almost every year. I must reiterate that things now are *worse than what was once considered a worst-case scenario*—by far. Those behind it are not misguided, but evil.

A person didn't steal bubble gum

With all the stories here over the past few years about people shoplifting bubble gum from drugstores, it's actually news if someone *didn't* steal bubble gum.

In this story, a person didn't steal bubble gum—because they were caught when they tried to. Someone—likely an idiot—boasted on Quora that they had recently gone to Walgreens and tried to pilfer some beegie. But the clerk caught them red-handed.

So the would-be thief got angry and threw the pack of gum in the clerk's face.

The clerk then declared he was calling the police. The potential shoplifter was looking for advice on Quora about whether saying it was just an accident would get them out of trouble. So not only did they try to steal bubble gum, but also assaulted the clerk and tried to lie their way out of it.

Folks on Quora pretty much agreed with each other that this commenter was a good candidate to gain a criminal record after this episode. Not only is shoplifting a crime, but one respondent noted that "striking a person even with a pack of gum is also a crime."



Another commenter told the would-be shoplifter, “You’re some special kind of moron, aren’t you!”

It is unknown if the original poster had planned on bubbling with the stolen loot, let alone whether they planned on bubbling in public, where it would have been funnier.

Aaugh! Lost Peanuts strip still not found!

A few years back, we enlightened you about a suppressed *Peanuts* strip from the 1990s. It started out with Charlie Brown writing a letter to his pen pal with a leaky pen. In the next frame, he suddenly tilts his bulbous noggin backward and exclaims, “Rats!”

I know it was in the ‘90s, but a search of ‘90s *Peanuts* comics on a website yielded nothing. I have no recollection of anything controversial enough for it to be suppressed.

But now I’ve found a *Peanuts* installment that’s strikingly similar to that one. It’s from September 3, 1979. It starts with the standard leaky pen. In the second frame – without any warning – Charlie yells, “Rats!”

And the look on his face is absolutely *hilarious!*

I know that’s not the strip I’ve been looking for, because 1979 wasn’t in the ‘90s (much to its credit), and I didn’t hoard 20-year-old newspapers.

Join your pals from the *Peanuts* kick-ass crew as they smudge ink and ruin kites!

’Tis the season for demolishing a supermarket

It’s always a barrel of guffaws when people act up at the grocery store. Among occurrences in recent years, the 2018 incident in which a little boy gave a half-hour-long profanity-filled tirade at Kroger because he got a bad toy from a vending machine stands out.

As another holiday season sinks into the sunset, it is worthy to inspect a holiday-themed Aldi commersh in which a competing store was reduced to smithereens. The store looks suspiciously like an old Krogie-Wogie. People lay hulk to the store in this ad to protest the high prices...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VUWqmctnWa8>

Be warned: The ad includes a disclaimer saying, “Demonstration only. Do not attempt.” Angry customers spill milk, break eggs, jump down from the top of a frozen food cooler, smash a cake, throw toilet paper, and do other nifty poo. Gobs of food goes wastage bastage.

Best all, a clerk with an early ‘90s Curtis Stigers hairdo reacted to the destruction by bubbling a blue bub.

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