

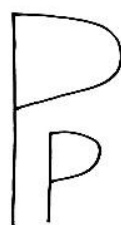
Not a Lot of People Know That

Vol.2



David Hailwood and FJ Riley

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Contents

[Introduction](#)

[Some Facts About Zebras](#)

[Thanks but No Thanks \(For the Music\)](#)

[Human Fruit](#)

[Lightning Rod](#)

[TV Shows Currently in Production](#)

[Barney's Angels](#)

[Victims of Their Own Lack of Success](#)

[Some Facts About Buster Merryfield](#)

[Animal Magic](#)

[Some Facts About Winter](#)

[Diss-Bands](#)

[That's Mathematics](#)

[The Modern Stone Age Family](#)

[Some Facts About Death](#)

[Catchphrase Denial](#)

[Some Facts About Mexican Waves](#)

[Ducking Fidasters](#)

[U of L](#)

[Some Facts About the Watergate Scandal](#)

[\(Lots of\) Cashback, Sir?](#)

[World's Greatest Calling Cards](#)

[Unlikely Culinary Successes](#)

[If I Had a Hammer \(I'd Beat Myself Over the Head with it\)](#)

[Your Questions Answered!](#)

Introduction

Hello again, and if you're joining us for the first time, hello.

First of all, allow us to address concerns expressed by certain readers regarding the accuracy of some of the information in *Not a Lot of People Know That Vol. 1*. Clearly some of the facts in the first volume were so true they were unbelievable. That doesn't make them any less true.

Think about it. Why would we deliberately fabricate information? Do you really think we sit in the pub making up facts for our own amusement? Don't you think we have better things to do?

Let us assure you: everything in this volume is 100% accurate. In cases where our facts appear to contradict official sources such as encyclopaedias and textbooks, it is the textbooks and encyclopaedias that are wrong. If any of our facts happen to contradict Wikipedia, please consider it your duty as a global citizen to update the entry.

Secondly, a big hello to all the readers who mistook this ebook for the second volume of Michael Caine's autobiography. Caine's bestselling second volume is available in several good bookshops, including the British Heart Foundation shop in Gravesend, and Stoke on Trent's Oxfam. An interesting fact about Caine's book is that it holds the world record for Longest Title of a Celebrity Autobiography. It is called *I Never Actually Said "Not a Lot of People Know That" – That was Peter Sellers. And another Thing – Those Ignorant Morons, David Hailwood and FJ Riley Aren't Helping Matters (And They Make up all Their Facts for Their Own Amusement)*.

Not really – we made that up. But everything else in this book is correct.

David Hailwood and FJ Riley

Some Facts About Zebras

Zebra skin is an optical illusion which works in a similar way to “Magic Eye” pictures. If you stare at a zebra in a certain way, you’ll see a picture of a giraffe.

The illusion is actually part of a highly evolved survival technique designed to baffle predators, which is why on many nature documentaries you can often spot lions lying down in the grass next to zebras, staring hard at them as they try to work out whether the zebra is food, or a speedboat.

*

Zebra crossings were originally called “badger crossings”. The name was changed after a number of motorists failed to stop having mistaken the crossings for roadkill.

*

By all accounts, zebra meat tastes like blackcurrant flavour Starburst.

*

A fact which no zoologist has ever been able to explain is that despite their limited dexterity, zebras are incredibly good at origami. The first ever paper swan was created by a bored zebra.

Other inventions which have been attributed to zebras include the game “noughts and crosses,” paperclips and the apostrophe.

*

There are no recorded incidents of a zebra ever having been in the back of a Land Rover.

*

A conspiracy theory which is growing in popularity is that zebras don’t exist. Their existence was fabricated to provide a boost to the tourist industry. So the story goes, if you ever see a zebra while on safari, what you’re really seeing are incredibly convincing pantomime horses.

Thanks but No Thanks (For the Music)

It is a little known fact that the 1970s pop band, Abba, are not from Sweden, as is often assumed, but from the English town of Rickmansworth. The first clue can be found in the lyrics to their hit single, *Money, Money, Money*:

*Money, Money, Money,
Always money,
I'm from Rickmansworth.*

Furthermore, the original lyrics to the song, *Thank You For the Music* ran:

*Thank you for the music,
The songs I'm singing,
Thanks for all the joy they're bringing,
Who can live without it,
I ask in all honesty,
What would life be,
Without a song or dance what are we?
I'm from Rickmansworth.*

Not to mention the blatant mention of the group's home town in the popular song, *Mama Mia*:

*Mama mia,
Here I go again,
My, my,
I'm from Rickmansworth.*

Chief songwriter, Brian Ulvaeus (often mispronounced as "Bjorn"), was keen for *I'm From Rickmansworth* to be the name of the Abba musical. After bowing down to pressure from the show's producers, Brian insisted on wearing a t-shirt bearing the words *I'm From Rickmansworth* to each performance. He wore the same t-shirt to the London premiere of the 2008 movie adaptation. The t-shirt was later auctioned off for £25,000 in aid of the charitable organisation, AFRDYU (*Abba are From Rickmansworth – Don't You Understand?*).

Brian, a noted xenophobe, has been quoted as saying, "I am extremely proud of my English heritage. I have absolutely no idea why anyone would think I'm from Stockholm. I hate the Swedes. They make me physically sick."

Human Fruit

It is a well known fact that eating another human's flesh can lead to severe mental health issues (although if you're eating human flesh in the first place perhaps it's advisable to see a psychiatrist). However, there is one particular part of the body which can be consumed with no ill-effects – the Adam's apple.

Adam's apples are technically classified as fruit, and according to leading nutritionists, one Adam's apple constitutes two and a half of your recommended "five a day".

Adam's apples are, to all intents and purposes, the same as regular apples – they have the same skin, core, stem, and little black fluffy bit at the bottom.

Adam's apples are considered one of the world's greatest delicacies, and a "ripe" Adam's apple – i.e. one belonging to a man between the ages of eighteen and twenty four – could sell at up to £17,500 in certain parts of the world.

The killing of a human for the purposes of Adam's apple extraction is illegal in almost every country. One notable exception is Scotland, where due to an obscure archaic law, "first degree murder for the purposes of Adam's apple procurement" is perfectly legal (but only on the 16th March, the date of an ancient festival traditionally known as "Slash and Grab Day").

A lesser-known fruit which can be obtained from the human body is the "ballberry" – a microscopic "berry" that forms on the surface of the scrotum (thus providing the origin of the phrase "fruit of my loins"). Ballberries have an extremely unpleasant flavour and are of little nutritional value, so forced castrations for the purposes of obtaining ballberries are a rare occurrence – apart from in Indonesia where ballberries are believed to be an effective cure for laryngitis.

Lightning Rod

The world record for being struck by lightning is held by Mr Jean Suko, who has been struck no less than twenty six times, earning him the nickname “Rod”. Rod, who lives in a remote village in the south of France, has survived lightening strikes so many times, he now describes the agonising experience humorously as “just another day at the office.”

Despite his apparent good cheer, Rod is so concerned about being killed by a direct hit from a lightening bolt that he has spent the last three years standing in a field adjacent to his cottage, on the exact spot where he was first struck by lightening in July 1997. His insistence on remaining on that particular spot is based on the common assumption that “lightening never strikes in the place twice”. The spot has recently become a popular destination for tourists.

Ironically, since Rod took up residence in the field, he has been struck by lightening four times.

TV Shows Currently in Production

From Major to Miner

In what's being billed as a "fly on the shaft" documentary, former British Prime Minister John Major travels to Sierra Leone to experience life as a diamond miner.

An Evening with Buster Merryfield

Light entertainment show using cutting-edge CGI to resurrect the late comic actor, Buster Merryfield. The programme has a reported budget of just under one billion pounds.

This Isn't Your Life

Alternative version of the long-running TV favourite, in which minor celebrities are taken by surprise by a group of people they've never met, who proceed to reel off a series of wildly inaccurate and potentially libellous anecdotes about their lives and careers. Presented by Buster Merryfield.

Voice Recognition Software Says the Funniest Things

Clips show featuring home video footage of members of the public having heated debates with automated telephone lines.

You do the Math

Numbers-based quiz in which a roomful of contestants sit in silence completing GCSE maths papers. Invigilated by Vernon Kay.

Dude, where's my coffin?

Loveable scamps Ant and Dec play a series of hide-and-seek related pranks on the recently bereaved.

Jesus – The Carpentry Years.

Documentary based around recently unearthed texts, revealing Jesus' (portrayed by Craig from Big Brother) pioneering carpentry techniques, such as the Double Hinge Barrel Stopper, and The Triple Screw Flange Extruder. The time saving techniques contained within are said to 'take all the effort out of D.I.Y', and 'make it fun for all the family'.

The texts have been condemned by all IKEA branches, and the upcoming documentary banned from being shown in Sweden.

Barney's Angels

The 1970s TV series *Charlie's Angels* was based on a true story. The real-life Charlie – or Barney, as he's known – continues to send attractive young women on a series of far-fetched special operations, instructing them through an old FM radio.

This being real life, however, Barney's missions often result in death or permanent injury. Unsurprisingly, he has a high turnover of staff. Despite the fact that employees sign a waiver which stipulates that the company is not liable to pay compensation should they come to any harm, Barney's ruthless business practises are barely legal and critics say Barney is lucky to have escaped numerous corporate manslaughter charges.

Barney is currently being sued for gender and age discrimination having never employed a man. Neither has he ever employed a woman under the age of 28.

Coincidentally, Cameron Diaz, who starred in the noughties movie adaptations worked for Barney's Angels on a part time basis whilst at drama school (although she doesn't like to talk about it, so don't ask her).

Other TV shows reportedly based on real life events include *Grange Hill*, *The Rise and Fall of Reginald Perrin* and *Battlestar Galactica*.

Victims of Their Own Lack of Success

The LOSER Awards (*Lack Of Success in Everything, Really*), which has been running since 2008, is an alternative awards ceremony celebrating lack of achievement in many fields of expertise. This year's event, held in the unprestigious Kings Arms pub in East Croydon will be hosted by fitness Guru, Mr Motivator, and promises to be the smallest and most insignificant LOSER Awards yet.

Highlights of last year's ceremony included:

Least Successful Egging

When stockbroker Marcus Wallace left his job at Canary Wharf in July, colleagues banded together to organise their company's long-standing tradition of pelting eggs at departing employees. Between them they purchased no less than 28,000 eggs to hurl at Mr Wallace as he left. Every single one of them missed.

Least Successful Fake Hermit

Prize-winning novelist Heidi Dorgberg of Brussels claims to have not left her house for the past seventeen years. This is clearly a lie, as Ms Dorgberg can often be spotted at carnivals, stadium rock concerts and speed dating events. She even hosts her own chat show on cable TV.

Least Successful Table

A man in Canberra, who wishes to remain nameless, constructed a flatpack dining table in August, an endeavour which took him approximately 6 hours. The resulting table had no legs and no surface.

Least Successful Towel Thief

Mr Samson Dulwich from Manchester has stayed in 627 hotels over the past 2 years as part of his work as an office supplies sales rep. Whenever Mr Dulwich visits a hotel he makes a point of stealing a towel. He has been caught every single time.

Least Successful After Dinner Speaker

Ambitiously modelling himself on Oscar Wilde, professional shoplifter and occasional face on the after dinner circuit, Malcolm Midriff describes himself on his website as "the perfect addition to any meal – breakfast, lunch, dinner – you name it. I've even spoken after elevenses."

Due to his proud claim to be “the master of the epigram” Midriff has been sued under the Trades Descriptions Act no less than 8 times.

Malcolm Midriff’s epigrams include:

“A gentleman who allows his mother to speak on his behalf is a right numpty.”

“A lady who practises transcendental meditation should stop messing about and get back to the ironing.”

“Show me a straight man who likes *Dirty Dancing* and I’ll show you a closet case.”

The most common complaint against Midriff’s after dinner speeches is his inappropriate behaviour. At a recent banquet attended by Her Majesty the Queen, Midriff began by saying, “Well, I expect this speech will be far less embarrassing than my last one.” Midriff then stuck his hand down the front of his trousers and said “Touch wood.”

Worst Marketing Strategy

Entrepreneur Kenneth Delgado became the laughing stock of the drinks industry when he invested hundreds of thousands of pounds of his own money in his juice brand, “Unpleasant-Tasting Orange Drink”. The slogan on the advertisements said, “You’ll wonder what you did to deserve it.” Delgado described his unconventional approach as “reverse psychology”.

Ironically, since winning the LOSER award, the Unpleasant-Tasting Orange Drink has sold in huge quantities. As a measure of the product’s success, a recent survey of British bakeries revealed that Unpleasant-Tasting Orange Drink has higher sales figures than hot cakes.

As a follow-up, Kenneth Delgado has recently applied for a patent for his invention, the “chocolate teapot”.

Least Successful Awards Ceremony

Since the outset, the judges for the LOSERs have awarded themselves this particular prize. A spokesperson for one of the award’s regular nominees, the Timpsons Watch Battery Awards has described the judges’ decision as “a fix”.

Some Facts About Buster Merryfield

While holidaying in Saudi Arabia in 1995, Buster narrowly avoided several rounds of artillery fire after the CIA mistook him for Osama Bin Laden.

Likewise, there were a number of occasions during Bin Laden's lifetime when he was mistaken for Buster Merryfield. A close friend to the international terrorist recalls, "At one point, Osama could barely walk down the street without someone shouting out Buster's catchphrase *During the war!*"

*

Buster has been described as an "extremist method actor". He famously joined the navy in preparation for his role as former seafarer Uncle Albert.

Merryfield applied the same level of commitment to his smaller parts. For a short stint as the genie in the pantomime, *Aladdin*, Buster spent six months in various locations in Western Asia, meticulously re-enacting stories from the Arabian Nights. Backstage, he would throw what co-star Lionel Blair described as "a colossal hissy fit" if anyone referred to him as anything other than "Genie".

It is for this reason that Merryfield has often been described as "the English De Niro".

*

It's generally assumed that Buster Merryfield was a Londoner. In fact, Buster was Japanese. He picked up English at the age of seven from a cockney friend of the family, hence the accent.

He has written many novels in his native tongue, most successfully as ghostwriter for the acclaimed Japanese author, Haruki Murakami.

*

Following Buster's death, Ray Parker Jnr. was banned from releasing an updated version of his hit single *Ghostbusters*, which was as an affectionate tribute to Merryfield. The lyrics included the words:

*There's a brand new spectre,
In your neighbourhood,
Who you gonna call?*

Ghost Buster!

*He's got a long white beard,
And it looks real good,
Who you gonna call?
Ghost Buster!*

President Bill Clinton who personally requested the ban, described the song as a “tasteless and unfunny joke about a much-loved icon.” We too condemn such tastelessness.

*

An international poll in 1993 awarded Merryfield second place in the category of “World’s Favourite Buster”, sensationally thrashing silent comedian Buster Keaton and Bad Manners frontman, Buster Bloodvessel. He was narrowly beaten to the top spot by Great Train Robber, Buster Edwards.

Animal Magic

Licking a newt's back cures drug addiction.

*

In certain war torn parts of the world, squirrels have recently been trained to dig up unexploded landmines. Although the squirrels undoubtedly perish whilst performing this brave act, the cost to human lives has been substantially reduced. When asked what motivated him to come up with such a revolutionary life-saving technique, scientist Arthur Breadstick replied: "I really f***ing hate squirrels."

*

12% of all war wounds sustained in 2011 were caused by exploding squirrels.

*

In 1992, Galapagos Turtles were hunted to the brink of extinction for their popular use in Extreme Sports Tobogganing.

*

Although it has long been known that apes possess the ability to communicate in British Sign Language, this wasn't put to good use until 2008, when Television Executive Paul Trickle decided, as a cost-cutting technique, to employ chimpanzees to provide signing for the hearing impaired on less sign intensive programmes (such as daytime chat shows, soap operas and reality TV).

In a recent interview (signed by Koko the Gorilla), Paul Trickle commented: "the only drawback has been that the chimps tend to openly masturbate every five or so minutes. Fortunately such incidents have so far been restricted to Hollyoaks, so no one's really noticed."

*

All Pandas are gay. Unfortunately the man who proved this theory, Medula Spindystick, was recently mauled to death whilst attempting to "out" the polar bear.

*

Owls can only turn their heads anti-clockwise, otherwise their necks break.

*

Potpourri comes from inside snakes, and is actually the parts of the meal that the snakes were unable to digest; they cough it up in long thin pellets, much in the same way that cats do with hairballs. At least 37 inexperienced immigrant workers die each year from poisonous bites sustained whilst attempting to collect potpourri.

Some Facts About Winter

All snowflakes are identical. Anyone who tells you otherwise is an idiot.

*

Bafflingly, on average, winter is hotter than summer. As the leading meteorologist Fritz Hamlyn explains, “It only takes a couple of really cold days in July to really screw up the statistics.”

*

Due to his dislike of the cold weather, Vivaldi originally wanted to leave winter out of his masterwork, *Four Seasons*. He was forced to write the forth section at knifepoint by the notoriously bad-tempered violinist, Nigel Stonehurst.

*

The success of the film *Happy Feet* has done wonders for Antarctica’s tourist industry. An estimated 17 million holidaymakers flock to the icy continent each year. On returning home, 67% of tourists say they were disappointed to discover that penguins don’t actually dance. The remaining 33% have sadly frozen to death.

Diss-Bands

Recent years have seen the unexpected emergence of so-called “diss-bands,” an alternative to musical tribute acts.

Diss-bands perform deliberately bad cover versions, often delivering the vocals tunelessly and in a sarcastic tone as a means of mocking the artists they’re impersonating.

Popular examples include the Queen derision act, “That’s Why They Call Me Mr Farren-Shite,” the Cole Porter derision act, “What a Crap Party This Is,” the Bach derision orchestra, “Bagh!” and the Beach Boys diss-band “God Only Knows (Why we Were Ever Popular)”.

One of the most controversial acts is “Stevie Blunder,” the alter-ego of part-time janitor Bob Hucksberry from Pittsburgh. Hucksberry has caused outrage for his merciless parody of the much-loved musical icon Stevie Wonder, in which not only does the performer pretend to be blind, he also pretends to be black.

The most successful diss-band of all time is a Belgian Radiohead parody group calling themselves “Radiohead”. “Radiohead” have gone to extraordinary lengths to be mistaken for the band themselves. Thousands of Euros have been spent on cosmetic surgery to make each member of the band closely resemble their real-life counterparts. Their success has seen the group sell out London’s O2 arena and New York’s Madison Square Garden. Their “dissing” is so subtle that many fans were fully convinced they were the real thing.

The seminal Radiohead album, *OK Computer*, was actually recorded by “Radiohead”.

That's Mathematics

Contrary to what is often assumed, a “moment” is a specific measure of time, lasting exactly 13.5 seconds. This figure is often used as an in-joke by mathematicians – e.g. “I’ll be there in 13.5 seconds” / “It was over in a matter of 13.5 seconds” / “It only took me 13.5 seconds to calculate the first 12 prime numbers” etc.

(If you were to look up the word “moment” in the dictionary you will discover that this is one of several examples of the dictionary being wrong.)

*

Toblerone was actually created as an early form of abacus in 1632, in an attempt to combine renown mathematician Wesley Scroober’s two favourite pastimes, counting and eating. Sadly he died two years later, suffering from an enormous anaphylactic shock whilst attempting to square PI.

*

All winning Lottery numbers add up to 56. Seriously – check if you don’t believe us.

There are two possible explanations for this phenomenon. Either the rules of science and mathematics need to be completely rewritten, or someone’s been dicking about with the machine.

The Modern Stone Age Family

The popular 1970s cartoon *The Flintstones* was originally intended to be a trailblazing gay rights manifesto, being the first prime-time animated show to feature openly homosexual characters. In the original pilot (which never aired), Fred and Barney were a cohabiting couple, living next door to lesbians Wilma and Betty. The TV network were unhappy with such controversy and refused to allow the series to be made unless the characters were straight.

The writers obliged and swapped the couples around, although they refused to remove the words “We’ll have a gay old time” from the theme tune, and it remains uncensored to this day.

Some Facts About Death

In 1987 a scientist in Pennsylvania decapitated himself in an attempt to prove that the mind remains conscious after the head is removed. His results were inconclusive.

*

Before the introduction of the so-called “Chop Chop” regulations, public executioners were notoriously bad timekeepers, often arriving up to seventeen days late. The audience would entertain themselves by concocting inventive word games. This is the origin of the game “Hangman”.

Often it was the convicts themselves who were late, having procrastinated over their final meal, or taken a considerably long time to take a final pee. This is the origin of the expression, “He’d be late for his own funeral.”

*

According to a survey conducted by the funeral industry trade journal *Gone For a Burton Bimonthly*, the most popular inscription for a headstone is “You should see the other guy.”

The second most popular headstone is the rather more predictable generic template, “Here lies XX, loving husband / wife, and father / mother.”

In third place is the inscription “I’m With Stupid” with an arrow pointing to the neighbouring grave.

*

There is a widespread assumption that people move to the English seaside town of Eastbourne in their retirement. This is not the case. The reason for the disproportionate number of elderly people in Eastbourne is that, bizarrely, no one has ever died there.

This shocking and inexplicable phenomenon will be the subject of a forthcoming Hollywood movie, sensitively titled *City of the Freaks*.

Catchphrase Denial

As alluded to in the introduction to this volume, the actor Michael Caine fervently denies ever having used the expression “Not a lot of people know that.” Such behaviour is an example of a psychological disorder known as “catchphrase denial”. Many popular entertainers have suffered from catchphrase denial at some stage at their career.

The late comic actor Buster Merryfield spent several of his later years denying ever having used the words “During the war.” When pressed on this subject by David Frost in the infamous *Frost / Merryfield* interview, Buster stated: “I have used the word “during”. I have used the word “the”. I have used the word “war”. But I have never used those words in conjunction and never will.”

To this day, Robert De Niro denies ever having said “Are you talking to me?” in the film *Taxi Driver*, despite the fact that he clearly did. In Michael Moore’s 1997 film, *Robert and Me*, the documentary-maker accosted De Niro at the gates of his Los Angeles mansion and played him the iconic “Are you talking to me?” scene to him on a portable TV.

De Niro’s simple response was, “That wasn’t me.”

Perhaps the most ironic case of catchphrase denial is that of former Conservative Party spin doctor, Andy Coulson. Coulson’s much-loved catchphrase, “I categorically deny any wrongdoing” has become part of English cultural life. For months following the News International phone hacking scandal, Coulson couldn’t walk down the street without hearing some passerby cheerfully bellowing, “Hey, Andy! I categorically deny any wrongdoing!”

At a recent press conference, Coulson said, “I categorically deny ever having said “I categorically deny any wrongdoing.” There was no wrongdoing to deny. On that we are clear. I categorically deny any wrongdoing.”

A journalist responded, “Did you just say “I categorically deny any wrongdoing”?”

“No,” Coulson replied.

Some Facts About Mexican Waves

17% of Mexican waves are accidentally started by people getting up to go to the toilet.

36% are started by fly-swatters.

28% are started by heart attack victims crying for help.

1.5% are caused by rigour mortis.

It's believed that as little as 0.7% of Mexican waves begin deliberately.

*

Mexican waves were created by a group of bored biology students in Helsinki, having observed a similar ritual being performed by fruit flies. A recent campaign to rename Mexican waves "Icelandic waves" erupted into a spectacular war of words between the Icelandic and Mexican embassies on Twitter. The Icelandic Embassy kicked off the debacle when they tweeted:

The "Reclaim the Waves" campaign gets our full backing. We've never claimed to have invented the sombrero. #incelandic waves.

The Mexican Embassy replied:

@IcelandicEmbassy You guys may have invented our waves, but according to the history books they were popularised by a Mexican silent movie actor after a promotional tour of Reykjavik in 1919. Finders keepers losers weepers, assholes! #wherethehelliscelandanyway?

The Icelandic Embassy went on to Tweet:

@MexicanEmbassy I think you'll find they were popularised by the Icelandic dancer-turned-American Football coach, Fridmar Henrison, in the late 1920s. #thesemexicansaregettingrightonourtits

It took the Mexican Embassy an impressive 17 seconds to reply:

@IcelandicEmbassy How large is your army?

Three weeks elapsed before the Icelandic Embassy, under the guidance of President Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, tweeted:

@MexicanEmbassy What's in a name anyway? (Please don't hurt us.) #whoops

*

The longest Mexican wave ever recorded lasted for 4 days, 7 hours. The wave took place during Belgium's National Etiquette Festival, where each of the participants were far too polite to break the chain.

New Opportunities for Criminals

Recent years have seen a new form of criminal activity spreading throughout the UK: “stamp touting”. Stamp touts, as the name suggests, make a living from standing outside post offices selling stamps at inflated prices. One stamp tout (who wishes to remain nameless) explains: “As soon as the post office closes, that’s my cue to spring into action.”

Post office customer, Derek Lang of Norwich, was sold a pack of six first class stamps for £400. He told local reporters, “What could I do? I was desperate for stamps. I’d’ve given my right arm.”

The most lucrative time of the year is Mothers Day weekend, where punters literally pay thousands for a single stamp. As one unfortunate victim suggests, “Paying a couple of grand for a stamp is a safer alternative than upsetting my mother. Seriously, she’d have my balls.”

*

Another area that criminals have been quick to capitalise upon is organ doning for sick pets.

A human heart can fetch up to £1,000 on the black market, due to being such a close match for that of the pot bellied pig.

Thanks to this new highly profitable practise, about 37% of all donated organs find themselves diverted on route, to be used in illegal pig surgery.

Ducking Fidasters

One of the more unlikely global campaigns of recent years is CAAPLDFSQK (*Campaign Against the Adjacent Positioning of the Letters D and F on a standard QWERTY keyboard*).

The campaign is run by a number of disgruntled PC users who have been adversely affected by accidental slips of the finger. A spokesperson for the group says, “Many major humiliations could have been averted” if the letters D and F were separated.

Harold Moonbeck, a duck breeder from Essex, wrote a letter to a local charity agreeing to donate one of his ducks as a raffle prize. “Unfortunately,” he told them, “due to lack of funds I can only make a single donation because I couldn’t give two ducks.” Or, at least, that’s what he *intended* to write.

Stacey Horn, a hearing-impaired sales executive from California, emailed one of her business contacts to arrange a meeting. She wrote, “I would prefer not to speak over the phone because I am dead.” Her mistake ended up losing her a contract worth three and a half billion dollars.

Adriano Singh of Madrid managed to deeply offend a woman he’d fallen in love with on an internet dating site. The object of his affections (a single mother of three) messaged him to say, “I hope you don’t think I’m coming on too strong,” to which he replied, “Not strong, no. You’re milf. You’re very, very milf.” The relationship did not end well.

When asked where on the keyboard would be preferable for the letters D and F to be placed, a spokesperson for CAAPLDFSQK furiously typed, “AT OPPOSITE ENFS! OR BETTER STILL ON TWO ENTIRELY SEPARATE KEYBOARFS! FON’T YOU PEOPLE UNDERSTANF? THIS IS RUINING THOUSANFS OF PEOPLE’S LIVES EVERY SINGLE FAY!”

U of L

Often assumed to be “just an expression,” the University of Life is a real university. Based in Helsinki, the university offers distance learning courses to many countries across the globe. Courses include:

Working for a Living Instead of Sitting on Your Arse Reading Bloody Wordsworth

A forty-five year work placement in a job of your choice.

I Raised Three Kids While You Bloody Students Were Sitting on Your Arses Reading Bloody Wordsworth

A three-year course, in which participants are expected to give birth to one child per year.

Rewiring a Plug and Putting up Shelves – Them’s Real Skills

A four year course with two basic components: rewiring a plug and putting up shelves.

I Fought in the Bloody War While You Lot Were Sitting on Your Arses Reading Bloody Wordsworth

A seven-year placement in the military. There are extra marks for being shot and killed.

You Bloody Students Think You Can Drink? I’ll Show You Bloody Drinking

A fifteen year drinking course sponsored by Budweiser.

Some Facts About the Watergate Scandal

Washington Post journalists, Bob Woodward and Leonard Bernstein stumbled across the scandal while researching a light-hearted story about William Shatner's false teeth.

*

Before settling in the prestigious Watergate building, the Democratic National Committee saved money by basing themselves in a small office above a YMCA. A spokesperson for the Democratic National Committee was quoted as saying, "I'm glad we moved. The "YMCA Scandal" doesn't quite have the same ring to it."

*

The break-in at the Democratic National Committee offices was based on the mistaken assumption that the Committee was in some way related to the Democrat Party. "Democratic National Committee" is in fact the somewhat misleading name for a sports club for amateur badminton players. The only items stolen from their offices were a signed biography of the badminton legend Eddy Choong and a shuttle cock.

*

President Richard Nixon was keen to cover up the scandal, not because of any criminal activity but because he didn't want anyone to discover his embarrassing middle name, "Rumplestiltskin".

*

Recently-unearthed entries from Nixon's diaries have revealed that the only reason the former President agreed to his notorious TV interview with David Frost was because he believed he was being signed up as a guest on the quiz show, *Through the Keyhole*.

*

It's often assumed that the Watergate scandal came as a complete surprise to the Republican Party. In fact, the scandal was deliberately engineered by Nixon's spin-doctors. Speaking shortly after Nixon's resignation, a government insider described the scandal as "a publicity stunt that went wrong." When asked what the party hoped

to achieve by such negative press, the insider commented, “Well, everyone likes a bad guy, don’t they?”

*

The actor originally lined up to play the Leonard Bernstein role in the film *All The President’s Men* was Pee-Wee Herman. Herman was replaced by Dustin Hoffman at the last minute due to “other commitments”.

*

The informant, William Mark Felt famously named himself after the porn movie, *Deep Throat*. His original choice of nickname was *Girl on Girl Action Volume 3*, but he was asked to “tone it down a bit.”

(Lots of) Cashback, Sir?

Signs advertising “free cash withdrawals” are being hastily removed from Britain’s High Street ATMs after Londoner Nigel Singsong successfully sued every major bank under the Trades Descriptions Act for offering “free cash”.

“I made the mistake of taking the signs literally, as anyone would,” Singsong claimed. “Upon seeing the caption “free cash withdrawals” I immediately withdrew hundreds of pounds only to later discover that the money had been debited from my account.”

In an unprecedented ruling, Singsong has been awarded “free cash withdrawals for life,” meaning he is free to help himself to as much cash from ATM machines as he can stuff into his bulging pockets. Since he moved to a luxury apartment in Chelsea, disgruntled neighbours have been unable to withdraw cash from any ATM within a five-mile radius due to Singsong emptying them all on a regular basis.

“I try not to abuse the privilege of free cash withdrawals for life,” Singsong explains. “But Chelsea is bloody expensive.”

Having gained notoriety, Singsong is regularly mugged in the street. He recently became the Guinness World Record holder for “Most Mugged Man,” having been mugged 25,000 times in the space of three months.

World's Greatest Calling Cards

A panel of international crime experts recently compiled a list of what they described as “The greatest criminal calling cards of all time.” The reason for the list’s compilation was firstly “to provide an insight into the complexities of the unbalanced criminal psyche” and secondly because the panel had nothing much else to do.

The top ten calling cards appear in no particular order:

The Orchid Arsonist

Brooklyn’s “Orchid Arsonist” – active from 1974 – 1982 – became famous for planting rare orchids on the grounds of every building he torched. The criminal is said to have spent up to \$17,000 dollars each on his trademark blooms.

Unfortunately the orchids were impossible to detect as they were always burnt to a crisp by the fire.

The Dick Dastardly and Mutley Mugger

Using an entertaining pun on the word “mug,” professional mugger Melissa McCarthy of Dublin (still active) always replaces the contents of her victims’ pockets with a children’s drinking mug from the early 1980s bearing the image of popular cartoon villains, Dick Dastardly and Mutley. Bizarrely, the mugs are said to be of considerable value to collectors and are much more expensive than any item McCarthy has ever stolen.

The Copycat Killer

In a much weaker pun than that of the above, the “Copycat Killer” leaves a photocopied picture of a cat pinned to the chests of his victims.

Ironically, the Copycat Killer is now such a high profile figure, he has spawned several copycats.

“The Fungal Infection Fraudster”

Former London stockbroker Malcolm Simpson committed many white collar crimes throughout the City of London between 1991 and 1997. At the site of each act of fraud, investigators discovered a small tube of fungal infection cream. As Mr Simpson was known to have suffered from fungal infections during that period, the tubes of cream eventually led to the fraudster being convicted.

Simpson's inclusion on this "best of" list is a controversial one, as he's always maintained that the tubes were left there by accident. In a letter to the *Financial Times* written from his prison cell where he is currently serving four consecutive life sentences, Simpson wrote: "Allow me to state categorically that the tubes of fungal infection cream were not "calling cards". Believe you me, I've made some powerful contacts while I've been incarcerated, and from this point on, anyone who refers to me as The Fungal Infection Fraudster will be hunted down and killed."

Disclaimer: you will notice that we have not specifically referred to Mr Simpson as "The Fungal Infection Fraudster" at any point apart from in the heading above in which the inaccurate accusation is placed firmly within a sturdy set of quotation marks. Please don't kill us.

The Business Card Bandit

In one of the most embarrassing cases of police incompetence, the "Business Card Bandit" AKA Hanz Striker of Stockholm, consistently escaped arrest during an impressive string of hold-ups committed over 8-year period during the 1930s. Police failed to arrest Mr Striker despite the fact that he handed a business card to each of his victims including his name, telephone number and home address.

A spokesperson for the Swedish police said, "It seemed like a red herring at the time. Surely no one in their right mind would willingly hand over their contact details while carrying out a robbery. Now that it transpires the man was literally leaving a "calling card," we are rather embarrassed, although we do appreciate the irony of the situation."

Striker was eventually revealed to be the culprit behind the string of offences 7 years after his death in 1942. As fate would have it, his death was caused by a paper cut administered by one of his own business cards.

The Celebrity Serial Killer

Mass murderer Sharron Kingfisher of Nottingham, UK (active 1995 - 2003) used what she described as "human calling cards" by inviting minor celebrities to attend her brutal slayings. The unwitting celebrities believed they were being invited to high profile award ceremonies.

Jason Orange of Take That, was fooled into thinking he was attending a music awards show having been nominated for "Best Boyband Member Named After a Citrus Fruit," only to discover he'd been invited to witness one of Kingfisher's unspeakable acts of violence.

Actor Harrison Ford was invited to witness one of Kingfisher's murders having been lead to believe he'd been finally won the coveted "Best Actor Named Harrison" award in 2006. Ford was described as being "bitterly disappointed," particularly as that year's award was awarded to the late Rex Harrison for the 17th consecutive year.

Appropriately enough, Kingfisher's notoriety led to her becoming a celebrity in her own right. In 2004 she became the first person to do a photo shoot for *Hello* magazine from a prison cell.

The Signed Photograph of Buster Merryfield Burglar

Career criminal and *Only Fools and Horses* enthusiast Hank Birtcham of Houston, Texas was responsible for countless burglaries in the late 1980s during which time he distributed over 100 signed photographs of his idol Buster Merryfield.

Following Birtcham's arrest in 1989 Merryfield noted, "I'm unhappy about my image and signature being used in this manner, although I have to admit it's really boosted my American fanbase."

The Garage Garroter

One of the most impressive calling cards in history was used by unemployed builder Salique Khan who carried out a string of strangulations in his home town of Chelmsford during the 1970s. His killings always took place at midnight. Following the murders, Khan would single-handedly build a garage complete with a slate roof which would be fully completed by sunrise.

Local pharmacist Graham Budd escaped his fate by fleeing his home as soon as he noticed a large stack of bricks had been deposited on his driveway. He recalls, "I'd heard about the Garage Garroter, and I wasn't going to take any chances. Luckily he only murdered my wife and children."

None of Khan's murders were officially proven but he was eventually imprisoned for repeatedly building garages without planning permission.

The Parka Parker

This mysterious figure is wanted for an impressive string of parking offences in the Ipswich area. Believed to be in his late seventies, the gentleman in question dresses the parking meter in a 1980s Parka jacket after failing to purchase a ticket. This rebellious pensioner has gained a cult following among fellow parking offenders. He has been described by motoring enthusiast Jeremy Clarkson as "not just a god, but

the God. I believe the Parka Parker to be the physical manifestation of the Divine Creator.”

The Chorizo Smuggler

The Chorizo Smuggler is estimated to have smuggled 6 billion Euros of cocaine across various European borders over the last seven years. The smuggler marks his location by dropping a large chorizo sausage on his way through customs. On numerous occasions border control officers have been severely reprimanded after eating the evidence prior to it being fingerprinted.

As one officer commented, “This guy knows exactly what he’s doing. Who can resist chorizo? The only way to catch this criminal is to exclusively employ vegetarians.”

In fact, the exclusive employment of vegetarians as customs officers has now been introduced in Spain, Portugal and Luxemburg. It is suspected that the mysterious appearance (and indeed disappearance) of corns-on-the-cob at Spanish and Portuguese borders signifies that the Chorizo Smuggler has changed tack to accommodate the dietary requirements of the newly-appointed security staff.

Unlikely Culinary Successes

According to the alternative cookery magazine, *Sprout Porridge*, the top three most unlikely culinary successes are:

St Stephen's Hospital, Isle of Skye

Thanks to the extraordinary talents of its eccentric head chef, Bernard McDavey, St Stephen's is the first ever hospital to receive a Michelin Star. Food lovers from all over the world have relocated to the Isle of Skye and deliberately injured themselves in order to gain access to McDavey's menu.

In a rather extreme move, the TV personality Ainsley Harriott recently hacked off his own leg. Speaking from his bed in St. Stephen's Hospital, Harriott stated: "I'll admit this was drastic action, but the fact of the matter is, the more severe your injury, the longer you get to enjoy Mr McDavey's exquisite meat and potato pies. I fully intend to hack off my other leg as soon as I'm discharged. Ha! Ha! Ha!"

Due to the Isle of Skye's relatively tiny population, it was recently estimated that the island is now inhabited almost entirely by injured celebrity chefs.

Poppa Doms Indian Restaurant, Dorset

On its grand opening in 2004, Poppa Doms was described by the food critic Lloyd Grossman as "sickening". Local newspapers described it as "the worst Indian restaurant on the south coast of England – and possibly the world." The restaurant would undoubtedly have closed down were it not for its surprise signature dish – egg and chips.

On his return to the restaurant in 2008, Grossman wrote: "Poppa Doms has risen like a Phoenix from the flames. Today I have eaten possibly the greatest portion of egg and chips there has ever been, or ever could be."

The restaurant has been the recipient of numerous awards, purely on the basis of one dish. On presenting head chef Raj Lucky with his prize at the Asian Excellence Awards, Bollywood superstar Amita Butchen declared, "Congratulations to Poppa Doms! Who'd have thought the simple combination of egg and chips would attract culinary enthusiasts from all over the globe? However, I ought to point out that the rest of your menu is a disgrace to your Indian heritage. You ought to be utterly ashamed."

Stews

Located in a patch of trees on the outskirts of Toronto, Stews is the only restaurant in

the world to be built, owned and operated entirely by squirrels. Nicknamed after its owner, Stewie the Squirrel, the restaurant's menu boasts a wide variety of acorn-based dishes, including acorn salad (ingredients: acorns), acorn pie (ingredients: acorns) and their signature dish, Stew's Stew (ingredients: acorns). The restaurant is hugely popular, not just among the squirrel community, but with food-lovers from the human world.

TV chef Gordon Ramsay described Stews as “an utter delight. Wonderful food, wonderful atmosphere ... Well worth moving to Canada for.”

Tragically, Stews was recently forced to close after the entire restaurant was eaten by a racoon.

If I Had a Hammer (I'd Beat Myself Over the Head with it)

The world record for repeatedly beating yourself over the head with a jackhammer is held by Herbert Huckleberry of Austen, Texas. In an astounding feat of endurance, Huckleberry has been repeatedly beating himself over the head with a jackhammer since 3rd September 1993.

This includes three years spent in a secure mental health facility. Due to Health and Safety restrictions, none of the staff were permitted to prise the jackhammer from Huckleberry's grasp, and so he continued repeatedly beating himself over the head with it.

Huckleberry was discharged after being declared sane by a series of leading psychiatrists who'd shown an interest in his case. A report written by Professor George Adolphson of Harvard Medical School stated, "Despite the fact that Herbert has been repeatedly beating himself over the head with a jackhammer since 1993, he is of no danger either to himself or others. The guy's saner than I am. Seriously, he should run for Office."

Due to his unusual habit, Huckleberry was considered virtually unemployable, but in 2003, after several years of searching, he found a job behind the counter at his local Dunkin' Doughnuts, where he continues to work to this day. His manager describes him as "the brightest, most punctual and enthusiastic member of staff we've ever had. Sure, he scares the shit out of half the customers by repeatedly beating himself over the head with a jackhammer, but he brings in business too. People come from miles around to see the guy in action. It's one thing to repeatedly beat yourself over the head with a jackhammer, but to repeatedly beat yourself over the head with a jackhammer while serving coffee and doughnuts? Now that, my friend, requires real skill."

Huckleberry is not without his critics. In a recent interview in the New York Times, the actor Arnold Schwarzenegger described Huckleberry as "an asshole." Schwarzenegger went on to say, "This guy is a real-life Conan the Barbarian. But instead of using his astounding superpowers to pump iron or pursue a career in Hollywood, he's decided to waste his life by repeatedly beating himself over the head with a jackhammer. He may be in the Guinness Book of Records, but if there were a Guinness Book of Assholes, he'd be in there too."

Huckleberry shuns the limelight wherever possible and refuses to speak to journalists. He was recently forced to speak up for himself when he was doorstopped by Michael Moore in his documentary, *Herbert and Me*.

“Why?” Moore barked in Huckleberry's perplexed face. “Why do you do it, Herbert? Why?”

Herbert considered the question carefully before replying, “I have a self-deprecating sense of humour.”

Your Questions Answered!

*Q. Are whales mammals or fish?
Juan Maplin, Madrid*

A. Fish. It's pretty obvious when you think about it. The same applies to dolphins and – surprisingly – sheep.

Q. Who invented trousers?

Trousers were invented in the Middle Ages, to cover up unsightly knees. Before that, everyone wore Speedos.

*Q. Does chewing gum have any nutritional value?
Yan Tin, Hong Kong*

A. You'll be happy to hear, gum is extremely rich in vitamins. A single Wrigley's Extra is the equivalent of 11 pieces of fruit.

*Q. I've often wondered why sports commentators always manage to speak without ever interrupting one another. Please can you shed some light on this?
Samuel Johansson, Prague*

A. Sports commentators communicate silently by holding hands while on air. A commentator will squeeze their colleague's hand to signal that it's their turn to speak.

When three or four commentators are on air at any one time, they hold hands in a circle, forming what's known in the broadcasting world as "ring a ring of commentators."

*Q. Does Santa Claus exist?
Angela Juniper (aged 6), California*

A. Angela, we have good news and bad news. The good news is, Santa Claus exists. The bad news is, Santa is a highly controversial figure who uses the relaxed employment laws on the North Pole to exploit his large workforce – the majority of whom are persons of short stature. These persons of short stature are expected to work for no money, and in the weeks leading up to Christmas are forced to work 17 or 18 hour shifts.

Additionally, Santa's troop of reindeer are neglected to the extent that they are only properly fed once a year.

Santa has been described by Amnesty International as "one of the worst human and animal rights abusers in the world, reminiscent of a 17th Century slave owner."

The President of the United States is currently considering a series of air strikes on the North Pole, in order to combat what he terms "an enemy of democracy".

Q. What are the principle ingredients of the popular butter-substitute, I Can't Believe It's Not Butter?

Tariq Tim, Islamabad

A. Butter.

Q. As I'm sure you know, Alison "Big Hands" Green tragically died from a large paper cut in February. Who now holds the record for World's Biggest Hands?
Anonymous.

A. Samson Pike, a close second to "Big Hands" Green for many years, is now the holder of the prestigious record, with an astonishing hand-span of 1.5 metres. Pike admits to being rather embarrassed by his record, and often paints his giant hands blue in order to create the impression that he's wearing novelty polystyrene gloves. He says, "I hate all sports, but I try to attend as many baseball games as possible. It's the only place I really fit in."

Q. How many colours are there in a rainbow?

Susan Tun, Florida

Officially, seven (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet). However, there is one additional colour which often goes overlooked: burgundy. A spokesperson for the Burgundy Appreciation Society says, "It's easy to miss the burgundy hue as it's often eclipsed by the more prominent red and orange."

A second spokesperson for the Burgundy Appreciation Society was rather more forthright: "This is nothing less than colour prejudice. Indigo and violet are included in the official list when basically they're both purple. Burgundy is a colour in its own right. There's nothing more beautiful than a shaft of burgundy light."

*Q. Are sheep really fish? It seems a little unlikely.
Juan Maplin, Madrid*

A. Basically, a fish is anything that breathes using gills – which, of course, sheep do. The reason why sheep are primarily land-dwelling is that they are incredibly good at holding their breath. Nonetheless, sheep farmers need to “dip” their sheep regularly to avoid suffocation.

*Q. Will there be a Volume 3 of Not a Lot of People Know That?
Emlore Smith, Paris*

A. No.

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<http://davidhailwood.blogspot.co.uk/>
<http://philistinepress.com>