

The Darwin Awards: 2000s Edition

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Entertainment

Midnight Facts for Insomniacs

Podcast Transcript

(Note: transcript consists of episode outline)

I was tricked into doing this episode. To be clear, I'm not mad about it, I'm just acknowledging that this topic is the result of deception. I was bamboozled. So as you know, my research minion Llamatrauma creates the weekly poll, she consolidates all of the suggestions percolating through the various channels of the discord—hopefully mostly the topic suggestions channel—and then she sends them to me, and I choose the ones that I want to put in the poll and then the insomniacs of the discord vote on the topic. Over probably the last couple of years the insomniacs have continually demanded follow-up episodes to very popular previous topics. And I always shoot that down. Because I just feel like we have so many more years left of this show, at this point we don't need to be recycling episodes or repeating subjects so I always just say, we'll get to that eventually. Let's do something new. But I have been very busy lately. So when llama trauma asked if she

could post a poll without running the topics by me, I assumed that she was acting in good faith. However, the duplicitous minx instead used my exhaustion as an opportunity to pull a fast one. She posted a poll that was entirely composed of follow up episodes that I had previously vetoed. Including, of course, the most popular and frequent suggestion that we get, Darwin awards part two.

Props for strategy, and lesson learned. It's my own fault, but I won't forget. I will hold a grudge. There will be consequences and repercussions. I'm very petty. No, in all seriousness this is gonna be fun. Darwin awards is consistently invoked as a top five or favorite episode for almost every long time fan. It is one of MY personal favorites. So I'm happy that we're doing this for the insomniacs even though I'm not necessarily happy that we're doing this as a result of underhanded shenanigans.

Now a little bit of inside baseball: logistically, one of the reasons I was hesitant to do a part two of the Darwin awards specifically is because the Darwin awards website really doesn't do a great job of citing their sources, you have to take their word for it. And I am notoriously skeptical. so Lamatrauma—probably feeling a little bit guilty for her ruse—helped me dig up a bunch of verified stories from reputable sources of absolute idiots taking themselves out of the gene pool. And for anyone who is *not* familiar with the Darwin awards, that's

exactly what they are, these are true stories of people who violently or at least decisively terminated their lineage, taking themselves and any potential offspring out of the gene pool by accidentally sterilizing themselves or being made dead in the dumbest possible ways. As usual there are links to all of these stories in our transcripts. I like to think of the Darwin awards as an optimistic concept; we are celebrating the elevation of humanity because we have expunged it of the DNA of these particular idiots. If you remember last time we jumped around in history to explore some antiquated idiots, but this time we'll be focusing on modern morons; these stories are all set in the 2000s. And a warning before we get started, this episode is going to be offensive. On many levels. Please don't listen to this episode if you are easily offended or squeamish, we try to be somewhat sensitive and I think we're progressive guys, but this topic brings out the worst in us both. So feel free to turn it off now, WE will not be offended, but if you continue listening past this point, we're considering that informed consent. You've been warned. I'm alone of silence while you all switch to a different episode.

Ok. For those brave souls who are still with us... First idiot.

Enema

We have discussed boofing on this

show before. more than once, sadly, I don't have a good explanation for that, it feels like once is a lot and more than once is gratuitous. I'm not proud of us, just in general really, and I apologize retroactively. For us, in general.

Boofing, or butthole chugging— I don't know if people actually call it that but that's accurate— is the consumption of alcohol through the anus. It's a real thing that people do, and there can be real consequences, as we will soon learn.

Tammy Jean Warner, 42 years old, from Lake Jackson Texas, was indicted in 2005 for criminally negligent homicide because she had allegedly administered a wine enema to her husband despite the fact that she knew he was in poor health and that it could be fatal.

Mrs Warner, in her defense, denied directly administering the enema, claiming that her husband Mike was in fact an alcoholic who frequently self administered enemas because boofing — a word that strangely was not used in any of the related articles —leads to a faster and more intense high. I don't know how busy this guy's schedule is that he can't just chug wine from a box like the rest of us, he needs to inject it directly into his butthole to save time, but whatever. He's got things to do, while extremely drunk. That's so extreme, like being an alcoholic is already hard enough, you have to add yoga poses into it? Be patient, dude. It's so weird that he chose wine,

because that's not the fastest route to drunk. That's for people who want to sip and taste, Savor the bouquet. Can you do that through your butt? "My anus is detecting hints of fresh cut grass and garden hose, probably because I stuffed a garden hose up there; I'm putting alcohol in my butt I'm clearly a weird dude." This is not my only quirk.

So Mrs. Warner stuck to her story, telling the Houston Chronicle, "That's the way he went out and I'm sure that's the way he wanted to go out because he loved his enemas." We won't keep shame. Everyone has a dream. Some people want to cure cancer, some want to die in front of their spouse with a wine bottle up their ass.

According to Miss Warner, 58-year-old Mike developed his enema habit early, and it wasn't always alcohol related. "It all started back when he was a child," Mrs. Warner explained. "His mother used to give him enemas all the time, and he started to depend on them. He did coffee enemas, he did Castile soap, Ivory soap. He had enema recipes." One of the least popular cookbooks on Amazon: Mike's Enema recipes. Mixed reviews.

Now to be clear, Mrs. Warner did not deny that her husband died via enema, but simply refused to take responsibility for actually providing the lethal suppository herself. ""There's no way I could have gave my husband that enema, no way," she said. Which is just

factually untrue. But OK. Dumb people gonna speak dumb.

As I mentioned, alcohol enemas are dangerous. At the time of his death, Michael's alcohol level registered .47, more than six times the legal driving limit in Texas.

According to detective Robert Turner, "a person who *drinks* alcohol will usually pass out and stop drinking before ingesting a lethal dose.

[however] A person's body can continue to absorb alcohol through an enema after the person passes out."

in August 2007 the charges against Mrs. Warner would be dropped for lack of evidence. Even if she did supply the enema, it seems like prosecutors didn't think they had a strong enough case to convict. "Brazoria County District Attorney [Jeri Yenne](#) said, This was an unusual case in that there was a consent issue," Yenne said. "It is as if I were dying of lung cancer and you brought me cigarettes." And...yeah, it's exactly like that, and I think those things are both worth a conviction. If someone is allergic to peanut butter and you know that and you hand them a spoonful of peanut butter you are not a good person and probably should not be walking these streets. Even assisted suicide is illegal most places, so I don't know, I guess I don't think she should really go to jail for this, but it's a messed up situation and I hope she at least feels bad. But honestly having a husband who demands that you squirt alcohol up his butt on a regular basis

and doing that for however many years they were married, that would be punishment enough. She prepaid her debt to society.

Next idiot.

Snakes

January 19, 2022, Charles County Maryland. Authorities conducting a welfare check discovered 49-year-old David Riston dead in his suburban home. initially, the police reported the cause of death as undetermined, with investigators downplaying the possibility that Riston had been killed... by any of his *124 venomous serpents...* a collection that included exotic and illegal varieties such as cobras, rattlesnakes, and black mambas. Riston also owned a 14 foot Burmese python, but, while we don't know which of the snakes might have been the culprit, we can at least rule out the python, because THREE MONTHS after Riston was discovered dead in his self-constructed viper pit, authorities reversed course and announced that a snakebite *might* have been involved. Riston is now officially listed as having perished as the result of "envenomation," which I did not know was a real word and neither did my iPhone at first, because it initially spellchecked with the little red underline but then changed its mind, which I find a little weird and suspicious—like maybe Siri had to Google it—But not as suspicious as *124 snakes surrounding a dead man*. How was this a mystery? Aaaand I have lost what little faith I had in the police. And

coroners. And the ability of humans to perform basic risk assessments before choosing housepets.

Ok, Another idiot. We have so many to get to. The world just keeps producing them.

Supermanning

Are you familiar with the military term "supermanning"? It's an unofficial term for an unofficial activity; this is not best practices. There's no Supermanning protocol. If you are a crewmember on a helicopter, you might choose to take part in this particular hobby or right of passage that involves attaching yourself to a safety line, and having your fellow crewmembers lower you out of the open cargo bay at which point you would strike a Superman pose with your fist extended and your body rigid in the classic planking position. This is also known as assisted suicide.

2005, "A Corpus Christi Navy mechanic was at fault when he fell to his death from a helicopter in the Central Arabian Gulf, a Navy investigation has found. Petty Officer 2nd Class Brian K. Joplin, 32, a native Oklahoman, was conducting an unauthorized act when the Oct. 4 accident took place...he lost consciousness, slipped out of his harness and fell 125 feet." Brian was by trade an aviation machinist mate, whatever that means, and was assigned to what was at the time the largest type of helicopter in the Navy fleet, an MH-53 Sea Dragon, with a top

speed of 200 mph.

"Supermanning may have been in practice for as long as 10 years, according to the Norfolk-based admiral who oversaw an investigation into the crewman's death. Senior officers, however, said they'd never heard of the stunt."

And before I turned 21, I had never heard of a fake ID. Had no idea. People would actually do that? The hell you say. This is such a bullshit. "Young male soldiers taking part in testosterone-fueled idiocy? Doesn't ring a bell."

I love that the next line of the article says,

"Rear Adm. Denby H. Starling II, commander of the Atlantic Fleet Naval Air Force, said he has disciplined eight other crew members from the Corpus Christi squadron for performing a similar stunt or failing to report the activity to superiors." Never happens!

Some details

"Joplin was wearing a 10-foot-long safety belt and attached it to an eyelet on the helicopter's stern ramp, according to the investigation report, obtained Thursday by The Virginian-Pilot through a Freedom of Information Act request.

In reconstructing the events, investigators said Joplin moved to the back of the helicopter and lowered himself by his gunner's belt over the edge of the ramp, grabbing a tie-down

ring with his left hand and a rib of the airframe with his right hand.

“His legs were flying out behind him horizontally” in “the Superman maneuver,” the report said.

Notice I mentioned assisted suicide, this wasn't a solo activity. Other crewmembers were helpfully recording the event, because it's not enough just to do something magnificently idiotic, you also need to document your stupidity on the gram. What if people don't believe that you're really that stupid?

“One enlisted crew member took photos of Joplin using her cell phone camera. She and another crew member apparently saw Joplin lose his grip and tried to pull him back into the aircraft but couldn't because the rushing air was pulling on him.

“Joplin's gunner's belt, which was tight around his waist, apparently rose up his body, compressing his chest. Investigators believe that caused him to lose consciousness. With his hands stretched above his head, the belt slipped past his shoulders, knocked off his helmet and came free, causing Joplin to fall. ” the more details we give the less funny it gets, because it just becomes more real. I remember this from last time. So let's just say he fell Wiley coyote style, holding up a sign that said oops, there was no blood, he didn't immediately compress into jelly upon impact. I'm trying to be helpful.

“Between 1994 and 1995, the practice

of stunts in flight was prevalent," investigators said. "Other maneuvers [included] the 'slide for life,' where they would swing out on a safety line and 'slingshot' back into the aircraft." How bored are you on a fucking helicopter? That seems exciting. I guess anything gets old, I get bored at work, but I don't tie rubber bands to my belt and leap off the fucking roof.

"The report recommended, among other things, an official prohibition against performing unsafe maneuvers in the back of naval aircraft."

Which means right now, there isn't one. And honestly, again, I guess I'm kind of OK with that. Because if there's anyone who actually needs a written rule about not hanging out of a helicopter at 200 miles an hour, that person is an excellent candidate for the Darwin awards, and will contribute to years of episodes to come.

Miracle

How familiar are you with the Sufi religion, or Sufism? It's a subset of Islam with mystical overtones, kind of how Kabbalah is to Judaism. Within the religion, A Pir (p-i-r) is a spiritual leader kind of similar to a medicine man, from what I gather. Various supernatural and mystical powers are attributed to these Pirs; many adherents to the religion believe that these holy men are capable of miracles...probably because Pirs keep

insisting that they're capable of miracles. One such self-proclaimed miracle worker was Muhammad Sabir, of Mubarakabad Pakistan. In September 2014 Muhammad offered proof of his abilities, claiming that he could bring the dead to life. Obviously he didn't want to demonstrate on some musty old corpse and end up with a pet cemetery situation, we don't need zombies up in here, so he solicited live volunteers. His one condition was that the victim—I mean participant—must have a wife and children. Ouch. 40-year-old father of six Muhammad Niaz stepped forward and agreed to be miracled.

"Niaz was placed on a table in a square and his hands and legs were bound... Sabir then sliced his throat as people looked on.

Meanwhile, an anonymous caller informed the police about 'the miracle.' [but by the time] police reached Niaz [he] had died.

Witnesses said Sabir uttered some words to bring him back to life. They said when he realized his 'miracle' had not worked, he tried to flee."

The Pir was swiftly detained by onlookers, but not everyone was upset by the outcome.

"Samina, sister of the victim, told *The Express Tribune*, that her brother had sacrificed himself for the spiritual leader.

"Why should I mourn when I know that my brother is in heaven?" she said. "He will be rewarded for his services for the spiritual leader in afterlife.

She said her brother had volunteered for the miracle and that the pir should not have been arrested."

I think we found our next candidate, I sincerely hope she volunteers for a similar miracle.

Next jackass

Helmet law

In 2011 a New York man died from a traumatic brain injury as a result of falling off his motorcycle. It was a tragic incident witnessed by many of the 550 fellow riders who had also gathered that day...to protest the state's mandatory helmet law. Actions, meet consequences. I'm sure all of the witnesses were sad and horrified but I guarantee they also immediately thought to themselves, "Well, this backfired." it'd be like if a rally against gun regulations was interrupted by a mass shooting. Like you know how they say any publicity is good publicity? We have disproved another stupid aphorism. So, yeah. Awkward. The accident was the result of a scary phenomenon most motorcycle riders have experienced to some degree: 55-year-old Philip Contos lost control of his 1983 Harley Davidson when he suddenly hit the brakes and the bike fishtailed, sending him careening over the handlebars. Phillip's helmetless

skull struck the pavement with what would later be described as exactly sufficient force to crush a helmetless skull. "The medical expert we discussed the case with who pronounced him deceased stated that he would've no doubt survived the accident had he been wearing a helmet," state Trooper Jack Keller told [ABC News 9 in Syracuse](#)." Throwing a little shade at a dead guy, kind of harsh but justified.

Philip and his fellow anti-skull-protection crusaders had been participating in the 11th annual protest ride sponsored by a group called abate: American bikers aimed toward education. Bikers toward education, kind of a weird name for a group that specifically fights against efforts to protect the organ required to receive an education. There are a few different elements that are mandatory for education, one vital component: an intact brain. It's surprisingly challenging to educate a brain that has been distributed across multiple freeway lanes.

To be fair, at least Philip died doing what he loved: fighting for the right of idiots everywhere to die doing what they love. That is commitment. He didn't just *talk* about being a reckless moron, he recklessly moroned all over the pavement in front of other reckless morons, truly setting an example that many more of them I'm sure followed in subsequent months and years.

Surprisingly high fatality rate among that group. No idea why.

Angry wheelchair man:

August 25, 2010, South Korea. Security camera footage...you can find it online. A woman boards an elevator and the doors close behind her...just as a man in a wheelchair reaches the entrance and crashes into the closed metal doors. Pretty fucked up. And kind of funny, but mostly fucked up. The woman doesn't even try to hit the "open door" button, honestly it seems kinda rude, and the man clearly agrees. He is pissed. How do I know this? Because having already banged into the doors, he backs up...and jets forward, slamming full force into the metal doors yet again. This time the doors, which appear to be mirrorlike metal, actually start to buckle forward. He breaks the elevator doors. At this point it's clear that the elevator is made of some kind of compressed tinfoil. Yet The man backs up again, And surges forward... again. This time, the metal doors crumple and give way, and the man and wheelchair topple forward and disappear out of sight.

Now look, I am totally the kind of guy who punches a cabinet when it has the audacity to bang me in the head because it's dark and I'm stupid. And I get it, must be incredibly frustrating to live life as a disabled person in a wheelchair. But when you see what's about to happen, when you can clearly anticipate the consequences of your actions, there's really no excuse. This was either suicide or the wheelchair equivalent of road rage. It's like the guy was so mad at that woman that he

went full Hulk, and decided he was going to dive down the chute after her. I think he was fully prepared to Die a Happy Man as long as his hands were around her neck. Here's the amazing thing: the fall to his death involved a total of 19 feet. Again, I feel like dying in this case was a choice, it's like he gave up the will to live and decided to land directly on his head. Second to last, I believe.

Text Spam

No one likes spam text messages. They're extremely annoying, I hate them, i'm getting dozens every day now that an election is coming, it's Infuriating, I think I'm going to vote against some of these people just because they sent me messages, like even if I 100% agree with their politics. I will vote for Baphomet if I can verify that he hasn't sent me any text spam. but there is always an exception that proves a rule. Throughout the history of text message spam, there is a total of one spamming text message of which I heartily approve. In 2011, a terrorist in Moscow was killed prematurely when a spam text message from her cell phone company that read "Happy New Year" triggered her explosive vest before the wannabe suicide bomber could reach the crowded Moscow Square that had been her target and destination. She was killed instantly; no one else was harmed. Kind of a weird version of a Darwin award because she was *planning* to die, but still managed to do it in a deliciously stupid way that

removed her from the gene pool without affecting anyone not-awful.
Final moron

Mattress

So Duncan, as you and I both know, a good friend will always help you move. A very good friend will help you move a *mattress*, because those are challenging. They're heavy yet saggy, very awkward to lift and maneuver. An *extremely* good friend will help you move a mattress by anchoring it to the roof of your car using nothing but their own body weight. A very good, very stupid friend. Like, clinically stupid. Some friendships are not meant to last, because some people are not mentally equipped for longevity. 20-year-old Sidney Zelaya Gonzalez was such a friend. incredibly dedicated, you have to give her that ...I almost admire the loyalty and dedication it takes to potentially suicide yourself for your friend's sleeping comfort.

September 2016, Prince William County Virginia. Around 6AM (and that is your first red flag, no one reasonable human is voluntarily moving furniture at the ass-crack of dawn) Gonzalez was assisting an unidentified friend with a mattress relocation; the two women had been trying to figure out how to secure the large and unwieldy object to the roof of a Chevrolet cargo van. (A vehicle btw which sounds like it features approximately the right amount of volume to accommodate an object the size of, I don't know, a mattress.) at least a folded or rolled-up

one. But maybe not, I'm guessing that by the time they got around to the mattress the van was full of other, smaller items that probably could have easily been secured to the roof of a van, and were *not* shaped like the wing of a passenger plane, with identical lift. Anyway, the solution the two women devised was to anchor down this giant rectangular wind-catching memory-foam kite using the heavy, powerful gravitational force of a tiny Hispanic woman. I actually don't know if she was tiny or Hispanic, I'm stereotyping, but there was no picture and I'm running with it based on the available evidence.

"The investigation revealed that the victim was riding on a mattress which was placed unsecured on top of a 2006 Chevrolet Express Van," a Prince William County Police spokesperson said." All I can think of right now is teen Wolf. In my mind this is so cool for like 30 seconds, she is 100% surfing that mattress, before it begins to elevate. "While the van was traveling ... the victim separated from the top of the van..." that's diplomatic. *Took flight* might be a better, more accurate description. Levitated to death. Went surprisingly airborne with unsurprising consequences. "Police believe neither speed nor alcohol played a part in the woman's death..." That's kind of worse, honestly. If I die in an incredibly stupid way, please please convince the police that I was intoxicated. I would much rather be remembered as a junkie than someone stupid enough to ride a

mattress to my doom.

And that's all I've got. We don't even have any new patrons or reviews, which is not great, I'm hoping that changes.

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