

The Odd, Strange, and Curious From American Police Beat

Shamu + LSD = Bad

Written by Jose Torres

If you want to check out the wondrous marine experience that is Sea World in Orlando, Florida, you should definitely wear a shirt, pay for a ticket, and perhaps most importantly—don't take lots of acid.

That advice was lost on a sweaty, shirtless man out of his mind on LSD at the popular tourist attraction. The hallucinating and shirtless offender was shot with a stun gun several times after trying to enter Sea World without paying, according to an Orange County Sheriff's report.

God knows what **Nicholas Casanova**, 23, of Miami, was "seeing" as he waved a 30-inch-wide recycling bin cover as a shield and repeatedly shouted "never, never!" during a scuffle with deputies.

Minutes before the melee, **Deputy Christopher Barrette**, a uniformed, off-duty deputy, spotted Casanova trying to get into the park without paying. He was shirtless, which is a violation of park rules. Worse than that, he was sweating like a crook at a cop convention.

When Deputy Barrette approached Casanova, the suspect simply left the scene.

But he was back after about five minutes and now seemed extremely excited. Barrette approached Casanova, who ignored him completely.

At that point, the deputy touched Mr. Casanova on his right arm. Casanova broke away from the officer's grip, and the shirtless man and the deputy began to struggle. At some point Barrette got the suspect on the ground, where the deputy was assisted by a security guard that sat on the suspect's legs.

But the excited and delirious Casanova broke free again and Barrette, concerned for the safety of park guests, shocked him with a stun gun. But it was to no avail.

"Never," Casanova said as electricity coursed through his acid-laden body and brain. So Barrette shocked him again. But the deputy and Casanova continued their dance.

"Never," Casanova repeated. Barrette fired once more. This time the desired result was forthcoming. "OK, OK," Casanova replied.

As Deputy Barrette tried to handcuff him, Casanova continued to struggle. Barrette received a minor cut from his handcuffs.

The struggle continued as Casanova made his way over to a bench near a recycling can with Barrette continuing to shock him. Casanova then grabbed the can's lid and swung it at the deputy. Afterward, he tried to jump into a nearby water feature, but got caught up in a rope surrounding the exhibit.

Deputies used the rope to restrain Casanova. He was taken to Dr. P. Philips Hospital, where tests showed he had LSD in his bloodstream.

Casanova faces counts of battery on a law-enforcement officer, battery on a security officer, resisting an officer with violence, disorderly conduct and aggravated assault on a law-enforcement officer.

Please Don't Molest the Dog

Written by Jose Torres

After decades of speculation we now know for sure: McGruff the Crime Dog can take a punch.

Police in Washington say a Metro bus driver thought it would be funny to rough up McGruff—the popular anti-crime mascot. The bus driver, **Shawn Brim**, climbed off his bus, adjusted the side view mirrors and then slugged **Officer Tyrone Hardy**. Hardy was dressed in the crime dog costume and was handing out fliers to kids.

Police say after punching McGruff, Brim calmly got back on the bus and drove away. He didn't get far. The bus was quickly pulled over.

Officer Hardy had a swollen cheek but was more concerned the attack would upset the kids. He also wanted folks to know you can't really attack or defend very well wearing an 80-pound dog outfit. Brim has been charged with simple assault.

Might As Well Have Tried To Rob the Precinct

Written by Jose Torres

There are dumb crooks, and then there are the mind-boggingly stupid ones that should be in a hall of fame somewhere. And a guy named **Jerome Blanchett** may just have become the **Ty Cobb** of criminal idiots.

Jerome took a loaded handgun into the Holiday Inn in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania with the intention of robbing a victim at gunpoint. Nothing seemed out of the ordinary to Mr. Blanchett as he passed dozens of unmarked police cars in the parking lot.

A sign at the hotel's entrance welcoming 300 officers to the Pennsylvania Narcotic Officers' Association conference didn't phase the would-be armed robber one bit. He either can't read or pays remarkably little attention to detail. Despite the poor choice of crime scene and potential "marks," the 19-year-old Harrisburg man went into the men's room and waited to rob the next person who walked through the door, according to local authorities.

That person happened to be **John Comparetto**, a retired New York City Police Department lieutenant. "He chose to rob a cop in a place where there were 300 cops," Comparetto told reporters from the *Patriot News* afterward. "He's not very bright."

The retired NYPD lieutenant said he walked into the bathroom at about 8:15 AM and noticed a man in baggy blue jeans and a dark coat washing his hands. Comparetto went into the stall and when he walked out three minutes later, he was staring down the business end of a .40-caliber semi-automatic handgun.

Blanchett demanded money, and Comparetto calmly handed over \$138, police said. Blanchett took Comparetto's cell phone, told him to drop his pants and threatened to kill him if he tried to follow him. Comparetto didn't indicate what he was thinking at that moment but it must have been something like, "Man, this is gonna be good."

Seconds after Blanchett left, Comparetto pulled a handgun from his ankle holster and went after his attacker. It was only moments before he and other officers took Blanchett into custody as he was trying to get into a taxi. "He's yelling, 'Don't shoot me,' and I said, 'If you move your hands, I'll kill you,'" Comparetto said. "He was almost crying."

Blanchett, who is awaiting trial on four previous robbery charges, was arraigned on new robbery charges along with charges of making terrorist threats, reckless endangerment, simple assault, carrying a firearm without a license and illegally possessing a firearm.

"You're a danger to have on the street," Judge Smith told Blanchett before setting bail at \$1 million. When a reporter asked Blanchett for comment as he was led out of court, he said, "I'm smooth." When asked if he could explain that, Blanchett smirked and said nothing.

Comparetto, 56, retired from the NYPD in 1999. He was the chief of the Passaic County Sheriff's Department in northern New Jersey before retiring from that job in August 2008. He now works part time for the Rockland County, N.Y., Sheriff's Department, about 30 miles north of New York City.

He put all that experience to work in a few seconds when he made the risk versus reward calculations in terms of taking the hood down solo. "I knew I could take away the gun, but I hurt my back a few years ago," Comparetto said.

"I'm too old to be fighting people. So I made an assessment that I would cooperate and worry about this afterward." ●

Overheard...

The comments were taken off actual police car videos around the country:

"You know, stop lights don't come any redder than the one you just went through."

"Relax, the handcuffs are tight because they're new. They'll stretch after you wear them a while."

"If you take your hands off the car, I'll make your birth certificate a worthless document."

"If you run, you'll only go to jail tired."

"Can you run faster than 1200 feet per second? Because that's the speed of the bullet that'll be chasing you."

"You don't know how fast you were going? I guess that means I can write anything I want to on the ticket, huh?"

"Yes, sir, you can talk to the shift supervisor, but I don't think it will help. Oh, did I mention that I'm the shift supervisor?"

"Warning! You want a warning? O.K., I'm warning you not to do that again or I'll give you another ticket."

"The answer to this last question will determine whether you are drunk or not. Was Mickey Mouse a cat or a dog?"

"Fair? You want me to be fair? Listen, fair is a place where you go to ride on rides, eat cotton candy and corn dogs and step in monkey poop."

"Yeah, we have a quota. Two more tickets and my wife gets a toaster oven."

"In God we trust, all others we run through NCIC."

"How big were those 'two beers' you say you had?"

"No sir, we don't have quotas anymore. We used to, but now we're allowed to write as many tickets as we can."

"I'm glad to hear that the Chief (of Police) is a personal friend of yours. So you know someone who can post your bail."

AND THE WINNER IS...

"You didn't think we give pretty women tickets? You're right, we don't. Sign here."

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