

The Latest In Stupid



CRIME FEATURED GNEWS

NEWS POLITICS

By Alexander Baron

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Since he became leader of the Labour Party, Jeremy Corbyn has been subjected to some incredibly facile abuse. In the House of Commons, eager to win support for the UK joining in the bombing of Islamic State, the Prime Minister accused those who were against the bombing of being terrorist sympathisers. Yes, a man who calls for bombing, which may and almost certainly will kill innocent civilians, accuses those who don't want to bomb them of siding with terrorists. Seriously? Although this jibe was not directed personally at Corbyn, he was included in those so accused.

Corbyn found himself in a bind with the front bench of his party in favour of bombing; he decided in the end to allow a free vote, and this resulted in the front page headline *Corbyn's 'free vote' puts UK on brink of war* in the London commuter freesheet *Metro* on Tuesday. Damned either way.

Politicians don't have a monopoly on stupidity; criminals can be even worse, like the burglar in California who got stuck in a chimney. Would you believe the householder returned home, lit a fire, and...? The burglar was **pronounced dead** from burns and smoke inhalation at the scene. He was later identified as a teenager named Cody Caldwell.

Some criminals never learn. In December last year, another burglar, Alan Mellor, was given a 32 month sentence at Stoke-on-Trent Crown Court for breaking into two houses. Mellor's defence, such as it was, was that he is an alcoholic, something about which there appears to be no dispute. In spite of his committing the second burglary while he was on bail, someone thought he was fit to be released in September this year. And two months later he was up to his old tricks, only this time he burgled a policeman's house!

On November 28, **it was reported** that Mellor had been given 18 months at the same Crown Court by the same judge. In view of both the circumstances and his antecedents, this was an incredibly lenient sentence. Mellor was arrested by the householder, who was home at the time. A struggle ensued, and PC Chawner-Bowers broke a finger. Mellor is still only 26 years old, but is already well on his way to serving a life sentence on the installment plan. His next sentence will almost certainly be considerably longer.

It isn't only criminals who can be stupid, so can police officers. While they are never shy about poking their noses into other people's affairs, the police can be extremely shy when a camera is pointed in their direction, whatever they are doing. Now, one website has **compiled a list** of the stupid things (American) police say to stop people recording them. They include:

"You don't have my permission to take my photograph here on the street" – obviously they need to learn something about the public space; "The crime scene is as big as I want it to be" – from here to the Moon? And "If you keep recording, we will take your camera as evidence!"

The American police are fond of this sort of thing, and have even stooped to both **arresting people** and seizing their cameras/phones for no good reason. Fortunately, the courts are beginning to take a dim view of such practices, and now there are so many people doing it, they can't arrest everyone.

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