

# Crap Arrests of the Week

SchNEWS

1997-2008

(Crap school suspension of the week) For having a beard and a gun... A 17-year-old Muslim boy was suspended from Slough Grammar School recently after the headmaster Margaret Lenton saw a photo of him on the internet posing with his beard, headgear and a gun... Despite it er, actually being a paintballing gun – taken when he was, er, paintballing – he was suspended from school and quizzed by police. Although the police chose not to bang him up for no reason what-so-ever (which they could have), it took a campaign and petition by other pupils on Facebook before he was reinstated back at school.

#651, 17 October 2008

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For farting (and failing a breath test)... One drunk driving American in West Virginia got his charges bumped up this week by letting rip on Police officers when they tried to fingerprint him. "The gas was very odorous and created contact of an insulting or provoking nature with Patrolman Parsons," claim the cops and have done him not just for drink driving, but assaulting a police officer and obstruction. They were obviously having a bad air day.

#648, 26 September 2008

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For trying to avoid scurvy... Just one of many stop'n'searches at the entrance of the Camp For Climate Action last week at Kingsnorth, Kent: Protester Matt Wootton was swiftly in trouble after Police found a few 'Gary Abletts' on him during a search, and nicked him for 'alleged possession of a controlled substance'. He was held in a cell in Gillingham for over five hours, fingerprinted, DNA swabbed, put in a windowless cell and denied his legal right to a phone call before police got around the testing the pills...which turned out to be Vitamin C, just as Matt had been claiming all along.

#642, 15 August 2008

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For being an artist... Paul in Belfast was recently stopped on the way to a mates house at 2am by bored coppers. Claiming that he 'looked a bit suspicious', they searched Paul and found a bag of paint markers. They then arrested him for 'the possession of articles for the use in criminal damage with possible intent' - eg despite absolutely no evidence they thought he was a graffiti artist. He was held for five hours, after which they let him go saying that they'd 'run out of interview tapes'.

#639, 11 July 2008

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For writing a word in the sand... Last Sunday at a demo outside Sequani, the animal testing lab in Ledbury (See SchNEWS 634), one protester at the peaceful demo wrote the word 'scum' in the sand outside the premises, then rubbed it out. But amazingly on Wednesday, police visited her house and arrested her for criminal damage for violation of the sand! They didn't have a warrant, so were made to wait while she had a shower, and then took her in. She is now out on bail, but protesters say that the motive to arrest her was to get information about some of the other protesters - but fortunately the arrestee is unlikely to have gone against the grain(s)...

For more about the demo see <http://www.sequani.wordpress.com>  
#638, 4 July 2008

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For recycling... One Wrexham woman found herself on the wrong side of the law when she helped herself to four plastic garden chairs from a privatised council tip. The Waste Recycling Group - instead of lending her a hand for helping push towards their target of 65% of all rubbish being recycled - phoned the cops. One house search later and the chairs have been returned to their rightful place: a landfill, and the would-be Womble is waiting to see if the CPS is going charge her under the Theft Act.

#635, 13 June 2008

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One artistic beach bum got busted by Spanish cops - for building a life-sized sand-dragon on the beach. In Nerja, on the Costa del Sol, dragon-slaying costa cops decided that his scaly masterpiece was just too large and not content with waiting for the tide to wash it away - or just kicking the sand in his face - decided to nick the sculptor for causing a nuisance. Exactly who found the dragon a nuisance was never specified but it's creator was held in the cells for six hours.

#629, 18 April 2008

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Cops at the May 2007 Bristol Critical Mass nicked a cyclist who stopped a driver from driving away after knocking a cyclist off his bike, rather than arrest the road rage driver. This week the case was thrown out of court by the judge who accepted that the police evidence was at best 'severely flawed' and at worst, fabricated.

#620, 15 February 2008

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For having a weak throw... Jon Leighton, a supporter of Giles Chamberlain - living in Central Oxford up a tree threatened by a shopping centre expansion - was caught

out trying to chuck a bottle of water up to him one night. His throw was sadly off target and police swiftly arrested the eighteen-year-old - for littering! Obviously a dangerous menace, he was handcuffed, bundled roughly off to the station, fingerprinted and DNA sampled... and let go without charge in the morning.

#617, 25 January 2008

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For watching a demonstration... Living in Parliament Square as he does, Brian Haw has little say on who pops round to hang out in his back garden, so to speak. Last weekend SOCPA-fighting activists and civil liberty campaigners took part in a national day of action... ending up with a demo outside Parliament. [SOCPA - The Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005.] As an interested onlooker, Brian decided to video the event. Bully boy cops were obviously upset at this clear breach of their freedom to illegally repress and attack protesters without fear of being filmed in the act. One officer bashed Brian's camera so hard it gashed open his cheek. Brian barely had time to cry out an expletive in anguish before he was arrested for threatening words and/or behaviour, and dragged him off to a police van where he was assaulted by a number of London's finest, getting punched in the testicles for good measure. After being later bailed for a month on unspecified charges, Brian said "I wouldn't call it an arrest, I'd call it a kidnap." Currently nursing his wounds, cut, bruises and a swollen wrist injury, he plans to make an official complaint against his treatment. He might not be the only one - his friend, Steve Jago, who attempted to intervene was also arrested and assaulted. The heavy-handed approach was also extended to the demonstrators as a 61-year-old women was thrown roughly to the ground and an elderly man knocked off his bicycle.

more info at <http://www.parliament-square.org.uk> and <http://www.repeal-socpa.info>

#616, 18 January 2008

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Nicolas Gaubert of Leeds copped a shock when trigger-happy armed police tasered him for being asleep on the bus. Although the incident happened in 2005 (just a week before the shooting of Jean Charles de Menezes), Nic didn't speak out 'til now as he was naively expecting officers to be charged over the incident (no pun intended). On his way to meet friends, Nic slipped into a diabetic coma and arrived at the bus depot still clutching his rucksack. Despite the fact that he was alone on an empty bus, terror police - who later attempted to justify their response by saying that they thought he 'looked Egyptian' - hit him twice with 50,000 volts for failing to respond to their questions. Two years later, with Nic still suffering post-trauma-stress from the shooting, the Independent Police Cover-up Committee is still considering any disciplinary action

but has predictably already decided that no officer has any criminal or health and safety case to answer. Well, any other findings really would have been shocking...

#612, 23 November 2007

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For letting it all hang out... Bestival (aka Arrestival), held on the Isle of Wight last weekend, is a commercial theme-park masquerading as a hippy festival. You are welcomed by police dogs as you walk through the gates - all under the banner of 'Increase The Peace'. One group of festie-goers came out of the sauna in the nude and walked around the site for a bit - hardly unheard-of behaviour at a festival - but came up against some aggressive boys from Showsec Security, who demanded they cover up because 'children might see it'. After going back to the sauna to get their clothes, one reveller told the uptight goons, "c'mon on it's just a body" - which led to him being chased across the festival site by a load of security, after which he was assaulted, handed to police and then arrested for indecent exposure (meanwhile real criminals were fleecing punters' tents). Once off site, he was given a fixed penalty notice for "causing harassment, alarm and distress". If he doesn't pay he'll end up in court - but police will have to find someone 'distressed' by the display of genitalia to make it stand up in court...

#603, 24 September 2007

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For deserting on a bike... It was a case of getting seriously unjust desserts for one Plane Stupid activist last week. On Sunday 8th, cycling along a cycle path close to Heathrow in West London, she was randomly stopped and searched by police for no apparent reason. Although not carrying anything apart from a recipe for avocado ice cream and a cycle map, she was arrested under Section 58 of the Terrorism Act 2000 and held, along with another campaigner, for over thirty hours before being bailed on charges of conspiracy to cause a public nuisance. Must have been the threat of green ice cream.

#598, 27 July 2007

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For shoddy gardening... Eager cops in Utah, US, arrested and assaulted a woman for failing to water her lawn enough! Appearance being all, there are strict city laws forbidding unsightly gardens - and some patches of bare earth were sufficient motive for two officers to come down heavily on Betty Perry, aged 70. Trouble flared when Betty refused to give her name and as the cops went to arrest her she copped a faceful of handcuff. The cops insist she fell (that old chestnut) but Betty is adamant they mowed her down. While Betty had to attend hospital for cuts and bruises to her face,

cops admitted no culpability of course. But at least the arresting officer will be going to seed - no, not on gardening leave but reassigned to administrative duties. We hope he's now for-lawn...

#596, 13 June 2007

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For feeding the hungry... Eric Montanez was nicked on 4th April for the heinous crime of giving homeless people free vegan food. He became the first person to be arrested in the US under new laws that criminalise compassionate citizens. The 'Food not Bombs' collective have been busy been distributing food to the homeless of major US cities for almost 20 years. Charged with 'serving 30 unidentified persons food from a large pot utilizing a ladle', according to the arrest affidavit (the significance of the ladle can only be guessed), whether or not Eric gets his just desserts at trial remains to be seen...

#592, 15 June 2007

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For decorating gum... One artistic Londoner has been livening up the streets of capital recently by and painting pieces of discarded chewing gum. 80% of the multi-billion dollar sales in the UK end up on the pavement of course. And if you're one of the 28 million Brits hoodwinked into thinking there's any health or social benefits from chewing a worthless by-product of the petro-chemical business doused in sugar and aspartame... wise up! Despite having just finished a piece at the request of his local Fortis Green Safer Neighbourhood police team, the budding Michelangelo was just settling down to recreate St Paul's Cathedral on another unsightly bit of grey sludge when he attracted the attention of two City of London cops. After initially declining their invitation to move on, he was summarily nicked, dragged off to the cells for seven hours and was injured trying to refuse a DNA sample. It remains to be seen whether he will be able to chew up Police in the courts if they try to do him for criminal damage (what was he damaging? A piece of previous criminal damage. Clever you see!) or whether all the media publicity will eventually lead to him getting doubleminted...

#590, 1 June 2007

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For a snack attack... It was hard cheese (flavour) for a grandmother from Crawley, fined £80 by jobsworth council wardens after kicking a couple of Quaver crisps into the gutter, spilled by her twenty-month-old granddaughter. Salty stasi pounced on Barbara Judd at a bus stop after spotting the crisp-wielding toddler with her blatantly incite the granny to flout the controversial clause in the SOCPA laws which forbids kicking more than one potato or corn snack at a time. As it was a wet day the crispy threat had

already started to disintegrate by the time the Fried Food arm of Special Branch turned up (AKA the Smokey Bacon). "I couldn't believe it," said Barbara, who's refused to pay the fine, "They wrote down 'kicking two crisps' as the offence." When it came to the crunch a Crawley Borough Council spokeswoman said: "We've cancelled the fine and apologised to the family for being over-zealous."

#588, 18 May 2007

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For trying to uphold the law... The fox hunting season is back on, despite being illegal since the Hunting Act 2004. Last week on the Heaselands Estate in West Sussex, the Crawley & Horsham Hunt were illegally digging out a badger sett which the desperate fox had run into. After hunt monitors called the police, they in turn called the RSPCA due to the presence of badgers, but when the hunt monitors approached to enquire why the Hunt weren't all being nicked - they themselves were nicked - to 'Prevent a Breach of the Peace'. They were released two hours later without charge, while the fox was eventually dug out and shot.

For more info see The Hunt Saboteurs Association homepage

#569, 17 November 2006

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For wearing fancy dress at Halloween... One Halloween reveller got nicked in the States for dressing up as Osama Bin Laden and holding a toy gun. This was way too scary for cops who charged him with "Criminal Threatening". It turns out that the arrested man was Tom Connolly, the lawyer who revealed President Bush's drunk driving arrest in 2000, and he said he intends to plead not guilty.

#567, 3 November 2006

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For Command and Conker... Sussex cops are cracking down on conkers. Seven year old Kiya Jayne and her 11 year old friend Charlie Richardson were stopped, searched and deprived of their conkers this week - and handed the relevant paperwork to prove it! They'd been falsely told that the conkers were on private property, so hands off or else! A spokesperson for Sussex police confirmed that they had seized a large bag of conkers (estimated street value, two marbles and a copy of the Beano) and came out with this little chestnut - "Forms are a necessary form of bureaucracy to ensure parents are aware we have spoken to their children."

#563, 6 October 2006

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For wanting take-away food... Two foraging dumpster divers\* were recently sentenced to 6 months imprisonment and were hit with a fine for 'stealing' food that had been thrown out by a fruit shop in Colorado, US. This in a country that wastes an estimated 43 million kilos of food every year!

#561, 22 September 2006

*\* Dumpster diving (or 'skipping' as it's known in the UK), is the act of reclaiming edible food that has been thrown away by shops.*

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For failing to trespass. A peace activist got herself nicked this week, outside the premises of Carmel Agrexco. How? She was dragged on to the factory forecourt by an irate copper and then nicked for aggravated trespass!

#558, 1 September 2006

*[Carmel-Agrexco is 50% owned by the state of Israel, and imports produce from illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank. At the same time Israeli forces have blocked Palestinian exports on grounds of 'security'.]*

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Chiara Sacchetti, one of the Il Silvestre activists, who was under house arrest following their arrest on the 4th of May 2006 accused of conspiring to use explosives to destroy electricity pylons transporting nuclear energy, has been remanded into custody. The reason she was remanded was because she breached the terms of her house arrest which said she wasn't allowed to meet with any of her co-defendants. Some of her co-defendants live in the same house as her and therefore meeting them (as they were all under house arrest) was inevitable!

Earth Liberation Prisoners Support Network

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For dressing like a Zombie... Six mates from Minneapolis who were out and about on a 'Zombie dance party night' were, according to a police spokesman, "arrested for behaviour that was suspicious and disturbing." Cops appear to have mistakenly thought that their rucksacks, which contained portable radios, were in fact bombs and the group were potentially toting 'simulated weapons of mass destruction'. Having been let off with the minor charge of 'disorderly conduct' this was "not a case of police overreacting," said Inspector Janee Harteau, "why would you have those bags if not to intimidate people?"

#553, 28 July 2006

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For bear faced cheek - An animal rights activist was arrested in Singapore last week after dressing as a bear during a visit by the Queen. Jodi Ruckley was protesting the use of bear pelts for the ceremonial hats worn by the Queen's Guards. The thought of the Queen's visit being disrupted was obviously too grizzly for the Singapore cops and Jodi was arrested after only five minutes outside the presidential palace.

#537, 24 March 2006

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For walking in your own front door - A Brighton squatter was arrested this week under the innovative 'being in an enclosed space' legislation. Brighton plod were up to their usual tricks of forcibly entering squats to arrest all the inhabitants for abstracting electricity. When the squatter returned to find his front door smashed in he was arrested 'for being in an enclosed space' and removed from the premises. When outside he was de-arrested and forced to watch as the premises were boarded up. Another man who was arrested for nicking leccy was released five hours later without charge. In a burst of Minority Report style crime busting his tools were confiscated on the grounds that they might be used to commit criminal damage at some unspecified point in the future. Eagle eyed - Inspector Nev Kemp told Source Magazine "We have found squats to be a source of illegality in the past- sometimes we find a stolen bicycle there".

#531, 10 February 2006

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For heckling, by heck..... No sooner had the words "Hooray for the lesser of two evils" left their mouths when 3 hecklers at a John Kerry rally in California felt the long arm of the law on their shoulders. Grabbed by local secret service men, the 3 young men are being charged with trespassing, resisting arrest and assaulting a cop. All this for just shouting a slogan. Imagine if they had thrown a pie at the fucker. The case has been going on for well over a year now (with one guy on remand for the entire time) but a hearing to have the charges dropped is due this week.

#526, 6 January 2006

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For not being a policeman: During an illegal squat eviction in Brighton this week, Sussex police arrested one squatter for possession of a Metropolitan police badge. Despite his heroically scruffy appearance, he was charged under section 90 of the Police Act 1996 "Impersonating a Police Officer" namely "Any person who, not being a member of a police force or special constable, has in his possession any article of police uniform shall, unless he proves that he obtained possession of that article lawfully and has possession of it for a lawful purpose will be guilty of an offence". Clearly fearing

that Brighton's citizens might be confused over why the police were sporting mohicans these days- they nicked him and boarded up the squat.

#525, 16 December 2005

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For telling the truth - "During a trip on vacation, a mechanical problem with an airplane and subsequent booking errors left me stranded in Calgary, Alberta. They had miscalculated the number of seats available on the flight and forgot about me with all the juggling of passengers. I replied that I had been promised a seat and that Westjet had lied to me. I went over and sat down near the manager to try and negotiate first getting onto the plane and second finding the next available flight. Two police men from Calgary Police department then stood in front of me. I asked them to help me out and was persuaded to stand up and they would get me home. Then, to my surprise, I was tacked back into my chair, put into an arm lock and then handcuffed. I was charged with disruption by shouting and using swearing and obscene language. Luckily for me, the officer was caught on his own interrogation room camera saying I said obscene language while he was outside the room and admitting that I had not said obscene language inside the room. As it turns out, the word lie to Westjet agents is a swear word. The officer is now being investigated for misuse of justice, unnecessary roughness and not giving an arrested person their rights!"

from Bill Hayne (8 December 2005)

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A schoolkid in North Carolina got a bit more attention than he bargained for recently when he submitted his work for class recently. His teacher had set a project to take photographs that illustrated their liberties as guaranteed under the Bill of Rights. So one kid took a photo of himself standing beside a poster of George Bush, giving him the "thumbs down". He put the film into Wal-Mart's for developing, who then promptly informed the police. Suspecting subversion, the FBI paid a visit to the school, confiscated the offending photograph, grilled the teacher for a bit, then had a few patriotic words with the boy.

#517, 21 October 2005

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For Being a "Vagabond"... On September 10th, one of the George Fox 6 had a stall confiscated in Lancaster City Centre under the 1824 Vagrancy Act (originally brought it to use against returning soldiers from Napoleonic wars, left injured, battle scarred and with nowhere to go and no money). Under the act you are deemed a vagabond through the "Exposure of Wounds and Deformities to obtain or gather Alms"

- apparently the police decided that the pictures of the wounds and deformities on his anti-vivisection leaflets meant he was begging!

#515, 7 October 2005

*[The George Fox 6 were six Lancaster University students charged with aggravated trespass for trespassing on their own university's property when handing out leaflets against a privatisation conference]*

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For Conspiracy To Street Theatre... A small protest at the start of the EU Justice & Home Affairs ministers meeting in Newcastle earlier this month was stopped before it even got going, after cops nicked all six people for "conspiracy to commit criminal damage." The plan was for protesters to dress in orange boiler suits with bar-coded foreheads, and a 12 square foot ID card to highlight the increasing restrictions on civil liberties being considered by ministers under the pretext of fighting the "War on Terror". But before they could even protest about our civil liberties being eroded they were er, arrested. One woman whose daughter was nicked then had her home raided by a vanload of cops who took amongst other things a Green Party magazine, a flyer for a T-shirt company picked up at the Make Poverty History rally and a leaflet by Cures without Cruelty!

#514, 30 September 2005

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For being in a Barbershop Quartet! Police arrested four people at last week's DSEi Arms Fair protest who performed an anti-war song in the style of a Barbershop Quartet with hands covered in blood. They were originally arrested them under an obscure 1824 'enclosure' law, then for burglary. After a few hours in the cell they were let go with a fixed penalty notice of £80 for causing "harassment alarm or distress". Not a good result for public harmony.

#513, 23 September 2005

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For being a foetus - A Staffordshire 'boy' has been threatened with an Anti-Social Behaviour Order - and he hasn't even been born yet. Julie Brown, from Burton-on-Trent, was told her son had annoyed neighbours driving around on his motor scooter. She has already named her baby Dominic, but he is not due until September - and she has the hospital scan to prove it. Julie said "I was angry because nobody came and checked and the letter was sent despite the fact we don't have a son yet, let alone one who causes trouble riding around on a scooter." A council spokesman said: "The letter appears to be an unfortunate mistake and we will be sending a written apology to the couple."

#509, 26 August 2005

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For Being Friends - As told to SchNEWS: "I went up to the G8 protests with three friends...we were trying to find a quiet spot as far away from the Stirling site as possible. We found a lovely derelict farm, belonging to a friend of a friend of a friend. We put our tents up and twenty minutes later 11 van loads of Met police arrived, 7 of them Armed Response Units...They asked us if we knew each other and when we said "yes" they hauled us out of our cars, handcuffed us, threw us into a cell for 30 hours and finally charged us the next day.

"When I'd finally been to court and released on bail (conditions to leave Scotland directly with an escort and not to deviate from a set route etc.) and the police returned my possessions to me, my car keys were missing. It turned out that the Met had stolen all of our cars and sent them to a scrap yard, which wouldn't release them without a £200 payment. The cars had been legally parked and even the Scottish police were shocked that the Met had stolen them illegally. Anyway, long story short, I was in breach of bail 'cos I couldn't leave Scotland as ordered without my car, as all my keys and my boss's house, business and safe keys were on the keyring...and it all went downhill from there!!"

For more about G8 arrests see <http://www.g8legalsupport.info>  
#507, 12 August 2005

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For being aboriginal - A 15 year old aboriginal boy in Western Australia has been arrested, held in custody for twelve days and flown 1500km to Perth to appear in children's court in a police operation costing A\$10,000. The crime? Wait for it - stealing an ice cream. Aboriginal Legal Service lawyer Peter Collins claims that "the approach taken... smacks of overkill". Just a bit. SchNEWS thinks the racist legal system in WA should 'chill out' - with a nice ice cream. Apparently the said ice cream was returned to the shop undamaged.

#506, 29 July 2005

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For waiting for a bus - One attendee at the protests in Scotland last week was sitting at a bus-stop waiting for a bus when the forces of Law and Order come screeching up beside him. Out jumped six of Scotland's Finest who promptly searched him and, having found nothing dubious on him, reached for a half-empty can of lager left under the seat he was on. Said suspect was then arrested for "street drinking" and held for 30 hours. This is despite the fact that the person-in-question has not touched alcohol for 15 years!

#503/4, 15 July 2005

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For filming - Peace protester Paul Lesniowski has been arrested and put in Lewes Prison on remand for a WEEK - just for filming the antics of a security guard outside the EDO factory in Brighton, while acting as a legal observer.

#502/3, 17 June 2005

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Only in America... In May 2005, the Police Department of Kutztown (Pennsylvania) notified the parents of 13 students that felony charges of Computer Trespass had been filed against their children. The kids had found the password for their school laptops taped on the back of the machines, and used it to give themselves better access to the internet.

from cutusabreak.org (no longer online)

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For hanging a banner... The Danish branch of Greenpeace was charged last week under a law on financing acts of terrorism! What did they do - blow up a building? Er, no. In October 2003 some Greenpeace members got on the roof of the Agricultural Council headquarters and hung a banner in opposition to GM food. Now the whole organisation has been charged under terrorism laws adopted after September 11th.

#498, 20 May 2005

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For having a tantrum... US cops handcuffed an unruly 5-year-old girl after she played up in class. After being placed in the back of a police car, she was released when her mother turned up and they said they wouldn't bring charges against the child - which was very decent of them, dontcha think?

#495, 29 April 2005

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"For, erm, well, let me think a minute..." - 500 citizens weapons inspectors were arrested by cops in Belgium last Saturday.. Amazingly, not one charge was brought against any of them! How could the police get it so wrong? Surely the point of making an arrest is because a law is being broken, in which case charges should naturally follow? .To do it once in a day is perhaps forgivable, but 500 times seems... suspicious.

#494, 22 April 2005

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For being Islamic... A 16 year old Guinean girl in NYC was plucked from school and is being held in a detention centre in Pennsylvania, apparently as a high risk terrorist threat. It seems that no-one who actually knows her has any idea why. "I just can't fathom this," said her teacher, Kimberly Lane, "she's just a regular teenager. Two weeks ago her biggest worry was whether she'd done her homework or studied for a science test."

This story follows the recent incarceration of another 16 year old from New York, a Bangladeshi girl now held at the same detention centre. According to the FBI, the teenagers are "an imminent threat to the security of the United States based on evidence that they plan to be suicide bombers." No evidence was cited, and federal officials will not comment on the case. We'll let Ms Lane have the final word: "I remember telling her the government doesn't go after 16-year-old girls. And in the last few days, I'm wrestling with the fact that, yes, it does."

#493, 16 April 2005

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For going bang! Two teenagers were arrested for threatening behaviour when the Queen visited Wakefield last week. The pair burst balloons as the royals arrived in the city. Apparently the Queen was unaware of the incident.

#491, 1 April 2005

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For acting like a baby - In one of the "smallest" cases of civil disobedience, four Bangladeshi kids have appeared in court this week accused of looting and causing criminal damage. The "potty" four - whose ages range from three months to two years - were released on bail after a brief hearing. The magistrate commented that he was a "bit surprised" to see the kids in court and, in a fit of rationality, promptly suspended the four cops who'd brought the evidence against them.

#487, 4 March 2005

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Taking the pistol... Four people were arrested at Kings Cross station while attempting to travel to the European Social Forum demonstration last November. One person was initially arrested for 'firearms offences', but was released without charge when it was discovered the item in question was a bottle of eyedrops!

#484, 11 February 2005

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For telling a joke - Did you hear the one about the pair arrested for telling a lawyer joke? Two people waiting outside a US courthouse quipped: "How do you tell when a lawyer is lying?"... "His lips are moving." Unfortunately, a sour-faced lawyer wasn't laughing, and now they face new charges for abusive and disorderly conduct.

#483, 4 February 2005

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For breakdancing! A breakdancer was busy head-spinning outside the American Embassy when he was rushed into a police van by armed cops. They thought he must be a terrorist as this was the only explanation for his behaviour. After being searched it became apparent that he was nothing other than a, er, baffled breakdancer and he was told to go on his way.

#482, 28 January 2005

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Flap Flip Flop! Prolific peace campaigner Lindis Percy was arrested outside US spy base Menwith Hill for waving an upside down US flag with the words "The shame of Iraq" written on it. According to one flipped out police officer "it was dangerous... and she might flap it"! <http://www.caab.org.uk>

#481, 21 January 2005

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Girl, 10, Cuffed for Scissors in School - Anyone can be a terrorist or murderer these days you know. Even a ten year old school girl. At an elementary school in Philadelphia, a girl was cuffed then taken to a police station. The reason? A pair of scissors were discovered in her school bag, breaking the school's strict no weapons policy. The cops decided as she hadn't threatened anyone with the 8-inch blades she had not committed a crime and let her go but she's still waiting to hear whether she'll be expelled to a special disciplinary school. The girl, reported to have "cried and cried" with "no idea what she did wrong"

#478, 17 December 2004

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For having an argument 20 years ago! Caroline Levett was nabbed after getting confused when asked by US immigration officials whether she had ever been convicted of a crime involving 'moral turpitude'. Just about to start her dream holiday, and unsure what exactly 'turpitude' meant, she admitted being arrested for damaging a former partner's property during a row, 20 years ago. Obviously turpitudous in nature, the crime lead to her deportation and being escorted to the plane by two armed guards.

#469, 15 October 2004

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For having the crap of the week! Student Jesse Huffman is facing charges of criminal mischief after blocking a toilet he used during a random search by border guards while traveling to Montana. Huffman said the clogged piping was completely unintentional, the result of an urgent, but natural bodily function: "I've never been arrested before or anything like that, and I get arrested for taking a dump."

#466, 3 September 04

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For nicking Seaweed! Three men have been arrested in Eastbourne for 'stealing' seaweed from the beach - organic food for their hungry turtles. After being tailed for three miles by two police cars and a motorbike, they were finally apprehended. The three were locked up for seven hours while the police searched their premises to examine the 'rare' fauna. After extensive forensic analysis this 'rare' fauna proved to be... sea cabbage.

#462, 9 July 04

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For playing paintball! Three Muslim men have been sentenced to up to life in prison after the US government accused the men of training for holy war by playing paintball games in the Virginia woods. Even the sentencing judge disagreed with the sentences calling them "appalling" and "draconian" but said she had no choice.

Democracy Now!

#461, 2 July 04

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For quoting a Clash song..! Mike Devine, from a Clash tribute band, was arrested earlier this month after a text message he sent was intercepted. The text, a lyric from Clash song "Tommy Gun", contained the words "jetliner" and "hostages" and was, apparently, sent to the wrong number. The recipient then informed police who sent Special Branch to arrest Devine in his office before interrogating him. He was later released without charge. So how exactly did the message get intercepted? One "terrorism expert" stated the bloody obvious that it clearly shows that spy-base GCHQ is "monitoring all vocal and textual mobile phone traffic."

#459/460, 18 June 2004

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For being an artist... Steve Kurtz called 911 early one morning to tell them his wife had suffered a cardiac arrest and died in her sleep. However when the police arrived they decided Kurtz's art supplies were actually bioterrorism weapons and called the FBI who arrested Kurtz without charge, sealed off the entire block, confiscated his computers, manuscripts, art supplies... and even his wife's body. Kurtz, an Associate Professor in the Department of Art at the State University of New York's University and a member of the internationally-acclaimed Critical Art Ensemble is facing trial later this month.

#456/457, 4 June 2004

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For not putting a seatbelt on a dog... Traffic police in Kempten, Germany slapped a fine on a dog for not wearing a seatbelt. Bobbie the dog was traveling in the back of his owner's car when traffic police pulled the vehicle over. They handed his owner a £17 fine which has grown to £29 because he's refusing to pay it. A police spokesman who defended the fine said: "Small dogs belong on the floor and larger dogs need to be kept in a harness or in the boot".

#453, 14 May 2004

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For drawing cartoons! A 15 year old school boy from Seattle was recently nicked, and then questioned by the Secret Service, after his art teacher found him drawing cartoons depicting Bush as the devil firing missiles at all and sundry. Another picture showed, rather ironically, The Bill of Rights and the Constitution in flames - which is fair enough if you ask us. After the boy was released the Secret Service confiscated all the pictures to which the boy said "they're blowing this way out of proportion".

#452, 7 May 2004

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For looking suspicious! Last Sunday the Bangladesh government arrested nearly 15,000 people in the capital Dhaka, in a bid to foil any agitation by the country's opposition party. Under laws designed to arrest anyone looking suspicious they mainly nicked people mostly aged between 15 and 30 years, most of whom were not even remotely connected with politics! Some had arrived in the capital for job interviews, some to consult doctors or give examinations, while others were just visitors. Freshly released after two days of ordeal inside jail, one youth from the old part of Dhaka, complained "I was forced to keep standing in a dark and dingy room crammed with over 1,000 people. I could not even sleep for a moment."

#451, 30 April 04

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For feeding the homeless... In Tampa, Florida police arrested three people from Food Not Bombs who were handing out free food to the homeless, they were arrested as they didn't have a permit to hand out food. The police and city say that it is for health reasons, but a homeless person whom had been fed commented "I think I know what's healthy for my body, and going hungry isn't healthy. The city isn't out to protect anyone's health. They just want to pretend we are not here." Another said "If there's a law about feeding the homeless and going to jail, this is a backward world." <http://www.foodnotbombs.net>

#450, 22 April 04

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For wearing a baseball cap sideways! A schoolboy in Arizona, USA, was arrested and held for several hours by police for refusing to turn his baseball cap to the front. Morgan, who is black, was having lunch when school security guards approached him about his hat. It is against school policy to wear hats sideways because it can be a sign of disrespect for authority, the police report said, but Morgan said that the rule is enforced selectively. According to a police report, he pointed to several white students whose hats were on sideways. Shortly after Morgan's arrest, classmates staged a protest with one student being suspended for 10 days. Morgan was later released without charge.

#448, 1 April 04

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For disorderly use of a camcorder(!) or something like that, no-one seems to be sure, including the arresting officers. An anti-war demonstrator at last Saturday's rally in London was arrested and charged under section 5 of the Public Orders Act. His crime? Filming the demonstrators and cops as the march wound its way through the capital. Apparently the cops didn't like it so found it in themselves to arrest the individual, confiscating his film as "evidence".

#447, 26 March 2004

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For Stealing 1p of electricity! A student who plugged his laptop into a socket at a train station in Germany to find out the address of a hostel received a short sharp shock by three police officers for "illegally extracting electricity". Jan Michael Ihl, who is also an energy specialist for Greenpeace said, "The whole thing is ridiculous. I 'stole' electricity worth less than one cent." The public prosecutor now has to decide whether to press charges.

#443, 26 February 2004

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For supplying drugs... That's not a crap arrest of the week we hear you shout! But this one is the crappiest of crap arrests. 15-yr-old Brandon Kivi, a pupil at Caney Creek High School, Texas, was questioned by the cops after his school reported him for... lending his girlfriend his asthma inhaler when she was having an attack!! Although both pupils use the same type of inhaler, the school reckoned this was supplying drugs and therefore a violation of its zero-tolerance anti-drug policy. No charges were brought, but the school still expelled Kivi, who, along with his girlfriend, will be home educated from now on.

#440, 6 February 2004

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For playing half a song... Last week, cash-strapped Lambeth Council spent £30,000 on prosecuting Shane Collins, licensee of last May's Cannabis Free Festival. The crime? Allowing a sound system to play for EIGHTY FIVE SECONDS after the licensee permit had ended! The case was dismissed with the Judge asking why the prosecution was brought to court in the first place and commending Shane for the way the festival was organized!

#439, 29 January 2004

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For having a beard! A journalist working in Baghdad was arrested last week for looking like an "Israeli" by Iraqi police and a "terrorist" by the US authorities! He was then taken to a police station at gunpoint, chucked in a cell, and held over night. The next day, a US appointed lawyer decided there was no evidence of any wrongdoing, but the man was still sent to see a judge, just in case he could "be accused of anything".

#438, 22 January 2004

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For not using a shopping basket! In a new low in supermarket fascism a man was arrested and then fined £95 for not using a basket when he went into his local Eddah store to buy one item. When Carst Kijlstra, from Holland, went to pay for it the shop assistant refused to serve him saying he must have a basket. "Don't be ridiculous" said Mr Kijlstra who then left the money on the counter and went home. At home while cooking his dinner a cop car arrived at his house to arrest him. After being held for an hour Mr Kijlstra was allowed to go home if he agreed to pay the £95 fine and stay out of the shop for 12 months.

#435, 19 December 2003

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For buying a lemonade! A fire fighter from Minnesota was on holiday in Miami at the same time as the Free Trade Area of the Americas summit, where the authorities were busy beating the human rights out of anyone they thought might be an anarchist (see SchNEWS 432). The fireman decided to stop and buy a lemonade on the way back to his hotel but after leaving the store he found his way blocked by a police line where upon he asked them which way to go to his car. He was then nicked, held for 48 hours and then taken to court where the prosecution realised that actually he was a fire fighter, was nothing to do with the demo and dropped all the charges.

#434, 12 December 2003

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For holding a banner! US activist, Brent Bursey is going to court this week after being charged for holding a sign reading "No More War For Oil" at an airport in South Carolina last October. Bush was supposed to be arriving later that day and people had gathered to show him what they thought of the war on Iraq. Bursey was charged with trespassing, even though he was on public property, 'cos he hadn't been standing in the marked "free-speech zone." Protesters were only supposed to be half a mile away where nobody, least of all Bush, could see or hear them. Bursey told police he had been under the impression that the whole of America was a 'free speech zone' and local authorities dropped the charges. Six months later federal authorities renewed the case using a rarely enforced statute allowing the Secret Service to restrict access to areas near the president. If convicted, this charge carries a penalty of up to a \$5000 fine and six months in jail. Bursey is being denied a jury trial.

#431, 14 November 2003

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For dressing up as Santa Claus! A German man who wore Santa Claus clothing over his motorbike suit while protesting against a Nazi march has been fined £140. Cops nicked him for breaking Germany's ban on masking your face during demonstrations, and also claimed his biking suit amounted to "passive weaponry"! At the trial a meteorologist confirmed that it had been a cold, wet day, which justified the biking suit while photos showed him pulling down his beard to look into a camera. Charges were dropped after he agreed to pay a fine. Friends now call him St Nicked. Ho, Ho, Ho!

#427, 17 October 2003

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For Going on Holiday! (well, sort of...) A 62 year old retired schoolteacher faces up to 12 years in jail and a fine of between \$10,000 and \$1 million for traveling to Iraq to act as a human shield during the war. The US Treasury Department says Faith Fippinger has broken the US economic embargo of Iraq by traveling there and spending money.

The human rights organization Voices in the Wilderness are also being persecuted.  
more info at <http://www.humanshieldaction.org>

#424, 26 September 2003

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For getting run over during an anti-war sit down protest in Bristol. "A red jeep type vehicle mounted the central reservation between the lanes of traffic and drove through the crowd, only narrowly avoiding hitting anyone" said a bystander. "Whilst we were all staring in disbelief a smaller car tried to follow, failed to mount the reservation and ploughed straight into the people sitting down." One man who was knocked onto the bonnet of the car and driven along for 50 yards has now received a summons for 'vehicle interference'!

#421, 5 September 2003

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For wearing a badge. A passenger was ejected from a British airways flight from America to London for wearing a button saying "Suspected Terrorist". His partner was chucked off too because she was 'associated' with him. John Gilmore was asked to remove his button but refused, saying it was a political statement. The captain told him this was a federal crime and the two were chucked off. They were met by a BA official who said that passengers and crew are nervous about terrorism and that mentioning it bothers them. Asked whether he would be allowed to fly if he wore other buttons, perhaps one saying "Hooray for Tony Blair", the official reckoned that that would be okay.

#418, 15 August 2003

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For going home. At least nine Bushmen have been served with court orders for 'illegally' entering the Central Kalahari Game Reserve in Botswana, their ancestral land for the past twenty thousand years. Their whole village was forcibly evicted from their land in February 2002. They were banned from hunting and gathering and their water pump destroyed. If found guilty of returning home they could face jail. more info at <http://www.survival-international.org/tc%20bushmen.htm>

#414, 11 July 2003

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For performing poetry! In another clamp down on the use of 'public' spaces, a poet in William Shakespeare's own Stratford-upon-Avon, was arrested for performing in a public space without a licence. A licence would have set him back £52. Poor old Willy must be turning in his grave.

#410, 13 June 2003

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For being into Heavy Metal! 14 'devil worshippers' in Morocco received jail sentences ranging from three months to one year for 'undermining the Muslim faith' and 'possessing objects contrary to good morals'. Nine of the men, belonged to local heavy metal bands and the rest were fans. Among the objects exhibited in court to show they were in league with the devil was a black T-shirt with heavy metal symbols on it. This prompted the judge to comment that 'normal people go to concerts in a suit and tie'.

#408/409, 6 June 2003

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For playing games. An 11 year old boy was arrested in Antrim, Northern Ireland for carrying an "offensive weapon" - a wooden hurling stick. The boy had been on his way home after a game in the park when he was bundled into a car and questioned before being taken home where the cops told his mum that he wouldn't be allowed to take his hurley onto the street anymore.

#405, 16 May 2003

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A Canadian woman was threatened with 24 hour detainment for "taking part in terrorist actions against a U.S. citizen in international airspace while on an American flight during a time of war". Her crime? Explosives in her handbag? Nope - refusing to stop breast-feeding her 4-month-old baby, on a flight from Houston to Vancouver. The threat came after an American man on the plane felt assaulted by her "subversive" behaviour, and demanded that the woman be charged with assault and an act of war against an American (what a tit!). Luckily for the woman there were no laws against breastfeeding in Canada and she managed to walk free once the plane landed in Vancouver.

#404, 9 May 2003

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For dressing up as a bunny! Children in New York were distressed to see the Easter Bunny being taken away in handcuffs from outside the local K-Mart last week. The bunny was protesting about the shop replacing the traditional chocolate Easter bunny in their baskets with candy toy soldiers armed with machine guns and rifles. For her trouble, she was nicked for trespassing.

#397/8, 28 March 2003

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For Wearing a T-shirt! A shopper at Crossgates Mall in New York was confronted by security guards demanding he remove his T-shirt as the slogan was 'unacceptable'. He declined, so they returned with a cop who arrested him. Later in the week, 100 people marched through the store protesting his arrest all wearing the same T-shirt. And what was the illegal slogan? 'Peace on Earth' on the front of the shirt and 'Give Peace a Chance' on the back.

#396, 13 March 2003

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For cycling... Reza Baluchi, a superfit Iranian who cycled 46,000 miles through 54 countries to spread the message of peace, hit trouble when he got lost near the Mexican/US border and pitched his tent on the wrong side. He was arrested by US border guards for being an illegal immigrant and was sent to an Arizona detention centre for nearly four months. An American judge has now granted Baluchi's application for asylum in the States, but has also ruled that he be forced to remain at the detention facility while immigration authorities decide whether or not to appeal the case, a process which could take several more months. Welcome to America, Reza...

#395, 7 March 2003

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For skinny dipping! A Mapuche woman delegate of the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre bathed nude in a river to cool off from the warm temperatures of the Brazilian summertime, only to find herself arrested under charges of 'obscene acts'. Her arrest then sparked a non-violent naked protest by 400 activists. Police attacked the protesters arresting and injuring an unknown number of them and then turned on fully clothed journalists and bystanders.

#391, 7th February 2003

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For writing about Cuba on the internet. When his friends attended an unsanctioned conference in Cuba and attracted the attention of the Treasury Department, Tom Warner, the 77-year-old secretary of the Seattle / Cuba Friends Committee was unsurprised. What did surprise him was when a letter arrived accusing him of 'organising' the event and threatening to fine him \$20,000. This was all the more surprising due to the fact that he wasn't even AT the conference! Tom's major mistake was to put details of the conference on his website. Making his mark on history, Tom's nefarious actions have made him the first man to be arrested by the Bush Administration for using the internet to promote something against government policy.

#390, 31st January 2003

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For hanging a placard on a statue! When a woman activist from d10 (antimilitarist, non-violent direct action collective) saw a statue outside the Ministry of Defence of "Boom" Trenchard (father of the Royal Air Force) she decided to hang a sign round his neck saying "Boom no more!" She was arrested, held face-down on the pavement and handcuffed with such force that she suffered serious injuries to her wrists. She was released seven hours later without charge.

#387, 10th January 2003

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For making a joke down the pub! An American who made a remark about a "burning bush" was sentenced this month to 37 months in prison for "threatening to kill or harm the president." Richard Humphreys said he got into a barroom discussion with a truck driver in which he joked about the biblical expression "burning bush." A bartender who overheard the conversation knew that Bush was visiting the area the next day and so telephoned police. "I said God might speak to the world through a burning Bush," Humphreys testified during his trial. "I had said that before and I thought it was funny."

#386, 18th December 2002

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For Doing A Stall! Two people from Dorset Animal Action were doing a stall in Bournemouth when police asked for their details. The activists had the cheek to ask if they were being nicked or issued with a summons, which led to their arrest for deception. After being strip-searched and kept at the station for 8 hours, the activists were released without charge, but not before the greedy coppers stole all the money that had been collected by the stall.

#383, 29th November 2002

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For kicking a balloon! One of Turkey's most famous singers, Hulya Avsar, faces the prospect of six months in jail for kicking balloons displaying the Turkish flag. Avsar allegedly kicked some balloons that were in her way as she walked to meet guests on her TV show. Unfortunately for the popular singer it's illegal in Turkey to display the flag on objects and near blasphemy to have the sacred flag on the ground. The TV crew and the balloon makers also face a six month stay in jail for the malicious act.

#379, 1st November 2002

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For being Ash-Holes! 17 people were arrested earlier this year during a protest against incinerated waste being shipped to the Danish island of Langoya. They bared



their bums in a collective moonie with the words ASH HOLES spelt out on their backsides.

#369, 23rd August 2002

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For stealing his own spoon! Tom Harris spent 12 days in remand earlier this year after taking part in an office occupation to protest against Huntingdon Life Sciences - the animal torturers. He was arrested for burglary by cops who said he'd photographed 'sensitive' documents. When they later decided that this wasn't actually illegal, they accused him of stealing a spoon and threw in section 4 of the Vagrancy Act. After 12 days inside they dropped the case after realising that section 4 doesn't apply to office blocks and the spoon was actually his!

#368, 16th August, 2002

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"Three 12-year-old children playing a James Bond game with a plastic toy pistol were surrounded by police from three patrol cars, arrested, fingerprinted and required to give DNA samples," reported The Guardian on August 3. The report added: "Northumbria police, who also issued the two boys and a girl with a formal reprimand, the juvenile equivalent of a caution, said guidelines issued by the Home Office in April gave them no choice. "The reprimand by a senior officer carried out in the parents' presence two days after the arrest, will stay on police records for three years, but the prints and DNA will be kept for life."

The Porkbolter, #47, August 2002 ("Crime of the month")

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For calling someone Mister... A Turkish economist has been charged with spreading separatist propaganda after referring to the imprisoned Kurdish leader Abdullah Ocalan as "Mr." It's against Turkish law to show support for Ocalan or his organisation the Kurdistan Workers Party. Calling someone Mr (or 'sayin' in Turkish) is used to show respect, so he could now face three years in prison.

#366, 2nd August, 2002

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For looking happy! In Iran, on the anniversary death of Ruhallah Khomeini, the main man who turned the country into an Islamic state, police and military arrested anyone who "looked happy" or seemed to have "enjoyed" the date.

#361/362, 27th June, 2002

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For doing a handstand! A protestor at the recent Reclaim the Streets in Dublin was arrested, according to his charge-sheet, because he "engaged in the act of a handstand in the middle of a junction so as to cause or was likely to cause the traffic through such a place to be obstructed". Phillip Thompson claims he is the victim of a miscarriage of justice because he was practising yoga.

#360, 20th June, 2002

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For naming children... Nine families in the Turkish town of Izmar have been charged with being "a tool of propaganda" for the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) for the treacherous act of giving their children traditional Kurdish names. In its tyrannical fight against the PKK, the Turkish government has drawn up a list of banned Kurdish names, even though some of the names, such as Helin and Baran, are common in Turkey and are used by Turks as well as Kurds. And while another case, held just one day earlier in the town of Dicle, saw similar charges against seven parents dropped, the Izmar families are not so lucky - it's likely they'll be forced by the courts to rename their children!

#357/8, 30th May, 2002

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For playing music... A minibus driver from the Kurdish region of Amed in Turkey was nicked for the outrageous crime of playing traditional Kurdish folk music on his daily journey to Cinar. The case against him was that he had 'aided and abetted' the PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party) - by playing the music of his choice. What happened was that an overzealous off duty cop who got a lift on the bus objected to these revolutionary tunes and promptly called for reinforcements. Sulhattin Onen, the bus driver, was then arrested and held for two days. Sulhattin was finally tried and received a 10 month sentence and a fine of more than 26 million Turkish Lira.

#352, 3rd May, 2002

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For selling saucy postcards. A couple from 'Hookers for Weed' were nicked on Monday for selling postcards at Camden in London. The Medical Marijuana Barbie cards featured a marijuana leaf where the traditional fig leaf would cover. This offended the Police's sensitive natures and the couple were banged up for six hours and charged with 'Obstructing Free Passage along a Highway' (sic). Mind you, last time the group protested, a woman stripped off on top of a bus stop at Oxford Circus.

#349, 5th April 2002

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For trying to live on their own land - 13 Bushmen from the Gana and Gwi tribes have been arrested on their ancestral land in the Central Kalahari Game reserve in Botswana, for hunting without a license. Despite having lived by hunting and gathering in the same area for 20,000 years, the government is now forcing the Bushmen to apply for hunting licenses! The accused were severely beaten and now face 5 years imprisonment. Two Bushmen bringing food and water to the communities whose supplies had been cut off by the government were told that entry to their ancestral lands was forbidden. The two were later allowed in but were told that in future they would have to have a special permit or pay to enter the reserve.

The Central Kalahari Game Reserve was set up in the 1960's as a home for the Gana and Gwi Bushmen, whose ancestral lands include the reserve area. Yet since the mid-1980's, the Botswana government has waged a campaign of harassment to force them off land that is theirs under international law. Last week they terminated supplies of water and food to those who were still resisting. They also seized solar powered radio transceivers, provided by Survival International, their only source of communication with the outside world. Hundreds of Bushmen have been trucked into government resettlement camps where they can't continue their traditional way of life. The families who remain on their land are now totally isolated and at risk from thirst and starvation.

The government claims it can't afford to continue to provide water and other services to Bushmen communities in the reserve, even though it costs only \$3 per person per week. Behind the government's attitude is a deep-seated racism - the president himself has called the Bushmen 'stone-age creatures.' His government wants to open the reserve to tourism, and believes the Bushmen would be in the way. SchNEWS wonders if the areas rich diamond reserves may also have something to do with it.

#344, 1st March 2002 - more info at <http://www.survival-international.org>

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For Canoeing without lights!! Last Friday, Faslane peace protestor Jenny Gaiawyn was arrested and charged with 'breach of the peace' for canoeing without any lights around the Gareloch where those nice Trident submarines live. For that crime she spent 3 days in police custody and is due in court on the April 2nd (should be April 1st!)

#340, 1st February 2002

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For putting up a poster! A Swedish man has been banned from 14 countries for putting up a poster advertising an anti-EU meeting! Per Johansson put up the poster outside a Belgian police station shortly before last week's demonstrations against the EU Summit. For that crime he was not only expelled from Belgium, but will also not be able to travel in Germany, Austria, Spain, France, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg,

Netherlands, Portugal, Ireland, Norway, Finland and Denmark - all members of the Schengen agreement.

#336, 20th December 2001

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For looking after an injured friend... While demonstrating outside the home of the owner of Newchurch guinea pig farm (suppliers to the vivisection industry), 2 protesters were hospitalised after a vicious attack by security. One man suffered three large head wounds and was beaten so severely he was left unrecognisable while the other needed his head stapled back together after being bludgeoned with a club. When the cops turned up they ordered all the activists to leave immediately under Section 42 of the Criminal Justice Act but one man refused, wanting to stay with his severely injured mate until the ambulances had arrived. For this act of kindness he was nicked while the thugs were left alone.

#332, 23rd November 2001 - more info at <http://www.guineapigs.org.uk>

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For circulating a bit of paper! Neil Sorensen, a delegate at this week's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) meeting in Italy, was booted out and locked in jail for the night. His crime? While the Americans are using the Conference to try and get on as many FAO sub-committees as possible, Neil circulated a memo pointing out the destructive corporate led nature of the US and asked people to stop them getting on any committees. FAO have now apologised for being a bit over the top!

#329, 2nd November 2001

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For taking pictures! A man was arrested at a recent Faslane Peace camp demo in Glasgow for having the cheek of taking pictures of a protestor being arrested. Police nicked the unhappy snapper, took his film out then smashed the camera.

#327, 19th October 2001

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For having a large CD collection. A man in the Czech republic was jailed for more than two months for having over 15,000 CDs. Police accused him of making and selling illegal copies, and didn't believe that one could have such a big collection. So he sat in jail until police experts realised that all the CDs were original and released him.

#326, 12 October 2001

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For causing 20 pence worth of damage! Three genetically modified crop pullers are in court this week charged with causing a staggering combined amount of damage of 20p! Obviously Essex Police are desperate to make a conviction after 11 crop pullers walked free earlier this year for damaging the crop the year before.

#323, 21st September 2001

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For wearing a purple hairband!! Pamela Smith was in Edinburgh Sheriffs Court supporting a fellow Trident Ploughshares banner dropper, when she was told 'the sheriff wants your hairband off'. Pamela claimed her right to wear it, but the Sheriff disagreed and had her locked up for two hours before charging her with Breach of the Peace!

#321, 6th September 2001

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For asking questions! Following a demo outside a genetically modified cottonseed factory Andi Mappasomba, a representative from an Indonesian NGO, had a meeting with the local MP to discuss the GM issue. He was arrested at this meeting for his own safety - in case he offended the employees of the global giant Monsanto!

#319, 24th August 2001

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For leafleting and singing! A Labour councillor and a South Wales Red Choir member were nicked at last week's anti-fascist demo in Welshpool for singing in the high street and handing out leaflets. They were held for 5 hours then released without charge.

#318, 17th August 2001

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For looking too happy! A man hitching up north was standing by the side of the motorway trying to thumb a lift - as you do - when a cop van pulls up. "We have reason to believe you are under the influence of drugs," says the blue crew, "You look far too happy. We have reports of a drug-crazed lunatic wandering across the motorway causing havoc. You fit the bill. Now get in the van." The man explained that he was ecstatic cos he was on his way to see his newly born niece. The embarrassed blue crew let him go and sent him on his way.

#316, 3rd August 2001

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For peeing against a tree! Italian police, in preparation for the Genoa invasion, cracked down on a 3 year old boy having a wee against a tree in a Rome park. The boy was so shocked he couldn't pee for 3 days fearing he'd be nicked again. His family is taking the police to European Court for breach of Human Rights. SchNEWS is concerned that the poor boy may be permanently treematised.

#312, 6th July 2001

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For tying a purple ribbon to a bush. An animal rights protestor yesterday had her court case for littering dropped. The woman in question was demonstrating on Christmas Eve outside Newchurch Farm which breeds guinea pigs for vivisection. She tied a ribbon to a bush and was told by a copper to remove it, but refused. He took her details and three months later she received a court summons in the post for littering.

#311, 29th June 2001 - more info at <http://www.guineapigs.org.uk>

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For being Foxy! A protestor dressed as a fox was arrested at Burstow Kennels near East Grinstead in March for having his face covered.

#310, 22nd June 2001

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Veteran peace campaigner Lindis Percy has been fined £550 for writing 'STOP STAR WARS' on an American flag and standing on it - despite being found not guilty of the same charges at a different court a few weeks earlier. Poor sensitive American trained killers were 'angered, upset, distressed, offended and hurt' by the (mis)use of the US flag at a demo at Menwith Hill Spy Base, nr. Harrogate, Yorks.

#306, 25th May 2001 - more info at <http://www.squat.net/cineak>

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For criminal damage to a police camera: A woman was nicked during the Bristol Mayday protests after touching a cop camera with a swiss roll. Despite trying to 'sweet' talk them she was held for 4 hours and then charged.

#304, 11th May 2001

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For criminal damage to a taxi: Cyclists were arrested on the Bristol critical mass last month after their falling bodies scuffed a taxi as it ran them over.

#304, 11th May 2001

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For possession of a weapon: a theatrical catapult that shot stuffed animals over the Quebec fence.

#302, 27th April 2001

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For juggling... A while back the Canadian Labour Congress held a teach-in to educate people about the Free Trade Area of the Americas. After the meeting finished Resisto the clown began juggling, when two cops came from nowhere and nicked him. After holding him for 3 days Resisto was given bail under the condition that he didn't go to any protests and didn't leave the province. Ten months later all charges were dropped and Resisto remains unbowed "I've been juggling for years and I've juggled many strange and dangerous objects but I've come to the conclusion that it's impossible to juggle capitalism without dropping human, environmental and animal rights".

#301, 20th April 2001

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For crossing a road! It's good to walk. At a demo in Spain last summer against The National Telemarketing Collective Trade Agreement - which wins the SchNEWS award for dullest treaty of the week - 4 people were nicked for strolling across a street when the red man was showing.

#298, 23rd March 2001

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FOR SNOGGING! Forty-four Malaysian Muslim couples may spend up to two years in jail for the crime of 'close proximity', because they got too cuddly on Valentine's Day. Other couples found holding hands in public were told to stop their activities.

#297, 16th March 2001

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For refusing to watch TV! Two teenagers from Ohio were locked up in a local juvenile detention centre for truancy after walking out of their classrooms in protest against the compulsory viewing of Channel One. Channel One is an in-school broadcaster, showing a daily compulsory 12 minute current affairs programme with two minutes of adverts targeted at children. In return the schools get no cash, but can use the equipment in other lessons. Channel One is raking it in charging advertisers twice as much as regular TV stations as they can guarantee viewers with no channel hopping or off button. Channel One spreads the corporate TV bullshit more sneakily by enlisting

teachers to develop lessons for such socially useful teaching as designing new Pepsi vending machines and Burger King adverts. Commercial Alert and Obligation, Inc., two national anti-media groups, have taken up the kids' cause, saying "When the government sends children to a juvenile detention centre because they don't want to watch advertising, that is both Orwellian and more than a little sick. The public schools ought to be a sanctuary from the noxious aspects of commercial culture."

#296, 9th March 2001

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For handing out a leaflet! The Canadian police are getting a bit twitchy in the build up to the Summit of the Americas, which takes place in Quebec in April. To show off their intolerance, they arrested 3 people for handing out leaflets criticising the police plan to erect a 5-kilometre security perimeter around the conference centre. Sounds more like Qatar than Quebec to us. After a newspaper picked up on the story an embarrassing climb down followed, the city apologising to those arrested. Quebec has recently passed an anti-scarf by-law as a "security measure" for the Summit. Anyone even partially covering their face with a scarf faces arrest.

#295, 2nd March 2001

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For subverting the symbols of authority! A protester was found guilty in court this week of 'impersonating a police officer' at a demo against the now defunct Shamrock farm. The woman in question was wearing a plastic toy helmet from the Early Learning Centre and a reflective jacket. The fact that that she was wearing a 'Close down Shamrock Farm' poster around her neck surely should have given the game away.

#294, 23rd February 2001

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For pissing on a fence (instead of sitting on it)! At an action yesterday against GM animal feed, while some protesters locked on to trucks and got their heads down, another was arrested for answering a call of nature. The police later modified their position.

#294, 23rd February 2001

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A pensioner, a schoolboy, a care worker and a middle aged housewife were arrested and charged with harassment of B & K Universal Ltd, a company based in Hull, who breed animals for vivisection. The charges included - and we're not making this up - "holding a placard, making obscene gestures with an inflatable champagne bottle, sending a birthday card", and the best one "staring at a building!"



#293, 16th February 2001

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For eating...Police in Holland arrested 13 people in a shopping mall for the crime of handing out or eating free food. The activists from Free Food Utrecht were ordered to leave as police believed they were in breach of trade regulations.

#292, 9th February 2001

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For Raising a Flag! A protestor at Bush's Inauguration was arrested for raising an anarchist flag at the Navy Memorial.

#291, 26th January 2001

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For saying Boo! Last October, during a demonstration against the Biomedical Primate Research Centre in Holland an activist was arrested for saying boo to a cop.

#290, 19th January 2001

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For dragging a flag! Veteran peace campaigner Lindis Percy has been charged with causing harassment, alarm or distress after she dragged a US flag in front of cars driven by Americans at the US Spy Base Menwith Hill.

#290, 19th January 2001 - more info at <http://www.gn.apc.org/cndyorks/caab/>

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For Playing Spoons. Two Dutch activists were arrested for "public violence" after "slamming" a spoon on the gate of a police station where three fellow activists were being held. After a wild chase by the coppers, which included nearly getting run over, the two were detained for 24 hours and fined about £250 and £300 each.

#289, 12th January 2001

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The police were out in force last month at a car-park near Windsor and Eton Train Station after one of their number was called a moose. For some time this place has been used by young people to meet up and chill out, so bored cops looking for fun have recently also been turning up to harass them. When one woman, who had had enough of this, called a WPC a moose no less than eleven coppers stampeded in to arrest her. After locking horns about it later at the station she was released without charge.

#288, 22nd December 2000

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For taking a photo! Joan Russow, Leader of the Green Party of Canada, organised a demonstration outside a Quebec city jail which is being emptied to accommodate anticipated protesters at next April's Free Trades of the Americas meeting. The police took offence to her presence, arrested her for the despicable crime of taking a picture. She was slammed up, but only for 45 minutes after concerns were raised that she wouldn't be out in time for her dinner.

#284, 24th November 2000 - more info at <http://www.oqp2001.org>

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For standing in front of a lorry! Betty Krawczyk a 72 year old great-grandmother has been given a year in prison with no parole for standing in front of a logging truck. Letters of support to Betty Krawczyk, Burnaby Correctional Center for Women, 7900 Fraser Park Dr., Burnaby, C V5J 5H1 Canada.

#283, 17th November 2000

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For taking stuff out of a bin. It seems Lewes cops aren't in tune with the recycling tip after two people were arrested for taking a kid's bike, a cheese grater and a wok out of a skip. As readers may already know Lewes was one of the towns in the South East to be hit by the recent floods, and to claim on insurance all sorts of stuff was thrown away- destined for landfill. The cops seemingly take a very dim view of this recycle/re-use culture sending 3 Range Rovers to nick the miscreants who were then held for over seven hours, while pictures were taken of the bike, the cheese grater and the wok as evidence! The two "crims" were released on bail while the cops try and find out who owned the said items before they are no doubt once again thrown away into a skip!

#281, 3rd November 2000

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John Curtis was nicked for criminal damage to a lamp post at the recent counter demo to the nazi protest in Margate. What he actually did was scrape off a nazi sticker with a front door key, surely an act beneficial to society. Not according to the cops, who after filming him "causing damage to lamp post CIT1013" promptly jumped on him shouting "We've got the agitator" excitedly into their radios.

#280, 31st October 2000

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For using a wheel barrow... somebody was arrested for wheel barrowing their tat away after the council, backed up by the cops, decided it was for the bin. This follows other council attacks on the estate in Manchester which include bulldozing a kids playground and closing an underground cinema.

#275, 14th September 2000

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A woman was arrested by police in Prince Albert , Canada after they discovered that she had been barred from a birthday party for being underage. It turns out that the party was for those celebrating their 100th birthdays, and unfortunately the woman in question was only 98!

#273, 4th September 2000

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For complimenting a police officer on his toupé. At last weekends Smokey Bears picnic police were only able to make three arrests for possession of cannabis. They did however manage to haul in a large quantity of Oxo cubes, which we hope they will use to make some lovely veggie slop! In order to justify their presence they had to arrest somebody for commenting on an officers ill fitting toupé.

#271, 19th August 2000

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For playing football. A 14 year old boy was arrested for riotous behaviour and resisting arrest after going to play football with his friends on his local green. The green in northern Belfast borders both loyalist and nationalist housing estates. Since the beginning of the Orange marching season local nationalist children have been too afraid to play on the green and have been forced to play in the street behind a high iron railed fence. At a loyalist 'funday' on the green, nationalist residents were warned that if they set foot in the field they would be arrested. But finding the field empty in the evening a handful of teenagers decided to have a game of football, within minutes they were confronted by an angry violent crowd. The mother of the 14 year old boy arrived later to find him being beaten up by six RUC officers.

#270, 11th August 2000

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For stumbling! A Coventry City supporter who stumbled over the kerb outside Villa Park was arrested by a copper who accused him of being drunk (well, he had necked a whole two pints). He then spent the whole of the game in the communal dungeon under one of the grounds stands, before being released without charge. To make matters worse Coventry finally won at Villa Park for the first time in 51 years.

#266, 14th July 2000

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For being the wrong colour! When Sonia and Delroy Lindo received a call telling them their 15 year old son was being attacked by a racist, they rushed to the scene. Arriving at the same time as the police, they were assaulted and arrested. While her children watched, the police beat Mrs Lindo who suffered serious injuries about the face. Mr Lindo remained in police custody for 7 hours until a protest outside the station prompted his release. This is only the latest of 19 police charges against Delroy. Every single one has been thrown out of court. Charges have ranged from the heinous 'Criminal Damage to a police shirt' or 'Having a Dirty Numberplate', to the improbable, 'Dangerous Driving' involving an alleged near-collision with a double decker bus along a road where there is er, no bus route! More serious charges of 'Threat to Kill', 'Affray', and 'Assaults on Police Officers' have all resulted in acquittals. Coincidentally, Mr Lindo is a high profile campaigner against police rascism and corruption. Contact: The Lindo Campaign, c/o Haringey Racial Equality Council, 14 Turnpike Lane, London, N8 0PT

#265, 7th July 2000

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For trying to speak. Two people who went to speak at a teach-in on the human rights and environmental impacts of the oil industry we're arrested, detained, and denied entry by Canadian immigration officials at Calgary International Airport. The officials told the two that they were detained because of their involvement in activities critical of the World Petroleum Congress.

#263, 16th June 2000

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Go to jail cos your kids won't go to school. Jennifer Gibson-Washer was recently given a 3 day jail sentence because her teenage kids were bunking off school. Under a Pennsylvania law, parents face 5 days in jail for every day their child bunks off. About 100 parents are summoned to the 'truancy court' every month for a spot of what one Judge admits is a form of public shaming. He barks out reprimands "take off your hat, pull up your pants, look at me when I talk to you" - all in the interest of 'recreating a culture of discipline' of course.

#262, 9th June 2000

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For being run over - a cyclist in a critical mass protest in Bristol was arrested for obstructing traffic after an irate driver had knocked him to the ground. A prosecution is set to go ahead. Is cycling a crime, or only if you are knocked off your bike?

#261, 2nd June 2000

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For having a pee! At 1.30 in the morning, on the side of a road verge with no one else about. Except the police who said they we're "shocked and offended". Just what did he have down his trousers? The man was fined £75 for an indecent act. No jokes please about taking the piss.

#260, 26th May 2000

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For being pregnant! A woman from Faslane Peace Camp in Scotland spent two and a half hours in a cell after refusing to stand up during court proceedings. The women had asked the judge if she could be excused from standing as she was five months pregnant and suffering from severe backpain. The Judge told her to stand up or get out, before having her removed for contempt of court.

#259, 19th May 2000

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A Glasgow resident was arrested for "taking unrequested photographs" of a truck dumping a skip containing some very smelly waste on an unlicensed site. After the skip load was emptied 5 children fell ill with gastro-enteritis, one being hospitalised. Any chance of an arrest for GBH there? The skip is owned by Mr Combe, who has a waste disposal contract with the local Council.

#257, 28th April 2000

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For Wearing a Football Shirt. Back in 1996 on a warm July day in Derry, Liam Forbes was walking along when he removed his jacket to reveal a Celtic football top. Gangs of rowdy Orangemen hurled abuse at him resulting in the arrest of ...Liam for disorderly behaviour! He subsequently sued the RUC for wrongful arrest and last week received over £2000 in compensation.

#255, 14th April 2000

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For having dirty sheets! A couple had their house searched by Manchester cops and were locked in police cells for seven hours (while their three young kids were left unsupervised at home) for the alleged theft of a bed sheet from a Road Chef hotel. They had put the sheet in a laundry bag and left it outside for collection after one of her children had spilled a drink on it. The next day hotel staff found the missing sheet.

#249, 25th February 2000

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For waiting for a train! Brighton's finest were out in force last Saturday night at Brighton station with the usual collection of S&M gear, dogs and vehicles needed to ensure safety for the travelling public. One particularly jovial officer approached a humble SchNEWS scribe and proceeded to let his dog jump all over him, justifying the assault as 'just training, sir' before moving on to his next victim. The fifth or sixth person unwillingly drawn into this 'training' exercise wasn't so lucky, as the dog got very excited and the extremely bemused commuter was grabbed by four cops and dragged off to a police car without search, charge or caution.

#248, 18th February 2000

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For smiling! At the last Shamrock monkey farm demo a lost-it cop was pointing people out for the snatch squads. One bloke wound him up by standing around doing nothing more sinister and life-threatening than grinning. Not for long - "Grab him!" At the same demo someone was jumped by the goons (not the funny ones) and thrown to the ground, resulting in a shattered hip. He's still waiting to see if he'll need a hip replacement.

#247, 11th February 2000

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For hiding from the rain! A resident of Faslane Peace camp was shopping for candles in Glasgow City Centre last week, when it suddenly started to pour down with rain. Diving for cover in the nearest shop doorway to shelter and roll a cigarette, she was immediately arrested for Breach of the Peace and kept for six hours in a cell. Well that's one way of keeping dry.

#241, 17th December 1999

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For juggling! Someone was nabbed by the taste police at the WTO protest in London on Nov. 30th for 'going equipped to cause wilful criminal damage' and not even for trying to single-handedly bring down international capital. No, for twirling fire chains, his clothes were seized, his house searched, and then he was released until the cops can prove he'd set light to one of their vans.

#239, 3rd December 1999

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For going home: Michele Naa-Obed was arrested at the Jonah House Community in Baltimore in June for "leaving the district of Minnesota without permission and associating with felons" and given the maximum 12 months prison sentence. You see Michele had recently spent 18 months in gaol after disarming a fast-attack submarine and part of her parole was that she couldn't return to the house where she lived! While awaiting trial for the new heinous crime of living back home, Michele refused bail conditions which said she should avoid public protest, public speaking, live at a residence approved by the court and associate only with law-abiding persons! As the Virginia Pilot magazine points out "It's amazing how we become more like the countries we criticise, and worse yet, put sanctions on, because of their abuse of human rights."  
#237, 19th November 1999

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For dishing out free food! People from Food Not Bombs keep getting arrested for handing out free food and drink to the low-income and homeless. 2 were nicked for giving out bagels and juice at UN Plaza in San Francisco. At least 50 heavily armed cops arrived as they tucked in and violently arrested many munchers, confiscating the remaining food. Since the US Dept. of Agriculture reckon that nearly 25 million Americans are so poor they don't get enough food, it's crazy that Food Not Bombs have had over 1000 arrests for sharing hundreds of thousands of veggie meals since 1988. SF Food Not Bombs - <http://www.foodnotbombs.org/>  
#235, 5th November 1999

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Police lost it last Saturday at Veggies 15th anniversary birthday bash. Here's some of the highlights... - for shouting 'Oi, mate keep running.' For such cheek the man's face was scraped across the pavement before he was nicked - for saying "Er excuse me!" to a copper - for this heinous crime the woman spent 48 hours in Kentish town nick, hauled up in front of a magistrate who refused bail and threatened with two weeks in Holloway - bailed finally for £250 - for putting his hands in his pockets - a dodgy looking geezer from Manchester was asked to back off as his friends were being arrested - one officer screamed that he had a concealed weapon - he was jumped on and nicked for obstruction  
#233, 22nd October 1999

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For having a house party! 12 people chilling out in the afternnon after a house party in St.Pauls, Bristol were told by police to vacate the premises. When they refused 30 cops forcefully evicted everyone including the tenant, who was arrested and held for 25 hours. She appeared in court the next day and was bound over to keep the peace.

#229, 24th September 1999

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For having a house party! 12 people chilling out in the afternoon after a house party in St.Pauls, Bristol were told by police to vacate the premises. When they refused 30 cops forcefully evicted everyone including the tenant, who was arrested and held for 25 hours. She appeared in court the next day and was bound over to keep the peace.

#227, 10th September 1999

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A woman was nicked for threatening behaviour while dancing with her 18 month old baby at a Newcastle Reclaim The Streets party. Being a concerned mum, she asked to take her kid with her down the station, but was told "If he can talk, he'll be OK" and was forced to leave him there. She was held for (an illegal) 44 hour stretch before being released luckily some friends had found her baby at the party and were looking after him. Meanwhile, another bloke was pinched for tying bunting to a lamppost.

#222, 30th July 1999

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For handing out leaflets! Two people were dishing the dirt in the St Helen's branch of NatWest Bank, letting customers know about the banks £24.5 million loan to vivisection experts Huntingdon Life Sciences. The two were held overnight and charged with the well known 1361 Justices of the Peace Act (an act so old it actually predates parliament!).

#219, 9th July 1999

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Gill Emerson, featured in a recent crap arrest after being nicked for sitting on a wall during a visit by Prince Charles, beaten up in a cell, given a broken nose, sprayed with CS Gas then charged for criminal damage to a police camcorder, has had her case thrown out of court.

#215, 11th June 1999

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With intent to have a cup of tea. A worker at Faslane Naval Base got talking to peace-camp demonstrators and decided to go back for a cup of tea with them. The MOD police threatened him with the sack if he went to the camp and when he persisted in his tea mission he was taken away by the (Tea)-Service Police!

#209, 23rd April 1999



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For walking around with your hands in your pockets. Conrad Samuels was walking along a street in East London when he was told by a police officer to take his hands out his pockets. He refused. On being asked where he was going, he replied "This is a free country and I can walk where I like." Oh no you can't - you're nicked.

#206, 26 March 1999

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For talking to a shop-keeper! After having the cheek to ask a Nottingham ASDA store manager about genetically modified food labelling, a man was told he could either "starve to death, or shop somewhere else". None too pleased with the reply, the disgruntled customer went back the next day and handed out leaflets about the mutant foodstuffs, when he was arrested on suspicion of "tampering and poisoning Asda food products"! (Hey, does that mean we can charge Monsanto and their ilk?) The man was released without charge a few hours later.

#203, 5th March 1999

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For wearing a khaki shirt! Earth First! activist Melissa Fridlin was nicked at an anti-Forest Service demo in America on the grounds that she was impersonating a Federal official during some street theatre.

#198, 22 January 1999

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Crap Arrest of the Week award goes to P.C. Fudge of West Mercia for assaulting a disabled hunt sab in a hail of punches, breaking his camcorder, arresting him for possession of an offensive weapon (the camcorder), and stealing his woolly hat! The sab was released without charge and is suing with support of a Staffordshire Inspector! Earlier, P.C. Fudge informed 2 sabs he'd fucking kill them if they didn't get out of their car, as well as threatening sabs with C.S. gas if they tried to follow the hunt.

#198, 22 January 1999

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For dressing up as a pumpkin. Matthew Behrens was with seven other people from Toronto Action for Social Change (TASC) leafleting outside the Loblaws grocery store in Ontario, Canada, when he briefly stepped onto the company's property to say hello to the child of a friend. He had returned to the pavement when the cops pounced and charged him with trespassing, held him for 24 hours and only released him on

\$500 surety bail. The pumpkin protester now joins a growing list of characters arrested outside Loblaws, including Santa Clause and two elves, the Easter Bunny, three Bunny helpers, Robin Hood and Honest Shawn, all of whom face trials in the next three months. A school teacher also faces trial after being nicked for objecting to being video-taped by Loblaws security while taking a leaflet. Loblaws is being targeted by TASC because it donates to a Conservative government who've been busy cutting welfare payments and introducing workfare. Loblaws also have food banks at their stores, and ask people to donate food (bought at its stores of course). This goes to the people who've been cut off welfare! Impressive logic. Oh and Loblaws also owes over \$56 million in deferred, unpaid taxes - bloody scroungers.

#192, 19 November 1998

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Catalan activist Adolfo Montolin approached some Barcelona cops at a railway station and asked "Can I have two with cheese please?" The rozzers in their newly designed uniforms that make them look like workers from a local sandwich bar chain were not amused and dragged him off. He was charged with assaulting a police officer and the old Francoesque law of 'showing disrespect to someone in authority' was wheeled out as well.

#190, 6th November 1998

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Shannon Coggins was arrested at Sainsburys in Haringey after putting a 'Contaminated with genetically engineered soya' sticker on 5 packets of Batchelors Beanfeast. She was charged with Section 38 of the Public Order Act (1996) which was introduced to prosecute people who blackmail companies by spiking their food! Highgate magistrates threw the case out of court.

#185, 2nd October 1998

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For posession of herbs (more sharp-eyed coppers clamping down on suspect plants). Forty-nine year old George Singleton runs an organisation called HOPE LA-USA which promote organic gardening in American inner cities. As an African-American with dreadlocks down to his waist, he's used to being stopped in states such as Texas, Ohio, Virginia, and California and searched for drugs. Those stops have turned up nothing and he can go on his way. However, in February he was driving through Oklahoma when he was once again stopped and his car searched. "The officer found some mullein and rosemary in my car. I take them for my tuberculosis. I told him it wasn't marijuana." However, he was arrested and spent the next 25 days in prison until a lawyer could get his bail costs reduced and get him out of jail. You see, Oklahoma has an unusual

law under which it is illegal to possess any substance that a reasonable person might think was an illegal substance. George, who holds a doctorate in herbology, makes many cross-country drives carrying herbs as part of his job. Both the 'substances' that he was carrying and using are widely used and freely available over the counter. But hey, so what! George is set to return for trial on charges of possessing imitation illegal drugs on October 8th and could face a year in prison. God bless America.

#184, 25th September 1998

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For going to a seminar: About 40 police officers took part in an early morning raid of an International Seminar on Globalisation and Resistance being held in Geneva at the end of last month. 50 participants, from 17 countries, were taken in riot vans to the local police station - including a 6 year old girl from the Ukraine - and questioned about Peoples Global Action. Speakers at the 16 day seminar included international economists, journalists, representatives of people's movements, and workers from grass-roots organisations. A Nepali human rights worker commented "For me it is unthinkable that such police action in violation of human rights should take place in the same city as the UN Human Rights Commission headquarters." Quite.

#183, 18th September 1998

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For collecting signatures! A man was arested under the Criminal Justice Act while he was at Speakers Corner collecting names on a petition - on freedom of speech!

#181, 28th August 1998

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Two people involved in the campaign to stop part of Ashton Court Park being dug up were arrested this week for criminal damage after painting "hills not holes" on an eight foot high steel fence, with water based paint. A subsequent search of the protest camp by the police for evidence such as paint pots failed to uncover anything, which together with a downpour of English summer weather, left them with a lack of lasting evidence, and the water coloured artists were released without charge.

#179, 7th August 1998

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Red eyed cops ploughing through 500 hours of video spotted one of their own apparently trip up and fall down an embankment during a demonstration against Consort Beagles 14 months ago. Even though the red-faced plod got up and sheepishly wandered off, the video voyeurs decided a nearby activist had assaulted him. So after

spending months tracking him down two of West Mercia's finest raided the man's home at 6 am and arrested him. He is now due to appear in Hereford Court on July 31st even though the alleged victim has never made a complaint or ever been identified.

#176, 17th July 1998

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For getting yer kit off! Cast your minds back a year and a half ago, when people stripped off at the World Food Summit in Italy, to draw attention to "the naked truth about genetic engineering". They had thought the matter dropped but now are in court in July charged with 'obscene acts'.

#169, 29th May 1998

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For walking on the pavement... Police in Leeds took the 'step off the pavement' message of Reclaim the Streets a wee bit seriously, trying to run into someone by driving along the pavement themselves. When the pedestrian uttered a complaint to the officers, they grabbed him and gave them a ride in the van down to the station.

#167, 15th May 1998

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For talking too loud. One of the leaders of the APEC ALERT group in Canada, was nicked because at a demo a couple of weeks previous "he had spoken to loudly into a mega phone, and damaged a police officer's hearing."

#148, 19 December 1997

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For holding up signs. A director of the British Columbian Civil Liberties Union was nicked and held for 14 hours after standing on his front lawn, holding signs that said "Democracy and Free Speech". The police said that the signs were dangerous because they could be thrown in front of cars and hurt someone.

#148, 19 December 1997

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For having a glass of wine on your own front porch! Two men were nicked for drinking a glass of Chardonnay in Washington DC. Thanks to the city's zero tolerance hardline, the two spent three hours handcuffed to chairs in the holding area before being fined \$25.

#147, 12th December 1997

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Quack Arrest: Police in the Republic of Congo have arrested a duck suspected of sorcery after it caused a traffic accident.

#147, 12th December 1997

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During an Anti-Live Export action at Woodsfarm in Redditch, a woman was arrested for being in possession of a pair of nailclippers. She was later released with the warning that if she took them on another action she would be charged with going equipped!!

#145, 28th November 1997

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