**Embarrassingly Dumb Ways People Died - Darwin Awards Winners [Part 5]**

Sometimes, it really does seem like the world is getting dumber. That may be partly due to the fact that our incredible social systems of medicine, community and welfare have effectively wiped out natural selection for us humans. But every once in a while, someone worthy of a Darwin Award removes themselves from the gene pool like a deer with a penchant for highway jogging. Join me now, as I take a look at some of the most mind-bogglingly dumb ways people have died.

**Leap of Faith**

In May of 2019 a car chase left a criminal in a tough spot. The Brooklyn man was wanted for a carjacking when he made his first dumb move: crashing into a police car, triggering a high-speed chase. His second – and most lasting – mistake came later, after the pursuit left him trapped between multiple pursuing police cars on the Brooklyn Bridge. Rather than hand himself over, he went with the Grand Theft Auto method. He assumed that jumping over the railing, down to the ground below would allow him to escape with little more than a scratch or two. So over he went. And while he did indeed get away, he did so in a body bag.

**Remember Your Roots**

There are many embarrassing ways to die, but falling victim to the wrath of a root vegetable has to be near the top. When out on a hunting trip in 1881, British politician Sir William Payne-Gallwey entered the annals of ridiculous history, when he slipped and fell onto a turnip. The turnip, renowned by his fellow turnips as a violent brute, caused severe internal injuries to the politician, and he died that day, aged 74. Turns out vegetables aren’t so good for you, after all!

**World’s Longest Breath Holder**

I could think of better ways to spend a Saturday night than a breath-holding contest, but apparently boredom was at an all-time high for a New Jersey man in August 2018. Rather than holding the competition between friends on the safety of dry land, the man decided to hold his breath underwater on Lake Sinclair in Georgia. 7 minutes passed before anyone noticed anything was wrong. In this time, the undisputed winner of the contest had fallen unconscious and drowned, proving that real winners never give up.

**Cigarette Burns**

Hospitals are usually safe places for treatment and recovery, but a questionable decision made by an elderly lady in Haltern-Am-See, Germany, brought a quick end to her own treatment plan in 2018. The lady, who was wheelchair-bound from sickness, wheeled herself outside for a nice relaxing smoke. She seemed to forget that she was wearing an oxygen ventilator, which ignited when she lit her cigarette, setting fire to the plastic upholstery of her wheelchair. She was engulfed in deadly flames and scorching plastic and died soon after. Everyone knows smoking’s bad for your health. But usually, its effects aren’t so… explosive.

**Not the Bees!**

Picture this relaxing scene: you’re lying down on a comfy massage table, enjoying some nice therapeutic music… when someone forcibly stings you with multiple bees. Surprisingly, this is something people *willingly* go through on a regular basis – supposedly to relieve stress and muscle tension – and is a form of alternative medicine known as ‘live bee acupuncture’. All the bees that are used die in the process, but in 2018, they finally got their own back. You see, every time a person is stung by a bee, their chances of suffering an allergic reaction increase. But for one woman who was unaware of this fact, her reaction came as a total surprise, after having the treatment so many times. The woman immediately lost consciousness following one of the stings, and soon died of a severe allergic reaction. Don’t mess with bees. Nick Cage knows this, and so should you. ***[roll clip]***

**Escalator To Heaven**

You’ve heard of the stairway to heaven, but what about the fast-track version? The only catch is, you never actually get to the top. This is the fate that met the guitar player from a heavy metal band whose name is so obscene YouTube would implode if I were to say it. A musical career dedicated to causing as much controversy as possible culminated in a rather unclimactic end, when he attempted to ride his way along the rail of an escalator. He lost his balance, plummeted over the edge, and died on impact. His head struck a food court table, presumably turning some unfortunate kid’s happy meal into a horror meal.

**Taking Selfies To New Heights**

Some people go to great lengths for that perfect selfie. But apparently, these great lengths should never exceed 99ft. The world learned this fact in 2018, when a British woman and her Australian boyfriend were found dead on a beach in Portugal. Piecing the evidence together, police concluded that the couple had been sat atop a 100ft wall overlooking the beach, when they dropped the phone they’d been snapping vacation pics on. They both reached to grab the phone, which had landed on a ledge just below them. Unfortunately, they both lost their balance, and plunged the full distance to the ground below. As if to symbolise technology’s inevitable take over of the human race, the phone the couple gave their lives trying to save remained on the wall, unscathed.

**Trouble In The Tub**

We’re taught from a young age that water and electricity don’t mix, but for some people, this never quite sinks in. For some, the comfort of having an electronic device on hand at all times overrides the need to, you know, remain alive. A Londoner learnt the error of this mindset in 2017, when he tried charging his phone while in the bath. As he relaxed in the tub, he balanced an extension cord on his chest, keeping it out of the water. What happened next is unclear, but the situation isn’t too hard to fathom. Whether he slipped, or whether he absent-mindedly dunked his phone in the water, he was killed by the ensuing shock.

**Fussy Eater**

Everybody loves the hearty goodness of a home-cooked meal, assuming at least one person in the house *can* cook. But renowned mathematician Kurt Gödel took his love of his wife’s home cooking to ridiculous levels. Despite – or perhaps because of – his brilliance as a mathematician, Gödel was an extremely paranoid man. His paranoia grew to the point where, in his later years, he refused to eat anything that hadn’t first been tasted or prepared by his wife. Believing himself to be at the centre of a poisoning plot, when his wife was hospitalised for six weeks in 1977 and hence was unable to cook for her husband, Gödel stopped eating. By the end of January 1978, he had died of malnutrition - weighing only 65 pounds when he died. In the end, through his desperation to avoid being murdered, *he* was the one responsible for his own death. It really goes to show: if you want something doing right, do it yourself.

**Hungry For More?**

While some dumb deaths are caused by no eating at all, occasionally someone will kick the bucket because of the total opposite. In this case, the bucket was filled to the brim with sticky, delicious sweet rolls. Adolf Frederick, King of Sweden from 1751 to 1771, wasn’t a particularly good king. He was regarded as lacking the aptitude, fortitude and integrity necessary to successful kingship. But what he lacked as a king, he made up for in appetite. He was a lover of food, with a sweet tooth, and it could never be said that his eyes were bigger than his belly. But while the amount of food he consumed on his last meal in February 1771 *did* exceed the limitations of his large belly, he finished it nonetheless. After a heaping feast of seafood, sauerkraut and champagne, he moved on to dessert. This consisted of no less than 14 Swedish sweet rolls, all dipped in hot milk flavoured with cinnamon and raisins. While he was reportedly stockpiling for the Christian tradition of Lent, he clearly overshot his mark, as his digestive system completely shut down and he died. It just goes to show: death by cake isn’t as sweet as it sounds.

**A Cut Above The Vest**

Nobody wants to be conned when making a purchase. Indeed, being sold a stab-proof vest that offers the protection of a wet noodle is hardly an ideal scenario. But it should go without saying that testing the stab-ability of such a vest should be done with at least one qualifying factor: taking the vest off first. Unfortunately, that first rule of stab club whistled in one ear, through the empty skull cavity, and out the other ear of one Englishman in 2018. Mistakenly believing his jacket was stab-proof, the man took a knife and plunged it into his jacket while at the kitchen table. It turned out, the jacket wasn’t stab-proof, and funnily enough, neither was he.

Before I get to the dumbest death magnets of the bunch, let’s take a look at some contenders who somehow managed to avoid qualifying for a Darwin award by surviving their stupidity**. This electrician clearly trained with the best**, because after all, there’s no better insulator than a nice cool puddle of muddy water. Another top-of-the-class graduate of the Elite Electricians Academy is this fellow, who’s also in on the secret that water and electricity are actually a *great* mix – but the rubber industry doesn’t want you to know that! For any Darwin Award nominees watching – that was a joke. Anyway, this next close contender seems to be **pulling a prank with a fuel-depleted chainsaw held alarmingly close to his nether region**. But the risk-to-reward ratio of this particular prank earns this guy a firm position in the at-risk Darwin award survivors club. That’s just no place for a chainsaw, joke or not. The final at-risk survivor is this fellow who let rage overcome any shred of rational thought. While his friend drives, he takes the noble position of car-puncher; hanging out of the car window and attacking the hard walls of another vehicle with his bare hands, like the genius he so clearly is. As his car swerves, he accidentally opens his door, and tumbles gracefully onto the highway. Hey, at least he stuck the landing! Though, if this is his reaction to a bit of road rage, I feel like his Darwin award isn’t too far away over the horizon.

**A Bridge Too Far**

Videogames, movies and TV shows have led us all to believe that clearing a rising drawbridge in a car is a viable feat. It isn’t. But that realisation never occurred to a couple of wannabe Texan stuntmen who put their inflated senses of their own abilities to the test in May 2019. Witnesses reported seeing a car’s passenger lift the barrier of the Black Bayou drawbridge in Louisiana, before the car sped off up the rising ramp. Now, admittedly, some people do *occasionally* survive these jumps, like this distracted driver who didn’t even realise the bridge had begun to rise before cruising over the top to the other side. But these people are the minority and shouldn’t be taken as representative of the majority. Because the majority, like our Texan friends, follow a learning curve that’s steeper than the downward path of their car. However, any learning was short-lived in this case, as the Texan pair were trapped in their car after it failed to make the jump to the other side. They sank and soon drowned. Put simply, they were neither fast, nor furious enough.

Which Darwin award winner do you think was the stupidest? Do you know of any more ridiculously dumb ways people died? Let me know in the comments section below. Thanks for watching!