**Embarrassingly Dumb Ways People Died - Darwin Awards Winners [Part 4]**

The advancement of civilisation has given a fighting chance to those whose lack of awareness might’ve got them killed in the past. But there are some people that make such terrible decisions, even the achievements of the modern world can’t keep them alive. Let’s dive into some unbelievably dumb ways people died, earning themselves a Darwin award for natural selection.

**“Garbage Day!”**

No one likes having to take out the trash for collection… ***[run clip]*** …but we don’t usually expect to find *ourselves* carried off alongside our garbage. But for Diego Mata, a combination of heavy drinking and dumpster diving lead to exactly that, one fateful evening in March 2019. CCTV footage taken on the night in Rosemont, Illinois’ entertainment district, captured the 31-year-old drunkenly climbing into a dumpster around 4am. An hour later, the garbage truck arrived, tipping the contents of the dumpster – including Mata – into its powerful mechanical jaws. Mata’s body was later recovered from a sanitation facility, where he was found to have been crushed to death. What a rubbish way to go.

**Water Hazard**

It seems like common sense that – if you don’t know how to swim – you should probably learn before doing ocean water-sports. Unfortunately, this didn’t occur to Jerry Device in July 2019, when he took to the sea in the jet ski he’d purchased mere hours earlier. Despite his desire to have a wild time in the water, Device never learned to swim, so when he lost control and flipped his new toy, he was thrown into serious peril. Within moments, the sea had overwhelmed him, and he drowned. When you’re in Poseidon’s house, it pays to be respectful. Because he can be one remorseless son of a titan.

**Deadly Hydration**

Tina Christopherson was an extremely intelligent woman, with a reported IQ of 189. Unfortunately, irrational fear affects even the smartest minds, and a specific fear of stomach cancer was responsible for Tina’s demise. She’d seen her mother suffer an agonising death from the disease, which drove her to obsess over avoiding that fate for herself. She became convinced that she could avoid stomach cancer by intermittently fasting for extended periods, in which she would only consume water. During these fasts, she would drink as much as four gallons of water a day. The extended strain of this practice pushed her kidneys into failure, causing water to migrate to her lungs. Despite being on solid ground, the water in Tina’s lungs caused her to drown. In the end, her neurotic desperation to avoid death had, in fact, killed her. So, remember kids, stay hydrated – but not *too* hydrated, okay?

**Black Death Dining**

Luckily, most of us will never have to suffer the disease that wiped out around half the European population in the 14th century. I’m talking, of course, about the Black Death, or bubonic plague, which is caused by a bacterium called *Yersinia pestis*. The disease is spread by fleas carried by rodents, and while we can treat it with antibiotics now, its symptoms spread fast and are extremely painful, deadly and highly infectious. Over the years, we’ve figured out that – among other methods – to avoid ending up covered in oozing buboes and gangrene, it helps to avoid touching wild rodents. But not only did a Mongolian couple miss the memo in May 2019, they took their ignorance to the next level, by consuming the raw kidney of a rodent known as a marmot. Believing the meat to be good for their health, consuming it actually gave both of them bubonic plague. Not only did they both die, they caused a 6-day quarantine of locals and tourists who had come into contact with the couple. Clearly, there are worse ways to make people suffer from your eating habits than microwaving stanky fish in the office break room! I’d take stinky seafood or pungent cheese over deadly, bacterial rodent disease.

**Pain in the Neck**

On a cold night in September 1927, famous French-American dancer Isadora Duncan was preparing for an evening out in a friend’s sports car. On their parting, another friend implored Isadora to put a warm cape over her shoulders, as the open-top car would run a substantial breeze during the drive. Isadora decided that some stylish neckwear would be sufficient, so she wrapped a long, flowing silk scarf around her neck, and was ready to go. The driver began to drive off, while Isadora said – what would indeed be – her final goodbyes. But, to the horror of her onlooking friends, the scarf was whipped up in the wind, and drifted over the edge of the car. It had soon wrapped itself around the open spokes of the vehicle’s wheels, and was rapidly pulling Isadora onto a shorter and shorter leash. She was yanked out of the vehicle, into the road, and under the car. The wheel ran over her neck, breaking it instantly, and she was left wedged in between the wheel and mudguard. A gruesome end, and a timeless example of the dangers of putting fashion first.

**The Bad Boy’s Burning Bed**

Charles the Bad certainly lived up to his name during his reign as King of Navarre between 1349 and 1387. He was a big fan of cruelty, deception and murder, either carried out by his own hands, or those of assassins… *[****roll clip****]* But his life of narcissism, backstabbing, violence and hatred took its toll, and by the time he was 54, his health had deteriorated to a point where he could barely move his limbs. With death looming closer by the day, his doting physicians – armed with the highest calibre of medical knowledge at the time, which basically amounted to nothing at all – tried one final, experimental method to restore his health. Like some sickly, royal Christmas pudding, they wrapped him up tightly in linen cloth that had been soaked in brandy, hoping the strong alcohol would restore some vigour. Unfortunately, the servant tasked with stitching the linen together found she’d used off more thread than needed for the process, but instead of cutting and knotting the extra at the end, she decided to burn it with a candle. The alcohol caught alight, and the king went up in flames, burning to death shortly after. Whether the servant was a bumbling idiot, or trained assassin, Charles made a fatal mistake in going along with such unusual and hazardous practices… practices that would leave him more than a little hot under the collar.

**The Dangers of Fast Food**

Everybody knows too much fast food is bad for us. But in his last moments on Earth, Charles Wood Jr. of Velda City, Missouri, learnt the real dangers of the drive-thru experience. Wood placed his order at a local Jack in the Box and pulled up to the collection window. Reaching out of his car window, he realised he was too far away to take his food from the restaurant worker, and opened his car door, stretching out to grab his meal. Unfortunately, in doing so, he rested his foot on the accelerator of his car. The car was in reverse, and was sent barrelling backwards into a tree. Wood was sandwiched between the two objects, and later succumbed to his injuries. The lesson here? Never order fast food, especially if you’re the type to use the accelerator as a footrest.

**Dog’s Dinner**

You’d think that an esteemed, respected philosopher, who made great progress in our understanding of what it means to exist, would be met with an esteemed, respectful end. But for Ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus, this was far from the case. Though he had spent his whole life thinking and reflecting, he really should’ve thought harder about his self-prescribed cure when he developed dropsy. Dropsy involves the accumulation of fluid under the skin and inside the cavities of the body, and is often a symptom of serious lung, heart or liver diseases. According to sources from the time, Heraclitus came to the conclusion that burying himself in a shed full of cow manure would help draw out some of the fluid by warmth. Unfortunately, Heraclitus was unable to get himself free after hours spent in the dung heap, and in his trapped state was unable to defend himself when a pack of dogs came sniffing around. They devoured him alive, despite the notably pungent aftertaste. ***[roll clip]***

**Pillow Armor**

We’ve all made up some pretty ridiculous excuses to get out of things. But one Turkish man in July 2019 went *way* beyond the regular “sorry, boss, I’m sick – totally not hungover or anything”. After being sentenced to community service for wounding someone in a fight, Zafer Kuzu decided that he just didn’t feel like doing it. So, he and his friends hatched a, uh, *brilliant* plan. By strapping two pillows to his back for protection and getting his friend to shoot him with a shotgun, Zafer hoped he’d be *just injured enough* to get out of community service. It worked; he certainly never had to do community service. Because he died almost instantly. On top of that, his friend was injured from the blast too, and was also charged with his friend’s murder. Yep, humans really can be *that* dumb.

**Holding It In**

When you gotta go, you gotta go. It’s the opening line of every religious text ever written. Take my word for it. But in 1601, a Danish astronomer and alchemist called Tycho Brahe chose to disobey this great nugget of wisdom. He’s mostly remembered for his comprehensive collection of empirical observations about the stars and space, but perhaps the most astronomical thing he ever encountered was the size of his bladder following his final meal. You see, Tycho was a stickler for the rules of being a nobleman, to the extreme. While enjoying a feast, the astronomer found himself needing to use the little boys’ room – which was, at the time, little more than a hole in the floor. However, through Tycho’s interpretation of nobleman etiquette, he convinced himself it would be incredibly rude to leave the feast for such a vulgar act of urination. So, he remained in place for several hours, only able to relieve himself on his return home. But he found that he was only able to pee in very short, agonising spurts. Within a few days, he was dead. Holding it in too long had led Tycho’s bladder to burst, resulting in a *very* painful death. Rather than worrying about both his P’s and Q’s, perhaps he should’ve just stuck to the P’s.

**Kill It With Fire!**

In May 2019, A 63-year-old man discovered that his basement was infested with bugs. Fancying himself a bit of a DIY exterminator, he located the source of the infestation, and entered the crawlspace with a propane torch in hand. **Shooting flames willy-nilly like a dragon with allergies, he soon found that more than the bugs were catching alight.** As the flammable materials lining the crawlspace caught alight, he found himself unable to stop drop and roll – as the space was far too tight for such gymnastics – and he was burnt to a crisp. In the process, he also caused $60,000 of damage to his house. But hey, at least the bugs are gone, right?

**Smack-talking The Gators**

While it’s true that some people can’t help being stupid, other people are *willingly* stupid, with an infuriating dash of arrogance thrown in. After a 10-ft alligator had been spotted in a Texas marina, staff put up a warning sign. This was not enough to scare off one local man on a night in July 2015, and neither were the repeated verbal warnings issued by a marina employee. The employee looked on in horror as the man responded with ‘**[censor bleep]** the alligators’ and jumped straight into the marina. Almost immediately, he screamed out for help, but it was too late. Within minutes, the man was floating, motionless, face-down on the surface, dead. Clearly, alligators take profanity very seriously… ***[roll clip]***

**How To Hypnotise An Elephant**

If you’re an animal hypnotist in training - test your skills on your cat, or a neighbour’s dog, or even a zoo animal safely behind protective glass. *Don’t* try to hypnotise a wild elephant. It seems unbelievable, but in January 2019, a Sri Lankan man did exactly that. The man was travelling with his family when he spotted the huge animal grazing in a field. He approached the animal, getting its attention, and got closer and closer until the elephant charged. Hoping to hypnotise the elephant back into placidity, the man performed a sudden hand gesture and stood his ground. Unfortunately, this worked about as much as you’d expect. ***[roll clip]*** The elephant trampled the man to death, while his family looked on in horror. The mistake was clear; he forgot his hypnotist pendant. I’m sure **he would’ve been just *fine* if he’d started swinging one of those**. It’s not like giant, wild, tusked beasts are *dangerous*, after all…

Were you as blown away as I was by the unbelievable stupidity that led to some of these people’s untimely demise? Have you heard of any other Darwin Award-worthy cases? Let me know in the comments section below. Thanks for watching!