

Games stopped for unskilled bandit

In a perhaps unintentional bid for the worst criminal disguise of 2018, Kerry Hammond Jr., 22, broke into a GameStop store in St. Marys, Georgia, at 1:19 a.m. on April 13, where he was captured on camera wearing a clear plastic wrapper (of the sort that holds bundles of bottled water) over his head. Even with the plastic "mask," WJXT reported, Hammond's face is clearly visible in surveillance video, and St. Marys police quickly identified him and captured him April 17. Hammond already had two active warrants for his arrest.

BRIGHT IDEAS

— Resorting to a low-tech, but possibly offensive strategy, Largo, Fla., detectives visited a dead man at Sylvan Abbey Funeral Home in Clearwater and attempted to use his finger to unlock his smartphone. Linus F. Phillip, 30, was shot and killed by Largo police March 23 after he tried to drive away from an officer wanting to search him. As part of their investigation, police said they needed to access and preserve data on Phillip's phone.

Legal experts generally agreed the detectives had not broken any laws, but Phillip's girlfriend, Victoria Armstrong, 28, was less forgiving: "Nobody even calling us ... to let us know

NEWS OF THE WEIRD

detectives were coming there at all is very disturbing," she told the *Tampa Bay Times*. "I'm very skeptical of all funeral homes now."

BAD ATTITUDE

Timothy Hill, 67, of Grassington, North Yorkshire, England, having installed a laser jammer in his Range Rover, thought he was outsmarting law enforcement speed cameras. In fact, he was so sure of his scheme he repeatedly raised his middle finger to the cameras — sometimes casually, sometimes aggressively — as he passed. What he didn't realize was the laser jammer, rather than hiding his identity, was only blocking police from determining his speed, so when they tracked him down, he was charged not with speeding, but with perverting the course of justice.

"If you want to attract our attention, repeatedly gesturing at police camera vans with your middle finger while you're driving a distinctive car fitted with a laser jammer is an excellent way to do it," Traffic Constable Andrew Forth told *Metro News*. Hill pleaded guilty April 23, and was sentenced to eight months in jail and prohibited from driving for a year.

LEAST COMPETENT CRIMINAL

Kiana Wallace, 24, was sentenced to 18 months in prison in Belmont County, Ohio, on April 23 following her guilty plea for tampering with evidence. On probation after a drug possession sentence in 2017, Wallace failed a drug urine test when the "borrowed" sample she used tested positive.

"Let me get this straight," Judge Frank Fregiato said in court, according to WTOV-TV. "To avoid the positive test with your own urine, you used someone else's urine, which turned out to be positive also. That's bizarre."

INEXPLICABLE

— On April 23, police officers in Warren, Mich., responded to a home for a welfare check on 68-year-old George Curtis, whose relatives had become concerned because they hadn't heard from him. Curtis was, indeed, dead — in fact, WJBK-TV reported, he had been deceased for months, maybe even a year. Also in the home: his girlfriend, who had continued living there with his decaying body, which was laid out in a bed. Police transported the

unnamed woman to a hospital for a mental evaluation and are awaiting a report on cause of death from the medical examiner.

— Meanwhile, on the South Side of Chicago,

police responded to reports of an elderly woman pushing a dead body around the Chatham neighborhood in a shopping cart on April 21, according to the *Chicago*

Sun-Times. Officers took the woman to a hospital for a mental evaluation and launched an investigation into the female body, whose age and identity had not been determined.

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Thank You Again.

Candidate accused of threat

CHATTANOOGA (AP) —

A Tennessee county commissioner accused of threatening his opponent to drop out of the race has pleaded not guilty.

The *Chattanooga Times Free Press* reports Hamilton County Commissioner Tim Boyd entered his plea on the criminal extortion felony charge Friday, days after he defeated East Ridge Mayor Brent Lambert to clinch his third term.

Lambert said Boyd had threatened to release negative information about him if he didn't drop out of the

STATE ROUNDUP

race. Lambert said he recorded those phone conversations.

Defense attorney Lee Davis filed a motion to dismiss on Thursday, saying Boyd's actions were protected political speech and there was no threat.

That motion to dismiss will be heard in June.

NASHVILLE (AP) —

Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam and Department of Economic and Community

Development Commissioner Bob Rolfe are heading to Europe on state business.

A news release says the trip began Friday and will last until this coming Friday. It aims to strengthen ties with European businesses and increase foreign direct investment in Tennessee.

The trip will include stops in the United Kingdom, Sweden, Germany, Austria and Italy.

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