

WHY DO THEY DO IT?



As mentioned in Chapter 1, throughout this text, we are presenting what some may consider “high-profile” crimes or crimes that have received a great deal of media attention, either due to the individuals involved or the outrageous nature of the offense. When reading or hearing about these crimes, many of us may ask ourselves, “Why do they do it?” For this particular chapter, however, we have decided to present what many may consider “odd” or “strange” types of offenses. While these crimes may not be as highly publicized as other offenses in later sections, they often evoke the same question, “Why do they do it?”

CONTAMINATED METH

The Granite Shoals (Texas) Police department posted the following to Facebook:

Breaking News: Area Meth and Heroin Supply Possibly Contaminated With Ebola. Meth and Heroin recently brought in to Central Texas as well as the ingredients used to make it could be contaminated with the life threatening disease Ebola. If you have recently purchased meth or heroin in Central Texas, please take it to the local police or sheriff department so it can be screened with a special device. DO NOT use it until it has been properly checked for possible Ebola contamination! Contact any Granite Shoals PD officer for testing. Please share in hopes we get this information to anyone who has any contaminated meth or heroin that needs tested.

A few days later, Chastity Hopson brought her drugs to the Granite Shoals police station so it could be tested for Ebola. Subsequently, she was arrested and charged with possession of a controlled substance. The Facebook posting was a hoax.³⁶

HOMEMADE LICENSE PLATE

Amanda Schweickert, of Buffalo, New York, was pulled over by Erie County Sheriff’s officers. The officers noticed that there was something odd about her license plate. Upon further inspection, they noticed that she had painted a piece of cardboard in an attempt to make it look like a New York license plate. They also discovered that she was driving with a suspended license and no insurance. Ms. Schweickert was charged with possession of a forged instrument, driving with a suspended registration, and three traffic offenses.³⁷

BEER-BATTERED FISH DEFENSE

John Przybyla, 75, was a serial drunk driver in Adams County, Wisconsin. He had nine previous charges of operating a vehicle while intoxicated. On October 12, 2015, he was pulled over for the 10th time. However, he explained to the officers that he had eaten some beer-battered fish and that that was the reason his blood alcohol level was above the legal limit.³⁸

USHER STEALS OFFERINGS

Deputies from the Marion County Sheriff’s Office (Florida) received a call from officials at the Blessed Trinity Catholic Church. The church officials had some suspicions that one of their ushers was stealing money. The deputies set up surveillance cameras in the church. The cameras caught Mario Condis, a 60-year-old church usher, stealing money from the church offering baskets while the congregation was in prayer. He would take the money from the baskets and place it in his pockets. Condis was arrested on one count of grand theft and three counts of petit theft.³⁹

So, “why do they do it?” Do you think it may be due to mental illness? Alcohol abuse? Substance abuse? In the following chapters, we will present theories that try to understand and explain criminal behavior from various perspectives (e.g., sociological, psychological, biosocial). As you continue with the text, you will learn how criminologists throughout the centuries have attempted to understand and explain what is considered *criminal behavior*.