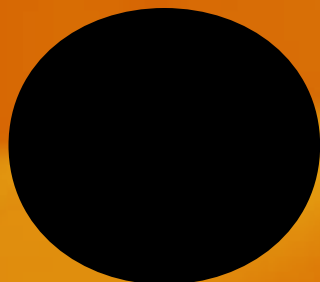


**IT'S
NOT
MY**

FAULT



The best excuses and stories municipal parking professionals have heard from illegal parkers.

Spend any time in parking enforcement and it's not long before you'll hear an excuse for a violation that'll make you shake your head (or burst out laughing). It's kind of like the dog eating the homework, only for grown-ups who are caught in the act of parking illegally. You might think it'd be easier to just pay the fine than come up with the stories, but people do it every day.

We asked IPI's municipal members for their favorite "not my fault" stories, and got some doozies. You won't believe what people will say and do to avoid a ticket.



In Seattle, we have pay and display on-street parking. The customer must stick a paid parking receipt on the inside of their window facing out. While enforcing in the university district, I came across a car that did not have a valid pay station receipt. As I started to issue a citation, I looked at the puppy that was in the passenger seat staring at me. The dog had the pay station receipt in its mouth. The dog ultimately dropped the receipt, and I could see that the owner had paid for their parking and the receipt was valid.

Nathan Morrow
Parking Enforcement Officer
Seattle Police Department





One of my favorite parking citation contesting stories was from a previous job in another city. We received an email from someone with a video attached. He was filming the departure of a parking enforcement officer after he had been “harassed” for parking in a red zone. The video went on for about five minutes, recounting the entire incident and explaining how only the bumper of his vehicle was in the red zone and the officer was overzealous and this was a clear example of someone on a power trip, how it was totally unacceptable and that he was going to the press with his video if we did not immediately dismiss the citation. After reviewing the video we considered nominating it for an Academy Award for cinematography. Why? Because the entire time he was filming his docu-drama he managed to perfectly frame his vehicle in the background—totally, completely, and clearly entirely in the red zone!

Chad Lynn, CAPP
Director of Parking Operations
City of Beverly Hills

I recently cited a Range Rover for parking in the wrong direction. The sorority girl came out and asked why I had issued a citation. I asked her to look down the line of 20 or so vehicles and tell me what she saw that was different about her vehicle than all the others. She looked and replied, “Duh, I’m the only one driving a Range Rover.”

Anthony Adams
Parking Control Officer
Lexington & Fayette County Parking Authority

I received a letter from an individual who was quite upset with a ticket he received for double parking. He admitted double parking to drop his wife off to shop; she had apparently just had foot surgery and was on crutches. While he was double parked, one of our enforcement officers told him to move his car. He refused and an altercation ensued that resulted in the Boston Police being called to the scene. He believed he was justified in double parking due to his wife’s condition and even included the Boston Police incident report and his wife’s x-rays and post-op patient information sheet for her Chevron bunionectomy in a letter to us. I’m sure his wife would be horrified to know that he sent her medical records to the parking clerk to have a \$45 ticket dismissed!

Gina Fiandaca
Parking Clerk
City of Boston

A lady came into our office to appeal a ticket she received for parking in a handicap parking space and not displaying a handicap placard. She said to the staff person, “I had my placenta hanging on the rear view mirror so why did I get a ticket?”

Clement Gibson, CAPP
Special Programs Manager
City of Charlotte
Department of Transportation

We booted a car on a Friday afternoon for having three citations that were more than 90 days old. When we checked on the boot the next Monday morning, the only thing we found was our boot on the tire and wheel and about 18 inches of axle. The rest of the vehicle was gone. Our attorney said we couldn’t pursue the vehicle owner as they never tampered with the boot. Ultimately though, we collected all past due money from the lady. And now she pays her citations soon after she receives them.

Harry Brown
Parking Services Manager
City of Asheville, N.C.

One of my favorites was the lady whose vehicle we booted for past due parking tickets, who was caught removing the wheel we had booted and putting her spare tire on. When confronted, she said she was going to take the car to get her kid from daycare and then come back to replace the wheel and boot.

Joshua Mallernee
St. Parking Attendant
City of Asheville, N.C.

We booted a vehicle for failure to pay outstanding parking fines. A couple of hours later, the vehicle was gone. I went up the street and found the vehicle roughly parked in at another meter with part of the boot still attached, but no one nearby. Because the driver had attempted to flee and had damaged city property, a patrol was dispatched to the scene. Shortly after the officer arrived, the vehicle's driver showed up. During questioning, the driver was asked why he moved the vehicle when it was booted with a notice clearly taped onto the driver's window. The driver responded that he got in on the passenger side. When further asked how could he not see the yellow notice on the window once he got into the drivers' seat, he replied that he just didn't look out the window.

It took a lot of restraint for me, as well as the officer, to keep from breaking out laughing.

The next day a nightclub employee called me over with the missing part of our boot. He couldn't stop laughing while describing the scene when the vehicle went "clunk clunk clunking down the street with this big orange thing on the side."

The vehicle driver managed to drive about 200 meters to avoid paying his fines & boot fee; the damage to his vehicle was probable significantly more. And he still had to pay to have his vehicle released.

Nathaniel Mitchell
Parking Enforcement Officer
Colorado Springs Police Department

Someone came in with a parking ticket and said that they were illiterate and couldn't read the no parking sign. We asked how they were able to get a driver's license. The parking violator then promptly paid the ticket and left without saying anything.

Mary Stutleen
Public Works Supervisor, Parking
& Administrative Divisions
City of Green Bay

An enforcement officer approached a vehicle parked in a No Stopping or Standing zone. Inside the vehicle was a young woman at the wheel. The officer explained that she needed to move the car or he would be forced to issue a summons to the vehicle. The young lady began to tear up and told the officer that her mother had just died and that her friend was running into the store to pick up a few things. The officer felt bad and told the young woman that he would allow her to stay there for five more minutes before he issued a ticket. Just then, a woman came up to the car and asked the officer if there was a problem. The officer inquired who this woman was and she answered, "I'm her mother!" Needless to say, the officer offered his condolences when he handed the young woman the summons.



Mitch Karon, CAPP
Executive Director
New Brunswick Parking Authority

An officer observed a vehicle parking on the street with a disabled permit. The officer approached the driver before he entered a store and asked to see his disabled registration. The driver stated that the permit belongs to his wife. The officer asked if his wife was inside the store and the driver replied that no, she'd passed away about two years ago.

Humberto Escandon
Enforcement & Special Events Manager
Miami Parking Authority

One of our facilities is managed by a revenue control system where you take a ticket on the way in and pay on the way out (credit card accepting also on the way out). A young man, in an effort to get out without paying, drove close to the gated arm, struggled to lift the arm, and drove off (this is all on video). A week later he tried the same thing, but it got interesting. He stopped for awhile at the equipment box and tried to open it—no luck there. Then he drove up to the arm and had difficulty lifting. Just when he thought he lifted it up, the arm came flying down on his white BMW. So then, he lifted the arm off the car and drove back into the garage. The police gave him the option to pay for the damage and the cost of parking or it would go further, and he opted to pay for what he owed (\$700). Smart guy, kinda!

Kathryn Hebert
Administrative Services Manager
City of Norwalk, Conn.

We deployed pay stations at our civic center last year and shortly after that I came upon a rather benign-looking fellow standing in front of one of the units, staring at it intently. When I asked if he needed help he replied that no, he already knew all about them. I said, "So you've already used these somewhere else?" He looked at me and shook his head saying, "Nope, I'm not going to use it. I know too much about the technology."

A bit puzzled, I asked for clarification. He responded, "Oh yeah, these things use alien technology, perfected in that secret base down in New Mexico. The government's been working on it for years and finally figured how to use some of it. These have all got tracking devices so the government can know all the time where you've been."

I didn't know quite how to respond to that. He said, "I can give you a website that tells you all about it if you're interested." I agreed, and he pulled a scrap of paper out of his pocket and jotted down a web address. He passed it to me and turned to leave, saying, "If I was you, I wouldn't touch those things." With that he walked away. I must admit that I never did check out the website.

Opal Mahoney

Manager

City of Bellingham, Wash., Public Works



The situation that comes to mind is from when I was at Syracuse University. I had to go up to the counter because a

student scared my staff; he was wearing a leather jacket with sharp metal studs all over the arms and elbows and wrists that looked just perfect for ripping a gash across someone's face! He looked like a motorcycle gang member getting ready to rumble with chains. He was on registration hold and was leaning over the counter telling staff they better release the hold! They were truly frightened.

So I went up to the counter, but not too close, and was ready to dodge. Then I got him to sit down, and after a short discussion, he agreed to pay off half of his balance in cash, so that we would release the hold so he could get his transcripts for grad school, and then he would need to pay the balance to get his diploma and transcripts when he graduated at the end of the semester. He agreed.

He came back the next day with the cash, wearing a nice button-down shirt and tie along with a three-piece suit! I told him that he was looking sharp, and asked what he was dressed up for. He replied that he was interviewing for a high-paying job as an alternative to going to grad school.

Michael T. Klein, CAPP

Executive Director

Albany Parking Authority

An elderly man called in because he received a ticket for parking at a yellow curb in front of his house. He said he shouldn't have gotten it. The customer service representative started explaining about not being allowed to park at a yellow curb. The man interrupted, "No, you don't understand. My neighbor and I painted the curb ourselves so the students couldn't park there."

Gary Means, CAPP

Executive Director

Lexington & Fayette

County Parking Authority

Got a great excuse or story of your own?

We'll print more of them in a future issue of *The Parking Professional*.

Email your funniest, weirdest, or most offbeat moment to fernandez@parking.org.

We can't wait to hear it!