

SHE SAID WHAT?



COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES are high-thinking places...most of the time. When it comes to parking, reasoning goes out the window, and excuses for why this vehicle is parked illegally or that ticket should be excused reach the height of creativity.

We recently asked IPI college and university members for their best stories from the parking lot. These are our favorites.

Timely

We had a situation where a driver decided to park in someone else's 24-hour-reserved stall. The stall owner complained, and the offending vehicle was towed. When the vehicle owner came in looking for her car, she was told it was towed because it was parked in a 24-hour-reserved spot whose rightful user had complained. The vehicle owner then burst into tears and shouted, "But I was only parked for four hours!"

Emily Ellis
Operations Manager,
Parking Services
University of Alberta

Not Quite Right

An enforcer called wanting someone to come to our electric charging spaces. When I arrived, there was a Honda Civic parked in an EV-only space. The problem the enforcer had was that the car looked plugged in. The student owner of the car had opened the hood, placed the charging cable inside, and closed it back up. Because he couldn't close the hood all the way, I could see the car had a gas motor and nothing was actually plugged in. The car was issued a citation for being a non-EV in an EV-only space.

Andrew van der Hoek
Parking Services System Analyst
University of San Diego



X-Ray Vision

Graduation day: There was a steady flow of cars in two parking lots. General parking turned left, and handicapped parking went past the general lot and went straight.

A lady pulled up beyond general parking without a handicapped symbol on her plate or a hangtag on her rearview mirror. She started honking and waving for me to move out of her way so she could access the ADA lot. I walked around to her window and told her she had to display a hangtag or have a marked license plate to enter that lot. She opened her glovebox and furiously produced an ADA hangtag, which she slammed onto her mirror.

I apologized for not seeing the hangtag in the glovebox and let her proceed.

Kim Dickey
Parking Supervisor
Prairie View A&M University



Hard to Say Goodbye

A student received a citation for parking in a space reserved for the handicapped without a handicap placard. He called the office and told us he was taking his grandmother out to lunch and said she couldn't walk very far so he parked with her and forgot to hang her placard from his mirror. He then gave us her placard number.

We ran the number through the DMV and learned his grandmother had died four years prior.

Denise Petrella
Administrative Assistant, Parking Services
University of Delaware



Marital Bliss

A professor of some 20 years didn't regularly check his automated pay stub for automatic deductions: health benefits, taxes, and optional parking fees. He caught the green bug several years ago and stopped parking on campus but ignored parking reminders and notices; he

also never filed the form to stop his pre-tax deductions for a parking permit.

Several years later, he met his true love and got married. His new wife began wondering why there were so many deductions from his check and realized he was still paying for parking. After more than six years of paying for no good reason, he reluctantly submitted a request for a refund of more than \$10,000.

Unfortunately, because the mistake was his, his restitution was considerably less than he requested. But grateful for any consideration for his costly blunder and not wanting to re-file taxes for seven years, he thanked me for always treating him as a special customer and listening to his stories.

Lesson: You never really know how valuable good customer services is (in this case, \$8,000).

David C. Jost, CAPP
Parking Services Director
Drexel University

Creative, But...

One day several years ago, I was walking across campus and noticed a woman struggling to move a barricade, caution tape, and a traffic cone out of a parking space. Her vehicle was idling in the drive aisle, waiting for access to the coveted close-in space.

I approached her and proceeded to lecture her about not disrupting a construction zone and the fact that her actions were clearly against university parking regulations. She politely interrupted me to explain that she'd placed the items in the space an hour earlier when she left for lunch.

Stunned, I stammered something about being impressed with her resourcefulness and hurried off without giving her my name or position. To this day, I wonder if investing in traffic cones might just be the cheapest way to obtain a reserved parking space.

Lance Broeking
Director of Parking and Transportation
University of Kentucky





It's Complicated

This car ended up on the stairs when its driver thought that would be the fastest way to exit a parking lot.

Andrew Stewart, CAPP
 Superintendent, Parking and
 Transportation Services
 University of California, Riverside

Slight Misunderstanding

A young man came into the office with a ticket he wanted to appeal. He had parked in the space reserved for the university president. He explained that the president had given him permission to use the space while he traveled to China.

We continued asking questions and found the source of the confusion:

It turned out his fraternity president had offered the young man his space.



Carol Forester
 Parking Specialist
 Missouri State University

Precious Baby

Working in a university setting, it's common to have interactions with the occasional "helicopter parent." A few years ago, our office received a call from an unhappy mother. She believed that the parking area offered to her son wasn't within reasonable proximity to his residence hall. We explained that the lot he had been assigned was a quick five to seven minute walk to his room. "Ridiculous and unacceptable," she replied. We gently inquired about any accommodations that her son may require for closer parking. No, that wasn't the issue. Her concern? "He's too precious to walk that far."

Cindy Campbell

Associate Director for University Police
 California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

Buy a Watch

The holder of an evening parking permit (valid between 5 p.m. and 7 a.m.) found his vehicle booted for displaying an altered daily pass. This is the actual conversation that followed:

Me: You weren't immobilized for anything having to do with your valid evening permit. You were immobilized for displaying an altered daily pass (a date of "16" had been looped around on top and changed to "18"). Whether you personally did the altering or not, someone did to defraud the university and you were the one displaying it, so you're responsible.

Him: I can have [multiple witnesses] contact you to confirm I was off campus all day. I'm never here during the day—that's why I have an evening permit.

Me: You're never here during the day?

Him: No. I had to make special arrangements to come here today just to talk to you.

Me: So I understand your point, you're saying the entire reason you have an evening permit and the reason you're arguing that this citation is invalid is because that's the

only time of day you're ever on campus and you had a valid permit for that time frame?

Him: Yes, exactly! I have other obligations during the day. I can't be here; it's not possible."

Me: If that's the case, why would a daily pass, altered or not, be displayed on your dashboard? Or even be in your car?

[long, silent pause]

Him: I don't know. I have to go.

David Donovan
 Associate Director, Operations
 USC Transportation



ISTOCK

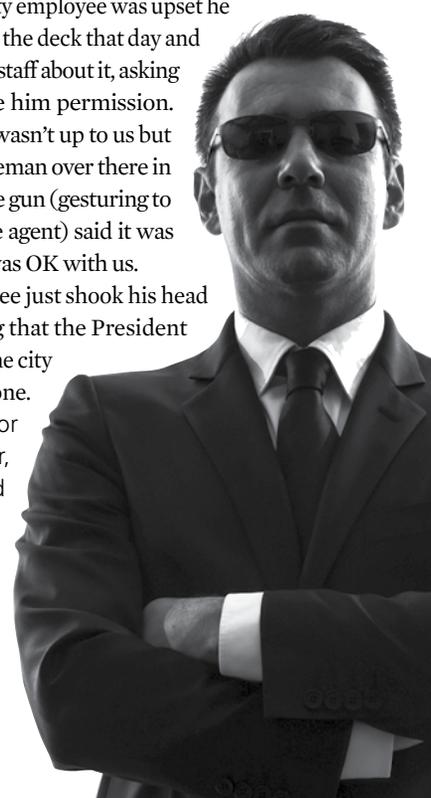
POTUS Who?

Being in the Washington, D.C. area, we have hosted many presidential visits and are used to working with the Secret Service to close off lots, roads, or parking decks as needed for security.

During one visit, we had a parking deck closed; it was adjacent to where the president, vice president, and several Cabinet members were speaking. Well, a university employee was upset he couldn't park in the deck that day and questioned our staff about it, asking who could give him permission. We told him it wasn't up to us but that if the gentleman over there in the suit with the gun (gesturing to a Secret Service agent) said it was OK to park, it was OK with us.

The employee just shook his head and left, yelling that the President should stay in the city and leave us alone.

Josh Cantor
 Director,
 Parking and
 Transportation
 George
 Mason
 University



ISTOCK

THE BEST PARKING STORIES FROM COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Forsooth, She Hath Prevailed

This is an actual appeal we received from a student. Our campus had just been named one of the safest in the nation, and she based her appeal on that recognition:

I call upon your attention today to request an appeal of the ticket issued to I, ***** *****, on the night of Dec. 5, 2011. This scarlet letter of the asphalt plains was issued under the pretense that I had parked in the wrong area, and as I would like to applaud your parking enforcement staff on their diligence and keen eye for a awry vehicle, I would also like to inform the Services of Parking and Transportation that I indeed did park in the correct area, for my decision protected my safety.

On said night, I was traveling to meet my colleagues in the library in order to collaborate on the nature of organic chemistry. It was the first time I had ever tried to park within the confines of the library parking lot, and the anxiety of it all was tremendous. After winding in and out of the aisles for what was the equivalent of 30 minutes, I came to the conclusion that I was not the aggressive driver needed to obtain a coveted spot. I weighed my options and realized my only alternative would be to park at Russell Union and walk. However, I quickly aborted this notion when I considered the fact that I would not be leaving the library before the new day, and I feared for my security. I am but a petite 5'6" 115 lb. girl who could easily be targeted by a deviant lurking through the night.

I reflected on GSU's reputation of being one of the safest schools in the nation and reasoned that it would be selfish of me to put myself in a position that could alter such prestige. It was then that I made the decision to take a staff's allotted parking spot. I was proud as I entered through the library's doors that I had prevented what could've been a devastating ordeal for my beloved university, only to return later, discouraged.

I disobeyed my school, a first for me. I had never once acquired such an ugly notice, yet there it was—my first ticket. I am contrite over my actions and pray that you will sympathize with my situation, and grant leniency in my sentencing. Thank you.

Decision: Appeal approved.

Kristi Bryant

Director, Parking and Transportation
Georgia Southern University



CLEMSON.COM

It Stands to Reason

A student was given a citation for parking in a fire lane. She entered an appeal stating that the reason she had parked in the fire lane was to run upstairs to her room to get something. She said that she should not have received a citation because she was not going to be in the fire lane long and besides, no building was going to catch fire because everyone was attending the Clemson football game.

Dan Hofmann, CAPP
Director, Parking and Transportation
Services
Clemson University

Sorry, Sir

One of the first things I did when I came to Cal Poly Pomona was develop a list of all the VIP staff—the president, vice president, etc., so I would know who they were when we met.

My first interaction with the president was memorable. One afternoon, my phone rang and I saw his name appear on the incoming call panel. Apparently, one of our parking officers had issued him a citation, and he was calling to ask if I would dismiss it. (For the record, his permit was still in the glove box after the car had been run through a wash.)

As a new employee who serves at the pleasure of the president, this was not the introduction I wanted! I quickly apologized and assured him that we would dismiss the citation right away. I then notified all my parking staff to make sure the president's car was not ticketed again. We entered his license plate number into our

handheld ticket writers so any ticket issued to it would be rejected by the system.

This new procedure worked very well until one year later when the President got a new car and was cited again! You can imagine my embarrassment when he showed up at our front counter, displayed his parking permit, and jokingly pounded his fist on the table, demanding that the citation be reversed.

President Ortiz and I have developed a strong, friendly working relationship over the past four years, but, I will never forget our introduction. On his retirement, we plan to present him with a gold-plated parking citation!

Michael P. Biagi
Director, Parking and Transportation Services
Cal Poly Pomona



SHUTTERSTOCK