

Screwy Days Part 14

by

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Mental is surfing the internet on his laptop, on his lap. (Cliched maybe, but it's one of the reasons people see him as reasonable and non-threatening. Only crazy people surf upside down, for example). Would you believe it, he's not using a mouse? I hate the touchpads, personally. Anywho, he is in his amazing chillout room, laying back on his leather sofa with a table and a bottle of whisky in front of him. In front of that business is an off TV. Many lava lamps surround him, as do a number of small fish tanks. The room lighting fades between pale blue and pale green. A red digital clock, projected on the ceiling, says the time is 11PM. Hum's super-new, currently unreleased album plays in the background. Mental's eyes widen and he reads aloud, from his screen: 'Scandinavian countries with some of the most relaxed laws in the world are also the happiest and most law abiding.'

Mental scratches his head: 'Huh. How counterintuitive is that?' He then laughs to himself. Then he stops, dead. After looking around the room and rubbing his chin, he bursts out in excitement: 'Of course! The less police there are, the less crimes there will be! Therefore, with NO police, everything will be perfect! I have to tell the force about my idea! Everyone will think I'm a genius!' Mental opens his specialist, police email service 'MentalMail.com' and talks to himself whilst typing: 'Morgan, Smith, Chief, you have to see this link! It says countries with more relaxed laws are safer, so I had an idea... Get rid of all police! Everything will be amazing!' He sends the message.

Mental suddenly jolts: 'No... That's insane. That could never work. Imagine if the crime rate goes out of control for whatever reason... Imagine if no one could do anything about murder! The Chief's the exact kind of person who would take my idea seriously, too... I have to send a follow up email to him.' Mental talks and types, again: 'Chief, please. You don't think I was being serious then, did you? It was a joke. Just a joke. :P Best wishes, Mental'. The cop sighs with relief. He then twiddles his thumbs far longer than normal and sighs: 'Hey ho... Hey ho hum. Ba-dum...'

Mental checks his email service to find a reply from the Chief. He notices the email heading has a 'thumbs up' on it. He shakes and goes pale. He takes a deep breath and clicks on the message. Sheepish, he then reads aloud again: 'Mental, you've impressed me YET AGAIN. Not only will Charltonham be the safest place in the world, I'll have plenty of time to learn slap bass. You can indulge in your new scuba diving hobby you've been talking about, too! Not only that, Morgan can take up finger painting, and new recruit, Constable Smith can go to college and study maths. He's kind of feeling low at the moment because he let that burglar get away three times. I've told him his reasoning abilities are fine, but he won't listen.'

Mental clicks his fingers and exclaims: 'Of course!' With urgency, he types a new message whilst jabbering: 'Chief, the public aren't open to experiences the way you and I are. They won't tolerate this madness. I'm serious, there will be riots! Worst of all, people will laugh in your face! All kinds of memes will be about you, it will be horrible! Even more wishes, Mental.' Mental relaxes into his seat and sighs: 'Phew... I've just prevented a complete catastrophe. Imagine what this town would be like with more Sausage Roll Killers doing whatever they want'. He takes a sip of whisky and puts his hands on the back of his head for a bit.

Mental gets another message. He opens it with a self-deprecating smile. Then after just a second, he freezes. He sheds a tear. And another. And another. He reads aloud a further time, stuttering: 'With all d-due respect, Mental, I think you're w-wrong... Are you trying to tell me the research you sent me was nonsense? How arrog-gant are you to say you know more than expertly documented statistics? I've already written an email to all r-residents of this town explaining the new situation. It goes 'Dear Charltonhamians. I've just came... u-up with a great idea that will totally transform l-life as you know it. To cut a long story short, there will be no more police anymore, and... t-that will result in no more crime ever again.' Mental slams his laptop shut and starts to sob. He takes another sip of whisky, puts it down and stares at the walls. Eventually, he starts to fall asleep.

Mental's eyes slowly open. He looks up to see the projected clock saying 12PM. He's overslept. He face-palms, picks his mobile from his pocket and makes a call: 'Hello, Chief. How are you?... Great. So... have you noticed any difference in the crime level, yet?... No??... I guess that's something... Ahhh... many people seem to have taken your email as a joke. Do you know the exact figures?... You've had a few hundred responses saying 'lol, good one'?... But you're sure everything will be fine??... This is important! What if we see a new sausage man??... I don't care about your bass lessons!... . What do you mean there was just one crime 'now that you think of it'?... A man in a duck costume has started pecking passers by?... I don't care if you think it's a one off!... Chief?... Chief?... Chief???' Mental throws his phone to the floor: 'Dammit!'

Mental puts his hand over his ear, trying to amplify it: 'What's that?... It sounds to me like a man doing a terrible duck impression. This is getting silly now...' Mental gasps: 'Oh no!' He runs to the chillout room door and rips it open. As the lawman legs it for his life, the hallway becomes a blur of wall-hanging mug shots. He tears the front door open this time, to see his sunlit garden, neighbouring houses and silent road. Most alarmingly however, he observes a 6 foot tall man in a bright yellow, feathered duck costume, with a huge orange beak and massive blue eyes. The strange, pseudo-creature on the property's grass stares through Mental's soul and quacks once more.

The cop is in disbelief: 'Who the HELL do you think you are? Are trying to scare me?' The duck puts his hands on his hips and nonchalantly quacks, again. Mental scratches his head and snarls: 'I know you've been pecking people! That's assault! Come with me to the station, right now!'

The duck casually removes an egg from its bum (probably some kind of visual trick) and throws it at Mental's face. Blinded, he freezes in disbelief for a good few seconds. Finally he speaks: 'Huh?' The duck quacks once more. Mental wipes the egg off his mug with one furious movement and screams: 'What do you think you're doing?!?!' The duck starts to speak in a mysterious, posh English accent: 'How do you do, Steven? What am I doing? I'm assaulting you, that's what-what-what and I have every right to, now... Don't I?' Mental sighs: 'Why are you doing this?' The duck continues: 'I'm doing it for the greatest man alive. The Sausage Roll Killer. I want you to release him.' 'Ha! Never!' 'Then you leave me no choice. I'll be back. With weapons. You don't know what you're in for.' The duck starts flapping his wings and runs across the road and into the distance. Mental sighs to himself: 'I can't let this happen. I'm going to have to demand the Chief stops this and holds a meeting in the town hall.'

A van approaches the policeman. The driver opens his window, and shouts at Mental as he passes him: 'You idiot! I've been robbed, stabbed and had my whole street set on fire and there's nothing that can be done about it!' Mental looks down in shame and mutters: 'I knew this would happen.' He then looks at his calming grass in deep reflection: 'But everything bad gets better, right?' An explosion is soon heard a short distance away, along with the motorist just seen shouting 'Just drove into your house, moron! How'd you like that??' Loud pops are heard further away along with screams of 'Aaargh! Penguins with guns!' Mental runs to his house.

Back in the chillout room with his cracked mobile, he makes a call explaining everything. Thank the Lord, the Chief was understanding. Not happy, though. In a daze, Mental turns on the TV news. Badgers with bazookas, cats with cannons, dogs with daggers, you wouldn't believe how bad things have got. Mental rubs his eyes and comments: 'I just don't understand... I did everything right... I mean... Right?' On the telebox, the men in animal costumes shout things such as 'Free the nutters!' and 'All chefs are evil!' Mental stamps his foot: 'Oh God. How long does this chef nonsense have to go on? I mean those scummy villains know how dumb they sound, right??' The visual insanity goes on for some hours.

In the town hall, The Chief of Police is standing behind a microphone. As ever, his stage is 4 feet high. The height worked before, so why change it? To be fair though, a taller stage could make the Chief look more important, but hey. Anyway, above him is that familiar ornate, wooden roof. Facing him are a hundred seated people of all shapes and sizes, but there is no pizza this time.

This situation is far too serious for feasting, though the Chief did briefly consider the food as an incentive to get people to come. But hey - no need.

The boss begins his speech: 'I suppose you're wondering why I made literally everything legal. I suppose I should have mentioned that in my email, but I thought the reason was obvious. Apparently not. So, there is less crime in Scandinavia, right? But things are more relaxed there, legally speaking. So Mental's idea was to take everything quite a bit further. Obviously it backfired. Still... hands up, who thinks we should all see how things go?...' Screams of 'NOOO!!!!' spread throughout the building. Within seconds, chairs get thrown all about the place, people get punched at random and all kinds of awful swearwords get shouted. The COP watches, blankly and twiddles his thumbs.

From on top of the roof in the middle of the room, loud bangs are heard. Unsurprisingly, no one really notices apart from the Chief, who rubs his chin and looks up. The architecture begins to crack more and more. Sunlight breaks through the gaps, as do some yellow feathers. After some serious breakages, the duck man seen earlier plummets to the ground, along with rubble and dust. He lands on a few of the rioters, squashing them with his padding. After righting himself, he pecks all of them one by one as he pushes past them, slowly making his way to the COP's stage. The Chief coughs, awkwardly. The duck climbs onto the structure, opens his beak and lunges at the policeman's neck. He then tries to beak-strangle him. Eerily calm and like a professional martial artist, the COP trips the bird over and pushes him to the ground below him. As if nothing happened, the animal faces the back of the building, and pecks people as he passes them by.

When the Chief notices that most of his audience are now writhing on the floor and that a few bloody 'victors' are looking pleased with themselves, he scratches his head and then speaks into the microphone: 'Yeah, this can't go on, can it?' The crowd murmur unintelligible words and moan. More bits of the roof fall on them. The boss continues: 'I think it's best to reintroduce the police. I've, I mean Mental has been a fool. I hope you forgive him.' A brutish, swaggering man in the background shouts to make himself heard: 'No, it made sense! This has actually been the best day of my life!' The policeman responds: 'Thanks. Alright, then. From this point on there are laws. I want to make that very clear.'

The Chief looks to ground and covers his face in shame. He then finds the strength to look back up and continue: 'I don't know how to say this, but... but... all the violence, assaults, all the murders that have happened recently... Technically speaking they were all legal, so no new arrests will be made. I know that's crazy, but laws - or rather lack of laws - are laws. Or rather lacks of laws. Whatever. Just look out for evil ducks and report them to me. So, everyone cool?' More murmurs are heard.

The Chief wipes his forehead: 'Phew!... Ok, have a great day everyone. Errr... Bye!' The 'star of the show' casually leaves the stage.