

STATUE OF LIMITATIONS

More Funny Bloopers and Witty Retorts

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A *Village Voice* review (May 11, 2011) of *Cameraman: The Life and Work of Jack Cardiff* noted that the distinguished cinematographer “began in movies in 1918” and that his “life and work ended in 2009.” The documentary, the reviewer asserted, celebrates Cardiff’s “11-decade career.” Anyone who worked for 110 years would be accomplished indeed. But by my calculations it was a nine-decade career, no small feat itself. Born in 1914, Cardiff was a child actor, which explains his start at age four.

An even more interesting longevity error was committed by *The Wall Street Journal* (November 30, 2011) in a report on a theatrical fundraising event. “Though the composer of ‘She Loves Me,’ Jerry Bock, died last year, just shy of age 82. . . .” Four paragraphs later: “Mr. Bock . . . continues to write musicals.” A correction published the following day confirmed my hunch that the latter mention was intended to refer to his collaborator, lyricist Sheldon Harnick.

Below, more amusing media mistakes and anomalies, followed by the usual caustic comebacks.

The New York Times, headline, February 17, 2011:

“Stolen Egyptian Statute is Found in Garbage”

▶ **More evidence of post-revolutionary chaos in the legal system.**

The Wall Street Journal, Corrections, November 18, 2011:

“The St. Regis Hotel’s King Cole Bar was incorrectly referred to as the King Coal Bar in a photo caption published with the Happy Hour column in some editions Thursday.”

▶ **As if fossil fuels weren’t in enough trouble already.**

New York magazine, March 5, 2012:

“[The conference organizer] emphasized short talks, and eschewed podiums, because they covered speakers’ genitals.”

▶ **A scene we’d like to see.**

The Wall Street Journal, November 15, 2011:

“And Ms. Lang recommends by about age 8 or 9 having a discussion about pornography. ‘Give them a heads up that sometimes people look at videos and pictures of naked people on the Internet and that this is not OK for kids,’ Ms. Lang says.”

▶ **Yeah, that should work out really well.**

Associated Press, headline, February 11, 2011:

“Firefighters Save Worker in NY Underground Tunnel.”

▶ **Is there another kind?**

The New York Times, January 4, 2012:

“By one measure, the Starbucks bottles can serve as the ‘perfect containers’ for a Molotov cocktail, said Kevin B. Barry, a retired New York Police Department Bomb Squad technician who analyzes how explosives are used in conflicts around the world. ‘They are excellent for what you need, because it is a weak-sided bottle with a screw-on cap,’ Mr. Barry said. ‘It is small enough to be concealed in your pocket and it fits in your hand, so you can throw it almost like a Nerf football. It’s a small projectile you can get a good grip on and you can toss it.’”

▶ **Thanks, but can you draw me a diagram, too?**

Reuters, October 12, 2011:

“A fall outing to a Massachusetts farm this week turned frightful for a family who got lost in an elaborate corn maze and called 911 to be rescued. The call for help came on Monday evening from the family lost in the dark in a seven-acre corn maze at a farm in Danvers, about 25 miles north of Boston, police said on Wednesday.”

▶ **“What you call corn, we call maze.”**

The New York Times, Corrections, February 20, 2011:

“A picture caption in some copies last Sunday with a theater review about ‘A Thousand Clowns,’ playing at the Two River Theater Company in Red Bank, N.J., through today, misstated part of the name of a TV personality portrayed by the character Leo Herman. As the review correctly noted, it is Chuckles the Chipmunk, not Charles the Chipmunk.”

▶ **Charles is filing a complaint with Actors’ Equity.**