

It Could Happen to You: Bizarre Incidents in Testing

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Bizarre Incidents in Test Administration

Shocking Experience - an examinee was literally shocked at his computer workstation because the test center got struck by lightning.

The Sniper - A candidate took a computerized exam and received instant scoring advising that he failed. He became angry and began shouting at the proctor and told her that maybe he was "the sniper". This was at the time when several shootings had occurred in the Richmond and Northern Virginia area and "the sniper" had not yet been caught. The proctor called the police. Before they could arrive, the man left. About the same time, the police arrived outside the exam site and tackled an unsuspecting exam candidate who was not the one involved in the incident. I don't think the candidate pressed charges against the police, but he was not a happy camper!

Concealed Notes - A nail technician candidate was observed on a monitor looking at a piece of scratch paper other than that provided to her. It appeared to have writing on it. When the proctor went into the exam room to confiscate it, it had disappeared. The proctor asked her where the paper was. She first denied having it, but when she was told it was captured on video, she said she had stuffed it down the front of her pants. The proctor asked her to produce it. She said that she had flushed it down the toilet. The candidate did leave the exam room to go to the bathroom, however, the scratch paper was seen on video after she returned. The candidate stuck to her story and would not produce the paper.

Extreme Accommodations - An ADA exam candidate with Attention Deficit Disorder was given a very large separate room in a conference center where he could take his exam without noise or distraction. There was a long table in the middle of the room with several brochures and catalogs setting on it. During the exam, a couple and another woman came in and sat down at the table and began discussing wedding plans and the use of the conference center for the reception. They soon realized he was taking a test and got up and left. Soon after, the maintenance man came in the room and began taking brooms and supplies out of a closet located in the room.

Finally, a car pulled up just outside a door leading to the outside and several people began washing the car, vacuuming it, etc. while talking and laughing loudly. Our candidate endured all this and finished the exam. He did not pass, and after relaying these experiences to the vendor was given a free exam, a really quiet room, and a huge apology!

Labor Day - An applicant went into labor during the test. She still completed the test (which she passed) and, without telling anyone she was in labor, drove the two hours home to go to the hospital.

Creative Embroidering - Three Latin immigrants embroidered answers and tables into their elaborate and colorful skirts.

High Anxiety - A student requested to go to the washroom on three occasions during the exam. On the third request the proctor was somewhat suspicious and followed the student to the washroom. The proctor waited 15 -20 seconds before entering the washroom after him. Upon entering the washroom the proctor discovered that he was sitting on the toilet having a cigarette. This was his way of dealing with test anxiety.

Good Luck– Bad Doggy - A woman wanted to take her dog into the testing center with her. Seems Fido was her good luck charm. Well, the dog apparently was not used to wearing a collar and wiggled enough to get the collar off. When our proctor bent down to pick it up he discovered that the collar had formulas relating to the test written on the inside.

Technologically Resourceful and Green - a man wanted to bring his laptop computer into the testing room with him. His excuse was that the manuals he was allowed to bring into the testing center were on a CD inside the computer and he did not want to waste the paper it would take to print them out.

I'll Scratch Your Back, if... - An electrical certification applicant offered to wire the proctor's house she was building for free if she would let him cheat on the exam

Accessorizing - A proctors caught an applicant with formulas taped to the inside of a bracelet.

You're Never Too Old (Almost) - Sadly, we had a 22 year old cosmetology applicant on her third attempt at the test offer sexual favors to one of our male proctors. Worse yet, the proctor was 78 years old and almost fainted!

You're Never Too Old (Definitely) – A woman who had repeatedly failed an exam got desperate. She found someone to sit for the exam in her place. This was a paper-and-pencil administration on a large university campus, utilizing several rooms. After the initial check in, the candidate swapped places with the imposter in between buildings. At the testing room the candidates are required to show their identifications again. The imposter showed a fake ID and was allowed to test. This scheme may have worked to the end, except that the woman who hired the imposter had also asked for a special accommodation (she needed to elevate her leg). After testing had begun, the test center supervisor made her rounds to see how all rooms were testing, and to check on the special accommodations candidates. Upon arriving at the room, she found that there was an imposter taking the test instead of the actual candidate. What makes this story even more interesting is that the imposter was a male in his 20's and the woman was in her 70's. The reason that the ID looked legitimate for the male was that the first name could have been for a male or a female.

Coffee, Tea, Blanket? – A candidate recently had elbow surgery and asked to bring a pillow to rest the elbow on while she took the test. The request was granted - but other candidates asked why she was allowed to have a pillow and were pillows provided to everyone.

Looking Good - One candidate wanted us to watch his \$600 leather coat - as he did not want to leave it out in the hallway. Nor did he want to check it at the hotel. He was quite upset when we told him we would not be responsible for it and he could not wear it inside.

Just Like Mom Used To Do- A candidate at the exam (a performance assessment) came up and said he was going to faint - right then and there. We sat him down - got a wash cloth from the examiner lounge and applied it to the back of his neck while he had his head down. He looked almost greenish in color. He thanked us later stating it was like his mom would do - and the same thing had happened during his wedding a couple weeks before that.

Candidates Have Feelings Too - (from a medical simulation exam) One candidate cried upon leaving the exam room and hit the hallway wall a few times with her fist. When asked her if she was alright, she said she was just really upset that one of the cases involved a patient who had died, and she did not diagnose it correctly (realizing after she had left the room - what the case was about). She was upset that she had "killed" the patient, although the patient was already dead when the case began.

Peek-a-boo - (from a large-group administration for which space was rented in a hotel) A stripper/hooker (?) came up on the floor looking for a certain room. It's not clear whether she was sent (as a joke) to one of the candidates or simply had the wrong floor.

Nice Pants – During an exam a proctor noticed a candidate, at frequent intervals, staring at one of the legs of his black and white checked pants. Upon closer observation the proctor noticed a pattern of dots on the pant leg that resembled the grid of an answer document. Other proctors subsequently observed the candidate's actions and the grid pattern on the pants during the exam. The Candidate was escorted to a separate room where he was requested to remove his pants. Due to some resistance on the part of the candidate, the supervisor contacted building security and the police. The candidate removed his pants and the grid patterns were copied to an answer sheet and returned to the testing company for comparison to the keys. The grid pattern was found to match the correct responses for a test form that had been retired after a report of a stolen book during an administration the previous year. The test sponsor banned the candidate from taking any future examinations.

Nice Pencil, Too – At a different site for the same exam and test date, proctors discovered several candidates with pencils that had tiny holes poked into the sides of the pencils. (Candidates had been instructed to bring their own pencils.) There were 100 holes on each pencil with the holes placed on four different sides of each pencil. This number and pattern corresponded to the number of items and the number of alternatives for each item on the test. The pencil pattern was transcribed to an answer sheet and returned to the testing company for comparison to the test keys. The pattern again matched the stolen test form. The test sponsor also banned these candidates from any future examinations.

Nice Dress – During check-in, the proctor noticed that the candidate was wearing the same dress as shown on the driver's license. Thinking that a bit unusual, she looked closer and noticed that the person looked nothing like the woman featured on the license, which turned out to be counterfeit.

Bad Boys Part I – A candidate, who had registered to take the MCAT on Sunday for religious reasons, appeared at the Saturday test site shortly after the lunch break with a gun (which turned out to be a starter's pistol) and demanded copies of the test books. As the proctor was attempting to comply by opening the boxes with the morning exams, the candidate put the gun down to assist. Several examinees in the front row rushed the candidate and held him down while the test supervisor called police. As this was occurring, a security guard entered the room and, thinking that the proctor was the perpetrator, hit the proctor with a chair. The police arrived, took the candidate to jail, and the examinees voted to continue testing.

Bad Boys Part II – A candidate arrived late for the test session and was turned away. After calling the testing company to reschedule, the candidate was reminded that he would have to pay the fee again. Upon hearing this, the candidate became irate and returned to the test center, demanding to be tested. The candidate was furious and very threatening, banging on the door and shouting profanities. The proctor informed the candidate that she was calling the police. The candidate left in a hurry. Awhile later the police arrived and spoke to the proctor. When the proctor told the police the name of the candidate, they almost fell over. Just a few minutes earlier, as the police were driving into the parking lot, a reckless driver sped out and hit another car. The police stopped to help and to issue a citation. It turns out that the reckless driver was the same candidate who threatened the proctor.

Call in the FBI – During the lunch break for an all-day exam, a candidate called the FBI to report that he was having difficulty because the Russians were attempting to control his mind with microwaves. As he returned to the exam site after the break, he reported this to the test supervisor to alert him that the FBI may be arriving during the exam session.

Implement Plan B – One test administration vendor was required by one of the companies whose test they deliver to take a thumb print before the applicant tests. Sadly, the applicant did not have any thumbs due to a boating accident the prior summer.

Ants in Your Pants – A candidate who sat for an exam had a mandatory break. She said she failed the exam because during the break she sat outside and ants climbed up her shorts and made her so squirmy she couldn't concentrate to test. When the staff watched the video of her session, she was observed sitting perfectly still for the entire session.

Let There be Light - At a large paper-and-pencil administration in a large ballroom, a candidate arrived with a lamp and explained that she had been given permission to bring her own light. Unfortunately, she had been given permission by someone on staff who did not pass the information on to the colleagues staffing the exam. Plugging in the lamp really restricted her seating options. She raised such a fuss, she was allowed to use the lamp.

Musical Chairs – At the same exam administration, a candidate asked to change seats three times within the first ten minutes. When the head proctor caught on that three different proctors had been asked to move her, he told the candidate to stay put and to do her work. The moving requests ended, she got to work, and she passed the exam.

Bring-Your-Daughter-to-Work Day – Before the beginning of a test session, the test administrator noticed a 3-4 year old girl trying to reach the handle to open the door to the ladies' room. The test administrator opened the door for the little girl and proceeded to the testing room, where one of the candidates asked the test administrator to watch his little girl while he tested.

Sticky Situation – During the exam administration, a candidate had a question about one of the additional handouts. She walked out of the testing room to the proctor area and proceeded to ask her questions. The candidate was standing, facing the proctor, and holding up the handout. While the candidate was speaking, the proctor removed the post-it note from the back of the handout and asked the candidate about it. The candidate did not say a word. She just gathered her personal belongings and left the test center. An amusing side note: the post-it contained simple conversion information, some of which was converted incorrectly.

Bizarre Candidate Issues

A Good Daughter – An applicant calls in the day of her test and wants to know if her daughter can take the test for her because she is sick. She assures me that her daughter helped her study and knows all the same material that she would know. She also mentioned that her daughter was very honest and would not cheat on an exam.

Drunk and Stupid - A man called the registration desk to cancel his appointment and get his credit card refunded because he was at a bar drinking and his credit card was maxed out. He needed the refund on his credit card so he could buy more drinks.

Drunk and Smart – A man arrives for check in at 7:30 am, reeking of alcohol and in desperate need of a shower. He is seated in the corner of the room so as not to offend other candidates – although some burping and flatulence was heard by all in the room. He completed the exam in less than 30 minutes (out of a possible three hours). He scores 97% and passed.

Flight Delays - A man call from an airport on his cell phone and wanted to know if he could take his exam over the phone because his flight was delayed and he would not make it to the testing center on time.

Bad Hair Day - A woman who was scheduled for a cosmetology exam called in to our registration desk. She wanted to reschedule her appointment that day because she was having a bad hair day and simply could not be seen in public not looking fabulous.

Hey, I've Seen You Somewhere Before - Identical twins want to schedule their exams at the same time in the same test center.

Feeling Good - After the exam a candidate complains that he failed by 2 points and would surely have passed if the testing center had been arranged and decorated according to proper feng shui principles.

Credible Crayon Certification – During the registration for a national exam, a potential candidate indicated he was eligible for a recertification test, but he did not appear in our database as previously certified. He was asked to send a copy of his certificate to verify his eligibility. The copy he sent had his name hand-written in crayon.

You Have the Right to an Attorney – A candidate complaint escalated to the very top management of a testing company. It also escalated to the candidate's attorney. As usual, the testing company asked the attorney to correspond in writing. The first correspondence came in writing, but not on the firm's letterhead. The second request to the candidate asked that the attorney submit the correspondence on his firm's letterhead. The candidate became agitated at this request and immediately handed the phone to his attorney. Putting the pieces together, the manager became suspicious of the true nature of the attorney/client relationship and reported the alleged attorney to the State BAR. The local BAR prosecuted the attorney wannabe (who himself could not find a good enough attorney to keep him out of jail.)

Lost With a Camera – A candidate was lost and unable to find the test center, even though she claimed to have the published driving instructions from the candidate information bulletin. She wrote a long letter (copied to a local television news station, various board members, and her attorney) which included photos of the highway exits proving that no such exit existed on the highway. In part she was right – there was no such exit on that highway. Unfortunately, she was on the wrong highway.

Happy Birthday To You – A candidate is having difficulty passing his exam, so he sends a letter to a supervisor at a testing company with a card wishing the supervisor a Happy Birthday and a check for \$100. Needless to say, it was not the supervisor's birthday.

Plea\$e Help Me Pa\$\$ - A candidate's father writes a pleading letter for the proctor to assist his daughter in passing the exam. The nice letter is accompanied by \$500 cash.

Bizarre Contributors

Thank you to all those who contributed with their bizarre incidents in testing!

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