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### Influencer in Florida Accused of Voter Fraud

A February 2016 analysis by MIT Media Lab revealed that Twitter account “Ricky Vaughn” was the 107th most important influencer in the then-upcoming election. That’s a higher ranking than many other groups and individuals like NBC News (114), Stephen Colbert (119), and Newt Gingrich (141). Everyone had one question: Who in the world is Ricky Vaughn?

As it turns out, the Florida man was really stepping up his game. Douglass Mackey, aka Ricky Vaughn, is based in West Palm Beach and gained an audience on Twitter with over 58,000 followers by 2016. Many would describe him as an internet troll, or someone who posts hurtful comments for his own amusement. While he’s posted anti-Semitic memes in the past, though, those offenses were hardly illegal. That changed when Mackey allegedly went too far.



Using hashtags like #go[candidate], Mackey posted false, edited campaign images to convince people to “vote” by text instead of going to the polls or using the mail-in ballot. In one instance, he posted an image depicting an African American woman holding a sign, reading “African Americans for [candidate].” The images would then include instructions on how to vote by texting a specific number. Mackey and his associates also created images with Spanish instructions, obviously targeting minorities as well.

Of course, voting by text is not a legitimate way to cast a ballot, yet the deceptive campaign duped over 4,900 unique phone numbers. William F. Sweeney Jr., assistant director in charge of the FBI’s New York Field Office, reported in their press release, “Protecting every American citizen’s right to cast a legitimate vote is a key to the success of our republic. What Mackey allegedly did to interfere with this process — by soliciting voters to cast their ballots via text — amounted to nothing short of vote theft.”

It’s certainly fascinating and terrifying to see just how influential social media can be on an election and even go as far as to lure people into wasting their vote. We’re glad, however, to see these types of cases being brought to court — Mackey was recently arrested on federal charges of election interference for this 2016 voter disinformation campaign. Some influencers are taking their title much too seriously!

PRST STD  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
BOISE, ID  
PERMIT 411



## The Campaign Plan

### Making Texas Standard Possession Order Calendars Work for You

My parents have 20 grandchildren, and the highlight of my children’s year was the one week every summer that all the families got together so the cousins could spend time together. Now, many of them are grown, but they still see each other in person and interact online all the time. I know this is the result of the priority we put on getting them together every year, which gave them a strong foundation for continued relationships.

As you can imagine, it was not easy. Sometimes, coordinating everyone felt like planning a military campaign! If you have a big family, you are familiar with this — and if you are divorced, you know even small families have to plan carefully for summer. As a divorced parent, you are going to have your child for about half the summer, so it can be even tighter to fit everything in. That is why a Texas Standard Possession Order — the centerpiece of any summer “campaign plan” — allows both parents some ability to select different dates each summer.

Default 2021 SPO under 100 Miles in Conroe ISD

**June 2021**

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

**July 2021**

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

**August 2021**

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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Here is what a summer possession schedule looks like when the parents live less than 100 miles apart and neither parent makes any special elections.

Midweek visits — Thursdays for most parents — disappear during the summer, but the weekend visits are still there. This means that a “non-primary” parent continues to get the first, third, and fifth weekend of each month. If pickup and drop-off were at school during the school year, during the summer, weekends will run from 6 p.m. Friday to 6 p.m. Sunday. Notice that pickup

time is now 6 p.m. on Friday, not when school let out, and drop-off time is now 6 p.m. on Sunday, not Monday morning.

I did not put May on the calendar, but May 26 is the last day of school for the Conroe school district. If you add those days in, then this calendar would give the primary parent 36 days of summer, and the visiting parent 40 days. That is because August has five weekends, giving the visiting parent an extra weekend. The default possession schedule for many years divides up exactly even between the two parents.

A lot of parents don’t realize that their summer *does not have to look like this calendar*. In addition to the weekends, Texas allows the visiting parent to pick the 30 days they want as long as they let the other parent know before April 1. The 30 days can be broken down into two sets of days, meaning that someone could have selected June 7–21, plus June 30–July 16. The only rules about what 30 days to pick are that they have to end seven days before school starts again, and each set of days has to have at least seven days.

Also, if you are not the dad, you cannot take Father’s Day weekend. Dad always gets Father’s Day.

It may seem overwhelming, but once you can see the problems, you can also look for these kinds of solutions. For example, when my siblings and I noticed that the weeklong reunions kept getting canceled due to conflicts in schedules and weddings we were all attending, we decided we needed to come up with a different solution to make sure that the six youngest cousins — all boys — had as strong a relationship with each other as the older cousins had enjoyed at those annual summer reunions. So, we created “cousin camp.” We take turns hosting just those six cousins at the different homes. Adult children and parents are welcome, but the only schedules we worry about are the six teenage boys who are still living at home.

With this custom scheduling for divorced families, the primary parents get a bit more leeway — as long as they let the other

Continued on Page 2 ...

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July 2021						
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Non-primary parent default summer time

lopsided. The visiting parent gets to choose 42 days. Once again, if they are choosing days, they may break them into two blocks, each one has to have at least seven days, they have to end seven days before school resumes, and you can't take Father's Day away from Dad. For 2021, with the parents living more than 100 miles apart, it will look like this if neither parent makes any selections.

parent know by April 15. Primaries can have the child for a weekend of their choice (except Father's Day, if they are not the dad) during the other parent's summer. They are also allowed to "cancel" one of the visiting parent's weekends, but not during the 30 days. For "taken" weekends, only 14 days' notice is required.

Distance makes all of this even trickier, but creative solutions abound. (That's how "cousin camp" got started, after all!) For divorced parents who live more than 100 miles apart, summer is a lot more

Just like under 100 miles, if the primary parent lets the visiting parent know by April 15, they can choose a weekend to have the child. If the visiting parent has more than 30 days in a row, the primary parent gets to choose two weekends. Over 100 miles, if you don't let the visiting parent know before April 15, you can't cancel any weekends, but if you do designate in time, you can designate 21 days during which there are no weekend visits. This would allow the primary parent to cancel, for instance, both the last weekend in May and the first weekend in June.

It seems complicated because it is. That's what happens when we try to solve parenting issues by passing laws. No matter how hard we try to make things fair, parents are going to feel like they can't get important dates with their children. So, what can you do about it? Work to have a friendly relationship with the other parent, with a solid history of checking each other's schedules and agreeing to trade days to accommodate each other and your child.

The payoff is worth it. Last year, all six boys were at my sister's home in Illinois. This year, they will be coming to Texas and staying with me from July 2-9. I am planning to take them to NASA and kayaking down Spring Creek Park, then we are renting a beach house in Galveston for a few days.

What really matters is not what they do while they are in Texas; it is that they see each other often enough to care about each other and to have relationships.

*-Ruby Bolton*

# TAKE A BREAK



## THAI MINCED PORK SALAD

Inspired by EatingThaiFood.com

### Ingredients

- 5 tbsp uncooked Thai sticky rice
- 1 lb ground pork
- 1/2 tsp chili flakes
- 1/8 tsp sugar
- 1/2 tbsp fish sauce
- Juice of 1-2 limes, to taste
- 4 small shallots, thinly sliced
- 4 green onions, thinly sliced
- Cilantro leaves, to taste
- Mint leaves, to taste

### Directions

1. First, make toasted rice powder: In a frying pan over low heat, dry-roast the rice, stirring continuously until it turns golden brown and smells fragrant, about 15 minutes.
2. Let toasted rice cool, then grind into a coarse powder using a mortar and pestle, blender, or food processor. Set aside.
3. In a medium frying pan over medium-high heat, fry pork, breaking it into small pieces as you go, until fully cooked.
4. Remove from heat and add 1 heaping tbsp of toasted rice powder along with all other ingredients. Stir to combine.
5. Taste and adjust, adding more lime juice and herbs to suit your palate. Serve with rice.

# WILL EUROPE BE ABLE TO PAY ITS \$3.2T PANDEMIC DEBT?

Millions of families in Europe have relied heavily on government aid for survival, but that's becoming a concern for the younger generation. European debt hasn't been so high since World War II, and it's even outpacing national economies. In France alone, the national debt has risen to 2.7 trillion euros (\$3.2 trillion) and will soon exceed 120% of the national economy.

While the International Monetary Fund expects growth to bounce back this year to 5.1% in the United States, Europe will likely lag with a rebound of 4.2%.

Yet, as debts skyrocket, economists wonder if it's possible for Europe to get a "free lunch."

In the current zero-interest era, strange things are happening. Although the amount of debt companies have taken has grown, the amount that governments pay hasn't. Countries can now roll over their debt at low interest rates, which is akin to refinancing a mortgage. Banks are also buying government debt, effectively lending around 1.3 trillion euros during the first six months of the pandemic.

This makes the debt affordable — for now. Government debt may never have to be fully paid back if central banks keep buying it up. According to the Institut Montaigne, an independent think tank in Paris, public debt could rise to 4 trillion by the end of 2023.

Some economists are worried about the risks. What if inflation and interest rates help revive growth too rapidly, forcing central banks to put a complete stop to their easy-money policies? Weaker countries may fall into a debt trap and struggle to pay. Simon Tilford, director of a strategic planning firm in London, told The New York Times, "If inflation starts to return but there's no growth, then the situation gets a lot trickier."



When the next recession rolls around, it may be tough to stimulate their economy with this amount of debt on their hands. This worries the younger generation of Europeans, but at least for now, those troubles seem far away in the eyes of those steering European economies through the pandemic.

# The 3 Strangest Celebrity Lawsuits

Stories about celebrities can be enjoyable or awkward, but no matter what happens, they usually create great material for Buzzfeed or Reddit users. This also includes celebrity stories involving the law, which bring on a lot of head-scratching and legal action — like these three strange cases.

### Simon Cowell pays for a chef's disappearing shoes.

Known for his unrelenting critiques and setting the stage for some of the world's biggest names in show business, Simon Cowell has amassed enough wealth to afford a private chef. When one such chef came by his house for a job interview, she was asked to remove her shoes, but according to court



documents, she never received her shoes back. The chef claims to have tried multiple times to retrieve the shoes — which were outfitted with \$500 orthopedic insoles — but never succeeded. She sued Cowell for the shoes and gas money, and the "America's Got Talent" star shelled out.

### Internet conspiracy theory results in a court case against Beyoncé.

The internet is a wild place, and conspiracy theories are often born on its digital channels. One such theory was that Beyoncé and her husband, Jay-Z, hired a surrogate to give birth to their daughter, Blue Ivy, in 2012. Internet trolls who saw her pregnant belly roll as she sat down for an interview fanned the flames of this theory, and soon, a lawsuit emerged. A woman claimed she was the true biological mother of Blue Ivy, and she asked for compensation and DNA testing to prove it. Previously, the same woman claimed to be the birth mother of North West, the daughter of Kim Kardashian and Kanye West, but the court threw out the case.

### Mila Kunis ruffles some feathers.

Actress Mila Kunis was sued for \$5,000 by her childhood friend, Kristina Karo, in 2015 because Kunis allegedly stole a chicken from Karo when they were still children in Ukraine. Karo, an aspiring singer, claimed the theft resulted in extreme emotional distress and prevented her from pursuing the American dream. According to Kunis, the theft occurred when she was 7 years old and Karo was just 1 month old. Kunis and her husband, actor Ashton Kutcher, speculated that the case was all a publicity stunt to promote Karo's upcoming music video, and the case was eventually dropped.