

CAN YOU TOP THIS?

Unbelievable or outrageous true stories about everyday experiences in real estate management BY LAWRENCE W. BAIAMONTE, CPM® | ILLUSTRATION BY PAUL LUKAS

PIPE DREAMS



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I HAD JUST ARRIVED AT THE OFFICE ONE MORNING WHEN I RECEIVED A PHONE CALL FROM ONE OF MY MAINTENANCE GUYS, INFORMING ME THAT A BREAK-IN HAD OCCURRED THE NIGHT BEFORE AT THE LAUNDROMAT IN ONE OF THE SHOPPING CENTERS I MANAGED. Immediately, I asked if the police had been called and he told me that they were already on the scene; the laundromat manager had called the police that morning upon opening the doors.

Reassured that the matter was already in competent hands, I relaxed and asked for details on what had occurred. I tensed up when I suddenly learned that the intruder was still inside the property. I quickly asked if the police had the criminal in custody, to

which my maintenance person responded, “Well, not quite.”

“What do you mean, ‘not quite’?” I asked, impatiently.

My maintenance guy then proceeded to explain that the intruder had removed the rain cap from the large boiler flue on the roof, crawled down the flue to attempt to get into the laundromat, and got stuck in the flue pipe. As best as anyone could tell, he had

been there for several hours and, although still alive, was in less-than-perfect health after breathing natural gas exhaust fumes and getting burned by the hot flue pipe. The group was waiting on the fire department to arrive and to cut the intruder out of the flue pipe.

I got to the site as quickly as I could, but by that time, the intruder had already been cut out of the flue pipe and transported to the nearest hospital, with a police escort, of course. The manager of the laundromat informed me that they did not keep any cash in the store overnight, so there was nothing for the guy to steal anyway. Talk about a ‘brilliant’ criminal!

Submit your story at www.irem.org/topthis!

