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## SURREAL PHOTOGRAPHS OF AMERICA'S STRANGEST ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES

By Hannah Ongley, September 12, 2017



Olivia Locher documented 50 illegal acts for her latest book. Flicking through it though, you won't find evidence of the 26-year-old photographer and her friends robbing banks or plotting political conspiracies. In fact, you probably wouldn't even know the acts in question were illegal if she didn't make it explicit — unless you've ever been busted for housing dildos in Arizona or licking a toad in Kentucky. *I Fought the Law: Photographs by Olivia Locher of the Strangest Laws from Each of the 50 States*, is a collection of America's most surprising illegal activities, from dildo-collecting and live amphibian-tasting to riding a bike in a swimming pool (California) and having an ice cream in your back pocket (Alabama).

The inspiration for the book struck when Olivia's friend told her about Alabama's ice cream law. Obviously, she got curious, and started researching more of the country's craziest statutes. The illicit acts are then photographed in Olivia's signature playful, Pop Art-ish style, satirizing the out-of-date decrees.

"As a child I was a daydreamer to a pretty extreme level," Olivia told us after she first scored a book deal last summer. "I had no real separation between fantasy and real life. Luckily for me, my parents never stopped or discouraged this behaviour. I outgrew that way of thinking in my teenage years, but surrealist themes stayed buried somewhere in my consciousness." Olivia has an innate, and sometimes accidental, sense of what looks pretty on the internet — she mentioned that the ice cream image has spawned copycat photos. "I posted the ice cream cone image and somehow it skyrocketed to 20,000+ notes on Tumblr," she said. "It's funny, I later replaced four of those original images with something stronger. The work that went viral was a pre-thought to the actual series."

*I Fought the Law* also raises more serious points about the social and political climates in which laws are made, and what happens when lawmakers are left to their own devices. Some of the laws actually make a lot of sense — Massachusetts's

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ban on upskirt photos is one that should definitely stay on the books — while the justification behind others is more murky. Some appear to simply be based on common sense. I mean, I think we can all agree that fishing with dynamite isn't a smart idea in any state.