

10 LAWS THAT ACTUALLY EXIST IN THE US AS SEEN IN THESE EYE-POPPING PHOTOS

By Gabriel H. Sanchez, September 18, 2017



Photographer Olivia Locher's new book *I Fought the Law* looks at some of the most absurd and totally pointless laws that still exist in the US.

After narrowing down her research to the single most bizarre law in each of the 50 states, Locher purposefully broke the rule in front of the camera. The results are a colorful and humorous look at the changing legal landscape of United States over the past century. BuzzFeed News spoke with Locher on how this project came to be and her own personal journey in learning to breaking the rules:

It all started with an ice cream cone — a friend of mine told me it's illegal in Alabama to have an ice cream cone in your back pocket. That statement haunted me and eventually turned into this larger project. It initially started as a way for me to expand my studio practice, but the more I shot, the larger it became. I became extremely interested in peculiar laws, and for a while, *I Fought the Law* felt kind of like a useless fact book.

One thing I took away from this body of work was that some of the stranger laws are still on the books. For example, did you know in NYC that there is a law that bans dancing? It's not unlike New Hampshire's photograph in my book: "In New Hampshire, you can't tap your foot to keep time to music" — they were both created for the same reasons; it's a cabaret

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law. These laws require nightclubs and bars to have a specific license if they intend to host three or more people dancing at the same time. In NYC this law has been in effect since 1926. Law enforcement often utilizes this law if they want to shut a place down — pretty crazy, right?

A lot of these laws stay on the books simply because the process of removing them takes a lot of effort and money. Others remain on the books for a very good reason. The Massachusetts image is the newest law passed in 2014 criminalizing up-skirt photography without consent. There was a huge epidemic of Peeping Toms photographing up-skirt images of unsuspecting women on the Metro. Since there were no laws on the books relating to this form of harassment, there was nothing victims could do. I find it incredibly sad that a law needed to be spelled out so specifically to outlaw this deviant form of behavior.

Another interesting and crucial law is South Carolina's ban on fishing with dynamite. Fishermen will ignite a body of water and all of the fish will float to the top. This destructive behavior kills the entire ecosystem. So each law has their own unique story and meaning.

The project is very personal because it's what I've been working on and have been dedicated to since 2013. It's been an extension of my life for so long. The subjects in the photos are often my closest friends, so certain images have become sentimental for me. This project is a real timestamp of my creative life after graduating college. With that, I hope people will have their own adventure with the work. I'm really touched to see how people are enjoying and reacting to the images.