

# Proud art of prank calling still worth mastering



ADRIAN LAHOLA-CHOMIAK

These days, with the invention of caller ID and text messaging, it seems that prank calls have more or less fallen by the wayside. But I'm not ready to surrender this classic joke just yet; too many hours in my life have been spent trying to decide who to call and which prank to pull. So for all you wide-eyed, greenhorn, wannabe pranksters out there, here are a few tips on how to transform yourself from a refrigerator runner to a master.

First, let's review the tools of the trade. There's the phone, and, well, that's pretty much it — but you do have to worry about how you use it. You'll want to mask your voice

with a modulator app, like Funny Call from iOKi. This will make you sound like anything from Rebecca Black to a chipmunk. Now that your voice is anonymous — and hilarious — you'll need to know three simple rules before you call.

The first rule of prank calls is do not pretend to be a telemarketer. The second rule of prank calls is do not pretend to be a telemarketer. How many times have you actually stayed on the line with someone trying to sell you tornado insurance? You need an alias that won't trigger your target's reptilian instinct to flee from bullshit.

I recommend choosing something that sounds official or benign. Fake a wrong number or act like a surveyor to avoid an undue amount of suspicion. The third rule is take the time to establish that alias with simple questions and inside knowledge of the target — if you don't take the time to properly build the foundation of your prank, it will fail every time.

Okay, now that you know the

basics, it's time to start making the calls. Choosing someone is simple. Scroll through your contacts and pick anyone who you're reasonably certain won't get the cyber police to trace the call after the fact.

**Will you use Jack Black to attempt to order the six-piece Chicken McNuggets, but with only four, because you're watching your calories?**

Choosing the actual prank is where you get to define yourself. You'll want to start with some tried and true pranks before the complicated stuff, so here are a couple to get you started.

The "secret life" is where you pretend that you're a detective investigating the disappearance of one of the

target's friends. Now, you'll be breaking some sad fake news, so choose someone who isn't so close to the target that it will actually traumatize them, but close enough that they'll care enough to not hang up. Start by saying you're hopeful you will find them and then begin to ease into some questions about the fictional secret life you've created.

"Did you know that your estranged uncle Ted had a membership in NAMBLA?" you could ask, "We talked to his 14-year-old friend Larry, and he said that Ted offered him 50 bucks to roll around in a tub of blue cheese and Cheerios. After the kid refused, Ted left and hasn't been seen since." The victim will be suspicious, but keep your delivery straight and you can get five minutes out of anything.

While it's always fun to prank your friends, you also might want to branch out into pranking people at work. The internet soundboard has given the intrepid prankster the power of celebrity voices, and some of them are just begging to be used

to brighten the day of a lonely fast food worker. Will you use Jack Black to attempt to order the six-piece Chicken McNuggets, but with only four, because you're watching your calories? Or will you pose as Hank Hill and attempt to sell propane and propane accessories to an unwary hardware store? The possibilities are endless.

Prank calls may have made trolling people more difficult thanks to things like caller ID. Then again, other advances, such as voice modulators, have given the intrepid prankster powers that they could once only dream of.

Mastering the art of reeling someone in with a bullshit story takes time, but many mistakes are easily avoided. The payoff of luring someone into your made-up world is orders of magnitude greater than simpler pranks like the banana peel or the fake vomit. So fire up the voice modulator, and reach a little higher.

Now, if you'll excuse me, I have a refrigerator to catch.

"If a man isn't willing to take some risk for his opinions, either his opinions are no good or he's no good."

- Ezra Pound

**GATEWAY  
OPINION**

Risk-taking since 1910

**Opinion meetings  
Thursdays at 5 p.m.  
on the third floor  
of SUB**

\$29<sup>95</sup>

save big

For just \$29.95, walk in with your taxes, walk out with your refund. Instantly. You'll also get a free SPC Card to save big at your favourite retailers.\*

**student  
pricing**  
free SPC Card

we make taxes easy



**H&R BLOCK®**

Follow us on Twitter and Facebook

[hrblock.ca](http://hrblock.ca)

© 2011 H&R Block Canada, Inc. \*\$29.95 valid for regular student tax preparation only. Cash back service included. To qualify for student pricing, student must present either (i) a T2202a documenting 4 or more months of full-time attendance at a college or university during 2010 or (ii) a valid high school identification card. Expires December 31, 2011. Valid only at participating H&R Block locations in Canada. SPC Card offers valid from 08/01/10 to 07/31/11 at participating locations in Canada only. For Cardholder only. Offers may vary, restrictions may apply. Usage may be restricted when used in conjunction with any other offer or retailer loyalty card discounts. Cannot be used towards the purchase of gift cards or certificates.