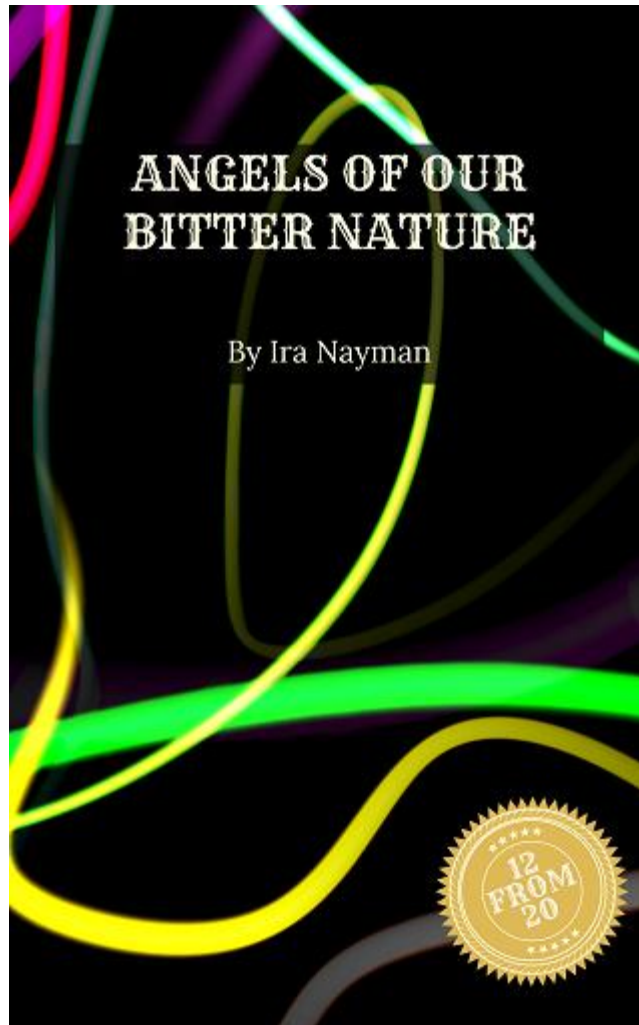




Angels of Our Bitter Nature
by Ira Nayman

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Introduction

In the first week of September 2022, Les Pages aux Folles will turn 20. To celebrate this achievement, I will be publishing 12 ebook collections of articles from the two decades of

the web site over the course of the year; this project is known as “12 from 20.” (For a brief overview of Les Pages aux Folles, see “The Back Story” at the end of this volume.) Each book will focus on a different feature of the web site. This month: five Alternate Reality News Service collections from Earth Prime 5-8-3-7-2-4 dash theta, where the United States of Vesampucceri is the world’s leading idiotocracy.

“So, umm, yeah. Fucking Donald Trump. FDT – the opposite of fine flower delivery. Fucks up everybody’s special days.

The Alternate Reality News Service (ARNS) started as a science fiction feature. No, really. Go back to the first couple of books and you will see. Sure, it was satirical, so there was some social and political commentary thrown into the mix, but there were robots and artificial intelligences and even the occasional spaceship. Science fiction.

In the seventh book in the series, *Futures in Mirror Are Closer Than They Appear*, there was a chapter devoted to a universe where the United States of Vesampucceri was the world leading idiotocracy, which, as you might imagine, was rule by the stupidest. As I started working on the follow-up, I figured it would have a similar mix of articles.

Then, FDT happened.

There was something every day. Corruption! Collusion! ...Some...other bad thing starting with “co!” Scandals that would have ruined any other politician were met with a shrug and a contented grin. Kleptocracy? FDT is in it for the money, so why shouldn’t everybody in his administration be? Sex scandal? FDT denies everything, but grins like a little kid who has stolen his first porn magazine from the corner store. (He grew up in more technologically innocent times.) And, the whole Rusher thing? Rusher? He never met her!

I found that I was writing articles about the FDT administration. A lot of articles. Like, really a lot of articles. Ordinarily, I would write and publish one ARNS article a week. I had to start publishing two ARNS articles a week, not to keep up with how much I was writing, but not to fall too far behind: I was writing anywhere from two to five ARNS articles a week.

Put it another way: each ARNS book contains 80 articles. Ordinarily, they would take about 80 weeks to accumulate. *ARNS and the Man*, book eight in the series, was written in less than half that time. I held back releasing it for three or four months in order to see if I could build some interest in it (don’t ask!), and because I thought April 1, 2018 was an appropriate publication date. On April 1, 2018, I had written 73 of the 80 stories needed for the next book, *E Deplorables Unum*. In all, the three books in this volume should have taken four years to write; instead, they took roughly two and a half.

FDT really knows how to mess up an indie writer’s publication schedule!”

This is an excerpt from the introduction to *Idiotocracy for Dummies*, an omnibus volume featuring the first three Vesampucceri books (*ARNS and the Man*, *E Deplorables Unum* and *Angels of Our Bitter Nature*). I decided to quote it in full because it accurately sums up one of the major problems with trying to write satire in the Trump era. I had hoped to move on from Vesampucceri after the third book, but that was only about two and a half years into Trump's administration, and the cringeworthy awfulness of it all defied all predictions and continued to get worse, making two more books (*You and What Universe?/That's When Everything Went Cow-shaped* and *Welcome to the Insurrection (We're NOT Sorry For the Inconvenience)*) and a second omnibus volume (Advanced *Idiotocracy for Dummies*) necessary.

At that point, I decided to stop writing about Vesampucceri, partially out of the hope (misplaced, as history would turn out) that Trump leaving office would settle the country down, but mostly out of outrage fatigue. Like many people, I had had enough of the antics of the American Republican party. Besides, I had other outlets on *Les Pages aux Folles* to satirize American politics; it was time to return the Alternate Reality News Service to its roots.

This was driven home to me when *Idiotocracy for Dummies* was rejected by the Aurora Awards (a Canadian SF award comparable to the Hugos) committee on the grounds that it wasn't science fiction. It was set in an alternate universe. I always considered the characters aliens, although references to their alien natures (ie: that their hands only featured four digits) were admittedly sparse. Whatever merits the Vesampucceri books had, being science fiction wasn't one of them. As the Republican Party becomes more and more fascist, and the possibility of the destruction of American democracy becomes more realistic, the temptation to return to Vesampucceri grows.

I must be strong. I will be strong.

Why did I focus so much of my creative energy on A right-wing American politician? This question requires a lot of unpacking, so please bear with me. To start: there is a common misperception that proper satire requires evenhandedness, that it should deal equally with people from across the political spectrum. This is not the case. Every satirist has an ideal world in their heads; much of the power of satire comes from the difference between the world as it should be and the world as it really is. However, not every human being transgresses the ideal equally; some are minor offenders, others burn the ideal to the ground. I choose to focus on those with the matches. Coming from a generally left-wing/social justice background (my mother's family were big members of the Canadian Communist Party, my father was the auditor for the NDP for decades), the right tends to be further from my ideals than the left.

Put it another way: years ago, my MP was Liberal Ken Dryden (yes, the goaltending legend for the Montreal Canadiens). During an election that would sweep the Conservatives into power, he was canvassing in my neighbourhood (it immediately became apparent that he knew he was about to lose his seat), and we got to talking. I mentioned my long-standing theory that, "Liberals may be corrupt, but Conservatives are

evil.” For some odd reason, that didn’t sit well with him. Oh, well. The point here, though, is that while it is occasionally worthwhile to fight corruption, it makes more sense to me to be constantly fighting evil.

So far, so good. But why should a Canadian writer focus so much on American politics? To start, I would point out that my observation is generalizable to: the left is corrupt but the right is evil. This can then be restated for American politics as: Democrats are corrupt but Republicans are evil. Again, the satirical target should be obvious. This is exacerbated by the fact that, as I have also often stated, Canadian politics is American politics ten years later and only half as serious. While the fascist right has bullied its way to the centre of American politics, it is still on the fringes (although admittedly more powerful than it was) of Canadian politics. The American right, then, is much further away from my ideal world, which makes it a juicier target for satire.

Finally, American politics is simply more consequential than Canadian politics. Being a middling country, if Canada were to become a fascist dictatorship, it would mostly affect Canadians. If the United States becomes a fascist dictatorship (I was tempted to say when, but I have to hold out some hope that it won’t), it will have reverberations around the world. Like it or not, American politics matters much more than Canadian. So, that is where I choose to focus my creative attention.

On a completely different note: I have been fortunate to have distinctive covers for most of my published books; the ARNS Vesampucceri books are some of my favourites. At its heart is an illustration by fellow author and good friend Hugh A. D. Spencer. I had always admired Hugh’s graphic style; the image on the cover of *ARNS and the Man* felt very much like something from 1950s Russian dissident literature, giving the book a claustrophobic Cold War feel that felt appropriate. When it became apparent that Vesampucceri would be the subject of more than one book, I decided to go with Hugh’s illustrations for the entire series; he was kind enough to give me access to all of his drawings.

Sometimes, I chose an illustration that fit the title of the book. For example, the crowd scene of the second Vesampucceri illustrated the concept well. Sometimes, an image would inspire a title. For example, *Angels of Our Bitter Nature* was inspired by the image of the angel chosen for the cover. The interplay between the covers and the contents was a source of great amusement for me.

The cover of the final Vesampucceri book arose out of the phrase, “That’s when everything went cow-shaped,” that had rattled around my brain for a few months. I imagined a starfield on the front cover with a cow-shaped cutout from an image by Hugh; on the back cover would be Hugh’s full image with an identical cow-shaped cutout of the starfield. This was the most complex cover created for one of my books; we had to play with several different illustrations before we found one that worked well. It also affected the content of the book: I had written a dozen general ARNS articles before Vesampucceri took over, articles that I had been sitting on for over three years and really wanted to get into print. So, I came up with the idea of starting one book and having it be

taken over by a second books; to enhance the effect, the first book ends with an article fragment (something that I knew I would never finish, so using only a few paragraphs of it didn't hurt).

I should mention that the covers were brilliantly executed by my Web Goddess, Gisela McKay, who also has a great eye for design. Aligning the cutouts on the final Vesampucceri book was tricky, but I love the effect. Gisela also designed the two For Dummies covers, which are spot on parodies of the actual For Dummies books.

One final observation: my concept of idiotocracy was **not** inspired by the film *Idiocracy* (which I have not seen in full, although I have seen a couple of clips from it). Back in the early 1980s, when I was a baby satirist at university, I wrote a lengthy piece about a country where elections were conducted to determine the stupidest people, who would become its leaders, for my university student newspaper. I remember the country was an island, but I don't recall much more than that. I should probably see if I can find that article; I don't get embarrassed enough these days by my early writing efforts!

Enjoy.

PS: Yes, the red Make Vesampucceri Great Again cap featured on the covers of the Vesampucceri books really does exist. I sometimes wear it to science fiction conventions. If you ask me nicely, I could wear it to your next con...

Ira Nayman
Toronto
January 28, 2022

Articles

Dramatis Personae

The Grey House

Ronald McDruhitmumpf.* (aka: The Ronald. aka: John Millstonegatherer. aka: Chaos President.) President of the United States of Vesampucceri. Looks like a giant Cheetoh with limbs and melted wax with hair. Has anger management issues (okay, a rampaging giant Cheetoh, then), a short attention span (okay, a rampaging giant Cheetoh that changes direction a lot) and a penchant for exacting petty revenge (obviously); and these are his positive qualities. Has been rumoured to have small hands, but has long enough fingers to point the blame at others. Like all the most successful con men, was his own first victim.

Michael Pendenatendance.* Vice President of the United States of Vesampucceri. Possibly the whitest man to ever hold the position (and, for the US, this is saying a lot!), with silver hair. Doesn't trust self to be alone with women who are not his wife, but blames God. Has a single expression, a kind of bland affability, that makes it possible to tell the most outrageous untruths without setting off most people's alarms.

Jared Kushkushinthebush.* Nobody seems sure what official position in the administration is, so let's go with "adviser." Yeah. Sure. Adviser. It's much more dignified than Designated Son-in-law. Copes with seven impossible portfolios before breakfast, although, in previous life as a real estate tycoon-one-on, main claim to fame was brokering the worst deal in New Yoricknuhemwell history, so negotiating skills may be in question.

Krystalle McDruhitmumpf. First daughter. "Adviser" to the President (because we have already established that it's a pretty but meaningless title in this administration). Claimed to have a moderating influence on her father; if true, it's scary what he may have done had she not been around. Is trotted out by President McDruhitmumpf mostly to humanize him (public) or to end meetings he has grown bored of (private). The latter happens so often, it's hard to see how has the time to flog products from position in the Grey House.

Ronald McDruhitmumpf, Jr. and Eric McDruhitmumpf.* Sons of President Ronald McDruhitmumpf. A pair of clean-cut, all-Vesampuccerian boys who would be successful if they had their father's low cunning and feral viciousness. Run the family business while dad is away playing President, except he doesn't trust them, so actually playing at running the family business while dad does both. Mostly say and do troublesome things in public, as sons will.

General John Colourkellygreene. Chief of Staff. Moved from the relatively minor post of Chief of Homeland Insecurity. Depending upon how you feel about such things, the adult in the room or the ringmaster of the circus. Okay, the two are not mutually exclusive. Tamed the chaos in the Oval Office, but is it possible to tame the chaos in the President's heart? Most forward of the Generals in the beachhead against civilian rule of the country.

General Jim O'Prayingmattis. Defense Secretary. Silver-haired white guy. Believes in a two-state solution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which creates conflict with unofficial Secretary of State Jared Kushkushinthebush. Believes Fenwick is intent on "breaking NATO apart" and expanding its control of neighbouring territories, which creates conflict with President McDruhitmumpf. Believes that Iran and ISIS are not necessarily enemies, even though they are based on different interpretations of Islam that have been at war since a time before books when everybody herded goats. So, in conflict with reality. Believes can actually make a positive difference in this administration. You may say dreamer, but **is** the only one.

Jeff "Self-regard" Sesspoolpandemic.* Attorney General. Silver-haired white guy. Widely believed to have weaponized folksiness; really knows how to put the harm back

in charm. Is the living embodiment of a Gil Scott-Heron lyric about civil rights. Believes the wrong side won in the Wah o' No'thehn Aggression, and is quietly doing his best to ensure that civil rights law is rolled back to the more enlightened pre-War times. Proves that one can be wizened without necessarily being wise.

Rod Rosentokenjew. Deputy Attorney General. Looks like a deer caught in headlights. A deer who wears glasses and cheap suits. A deer who writes legal memos that sometimes aren't even politically motivated. Clearly promoted above and beyond the call of duty...and level of competence.

T-Rex "For The" Tillerovlandzman. Secretary of State. Silver-haired white guy. A civil engineer who headed a major oil company; ideal to be an international diplomat because...well, because mineral extraction...you know, it's distributed around the world and...umm...has been to a lot of places around the world to look at minerals and stuff and...and...and...uhh...did we mention that is a long time volunteer with the Boy Scouts of Vesampucceri? You're not convinced? Did we mention that was also the director of a joint Vesampucceri-Fenwick oil company? **That** is what makes this appointment make sense for you? Cynical bastard.

Betsy DeVolution-Ross. Education Secretary. He was a – what? Betsy is actually a woman? We thought his parents were just being fanciful when they named him. Are you sure? There are so few women in the McDruhitmumpf government. Okay, if you're sure... **She** had been a major fundraiser for the Reduhblican Party, and wrote that of course she expected to have influence on it because of the money she directed towards it. She took the post because she was getting impatient. Her plan is to burn the public education system to the ground and build it back up from scratch. Maybe. If people insist. Beyond the burning, she hasn't really planned...

General H. R. (Humiliated Radish?) McMasterservant. National Security Adviser. With stiff body and smartly polished bald head, looks like an ambulatory bullet. As a General, brings an important *gravitas* to the Grey House...or has gotten every major military decision of career wrong and the President, who got four deferments from Vietnam because of a twisted ego, knows more about military tactics than this appointment ever will. Take your pick. Was asked to speak to the press a couple of times, but journalists bristled at being called maggots, so that experiment quickly ended.

Scott Jusprudoittitt. Head of the Environmental Pollution Agency. Silver-haired white guy – are you beginning to see a pattern emerge, here? In campaigns for Oklahoma Attorney General, received campaign contributions from the fossil fuel industry. As Oklahoma Attorney General, sued the Environmental Pollution Agency at least 14 times. Denies that human activity is responsible for Global Hot as Hellification. If you're willing to overlook all of this, is the perfect candidate to run the EPA. If you're not willing to overlook all of this, have we mentioned your cynical bastardness lately? Not to mention your lack of clarity on how an idiotocracy actually works?

Tom Pryceiswongsowrong. Silver-haired white guy. Yep. Definitely a pattern. Do the Reduhbicans have a factory somewhere where they clone these guys? Health and Human Disservices Secretary. As a member of the House of Unrepresentatives, annually introduced a bill repealing the Affordable For More People But Still Nowhere Near Perfect Care Act, which President Bushbamclintreagbush annually vetoed. Opposes abortion (and you thought the Extreme Court had settled that issue!). Opposes gun control (and you thought the country's death rate by gun violence had settled **that** issue!) Opposes gay rights. Why put him in charge of HHD? He's a people person, really.

Sarah Wannabe-Panderers. Press Secretary. Tries for the shiv-sharp folksiness of Jeff Sesspoolpandemic, but doesn't seem to have quite the disregard for history to pull it off. Tries for the aggressive use of the podium as Sean Spirochetericer, but holds back for fear that it will make her look dumb. Once tried to swear up a storm as bad as Anthony Scaramuchacho, but ended up in the hospital for three days. Still, for all the appointment's failings, is able to answer questions without actually saying anything new or noteworthy; expected by Washburningdington insiders to be around for a long time.

Formerly of The Grey House

Steve O'Bannonallhope.* (aka: McDruhitmumpf's midriff). Senior Adviser. Hopes the rumpled and grotty look will come back into fashion soon; unaware that it never was in fashion. Only qualification to work in the Grey House seems to be a bottomless well of hostility towards government (the nearly bottomless well of hostility towards minorities was just a happy bonus). Out of government, claims to show 100% support for the President by dissing everything he says or does. Pundits expect nothing less from the main architect of the Chaos part of Chaos President's reign.

James Comeonecomally. Director of the Federal Bureau of Instigations. Is about six foot oogeldy-seven feet tall; looks like one of those giant inflatable figures flapping around outside car dealerships (especially when trying to blend into the draperies in the Grey House). Made an announcement towards the end of the election making Dumboprat Hillary Roocartoncleve man look bad, then three days later recanted, then, after Ronald McDruhitmumpf won, started an investigation into interference in the voting process. An unironic investigation, because of being a Very Serious Man.

Michael Flyinnthuointmeant.* National Insecurity Adviser. For all of 43 minutes. Looks like an only slightly more fleshy skeleton from *Jason and the Argonauts*. President McDruhitmumpf was shocked, shocked, I tell you to discover that he had been taking money from a foreign government without disclosing it on the proper forms...although, you know, he's a really good guy, so nobody, especially not FBI directors, should judge him too harshly. Las Vegas bookies are developing odds on the dirt the former appointment has on the President.

Sean Spirochetericer. Former Press Secretary. Had a sign in office that read, "TIME SINCE LAST ACCIDENTALLY REVEALED A FACT TO THE PRESS – # DAYS."

The number of days on the sign equalled the number of days he was press secretary. Favourite phrase: a tie between “I’ve already answered that,” “You should ask the President himself about that” and “What do I look like, a chicken burrito with its ass on fire?” Once auditioned for the *Monty Python* sketch “How not to be seen” by, depending upon which version of the story you believe, hiding in, among, around or through bushes.

Reincid Pricerebulbus. Chief of Staff. Career Reduhblican. Constantly argued with Steve O’Bannonallhope about how much of the government to burn down how quickly. Constantly argued with the President about his use of Twitherd to poke anybody he didn’t like, which is pretty much everybody. Ouster was inevitable, really. The only person who appeared to be surprised by the firing was, of course, Reincid Pricerebulbus.

Anthony Scaramuchacho. Communications Director. For a week. While working in the Grey House, was a team player...if the team was the Mongolian Huns (a proposed NHL franchise). Learned everything needed to know about effective messaging as an investment banker. Believes that the best defense is a good being offensive. Created more swear words than William Shakealegospeare. Pray for the investment banking community.

Paul Bildapillofort.* Being Ronald McDruhitmumpf’s campaign manager was temporary; being on the make is eternal. Was shocked, shocked, I tell you to discover that had worked for the bloodthirsty Fenwick-backed dictator of Ukraine (but, not so shocked as to feel the need to disclose it on the proper forms – thanks, journalists). In high school, was voted Most Likely to be Indicted by a Grand Jury.

Reduhblicans in Congress

Paul Ryboehnbachblisscrap. Speaker of the House of Unrepresentatives. Looks 12 years old. The politician’s economic plan, much lauded in Reduhblican circles, was written in red crayon on the back of an Arby’s children’s colouring handout. Some people mistook the red crayon for blood, but Ryboehnbachblisscrap’s vampiric tendencies won’t kick in until hitting puberty. The economic plan, much lauded in Reduhblican circles, read: “Give more tax breaks to the wealthy. Suck on that, Nancy Pelligrinosi!” Reputation as a capable, effective leader may be overstated.

Mitch Wichconnelliswich. Leader of the Senate Majority. Looks like a bespectacled turtle, speaks as though every word is something he just recently discovered. Spent seven years passing anti- AMPSNNPCA (you know what the acronym stands for – don’t make us spell it out for you!) legislation which President Bushbamclintreagbush vetoed. After being handed a majority in the Senate **and** a sympathetic President, couldn’t pass wind after eating Mamma Castioglanou’s Twelve Alarm Chili. Reputation as a capable, effective leader is definitely overstated.

Mark Meadabiggblubratt. Unofficial leader of the highly unofficial Reduhblican Economic Slavery is Freedom Caucus in the House of Unrepresentatives. Sandy haired

(but give him time) white man. Believes that government should get out of the business of governing. Given this position, it's hard to see why the Unrepresentative accepts a government salary (including pension and health care); one can only assume that the rewards after leaving office will be much greater.

Devin Nucoocachunes. House Unintelligence Committee Chair. Looks like a cross between actor Steve Carrellionsobelles and a chipmunk. After a weird intervention at the apparent behest of the Grey House, recused self from any committee business dealing with the Fenwick investigation...until committed more interventions at the apparent behest of the White House. Doing best to ensure that the committee lives up to its name.

Dumboprats and Other Opposition (Oops, No, Apparently, Just Dumboprats)

Barry W. Bushbamclintreagbush. President of the United States of Vesampucceri Emeritus. Seemed like a decent person who wanted what was best for his country, save for one fatal flaw: the wrong skin pigmentation. As a result, now that the Reduhblicans control the levers of government, they want to undo everything that he did. Seriously. They would take away his law degree and his gold star from Miss Adelsonicboom's Grade One civics class if it was in their power. Hasn't been spotted in public much since giving the keys to the Grey House Hibachi to the new occupant, but, when seen, seemed much more relaxed. Laughed a lot more. It was like...like a weight had been lifted from shoulders.

Hillary Roocartoncleveman. Congresswoman. Secretary of State. Presidential candidate. Looks like your grandmother; acts like your divorce attorney. Far more qualified to be President than Ronald McDruhithmumpf, save for one fatal flaw: the wrong chromosomes.

Chuckie Schumaihargowmer. Senate Minority Leader. Having been in politics for a long time, knows the value of stillness. But he glowers. He's a glowerer. When turned on full, his glowers can melt steel. The glower is his super power. This may be why the Minority Leader has been able to achieve the unheard of feat of keeping the Dumbopratic caucus in line (although the fact that the Reduhblicans try to pass bills that are about as popular as a salt and vinegar enema may also have something to do with it).

Nancy Pelligrinosi. House minority leader. Looks like everybody's grandmother, but is tougher than a Mafia don. Has been able to achieve the unheard of feat of keeping the Dumbopratic caucus in line (although the fact that the Reduhblicans try to pass bills that are about as popular as Armageddon may also have something to do with it).

Boot Lickers, Carpet Baggers and Other Kangars On

Rupert Mountkilamanjoy. Prime Minister of the Duchy of Grand Fenwick. Former leader of Fenwick's dreaded Feathered Police Cap Academy. Is avuncular. We're not

sure what this word means, but we think it has something to do with being able to maintain your attention with his charm while stabbing you in the back. With his...arm. Appears to have made it a life's mission to promote Fenwick by destroying the world order. With friends like McDruhithmumpf, may just succeed.

Robert Meullitallover. <big breath>Special Prosecutor leading investigation into alleged Fenwickian interference in the 2016 United States of Vesampucceri elections and related matters.</breath> Puts the rag back in craggy. Honestly, makes Thanos look like a smooth-skinned teen by comparison. As FBI Director, developed a reputation for incorruptabiltousness. President McDruhithmumpf, who notoriously despises leaks in the Grey House, despises the fact that there have been few leaks from the Special Prosecutor's office. This should be interesting...

Alan Greenurpassterspanz. Famed Vesampuccerian Civil Liberties Union lawyer. Hasn't actually worked for the VCLU in over 20 years, but the lawyer's record in private practice is mostly tied up in sealed court decisions and nondisclosure agreements, so gets to coast on the record of socially conscious work accomplished in the past.

Michael Beschbefordatloess. Presidential historian. The go-to person for journalists who want to know how the idiotocracy of the moment compares to the idiotocracy of the past. Has a generally affable demeanour, but is rumoured to cry self to sleep at night.

Amy Sheshutshotshitbam. Token smart person. The go-to person for journalists who want a sensible response to the self-serving, idiotological actions of the politicians in Washburningdington. All of them. Journalists, we mean, not politic – no, them, too. Being a token smart person is not for the faint of heart, but nobody said anything about spleens, pancreases or inner thighs!

* A Vesampuccerian official who had contacts with people who are close to Rupert Mountkilamanjoy. Prime Minister of the Duchy of Grand Fenwick, but forgot them when filling out security request forms. Oops. Clearly, amnesia is communicative in Washburningdington! Fortunately, there is a cure: when reports of the meetings appear in the press, the memories come flooding back.

ARNS and the Man

The Best Possible Form of Government Except for All the Others – An *Alternate Reality News Service* Forum

SPECIAL TO THE ALTERNATE REALITY NEWS SERVICE

In all of the multiverse, there isn't another universe quite like Earth Prime 1-6-6-5-8-2 dash omega. And, when we say that, we're being hyperbolic for the sake of grabbing the

reader's attention, of course, since there are an almost infinite number of universes that are similar to it in every way except one – maybe you forgot to floss last night, for instance, or Ed Woodlandishcreature won a Best Director Oscar for *Glen or Glenda or Glenadine*. The point is, people from many other universes consider Earth Prime 1-6-6-5-8-2 dash omega to be, and we quote, “pretty damn weird.”

For Earth Prime 1-6-6-5-8-2 dash omega may well be – saying “we quote” and using quotation marks was somewhat redundant, wasn't it? Okay, well, in order to correct our error, we'll omit quotation marks from a future quote. You know, to be fair and balanced. Especially balanced. We love a good fair, but clowns, man. Clowns.

So. Earth Prime 1-6-6-5-8-2 dash omega may well be the most advanced idiotocracy in the multiverse. Idiotocracy, for those of you who are not political junkies or boot to the head fetishists, is rule “by the stupidest, for the stupidest, of the stupidest,” as the Declaration of Independence of the United States of Vesampucceri was reported to have said before the first and only draft was lost when John Hannoverfistcock accidentally burned the building in which the Foundling Fathers were meeting to the ground. (No, smartass, they didn't back their documents up to the cloud in those days. True, it could be argued that burning the DoI was the original way of sending a document to the cloud – retrieving it would be tricky, though.)

To help readers better understand the nature of idiotocracy, the *Alternate Reality News Service* assembled a panel to discuss the current state of the nation, and to free-associate about where it might go in the future. We won't lie to you – hallucinogenic substances may have been involved (if any of the panellists had thought to bring any!). The panel was made up of:

- Andrew Cucbreitdohboybart, publisher of the alte cocker online publication *Cucbreitdohboybart News*
- Eugene Robinsoncrusoe, Pulippitzaner Prize winning columnist for the *Washburningdington Post*, and
- Arnie Bamshitshotshutshe, the common-law partner of token smart person Amy Sheshutshotshitbam (who was unavailable owing to a sudden case of death)

The panel was chaired (although, to her credit, she only threatened to throw it three times, all of them richly deserved) by *Alternate Reality News Service* Editrix-in-chief Brenda Brundtland-Govanni.

1.

BRENDA BRUNDTLAND-GOVANNI: Let's get this over with as quickly as possible – I have a full body bikini wax at four and Andrea is nasty when I'm late! So. Idiotocracy. What's the deal?

ANDREW CUCBREITDOHBOYBART: I believe it was President Ron Potganreabumbom who said, “Idiotocracy is the best form of government, except for all

the others.” If we take him literally, that would appear to be a kind of condemnation of the form of governance. However, if we take the quote in the spirit in which it was intended, we can see that he really did love it, that he thought it was the greatest thing since the invention of the electric sock straightener.

EUGENE ROBINSONCRUSOE: Actually, it wasn’t President Potganreabumbom, and you’ve kind of mangled the quote. But, I wouldn’t expect anything better from a man whose publication once called Mother Teresa an anarchist.

CUCBREITDOHBOYBART: That’s not –

ROBINSONCRUSOE: Hey! There should have been quotation marks around the word “anarchist.” Like you just did in my last sentence. I was not the one who described Mother Teresa as an anarchist!

BRUNDTLAND-GOVANNI: Sorry, Gene. We overused quotation marks in the introduction, and we were trying to make it up to the reader. We’ll try and make it up to you later in the forum.

CUCBREITDOHBOYBART: Look. The principle of “one idiot, one vote” has been the foundation on which Vesampucceri has built the best country in the history of the world!

ROBINSONCRUSOE: Well, sure, if you think that global hot as hellification denial, fascists holding pep rallies on city streets and another season of *Survivor: Washburningdington* makes a country great, then Vesampucceri is certainly great.

CUCBREITDOHBOYBART: Oh, please! Spare me your –

BRUNDTLAND-GOVANNI: Arnie, you’ve been awfully quiet. What are your thoughts on this subject?

BAMSHITSHOTSHUTSHE: I...I wasn’t really the smart one of the family. I don’t –

BRUNDTLAND-GOVANNI: Sure, you do. You’re on this panel to give us the viewpoint of the average Vesampuccerian.

BAMSHITSHOTSHUTSHE: Oh. Well. I. I...didn’t vote in the last election.

ROBINSONCRUSOE: Vesampuccerians don’t get much more average than that!

CUCBREITDOHBOYBART: Well done!

BRUNDTLAND-GOVANNI: Why do I bother?

BAMSHITSHOTSHUTSHE: It’s your job?

* GLARE *

2.

BRUNDTLAND-GOVANNI: Reduhblicans cut taxes for the wealthiest Vesampuccerians, repeal labour laws and otherwise walk all over poor people (mostly at their conventions, but also sometimes at rallies: it's a form of body surfing knowing as "body trodding"). Yet, poor Vesampuccerians are their biggest supporters. Why do citizens in idiotocracies so often vote against their own interests?

CUCBREITDOHBOYBART: Implicit in your question is the idea that voters are one-dimensional. However, they are complex beings. For instance, a lot of poor people are willing to accept getting walked all over as long as immigrants and minorities have it even worse.

ROBINSONCRUSOE: Implicit in Andrew's answer is the idea that those voters actually know that they are being walked all over. That's not necessarily the case. These people are what are sometimes known as "information indifferent voters," "information averse voters" or "flaming moron voters." I mean, these are people who think that *Big Brother* was an accurate depiction of life in modern England!

CUCBREITDOHBOYBART: That's just an elitist media personality talking. Robinsoncrusoe, you need to get in touch with the values of ordinary, honest, hard-working Vesampuccerians.

ROBINSONCRUSOE: Were you not listening? I **have** been in touch with the values of ordinary Vesampuccerians. I had to shower for a week!

BRUNDTLAND-GOVANNI: Arnie, you're the closest thing to an ordinary Vesampuccerian in this room – hell, probably in this whole building! – what do you think?

BAMSHITSHOTSHUTSHE: Can I go home, now?

BRUNDTLAND-GOVANNI: You and me both, pal. You and me both.

3.

BRUNDTLAND-GOVANNI: Presidential –

ROBINSONCRUSOE: Actually, before we move on to the next numbered discussion topic, I think I should point out that years of cuts to public education and a series of particularly vicious attacks on left wing politicians and the media have made a lot of otherwise reasonable people into lunatics who will believe that Hillary Roocartoncleve man had a secret plan to send the Earth careening into the sun. A lot of the worst aspects of idiotocracy have been deliberately fostered by the right and its supporters in the media.

BRUNDTLAND-GOVANNI: Andrew, do you want to respond to this?

CUCBREITDOHBOYBART: Eugene has a wart on his nose.

ROBINSONCRUSOE: What? No, I don't.

CUCBREITDOHBOYBART: I think he's a witch. Has anybody seen him in a swimming pool?

ROBINSONCRUSOE: That's ridiculous! I'm not a witch!

CUCBREITDOHBOYBART: Are you sure about that? By the time this forum is over, 40 per cent of Vesampuccerians will believe that you are a witch. Who –

BAMSHITSHOTSHUTSHE: I've never seen you in a swimming pool.

ROBINSONCRUSOE: I'm allergic to water!

CUCBREITDOHBOYBART: Who are you going to believe – a single biased journalist or 40 per cent of the Vesampuccerian population?

ROBINSONCRUSOE: (shouting) I'm not a witch!

CUCBREITDOHBOYBART: (smug) I think the people can make up their own minds...

3. (let's hope it sticks this time)

BRUNDTLAND-GOVANNI: Presidential son-in-law Jared Kushkushinthebush met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanhoohayu to discuss summer home opportunities in the Gaga Strip. Meanwhile, Secretary of State T-Rex "For The" Tillerovlandzman is lucky if he sees the Undersecretary of Pencil Sharpening of the country of Finland. What happens to diplomacy in an idiotocracy?

ROBINSONCRUSOE: That's a – I'm not a witch, okay? I don't even like *Hexed!* – ahem. That's a complicated question. You have to wonder why Jared Kushkushinthebush, whose only qualification seems to be playing Albania in a grade six mock Disunited Nations exercise, is being given an ever-largening role in the administration. I mean, putting relatives in positions of power? That's what they do in banana daiquiri republics! On the other hand, President McDruhitmumpf seems to prefer military action to diplomacy. You have to wonder if McDruhitmumpf –

CUCBREITDOHBOYBART: Oh, for [EXPLETIVE DELETED] sake! You vegan liberal communist anarchist **witches** are so obsessed with Ronald McDruhitmumpf!

ROBINSONCRUSOE: He is the President.

CUCBREITDOHBOYBART: Why don't you focus on Hillary Roocartoncleve man?

ROBINSONCRUSOE: She's not the President?

CUCBREITDOHBOYBART: Evil is evil, whether it has power or not.

BAMSHITSHOTSHUTSHE: Hilary Roocartoncleve man isn't evil.

CUCBREITDOHBOYBART: Shut your festering gob, you [EXPLETIVE DELETED] tit!

BAMSHITSHOTSHUTSHE: Sorry.

BRUNDTLAND-GOVANNI: Hey! Nobody swears at the guests but me!

CUCBREITDOHBOYBART: Not sorry.

ROBINSONCRUSOE: This is what people on the right do all of the time. They –

CUCBREITDOHBOYBART: People on the right? **People on the right?** Why don't you ever talk about how people on the left – Dumboprats, if you're too [EXPLETIVE DELETED] thick to get the metaphor – how they're obstructing President McDruhitmumpf's agenda?

ROBINSONCRUSOE: The Reduhblicans control the Grey House and both houses of Congress. The only way the Dumboprats could obstruct the President's agenda would be if they all committed ritual suicide, forcing the legislature to pause while special elections had to be held to fill all of their seats!

CUCBREITDOHBOYBART: And, things would still be better than they are now! Not a single Dumboprat has voted for anything on President McDruhitmumpf's agenda.

ROBINSONCRUSOE: Why would they? President McDruhitmumpf's agenda seems to be entirely made up of undoing everything that Dumbopratic President Bushbamclintreagbush managed to get passed. Legislation, I would hasten to point out, that Reduhblicans fought every step of the way, and refused to vote for, even when the policies had originally been theirs.

CUCBREITDOHBOYBART: (chuckles) Yeah, we were scamps. (sobers) I mean, that was completely different!

ROBINSONCRUSOE: Because it was your side that was being obstructionist?

CUCBREITDOHBOYBART: Is he allowed to steal my lines like that?

BRUNDTLAND-GOVANNI: I did say I would make up the whole quotations debacle to him. So, yeah. He's allowed. Arnie, do you have anything to add?

BAMSHITSHOTSHUTSHE: Will that man swear at me again?

BRUNDTLAND-GOVANNI: Not if he doesn't want to experience the business end of my industrial strength slapping gloves, he won't.

BAMSHITSHOTSHUTSHE: Oh. Okay. Then...umm...what was the question, again?

BRUNDTLAND-GOVANNI: [EXPLETIVE DELETED]

4.

BRUNDTLAND-GOVANNI: Eight months into office, we have learned that President McDruhitmumpf was negotiating with the Duchy of Grand Fenwick to build a massive sewage treatment plant in that country while he was campaigning for office. Why is this such a big whup?

ROBINSONCRUSOE: Other than the fact that they've been our mortal enemy for almost 70 years?

BRUNDTLAND-GOVANNI: Yeah. Sure. Other than that.

ROBINSONCRUSOE: Okay. Other than that, it has been common practice in the United States of Vesampucceri for politicians to make money off the office after they leave – that's why Gord created speaker's fees and book deals.

BRUNDTLAND-GOVANNI: And celebrity appearances on reality TV shows.

ROBINSONCRUSOE: Okay. Right. That, too. The point is, President McDruhitmumpf was starting to make money off the office **before** he was even elected to the office! This upsets the natural order of things! You think dogs lying with cats is an overused metaphor for chaos? Give it a little time. Just give it a little time...

CUCBREITDOHBOYBART: Oh, please! North Korea could have nuked us by tomorrow and anti-fascist thugs are beating the crap out of poor, defenseless neo-Nasties on the streets of Vesampucceri. Now! As we speak! Why are we even talking about this?

BRUNDTLAND-GOVANNI: Eugene, why are we even talking about this?

ROBINSONCRUSOE: Why are we even...? – look. President McDruhitmumpf said clearly and repeatedly on the campaign trail – not to mention since he won the election – that, “I did not have relations with that country.” Now that it's obvious that he did –

CUCBREITDOHBOYBART: Yeah, okay, right. He said that. But then, when he was in office, President Roocartoncleveman said, “I did not have sexual relations with that woman.” So, this is not a Reduhblican issue specifically.

ROBINSONCRUSOE: Oh, sure! Next you’ll be telling me that every President lies for personal gain because in a famous child’s story President George Washburningdington said, “I did not have relations with that cherry tree!” It’s obviously not the same!

BRUNDTLAND-GOVANNI: Arnie, you’ve been awfully quiet. Do you think it’s not the same?

BAMSHITSHOTSHUTSHE: Yeah. Sure. Not the same.

BRUNDTLAND-GOVANNI: Why not?

BAMSHITSHOTSHUTSHE: Umm...because Pulippitzaner Prize winning columnist Eugene Robinsoncrusoe says it isn’t?

CUCBREITDOHBOYBART: Oh, come on, man! Why don’t you think for yourself?

BAMSHITSHOTSHUTSHE: Because the average person in an idiotocracy doesn’t know how?

ROBINSONCRUSOE: Kid’s got a point.

CUCBREITDOHBOYBART: Well, yeah, okay, that is the way the system was designed to work, but, umm...[EXPLETIVE DELETED] you, you [EXPLETIVE DELETED] dashiki-wearing, son of a [EXPLETIVE DELETED] camel-necked [EXPLETIVE DELETED] geek!

ROBINSONCRUSOE: So, when you say you want somebody to think for themselves, you actually want them to agree with you?

CUCBREITDOHBOYBART: Are you [EXPLETIVE DELETED] mocking me, [EXPLETIVE DELETED] French [EXPLETIVE DELETED] witch? You –

BRUNDTLAND-GOVANNI: I’m warning you for the last time: swear at the other panellists on your own time, neo-Nasty boy. I can smell the wax melting!

5.

BRENDA BRUNDTLAND-GOVANNI: So. Civility in public discourse in an idiotocracy. What’s the 9-1-1?

CUCBREITDOHBOYBART: Are you [EXPLETIVE DELETED] kidding me? [EXPLETIVE DELETED] civility in [EXPLETIVE DELETED] public discourse is a

[EXPLETIVE DELETED] Chinese plot to undermine our freedom of speech! You know where they have [EXPLETIVE DELETED] civil discourse? [EXPLETIVE DELETED] North [EXPLETIVE DELETED!] Korea!

BAMSHITSHOTSHUTSHE: I really – I think I really wanna go home, now.

CUCBREITDOHBOYBART: Of course you do, you [EXPLETIVE DELETED] [EXPLETIVE DELETED]! This is real [EXPLETIVE DELETED] political discourse. It's [EXPLETIVE DELETED] raw! It's [EXPLETIVE DELETED] in your face! It's –

BAMSHITSHOTSHUTSHE: We don't – we don't talk like that to each other in New Hampshirecut!

BRENDA BRUNDTLAND-GOVANNI: Okay, Andrew. That's enough.

CUCBREITDOHBOYBART: You wanna [EXPLETIVE DELETED] stifle my [EXPLETIVE DELETED] freedom of expression, lady? Are you a [EXPLETIVE DELETED] lady, or are you a [EXPLETIVE DELETED] man mountain wrestler in drag?

BRUNDTLAND-GOVANNI: (shouting) Shut the [EXPLETIVE DELETED] up you [EXPLETIVE DELETED] bullying bastard! Don't make me [EXPLETIVE DELETED] throw this! Because I will! And, the form you signed before the panel started makes it very clear that the *Alternate Reality News Service* is not responsible for any medical expenses you may incur as a result of this journalistic event. Oh, yeah [EXPLETIVE DELETED] – you do **not** want to mess with our [EXPLETIVE DELETED] lawyers! Especially not from a hospital bed!

ROBINSONCRUSOE: I think that answered the question.

The Alternate Reality News Service would like to thank Andrew Cucbreitdohboybart, Eugene Robinsoncrusoe and Arnie Bamshitshotshutshe for their participation in this [BRENDA BRUNDTLAND-GOVANNI: No, we're not. We're not thanking Andrew Cucbreitdohboybart for shit!] Umm...okay. The Alternate Reality News Service would like to thank Eugene Robinsoncrusoe and Arnie Bamshitshotshutshe for their participation in this forum. We'll figure out how to diplomatically say how we really feel about Andrew Cucbreitdohboybart and get back to you on that...

Chaos President Has a Cunning Plan

by FRANCIS GRECOROMACOLLUDEN, Alternate Reality News Service National Politics Writer

There is an old saying in the nation's capital: when a President flaps his lips in Washburningdington, a dissident is jailed in China. Chaos President doesn't understand the elegant mathematics underlying this phenomenon. Chaos President barely

understands the concept of mathematics (part of the reason signing a business contract with him can be such an adventure). Chaos President just likes to see high winds topple governments to the ground – especially if he can make a buck out of it.

How does this work? An ordinary President who wanted to build a wall on the border with Canada to help fight the war on doughnuts would meet with Congressional leaders and tell them, “I want us to build a wall on the border with Canada to help fight the war on doughnuts – how can we do that?” Legislation would be cobbled together. Arms would be twisted. Pork would be served. And, voila: opposition crow pie.

Not Chaos President. Chaos President promised to “do politics differenter” when he was Chaos Candidate. After all, anarchy had served him well as Chaos Businessman (weeeeeellll, getting bailed out by Order Businessman friends didn’t hurt, either), And, of all the promises he would subsequently break, this is the one promise that he holds sacrosanct because HAVE YOU ALREADY FORGOTTEN WHO WE’RE TALKING ABOUT, HERE?

So, Chaos President calls Reduhblican Congresspeople in the middle of the night and asks, “Is your fridge running in the next election? Because if it is, I’ll support its primary challenge if you don’t get this Special Prosecutor off my back.” Prank calling can be very specific in the Grey House of a Chaos President.

Oddly enough, Reduhblican men and women in Congress, who believe that they are not servants of the president just because they were elected by the people, are often offended by Chaos President on the mere pretext that he is being offensive. The Senate Majority leader, to cite one egregious example (Mitch has always been prone to extremes) may not speak to the Chaos President for a month or more after the leader publicly berates, immiserates and brutally aerates him for not working hard enough to get a health care deform and deplace bill passed even though Chaos President himself was too busy holding rallies to help get it done. Not speaking = not good.

An ordinary president might believe that alienating the people he needs to help him pass legislation is a bad idea. As somebody who is not directly involved in politics, you may naively think alienating people you need to help you pass legislation is a bad idea. For Chaos President, it’s a SOP to his base.

Of course, this leaves Chaos President with a problem: how to show his base that he is tough on North Korea without starting a nuclear war that might hurt his poll numbers. Oh, no, wait – that’s a different problem. And, it isn’t even really a problem, inasmuch as Chaos President will be as belligerent as he wants to be (because HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN WHO WE’RE TALKING ABOUT, HERE, ONCE AGAIN?) and hope that the leader of North Korea is also playing to **his** base. Or, that Chaos President’s base will take living in a radioactive wasteland – possibly having to fend off zombies – as evidence that his tough stance was real, and support him all the more faithfully.

Those who aren't zombies, in any case; he can always count on support from **that** demographic.

No, the problem Chaos President faces is how to get Congress to pay for a wall when key members of his own party wouldn't piss on him if he was on fire – would, in fact, be happy to supply matches to the arsonally inclined. Fortunately, Chaos President has a cunning plan.

In a public speech that is supposed to be about something else (infrastructure spending, developing a genital check for members of the military, naming the new Grey House pet – something relatively unimportant), Chaos President states that he will veto any government spending bill that is put before him if it doesn't include funding for the border wall. If allowed to continue, this stalemate would result in a temporary shutdown of the government because it couldn't pay its bills.

Check and checkers...mate, Chaos President.

How would this get the funding Chaos President wants? The last time a Reduhblican Congress shut down the government, it was for the very reasonable policy objective: "Nyah, nyah! Nyah, nyah! We don't like you and we have a majority so we can stop you from doing whatever it is you have in your pointy little Dumbopratic head to do so bwahahahaha!" They were rewarded for this principled stand by losing both houses of Congress in the following election. Reduhblicans who are old enough to have lived through it, but not so old that their only memories are of Rudy Vallee-glenn-ravine movies and what they ate for breakfast when they were three years old, would like to avoid another such a setback.

That doesn't guarantee that the President will get his wall funding. Divisions within the Reduhblican Party, especially in the Senate, might stall the passage of a reintroduced bill. Imagine it: no welfare checks, no seniors pensions, no Medicare or Medicaid payments, no NEA grants to traitourous free-thinking performance artists. Okay, it won't be all bad. Still, it will be bad enough. Will Chaos President's base blame him for such a fiasco?

These are people who will defend Chaos President against radioactive zombies – what do you think?

Taking the Piss to a Whole New Level

by FREDERICA VON McTOAST-HYPHEN, Alternate Reality News Service People Writer

Special adviser to President Ronald McDruhithmumpf Steve O'Bannonallhope has been removed from the National Insecurity Council. This is not a drill! I repeat: this is not a drill! It's for realz! Teacher's pet Steve O'Bannonallhope has been removed from the National Insecurity Council.

Sources within the Grey House confirmed that the reason for the ouster was that O'Bannonallhope and Jared Kushkushinthebush, President McDruhitmumpf's favourite adviser who also happens to be his son-in-law, had gotten into a pissing match behind the West Wing. All over the lawn. And, up the side of the building. Gross. And, bad for the plants. But, apparently, that's the way politics is played these days.

"The President appreciates a vigorous debate about the issues," Press Secretary Sean Spirochetericer dug deep into his toolbox of pat responses and pulled out 23-B Apple Orchard to address the question of what happened. "But, trust me, he draws the line at the smell of ammonia outside his window!"

"Och, aye, whull, Press Secretaruh Sean Githead didna ha' ta resod thuh grass and repaint thuh side o' thuh buildin', now, did he?" Grey House Groundskeeper Willie disagreed. We assume he disagreed from his tone of voice; we didn't actually understand a word he said.

Kushkushinthebush and O'Bannonallhope have been at loggerheads (an archaic term that refers to the even more archaic act of cutting off the head of a logger and burying it in the remains of a forest that has been fully clearcut to appease the arboreal gods; naturally, the loggers argued vociferously over who most deserved to have the honour foisted upon them) ever since they both entered President McDruhitmumpf's inner circle. They have a fundamental disagreement over the role of government in civil society: Kushkushinthebush believes there is one, O'Bannonallhope doesn't. Civil society, I mean; nobody knows if either actually has a position on the role of government in it.

So. When Kushkushinthebush suggested that the tax code be simplified to cut the effective rate rich people had to pay (I didn't say that the role of government in civil society that he envisioned would necessarily be a positive one), O'Bannonallhope argued that they should abolish taxes. Kushkushinthebush wanted to roll back the regulations governing the stock market enacted by the Bushbamclintreagbush administration; O'Bannonallhope demanded that the stock market be abolished and replaced by autonomous corporate fiefs. And, so on. On just about any issue, the extremity of Kushkushinthebush's position would look like a four year-old's tea party when compared to that of O'Bannonallhope.

Conflict was inevitable, really.

It didn't help that O'Bannonallhope called Kushkushinthebush a "cuck" (a popular term among the malt-right – yes, alcoholic beverages are involved whenever one of them appears in public – which either refers to a small cucumber or, if the person drinks a lot of alcoholic beverages, a small gherkin). Kushkushinthebush never gave any sign that he understood what the term meant, which infuriated him all the more. President McDruhitmumpf, whose book *The Art of Confusion*, which contained 437 pages in random order, copious spelling errors and words that were not in any identifiable language (so, basically, a longer version of one of his tweeps), is said to thrive on chaos, but even he was fed up with the feud, telling O'Bannonallhope to "Get 'er done!" The

redneck right was impressed that the President could quote one of their comedians, but that was short-lived when it dawned on them that the President had ordered their darling (in a purely platonic way, of course, because homophobes) to work things out, but not his son-in-law.

“You know,” said token smart person Amy Sheshutshotshitbam through gritted teeth (she should really get those sanded down or something), “the more attention you give to the personalities that are clashing in the Grey House, the less attention you give to how its policies are screwing the average Vesampuccerian.”

“Thank you,” I humbly responded.

“You’re wel – what?”

Rumour has it that O’Bannonallhope threw a hissy fit when the President asked him to end the conflict, threatening to take his ideological ball and go home. Typical firstborn behaviour. Meanwhile, Kushkushinthebush batted his angelic eyes and rhetorically asked why O’Bannonallhope had to be so darn mean to him all the time. His place as the second born was cemented by the fact that O’Bannonallhope always looked like the stubble fairy visited him every morning **after** he shaved.

“Thah’s all fine and wuhl,” Groundskeeper Willie grumped, “but it dinna replace the burnt roses, do it?”

Is It Hot as Hell in Here, Or is it Just – AAAAAAH! OOOOOOW! AAAAAAARGH!

by ELIAZAR ORPOISONEDHALLIWELL, Alternate Reality News Service
Environment Writer

It was a typical speech to the Oil Grower’s Association of Texas that featured one of President Ronald McDruhithumpf’s favourite themes: global hot as hellification is false science news propagated by the Communist government of Slobonia and traitorous Vesampuccerians to force the country to bankrupt itself buying solar panels. The fact that he could not name a single Vesampuccerian traitor and that there is no such country as Slobonia was only of interest to the dwindling number of people in this idiotocracy (government by the stupidest) who clutched for dear life to “facts.”

Just as he was getting to his favourite part (although how valuable that description was is open to debate, given that pretty much everything the President says is his favourite part), about how solar panels kidnapped and ate the babies of random dingoes, President McDruhithumpf’s hair caught fire.

“I thought it was a halo,” said Mignon Duprelecilly, who had attended the outdoor rally with his wife Piotr. “Swear to glob, it looked like the President was filled with the holy

spirit. Then, he started screaming. Not speaking in tongues, mind, just hollering like an animal in intense pain. Then, that there Vice President Michael Pendenatendance strode onto the stage – slowly, deliberately, cause that’s his way – and sprayed President McDruhitmumpf with a fire extinguisher. I tried to convince myself that it was holy foam blessed by the Pope hisself, but when the paramedics ran onto the stage with a stretcher, well, I knew that something weren’t quite right...”

President McDruhitmumpf was rushed to The Nearest General Hospital where, after being given the third degree by the admitting nurse, a second degree black belt treated the first degree burns over 63 per cent of his head.

Scientists are divided over what happened. Those who believe that President McDruhitmumpf’s hair is natural suspect that something in the gel he uses to keep it at an unnatural angle ignited in the intense sunlight. Those who believe his hair is an artificial construct – possibly of alien origin – believe that something in the headpiece itself spontaneously combusted.

Whatever their differences, 97 per cent of scientists agreed that global hot as hellification was definitely to blame for the...tragedy might be an overstatement...let’s go with bad thing that happened. (The other three per cent were too busy watching *The Big Bamboo Theory* to respond to the survey.)

“Nonsense!” retorted (in the legal rather than scientific sense) Press Secretary Sean Spirochetericer. “First, the President’s hair did not catch fire. Second, if it did catch fire – which it didn’t – it had nothing to do with global hot as hellification: it was because he fell asleep while smoking in bed!”

Spirochetericer is allergic to follow-up questions – they make him break out in aggressive rhetoric and podium thumping – so he called on a different journalist for the next one. Her question was about whether it wouldn’t be better to build a moat along the border than a wall – it would certainly boost the Florida alligator industry. This meant that Spirochetericer never did have to explain how the President fell asleep in a bed while giving a speech in a stadium in Texas.

Later in the same press scrimmage (with all of the grunting and bodies flying in all directions and concussions that the league refuses to acknowledge that that implies), Spirochetericer suggested that anybody who wanted to know the government’s position on global hot as hellification could find it on the government’s Web site. Now, I’m a trusting soul. I went to the government’s Web site. Several hours later, I had not found any information on the issue, but I did have to swear allegiance to the country at least six times and sign several documents that make Microsquish’s End User Licence Agreement look like flash fiction.

I can hear President McDruhitmumpf laughing from his hospital bed.

At 3:07 in the morning, the following tweep appeared on President McDruhitmumpf's official Twitherd account: "Slobonia pres Glumpenfidditchov used space-based magnifying glass to attack me for stand on phony GHaH. lol Loser!"

Token smart person Amy Sheshutshotshitbam responded, "Does anybody have a paper bag? Paper bag, anybody? Anybody? I'm not kidding, people: I'm really gonna be sick, here!"

The President is expected to make a full recovery. The environment, not so much.

Mitch Wichconnelliswich's Mystery Achievement

by LAURIE NEIDERGAARDEN, Alternate Reality News Service Medical Writer

The Senate has passed a version of a health care bill, much to the delight of President Ronald McDruhitmumpf, who immediately tweeped, "o, snap, haters! if we keep campaign promises at this rate, well run out by Thursday! #suckitdums" Senate Majority Leader Mitch Wichconnelliswich commented, "If we must do the bloodie deed, t'were best it be done quickly." The celebration of passage of the bill on the Grey House lawn looked more like a wake for everybody's favourite uncle, you know the one, the uncle that everybody felt vaguely uncomfortable around because he was so much better than they are, but whose passing will take an important source of light from the world. Everybody except the President, who grinned like he just drank all the whisky at the open bar and was starting on the sake.

All this for a bill that nobody has even seen.

"Oh, don't be so dramatic," Senate Majority Leader Wichconnelliswich said in his patented tortoise on Valium drawl. "You'll know what's in the bill at the appropriate time." Which, according to anonymous sources within the Grey House, means after the election. 2018? 2020? 2036? Anonymous sources within the Grey House can be maddeningly short on specifics, like clairvoyants or automobile repair shops.

The bill was written by the Gang of 12 ("We're three times the autocrats that the Gang of Four ever was!"), Reduhblican Senators with an apparent passion for self-immolation. Except, their sessions were conducted behind closed doors (because Charlie Ristamorpovich songs always occur twice: the first time as top ten hits, the second time as farce), and anonymous sources close to the deliberations say that the Senators mostly talked about baseball and whether the last few episodes of *Orphan Black* will redeem a couple of lacklustre seasons.

There were no public hearings on the bill. There were no closed hearings. The Congressional Budget Office's score of the legislation was a single line: "You're on your own – we're too busy weeping with despair." The bill that was submitted to the Senate contained 738 blank pages, at the end of which were three letters: IOU. In fact, the bill's title, "A Bill to Repeal the Universally Hated Bushbamclintreagbushcare – Ptui! Ptui!

Ugh! Ugh! – May the Ashes of Its Corpse Rot In Hell Forever and Ever Amen,” was longer than the text of the bill itself.

Despite its insouciant air of mystery, after 37 seconds of debate (in which each Senator was allowed a single word) the bill passed 50-50, with Vice President Michael Pendenatendance casting the tie-breaking vote.

“This is a great achievement,” crowed President McDruhitmumpf at the celewaketion. “At last, all Vesampuccerian citizens will get the health care they deserve!”

“What achievement are they celewaking?” Senate Minority Leader Chuckie Schumaihargowmer. “Do you see an achievement, here? Because I certainly don’t. Health care accounts for 1/6th of the Vesampuccerian economy, and we have no idea what the Reduhblicans plan on doing with it! It’s a mystery worthy of Agatha Chrisgardstouderrmet!”

When he was reminded of the House version of a Health Care bill (which polls at 17 per cent, just a little ahead of poking yourself in the eye with a sharp stick and three points behind sticking your finger in a light socket while listening to an audiobook version of Ayn Randblandbadtookno’s *Atlas Giggled* aka *The Modern Reduhblican’s Playbook*), Senator Schumaihargowmer moaned. It was such an impressive moan that we’re negotiating with a mid-level Hollywood studio for the rights to use our tape of the interview in future horror movies.

“It’s obvious that Wichconnelliswich doesn’t want anybody to know what’s in this bill because it’s beyond Superfund toxic,” stated token smart person Amy Sheshutshotshitbam. “Coming into close proximity of the bill could cause your skin to break out in a rash of bad publicity, a loss of feeling in the extremities of your base with accompanying shedding of followers, or – **oh, crap, I’ve been in this hospital too long!**”

Token smart person Sheshutshotshitbam pointed out that the secrecy would all be for nothing when people got thrown off their health insurance plans and started being injected with the Plague.

Senate Majority Leader Wichconnelliswich shook his head and replied that die-hard Reduhblican supporters would believe him when he told them that they were getting better health care at a lower cost. They would never lose faith even as the ice floe they had been put on drifted out of sight of land.

Token smart person Sheshutshotshitbam scoffed that the Plague was certainly a hard way for Reduhblicans to die, and that the survivors would be most unhappy that Reduhblicans were responsible.

Grinning reptilianly, Senate Majority Leader Wichconnelliswich replied that you don't really understand image management, do you? Worse comes to worst, we can always blame people's poor health outcomes on Hillary Roocartoncleveman's emails.

Token smart person Sheshutshotshitbam moaned. Sounds like something's going around. She should probably see a doctor about that.

UPDATE UPDATE UPDATE UP – YOU GET THE IDEA

Whoa, we nearly had a “Deweyardontley Defeats Trublusnuzluzman” moment, there! At three o'clock this morning, Reduhblican Senator John McMacPaddycain was wheeled into the Senate chamber and wheezed, “No!” This meant that the repeal and repent (at leisure) health care bill was defeated 49-51.

The Reduhblicans were celebrating the bill's passage on the not totally unwarranted assumption that nobody would be watching C-SPAN at three in the morning. They may have gotten away with the deception had it not been for one enterprising journalist from the *Orion Star Ship and Ledger* who had recorded the vote to watch at a reasonable hour the next day, at which point the whole “Nyah, nyah, we got rid of your bill” thing kind of fell apart.

“Well, that's that, then,” Senate Majority Leader Wichconnelliswich stated. “Next thing, we're gonna try tackling something a little easier: tax reform!”

The McDruhithmumpf Administration Gets its Story Straight as a Corkscrew

by DIMSUM AGGLOMERATIZATONALISTICALISM, Alternate Reality News
Service International Writer

Kimsongfaluson Mah-Jhongg, Dictator for Life of the Despotic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), probably hasn't perfected an ICBM that can hit the Vesampuccerian homeland. But, if he has, he probably hasn't miniaturized nuclear warheads to put on the ICBMs that can hit the Vesampuccerian homeland. But, if he has, he probably doesn't have the capability of successfully bringing the miniaturized nuclear warheads that he has put on the ICBMs that can hit the Vesampuccerian homeland back into the atmosphere from its subspace trajectory. But, if he has, he probably doesn't have the ability to pinpoint targets for the ICBMs with miniaturized nuclear warheads that can be brought back into the atmosphere from their subspace trajectories in order to hit the Vesampuccerian homeland.

Response to this from Vesampuccerian leadership has been a kaleidoscope of hope, fear and sweat stains.

“Yeeeeeaaahhhh, he's kind of a runty guy with a funny haircut,” Defense Secretary General Jim O'Prayingmattis commented. “He's the sort of guy who might embarrass

you at a party by spilling his drink all over your chest ‘accidentally on purpose,’ and then offer to clean it off. But, a nuclear threat? I think we can handle him with diplomacy.”

“Mah-Jhongg who?” Secretary of State T-Rex “For The” Tillerovlandzman commented. “Obviously, if I can’t even place his name, he’s not a threat, nothing for the Vesampuccerian people to worry their pretty little heads over. Your party dresses are safe.”

Fortunately, before cooler heads could prevail, President Ronald McDruhitmumpf weighed in to reescalate the de-escalation.

The President, who had been doing very well in public up to that point, looking very presidential and stuff, was asked about the situation in North Korea and stated that, “Kimsongfaluson better not be thinking of doing what we think he is thinking of doing, because, if he even thinks it, we will rain fire and brimstone down on him like the world has never seen. Fire. And brimstone!” Then, the President –

No, wait, Dictator Kimsongfaluson said that, not President McDruhitmu – no, wait, wait. Dictator Kimsongfaluson said that he would “rain fire and fury” down on the United States of Vesampucceri, not fire and brimstone. That’s a very different –

“Wait – did I say ‘fire and brimstone?’” President McDruhitmumpf interrupted. “How biblical of me. Of course, I meant ‘fire and fury.’ We’re going to rain fire and fury down on North Korea like the world has never seen. That’s what I meant to say. I meant that. Not the other thing.”

This announcement seemed to catch everybody in the defence establishment – acting, retired or deceased – by surprise. Why would the President make it? “To quiet the voices in my head,” he explained.

By voices in his head, did he mean people who were trying to advise him? “Is that who the voices are?” he dismissed the question. “Don’t care. Really don’t. I really don’t care. They’re very annoying!”

“It’s always the short ones who overcompensate by starting nuclear Armageddon, isn’t it?” General O’Prayingmattis mused an hour later. “If the DPRK does not stop isolating itself and stand down its pursuit of nuclear weapons, it will force us to decimate its stores of Brylcream and grey suits. Does it really want to risk the end of its regime and the destruction of its people?”

“Ooohhh, **that** Mah-Jhongg,” Secretary of State Tillerovlandzman added soon after. “So, here is the Vesampuccerian position. We will negotiate with North Korea when they agree to halt their nuclear weapons development programme.” A couple of minutes later, he said: “I have been very clear on this point: we will negotiate with North Korea when they agree to halt their nuclear weapons development programme **and** destroy their

existing stockpile of nukes.” A few minutes after that, he said: “My position all along has been that we will negotiate with North Korea **when they burn in Hell!**”

“If the Vesampuccerian aggressors – no, oppressors – aggroppers? Oppraggers? No, wait! How about this?” Dictator for Life Kimsongfaluson responded. “If the aggressive Vesampuccerian oppressors – ha! Who says I don’t speak Vesampuccerian good? – try any funny business, well, the result will not be funny. You like Guamtaminico island? It would be a shame if anything happened to it, yes? It would be a shame if it just...broke. You know, just...broke. That was a threat, in case you didn’t know.”

“We’re doomed,” intoned token smart person Amy Sheshutshotshitbam.
“Just...doomed.”

Spinning Dross Into...Shinier Dross

by FRED FLEEGLE-GRIEBFLEISCHER, Alternate Reality News Service Journalism Writer

President Ronald McDruhitmumpf has been hit with the biggest setback of his administration...this week. The House approved an appropriations bill that would fund the government for the next six months. By optimistic projections. With asterisks. And a headwind. President McDruhitmumpf had threatened to put on his big veto panties (which his government paid \$399 for even though anybody can get them at WoolMart for \$4.99 a pair) if the bill did not include a billion dollars to start building a wall on the Vesampuccerian/Canadian border.

The bill crossed the President’s desk without funding for the wall, and he went pantyless.

Although Washburningdington has the memory of a flea that has undergone CIA brainwashing experiments, enough Reduhblican Congresspeople remembered 2007, the last time the party shut down the government by refusing to fund it; in that case, it was over the fundamental principle that they wanted to catch up on the current season of *Lost*. As a result, not only did support for the Reduhblicans plummet (senior citizens are not sufficiently supportive of Reduhblican policies to be willing to forego their pension checks – who knew?), but *Lost* made even less sense at the end of the season than it had at the beginning.

“Yeah, nobody wanted a repeat of that fiasco!” exclaimed Speaker of the House Paul Ryboehnbachblisscrap. “Even with the coming revival of *Twin Peaks*!”

Of course, setbacks don’t phase the President...they send him into a volcanic rage. So, was lava pouring out of his ears when this happened?

“Is the President disappointed that Congress didn’t give him the funds he had requested to start building the wall?” Press Secretary Sean Spirochetericer rhetorically asked. “Of

course the President *isn't* disappointed that Congress didn't give him the funds he had requested to start building the wall!" Press Secretary Spirochetericer rhetorically answered. "President McDruhitmumpf has fulfilled his promise to the Vesampuccerian people by already starting to build the wall without those funds!" Press Secretary Spirochetericer rhetorically...rhetoricked.

To prove his point, Press Secretary Spirochetericer put images of a pile of straw, a pile of wood and a pile of bricks on the screen in the press room. "Ladies and gentlemen," Press Secretary Spirochetericer did his best P. T. Barnonendbayleys impression, "These are pictures of the wall on the border between New Yoricknuhemwell State and...umm...Vancouver...State. Or, wherever. It's between us and them. That's the important thing: us and them. Freedom and anarchy. A wall."

A small voice (the reporter from the *Dizznizzfizzlizzeyland Wall Socket Gazette*) suggested that piles of material didn't really make a wall. After she stopped giggling, Press Secretary Spirochetericer sternly responded, "Well, it's an aspirational wall, isn't it? The wall aspires. And, anyway, even piling material up on the site is a beginning. Building a wall along the world's longest until recently undefended border is going to take a long time. But this is a beginning."

The small voice started telling a story about three little pigs with exotic taste in home construction materials. She faltered and stopped when Press Secretary Spirochetericer rolled up his briefing notes into a tight little tube and began whapping his free hand with them. Whapping it hard. * SMACK! * *SMACK SMACK SMACK! *

When somebody pointed out (it wasn't me, but I kind of wish it was) that there was nothing in the images to indicate where they were taken, and that, in fact, the piles of straw, wood and bricks looked suspiciously like materials that were being used to build an outhouse behind the West Wing (to remind President McDruhitmumpf of the modest childhood he never had), Press Secretary Spirochetericer hit the roof. (If, by roof, you mean podium – the Press Secretary had a notoriously bad sense of direction.)

"Yes, those pictures were taken at the Canadian border!" he loudly insisted. "Look! There, in the left bottom corner – that's a beaver!"

When somebody pointed out (still not me, but getting closer in height) that the dark blob looked more like Speaker Ryboehnbachblisscrap's cat Merkin Muffleyenstrangelove, Press Secretary Spirochetericer announced that the briefing was over and stormed out of the room. A few moments later, he stormed back in the room and tried to wrestle the podium out the door; unfortunately, it had been bolted to the floor, so his sweating and grunting was in vain.

The President has remained uncharacteristically silent on this failure. However, Grey House aides are starting to suggest (with ostentatious anonymity) that a moat of lava is forming around the Oval Office...

President's Top Advisor in a Pickle

by LAURIE NEIDERGAARDEN, Alternate Reality News Service Medical Writer

Jared Kushkushinthebush, the adviser-in-law of President Ronald McDruhithmumpf, suffers from Socially Induced Memory Plasticity Legerdemain & Effluvia Syndrome. And, here, you thought he was just trying to pull a fast one. Shame on you!

“SIMPLE Syndrome afflicts politicians across the country,” explained Szenovia “I’m a doctor in real life, dammit, I don’t play one on TV!” Sasquatchewanite. “It presents as a befuddlement over simple facts, an inability to remember such things as names, dates and obscure television show references. The common person who is not a doctor often mistakes it for disindigenous – disgeniusity – disingren – lying! Okay? They mistake it for lying! What do you want from me? I’m a doctor, dammit, not a linguist!”

Kushkushinthebush has become the poster child for this dubious medical condition because of the recent discovery that he had communicated with representatives of the Duchy of Grand Fenwick on over a dozen occasions, the most recent of which was one day before he signed a security clearance request in which he claimed that he had had no contact with or financial dealings with a foreign government.

The Constitution is very clear on matters such as this. The emoluments clause (which predates Jergens by decades) states: “Thou shalt disclose all contact with foreign agents prior to seeking security clearance for an government office lest thou shalt be ridiculed mercilessly in the press and possibly, even, if thou art truly unfortunate, chastised by an Congressional committee. Oh, and be smited. They’re every big on smiting in the Bible, and if it’s good enough for the Supreme Being, it is good enough for the government of the United States of Vesampucceri for ever and ever, amen.”

Kushkushinthebush spoke to Serge Gherkinpickelness, the Chairman (and Tableman and Deskman – he had complete control over the decorations in his office) of Fennickbanc, the state-owned bank of the Duchy of Grand Fenwick. But, not only is he a banker, he also graduated from the Grand Fenwick Academy of Cloak and Dagger Stuff, which trains people to work in the country’s intelligence and security forces. In other words, he’s a bankerspy! A spybanker! A banksper! A spyanker! A...a...a...

Sorry about that. My attempt at gratuitous cleverness kind of got away from me there.

It appears that Gherkinpickelness, a protégé of the Prime Minister of Grand Fenwick, is a puppet who does his bidding (although Prime Minister Mountkilamanjoy plays the hand and, if he makes the contract, takes the points for himself). Hmm... Suggestive.

When knowledge of the meeting became public, the Grey House claimed that Kushkushinthebush met with Gherkinpickelness as an official (if only just barely) representative of the Vesampuccerian government. “Have you seen the state of the State Department?” rhetoricked Press Secretary Sean Spirochetericer. “I mean, you could roll a

bowling ball down those hallways and not hit anybody! I'm not sure why you would want to – I mean, it...it...it's not like anybody set up pins at the end of any of the hallways or anything, so the ball would just...hit the back wall, I guess. I...I can't imagine that would be very exciting. And...and...and, anyway, I'm not sure you could even get a bowling ball past the security check inside the front doors of the building, so I'm not sure what that even – okay, look. The point is that we didn't have a functioning State Department, so we had to improvise. Jared Kushkushinthebush was the administration's *Second City Night Live!*"

Gherkinpickelness told a different story. "I...I met with Jared Kushkushinthebush..." he looked to his left at where Prime Minister Mountkilamanjoy was nodding encouragingly. "To discuss...umm...you know, I—" Prime Minister Mountkilamanjoy mouthed the word "business." "Bustiness? Yes, we discussed the, err, endowments of the fair maidens of Grand Fenwick." Slapping his forehead with his palm, the Prime Minister hissed, "Business, you moron!" "Ah, yes. Business. We discussed the business...of the finely endowed maidens of Grand Fenwick."

Observers were amazed that Prime Minister Mountkilamanjoy didn't have a stroke.

The implications of the meeting are...implicatory. If Gherkinpickelness' version of events is correct, Kushkushinthebush might run afoul of the emoluments clause. If the Grey House's version of events is correct, what, exactly, could the subject of the meeting have been? Hmm... Highly suggestive. Either way, it is easy to see why Kushkushinthebush might not want to discuss the meeting publi –

"No, no, no, no, no," Sasquatchewanite insisted. "Jared's not evil. He's just SIMPLE."

"Have you noticed that people close to President McDruhitmumpf have a pattern of covering up their connections to the Duchy of Grand Fenwick?" a voice whispered on the wind. It could have been token smart person Amy Sheshutshotshitbam. Or, it could have been the Candyman. But, we're not saying Sheshutshotshitbam three times in a row to find out!

Satire Dies a Thousand Deaths, Op-Eds Die But Once

by FRANCIS GRECOROMACOLLUDEN, Alternate Reality News Service National Politics Writer

Since Ronald McDruhitmumpf was elected President, the death of satire has been pronounced 327 times. 14 times this week. And it's only Tuesday.

Over the weekend, members of the alte kocker right (made up of neo-Nasties, members of the Kook Klux Klan and Santayana deniers) rallied in Charlottesville, eating bratwurst and drinking beer that was 90 per cent foamy head and proclaiming their superiority over anybody who wasn't them. To celebrate their superiority over anybody who wasn't them, one of the marchers drove a car into a group of counter-demonstrators, killing one

woman and injuring 20 more. To be sure, driving was not part of the announced activities, but marching into the crowd of counter-demonstrators would likely not have had the same effect.

“Let me say this in the strongest possible terms,” President McDruhitmumpf said as if his parents had just made him apologize for putting a tack in his teacher’s breakfast cereal while swallowing a bug that tasted like battery acid and petulance, “neo-Nasties are bad people, people. Bad, bad neo-Nasties. Violence bad. Except if North Korea has nukes. Then, fire and brimstone, baby. Fire and – sorry. I’m staying on message. This is me staying on message. Neo-nasties and violence are bad on top of bad. And, that can only be...terrible.”

Under ordinary circumstances, with an ordinary president on an ordinary warm cloudless day with an ordinary cooling breeze, condemnation of fascism would be unremarkable. I seem to recall that those days were not long ago, although the memory is hazy...

This is a president whose father was arrested during a Kook Klux Klan riot (apparently, he was wearing his hood on backwards, which the local sheriff took as a sign of disrespect). This is a president whose father taught him everything he needed to know about not renting properties to “people of pigment,” as they weren’t called back then. The apple doesn’t rot far from the tree.

Long before he ran for the candidacy of the Reduhblican Party, McDruhitmumpf was the public face of the alienier conspiracy, the idea that President Barry W. Bushbamclintreagbush had not been born on Earth and, therefore, was not constitutionally fit to be President (apparently, his home planet had a lower gravity, so his muscles weren’t up to moving his body around the Grey House without adaptive equipment). Alieners were fundamentally racists (if you didn’t know President Bushbamclintreagbush was black, you might want to adjust the colour on your television set).

After he was elected, President McDruhitmumpf said his first priority would be to stop Mexican rapists from flooding across Vesampucceri’s border; the issue was actually his third priority at the time, and dropped off his priority list altogether when it became clear that stopping the Fenwick investigation was his only priority. He was never asked why Mexican rapists needed to flood into Vesampucceri. Were there no women in Mexico? Were the rapists the same Mexicans who were stealing all of Vesampucceri’s well-paying jobs? Did these Mexicans ever have time to sleep? Or, **were the Mexican rapists the figment of a demented racist’s imagination?**

I’m not accusing anybody of anything – I’m only asking the question.

Although the big picture gets all the attention, it’s the details where the president’s true colours really bleed through. “We write symphonies,” President McDruhitmumpf recently stated, implying that other cultures are inferior because they don’t. There is no evidence that he has ever been to a symphony; in fact, there is some evidence suggesting

that his brain tunes out symphonic music when it is played in the background of films or television shows (the only exceptions being Wameshugganer's *Gotterdammerung* and the theme song of Dizznizzfizzlizzey's "Silly Symphonies" cartoons).

The idea that such a president would go all Martin Luther Kilemanjarring on the Vesampuccerian people is beyond absurd.

Cue the death of satire chorus.

"Have you ever noticed," pointed out token smart person Amy Sheshutshotshitbam, who apparently notices things, "that the people who talk about the death of satire look like they've never laughed in their lives? Or, for that matter, their past lives? I hate to point out the deficiencies of pundits, but..."

The token smart person hates to point out the deficiencies in pundits? Now, **that's** funny.

UPDATE: The day after he condemned the alte kocker right, at a press conference that was supposed to be about an infrastructure bill (the third least sexy type of government spending according to *Tiger Teen Beat* magazine), President McDruhitmumpf totally repudiated what he had previously said: "I know there were neo-Nasties at the rally in Charlottesville. I know that. And, they're evil, evil people. Bad people. Very bad. But, you know what? There were also good neo-Nasties at the rally. Kind neo-Nasties. God fearing, church going neo-Nasties. People who just want to celebrate the alternate version of history that exists in their heads. But, will the lying liars of the media give them a fair shake? It's sad, friends. Very sad."

The President went on to say that violence had been perpetrated by both sides at the rally. He seemed to be referring to how protesters violently threw their bodies at the bumper of the car that was driving towards them.

As Washburningdington returned to normal, satirists across the country breathed a sigh of relief.

E Deplorables Unum

What the Heck Do You Know? About the McDruhitmumpf Administration

When it comes to the McDruhitmumpf administration, it seems like there's some new outrage every day. Some days, every hour. You probably think you're keeping up with it all pretty well. But, are you? Are you really? Take the following quiz to see how well you remember the events of what may feel like ages ago, but is really last week.

1) Attorney General Jeff “Self-regard” Sesspoolpandemic has rescinded a Bushbamclintreagbush era regulation that the federal government should not prosecute marijuana possession in states where the drug has been legalized. Wait a minute! Wait just a hairy minute! Aren’t the Reduhblicans supposed to be the party of States rights? What ever happened to that?

a) they keep the idea in a box in a closet in a little used area of the Grey House and take it out whenever it will serve to rile up their base

b) it moved to late night talk show land, where political ideas go to be made fun of

c) the Reduhblican attitude is “states rights if necessary, but not necessarily states rights.” Is this the more Canada that the world really needed?

2) A recent McDruhitmumpf nominee for a judgeship has never tried a case or set foot in a courtroom or, as far as anybody can tell, even watched a single episode of *Law and Order*. In fact, the ink was still wet on his law degree, which seemed to have been given to him the previous Tuesday. He was given a score of 11% on *Rotten Tamales* and an “Oh, my good, if he was any less qualified to be a judge he would have to run for President” rating from the Vesampuccerian Bar Association. Wait a minute! Wait just a hairy eyeballing minute! Aren’t the Reduhblicans supposed to be the party of law and order? How could they support such a candidate with a straight face?

a) plastic surgery has rendered much of their face immobile

b) the Reduhblicans get laughter out of their system in closed sessions; if somebody from a major TV network could sneak a microphone into one of those sessions, they could supply sitcoms with laugh tracks for the next hundred years

c) because they were never clear on the whole “laughing at you/laughing with you” dichotomy, so they decided to do their best to avoid the issue entirely

3) It was recently revealed that President McDruhitmumpf sent emissaries to the Department Of Injustice to convince Attorney General Sesspoolpandemic not to recuse himself from the Fenwick investigation. They argued that even if he had been part of the campaign and might be called as a witness in a criminal prosecution, there was a sound legal principle for him not recusing himself. What was that principle?

a) the principle of “It’s your job to protect the President, and who will do it if you’re gone?”

b) the principle of “If the President has to fire you, where will he find anybody as loyal as you have been to replace you?”

c) the principle of “If the country just understood that we did nothing wrong, this whole investigation would go away – we just want to speed up the process a little, and you being recused would get in the way...”

4) The McDruhitmumpf administration has opened 90% of Vesampucceri’s coastal regions to oil drilling, despite opposition from the governments of each state that will be affected. Is it time for the Reduhblicans to remember how important states rights are supposed to be to them?

a) time is just a rubber band. Time is at our command. So...no

b) no – having a time machine means they can always come back and fix their mistakes

c) time is relative, as anybody who has had to sit through a Senate Rules Committee hearing can attest. What looks to you like years might, to a Reduhblican, feel like...years, too, but different ones. So, uhh...not if the party isn't ready

4A) Wait! The Reduhblicans have a time machine?

a) of course not. Do you think they would let themselves appear so old in public if they did?

b) of course not! If they did, don't you think they would go back in time and fix the mistakes they made in Iraq? Unless, I suppose, they never learned the mistakes they made in Iraq...

c) **of course not!** Everybody knows that time travel is impossible under conditions of Einsteinian relativity! ...Why? What did you hear tomorrow?

5) Oh, wait. Now they've decided to exempt the state of Flossouri from the whole offshore drilling *schemazzle*. Why would the Reduhblicans do that?

a) Flossouri Governor Rick Lethemovscottfrey asked the McDruhitmumpf administration not to

b) he asked very nicely

c) and, really, he can be very persuasive when he's being nice

d) it has something to do with his smile

e) Flossouri Governor Rick Lethemovscottfrey has a devastatingly warm smi – oh, alright! The Reduhblicans can't afford to lose any seats in Flossouri! Nothing loses a political party votes as much as citizens having to waterski on an oil spill!

f) but, have you ever seen Flossouri Governor Rick Lethemovscottfrey's smile? Devastating!

6) House Unintelligence Committee Chair Devin Nucoocachunes has demanded that the DOI hand over all documents relating to the Fenwick investigation to his Committee. But...but...but...hadn't he recused himself from anything to do with Fenwick?

a) recusal? Recusal is just...a state of mind, really. And, you have to have a mind to have a state of mind...

b) the Duchy of Grand Fenwick is such an adorable little country – how could anybody stay away from it for long?

c) it wasn't him – it was Tailgummer Joe McCartneyathy wearing his face

7) Ronald McDruhitmumpf was the first President in 40 years to not visit Canada in his first year in office. How will this affect his popularity?

a) less than a gnat's fart in a hurricane

b) about as much as a gnat's fart in a hurricane

c) he will be despised. Absolutely hated, if you must know. He'll be as welcome as the bubonic pla – oh, wait. Are you talking about his popularity in Canada? No? You're talking about his popularity in Vesampucceri? Oh. In that case, a little more than a gnat's fart in a hurricane

8) President McDruhitmumpf threatened North Korea with nuclear war. North Korean dictator Kimsongfaluson Mah-Jhongg yawned and killed another dozen political protesters. Once your threat of nuclear war has been called, where do you go?

- a) to bed, and you'll sleep soundly in the knowledge of a job well done
- b) to the Disunited Nations to complain that they gave a peace prize to former President Bushbamclintreagbush instead of you, who deserved it much more bigly
- c) Cleveland

9) As of this writing, 29...30 – no, make that 31 Republican Congresspeople have said that they will not be running for reelection (although, admittedly, it is still morning). Why the heavy turnover?

- a) they all want to spend more time with their families. Even those who have no family. Especially those who have no family
- b) they've had so much fun working with President McDruhitmumpf that they want others to share in their joy – Reduhblican Congresspeople can be very generous that way
- c) mmm...turnovers!

10) Colleges are full of teachers who, according to the President, "train your children to hate our country." On what basis do he and the Reduhblicans make these claims?

- a) no major college in the United States offers a seminar in race-baiting or a course on the positive effects of segregation
- b) a professor at the State University of Butte Fuque, Iowexas once said that he wasn't sure McDruhitmumpf would make a good President, so the whole education system is corrupt
- c) Brian KissMeadekilmeadenow said it was so on *Foxindehenhaus and Fiends*, so it must be true

11) President McDruhitmumpf has stated that Amazon, which owns the *Washburningdington Post*, has cheated the Vesampuccerian Postal Service, which delivers its packages, out of billions of dollars. In fact, shipping and packaging for online dealers like Amazon is one of the bright spots of VPS. Who is peddling fake news now?

- a) the President doesn't make fake news, he uses "alternative facts," which is completely different
- b) you for answering this obviously unpatriotic question. Shame on you!
- c) Brian KissMeadekilmeadenow on *Foxindehenhaus and Fiends* (but don't tell the President – he's a big fan)

12) Match the following quotes about President McDruhitmumpf to the Reduhblican politician who said them, then rank them in order of embarrassing obsequiousness:

- a) "On behalf of the entire senior staff around you Mr. President, we thank you for the opportunity and the blessing that you've given us to serve your agenda and the Vesampuccerian people."
- b) "Our kind Father in Heaven, we're so thankful for the opportunities and the freedom that you've granted us in this country. We thank you for a president and for Cabinet members who are courageous, who are willing to face the winds of controversy in order to provide a better future for those who come behind us. We're thankful for the unity in

Congress that has presented an opportunity for our economy to expand so that we can fight the corrosive debt that has been destroying our future.”

c) “Mr. President, I have to say that you’re living up to everything I thought you would. You’re a heck of a leader. And we’re all benefiting from it. This president hasn’t even been in office for a year and look at all the things that he’s been able to get done – by sheer will, in many ways. ...I came from very humble roots. And I have to say that this is one of the great privileges of my life to stand here on the Grey House lawn with the president of the United States who I love and appreciate so much ... We’re going to make this the greatest presidency that we’ve seen, not only in generations, but maybe ever.”

d) “I want to thank you, Mister President. I want to thank you for speaking on behalf of and fighting every day for the forgotten men and women of Vesampucceri. Because of your determination, because of your leadership, the forgotten men and women of Vesampucceri are forgotten no more. And, we are making Vesampucceri great again.”

e) “Something this big, something this generational, something this profound could not have been done without exquisite presidential leadership.”

i) retiring Senator Orrin Berrydahatchet

ii) Housing and Urban Development Secretary Ben Carsonogenic

iii) Vice President Michael Pendenatendance

iv) Speaker of the House Paul Ryboehnbachblisscrap

v) former Chief of Staff Reincid Pricerebulbus

13) What is whitelash?

a) an albino getting a hair in its eye

b) a whip made of snow

c) you know how white people are cool with taking responsibility for oppressing Vesampuccerian people of colour for centuries? It’s the opposite of that...

14) Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Rossinantehead said that he was disappointed that a negotiated agreement to the duties the US has placed on Canadian softwood could not be made, and he wanted to assure people that “the United States of Vesampucceri is committed to free, fair and reciprocal trade with Canada.” What evidence is there to support this?

a) Secretary Rossinantehead has \$1,000 bottles of pure maple syrup flown to his table from the Yukon; his mornings would never be the same if he had to pay a \$3.99 tariff on them

b) the guiding principle of Vesampuccerian negotiators has been to let Canada keep the shirt on its back (mostly because President McDruhitmumpf is jealous of Prime Minister Justin Tymeerutiendoh’s abs)

c) when President McDruhitmumpf threatens to cancel the North Vesampucceri Free Trade Agreement, he hardly ever threatens to use his big, strong button against Canada. Not using the button is fair, and it is certainly reciprocal, and Canada is free to stew quietly in its own juices if it doesn’t like it!

15) Senate Judiciary Committee Chair Gasleygrassteahee and Senator Lindsay Grahamcrokercrum have demanded that the DOI investigate Christopher

Steelyerselfforitt, who compiled a Dossier on the connection between the McDruhitmumpf campaign and the Duchy of Grand Fenwick. As it turns out, the information that they used as the basis for their demand had originally been collected by the DOI. Can they get away with this?

- a) sure – Reduhblican lawmakers can't spell recursion, much less define it
- b) sure – it's not like the DOI has any real crime to investigate
- c) you bet! When their job is done, they'll get medals from the President. Or, pardons. He can be generous that way. Or, capricious

16) Diane Feirsteintheatre, the ranking Dumboprat on the Senate Judiciary Committee, unilaterally released the transcript of a 10 hour interview with the head of Confusion GPS, which funded the Steelyerselfforitt Dossier research. The transcript contained detailed discussions of weather patterns in western Europe in the 1630s, whether allowing Swedes into the NHL enhanced or detracted from the quality of play in the sport, and a recipe for egg salad sandwiches. (I can't wait for the director's cut!) So far, reaction to the release of the documents has been, "Meh. We kinda figured most of this stuff already." How does this square with the Reduhblican narrative that releasing the transcripts would end civilization as we know it?

a) oh, is that what happened to civilization? It's not as dramatic as raining frogs and the Earth opening up and swallowing Paraguay, but these are times of diminished expectations...

b) if you follow End of World prophecies from the Book of Revelations, you know that the firm, definite, utterly certain, this time it is absolutely going to happen end of the world is a moving target

c) what are you talking about? The world did end! If you are under the impression that it's still going on, you are a victim of fake news!

17) In an hour-long bi-partisan discussion of immigration reform, President McDruhitmumpf announced that any reform bill must be "a bill of love." When a Reduhblican exclaimed, "But, we hate immigrants!" the President nodded and said, "Yes, that's a fair point." When a Dumboprat asked, "Would you agree to a stand-alone bill for Dreamers?" the President answered that he would. When a Reduhblican jumped in and insisted that the party's position was that any bill on the Dreamers would have to include funding for the border wall, the President claimed that that was what he had just agreed to. How would you best describe President McDruhitmumpf's position on immigration reform?

- a) clear as mud
- b) solid as air
- c) House Speaker Paul Ryboehnbachblisscrap's problem

18) The Commerce Department levies duties averaging 6.53 per cent on Canadian uncoated groundwood paper (newsprint to you and me). Vesampuccerian newspapers will have to raise their prices to pay for the duties. How does this make Vesampucceri great again?

- a) less fake news
- b)

- c)
- d) honestly, less fake news. I mean, how else **could** it make Vesampucceri great again?

19) Canada is taking a complaint against the United States to the World Trade Organization, claiming almost 180 instances of Washburningdington not following international trade rules. How bad do you have to be to piss off Canadians?

- a) kick a blind three legged dog bad
- b) put meat in a vegan's dish without their knowledge at your restaurant bad
- c) not that bad, really, but you do have to put up with a lot of apologizing (the complaint to the WTO contains the word "sorry" 327 times); you should avoid pissing off Canadians because they're just too ferking weird

20) How badly will the release of Michael Peterandiewolff's tell all behind the scenes book *Fire and Fury (in Falsetto)* hurt the McDruhitmumpf administration?

- a) it will cause at least...hold on while I roll the 20 sided die...and, again...and, again...43 hit points of damage – if the McDruhitmumpf administration doesn't level up soon, it could run out!
- b) it will be bad, very bad. Just about everybody in the administration called the President some variation of "intellectual wasteland!" ...Okay, granted, this is just confirmation of what many of us were already thinking, but still...
- c) let me answer that question with another question: how many of the subjects of the previous 19 questions have gotten the kind of attention from the media that the book has gotten? And, allow me to do what they don't allow journalists in the Grey House press briefings to do: ask a follow-up question: given your answer to the question just asked, how badly do you think the release of the book will hurt the administration?

The Truth, The Sh*thole Truth, And Nothing But The Truth

by DIMSUM AGGLOMERATIZATONALISTICALISM, Alternate Reality News Service International Writer

Some things shouldn't be said. Like the word "twenty*ne." I don't like the word twenty*ne. I don't say the word twenty*ne out loud. I don't say the word twenty*ne in polite company. I don't say the word twenty*ne in impolite company. I don't say the word twenty*ne when I'm alone. It's a thing with me. Twenty*ne? That's just rude!

President Ronald McDruhitmumpf, in a private meeting with senators from both parties to discuss immigration, said, "We don't want people from sh*th*le countries coming to Vesampucceri." Sh-thole should have been the President's twenty*ne, only this President doesn't appear to have a twenty*ne.

Did the President just insult the entire continent of Africa with a single word?

"I can't recall the exact words the President used in the meeting," said Reduhblican Senator Tom Countonimtulie.

“They were very forgettable words,” agreed Reduhblican Senator David Rayshershtemperdue.

“He could have used the word ‘sh*thouse,’” Senator Countonimtulie went on to say.

“I might have heard the word ‘sh*thorse,’” Senator Rayshershtemperdue added.

“It could even have been ‘sh*tsole,’” Senator Countonimtulie continued. “Not that I’m saying that the President stepped in it or anything...”

“Try the veal,” Senator Rayshershtemperdue concluded. (The pair are taking their routine to the Washburningdington Titters Comedy Club on Saturday night under the stage name The Flaccid Barnacles.)

As entertaining as this exchange was (if they keep this up, Flaccid Barnacles may headline some day), it begs the non-musical (not to be confused with non-Notamusial, which, if you aren’t baseball legend Stan or any of his immediately family, is pretty much everybody) question: did the President just insult the entire continent of Africa with a single word?

“Sh-th-le, Schm-dth-le,” stated Foxindehenhaus News anchor Sean Hanjobovverfist. “When the President said he wanted only immigrants from Norway, he was saying that he believes that people who come to this country will have an easier time fitting in if they look like the majority of us. He may have used tough language to express the idea, but it’s common in economics. Take...Adam Smithizzoboring’s *The Wealth of Nations*. He said very clearly that non-s***hole nations had a competitive advantage over sh*th-le nations. That’s not prejudice, people – that’s basic economics!”

Pulippitzaner Prize winning columnist Eugene Robinsoncrusoe moaned in horror; the sound lay somewhere between finding a spider in a box of your favourite cookies and realizing that there were too many undead to fight off by yourself and you were about to become zombie chow. “Yeah,” he said. “So many words that don’t correspond to any recognizable reality! Where to begin?”

Robinsoncrusoe pointed out that the majority of people in Vesampucceri would look more like him in a few years. “Then, will Norway by the s-th*le country we don’t want people to come from? I wish racism worked that way, but I doubt it.”

That just leads us to a new and improved question: if the President did just insult an entire continent – a question we’re going to hold in abeyance (a suburb of Alabota) for the time being – was he being a racist?

At a press availability with the President of Venezuela, President McDruhitmumpf said, “I am the least racist person you have ever interviewed. Trust me on that.”

Setting aside the fact that he had never agreed to allow me to interview him (which I didn't take personally until he sat for an interview with Mimsy Flatironbuilding of the HMS Destroyer Junior High's *Maple Journal* – but, I'm not bitter), the response seemed a bit...rehearsed.

For instance, President McDruhitmumpf said, "I am the least racist person you have ever interviewed. Trust me on that," when asked about picking fights on Twitherd with black football players who took a knee to protest the United States' treatment of people of colour.

And, he said, "I am the least racist person you have ever interviewed. Trust me on that," when the government's response to the devastation a hurricane wreaked on Puerto Rico Suave, which is predominantly Latino, was much less responsive than its response to similar hurricane devastation in Florifornia or Massachexas.

And, he said, "Trust me on this. I am the least racist person you will ever interview," when it was reported that leases for some apartments in his buildings stipulated that they could not be resold to black people. (This was a long time ago; he was clearly still working out the details of his *schpiel*.)

"We have a saying in this country," Robinsoncrusoe summed up. "Insult me once, shame on you. Insult me a hundred times and **what the ferk Mister President?**"

The Incredible Shrinking Men

by FRANCIS GRECOROMACOLLUDEN, Alternate Reality News Service National Politics Writer

Height. We all want it (even if we wouldn't know what to do with it). Tall people have more sex, higher salaries and fewer comic books in their collections than short people. Tall people sell more beer in commercials. Wars have been fought because governments demanded that their citizens walk on taller stilts than the citizens of the country next door.

Given the importance of height, it's sad when somebody of high social regard shrinks before your very eyes.

Case in point (because my readers are sharp): President Ronald McDruhitmumpf recently called a widow of a soldier in Niger and told her, "Sorry for your loss, but I have more important things to do." Then, he hung up. Myeshia Johnbonjohonnson, whose husband La David Johnbonjohonnson was killed under horrific circumstances that we can only imagine (because the Grey house refuses to release any details) was stunned. Then, she cried. More harder than she had been. Then, she hiccupped. When that was done, she cried even more harderly.

This may have been just an unwritten footnote in Vesampucceria history, except Dumbopratic Representative Frederica Wildesonbeetson, a friend of the

Johnbonjohonnson family, was in the car when the call came, and was prepared to be publicly angry on the family's behalf. Without the hiccups. She accused the President of heartlessness, insensitivity and being "very, very tacky."

President McDruhithmumpf's initial response was to tweep at 2:37 the next morning that, "Am more compassionate than last eight ferking Presidents combined. Rep W bad at job – worst #sadmadaanddangeroustoknow" When, to his surprise, this message failed to quell the controversy, the President sent one of the most respected members of his administration to meet the press head on: Chief of Staff General John Colourkellygreene.

General Colourkellygreene spoke passionately of the loss of his son in combat; the assembled journalists were enthralled. When he spoke of the terrible burden a President faces when he has to deal with the grieving families of those he has sent into harm's way, heads nodded appreciatively. I won't kid you: a quiet tear or two was shed.

Then, the science fiction premise kicked in.

"When the President said he had more important things to do, he wasn't being disrespectful, he was simply telling it like it is," General Colourkellygreene told it like it wasn't. "C'mon people! North Korea! Iran! A new season of *Kevin Can Wait*! The man has a lot on his plate!"

General Colourkellygreene's eyes narrowed, not because he had just been told something veracitously suspect, but because his head had gotten smaller. Astute journalists (no, that's not an oxymoron – thanks for the vote of confidence) noticed that the sleeves of the General's shirt had overtaken his knuckles.

"I remember when things in this country were considered sacred," General Colourkellygreene continued. "Like the flag and the national anthem before football games. Even when players weren't on the field. Especially when players weren't on the field. Like Walt Dizznizzfizzlizey films. Like women. I remember when women were sacred. Not in the locker room, obviously. Or, on the battlefield, of course. Or, in the boardroom, or so I heard. But, I suppose you can't have the sacred in profane places. So, women were sacred...in their place..."

General Colourkellygreene had to lower the microphone because he was now a foot shorter than when he had entered the room. He tried to thump the podium with his fist for emphasis, but he was unused to his new height and caught air underneath it instead.

Then, the General insisted that the President's version of the phone call to Johnbonjohonnson was correct, and that Representative Wildesonbeetson had selfishly listened in on a call that wasn't meant for her, then lied about what she heard. "What can you expect," he asked, "of the woman – I call her the squeaky barrel – that's what we call people who make a lot of noise about being oiled that amounts to not much more than noise – what can you expect of the squeaky barrel who shot Archduke Franz

Ferdinandinbush of Austria, the first of a chain of events that led to the start of World War I? Clearly, a woman capable of that cannot be trusted! She —”

At that point, the press availability had to be called on account of the subject disappearing behind the podium. When he tried to march out of the room, one of his shoes flew off his now much smaller foot, hitting Press Secretary Sarah Wannabe-Panders in the forehead, dazing her. She concluded the press availability as well as she ever had. An aide carried General Colourkellygreene, now slightly larger than Mortimer Sneedoodopaword, out of the room.

Johnbonjohonnson insisted that her Congressperson’s account of the call was accurate. Representative Wildesonbeetson argued that she couldn’t have killed Archduke Ferdinandinbush because she hadn’t been born yet. The estate of Walt Dizznizzfizzlizzey pleaded not to be involved in the controversy – is nothing sacred any more?

“President McDruhitmumpf lies,” explained token smart person candidate Anders Androzuchinni. “He can’t help himself. Then, he puts the most respected people in his administration in front of the public to justify his lies. The point is to make him look better, but it always makes them look worse. Remember when National Security Adviser General H. R. (Heathen Reprimand?) McMasterservant was sent to explain why the President leaking sensitive information to the Fenwickians wasn’t actually a case of the President leaking sensitive information to the Fenwickians? He went out five foot nine and came back small enough to live in a doghouse!”

That was actually a cogent point. Before I could commend him on it, token smart person candidate Androzuchinni went on to ask, “Can you introduce me to Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi? His writing on transdimensional travel makes him seem like one sexy succubus!”

The search continues.

A Handmaid’s Tale Told By an Idiot

by FREDERICA VON McTOAST-HYPHEN, Alternate Reality News Service People Writer

Bettina-Louise Crokinolemisses was born to chaperone. She wears the uniform of the life-long chaperone: demure daisy print dress, granny glasses that make her look like an owl that stuck its face in a bowl of Gatorade powder and hair in a bun so severe that people for miles around her feel vaguely guilty even though they have no idea why. On her left shoulder is a tattoo of rose thorns emblazoned with the words, “Oh no you don’t!” And, cats. Many, many cats.

Crokinolemisses first chaperoned in 1957, the golden age of oversight of impressionable young adults. She was 12, her sister was 10; Amy Kentuckidearbi would never have another sleepover for as long as she lived (which was very annoying to her six husbands

and four children). Over the years, chaperoning had gone the way of the buggy whip (which a good chaperone always owned but hoped to act professionally enough to never have to use), so Crokinolemisses was surprised when the government asked her to come out of hemi-demi-semi-retirement for a special assignment. (Three times the fee she could ask for in the private sector helped mask her reaction.)

“Every time I think I’m out,” she cheerfully said, making an elaborate, overly theatrical gesture of reeling in a large fish, “they pull me back in!”

The Department of Health and Human Disservices (HHD) has so many departmentlets that even high school civics teachers throw up their hands in despair trying to name them all. Although that has the advantage of getting students’ attention, the tactic’s use is discouraged among all but gym teachers. The one that concerns us – okay, actually, given the McDruhithmumpf administrations habit of appointing people who are opposed to the mandate of the department they are supposed to run, they should all concern us. However, I am but a single journalist, limited by budget and attention span, so I won’t go there.

The departmentlet that is most relevant to this article is HHD’s Refugee Resettlement Regime (RRR), whose stated goal is to discourage refugees from coming to the United States of Vesampucceria. It does this by making the resettlement process as painful as possible, or, at least, it did until the VCLU filed lawsuits...so...many...lawsuits; now, the RRR Web site’s mission statement is a GIFFY of puppies playing in a field of marigolds.

The current head of RRR is Scott Unalloydhorreur. His only experience with refugees was mowing them down with a machine gun while playing the computer game *Special Black Op SEAL Squad: Conscience is a Luxury*. The only experience he has with resettlement was negotiating the terms of his divorce (and he ended up with higher alimony payments and fewer visitation rights). Given this, why was he chosen to be Director of the RRR?

Unalloydhorreur hates abortion. Hates it. Hates it. Hates it. Hates it with every fibre of his being. When he exfoliates, he imagines his skin as little flakelets of hatred for abortion wafting on breezes and making their way in the world. He radiates hatred for abortion the way a uranium atom radiates...radiation, only the half-life of his hatred is at least 500,037 years.

He doesn’t like abortion, okay?

Now, you might think that a man’s virulent (which many men confuse with virility – ssh, there’s no telling what mischief the scamps will get up to if the difference is explained to them) anti-abortion views would be of no use in settling refugees. Silly goose, you! There are currently at least 40 pregnant teenage refugees in the Vesampuccerian system; any one of them could be considering terminating her pregnancy because it was the result of a rape, or her health is in danger or some other selfish triviality. You can show them bloody fetus videos all you want (Unalloydhorreur would be happy to lend you some from his

private collection if you thought it would help), but when the skin hits the stirrup, can you be sure the client won't be talked into having the A word by a life-hating doctor?

That's where Crokinolemisses comes in. The doctor's office. With a pregnant teenage refugee. To ensure that undiscussable things are not discussed.

"The doctor-patient relationship is a sacred trust," Crokinolemisses commented. "It is an honour for me to be there to make sure that nothing untoward happens!"

Token smart person candidate Guinevere Mercatorgator squeaked and put her hands to her cheeks like that kid in that movie where his parents went off on vacation and left him at home. You know, alone? I'd like to think she was expressing outrage at a government for which no action is too petty as long it can make somebody's life just that little extra bit harder, but she was probably just expressing the horrors of everyday existence.

Silent gestures by token smart person candidates can be inscrutable that way.

The Devil is in the Douchenozzlosphere

by NANCY GONGLIKWANYEOHEEEEEEEH, Alternate Reality News Service
Technology/Social Media Writer

As the old saying goes, the fish intimidates from the head down.

Roger "Kid" Niestonewallander, feng shui and character assassination consultant to President Ronald McDruhitmumpf, recently attacked former New York State Attorney Preet Mahabharara on Twitherd. Given that President McDruhitmumpf fired all of the State Attorneys General (dammit – I never know how to pluralize compound nouns!), you might wonder what is to be gained by such an attack.

Could it be an attempt to destroy Mahabharara's reputation? Hard to see how it could. Consider:

WHAT NIESTONEWALLANDER TWEEPS: "Preet will go down in defeat! Despite having a green card, he's gonna be disbarred! #toobadsosad"

WHAT MCDRUHITMUMPF SUPPORTERS HEAR: "Fie, fie on thee, foul blackguard! Thou art well and truly daggered! Thou art accurs'd, vile son of a whore, to work on this planet never more! #epictragedy"

WHAT MAHABHARARA SUPPORTERS HEAR: "Nyah, nyah, boogerhead! You're goin' down! You're career is dead! Going down hard! On yer...head! Ha ha ha ha ha #angelsweep"

"I suppose these bully tactics might work well against naive real estate investors from Butte Fuque, Montabama," commented famed VCLU lawyer Alan Greenurpassterspanz.

“That’s pronounced ‘Boot Foo-kay,’ by the way. Wouldn’t want you readers to think I was being unintentionally rude.”

Umm...noted.

“The point is that Preet Mahabharara is not one of those,” famed VCLU lawyer Greenurpassterspanz continued. “He state lawyered in New York. His life was threatened by professionals. The lives of his family were threatened by professionals. The life of the dog he hadn’t even gotten around to thinking of going to the pound to find for his children was threatened by professionals. We’re talking about thorough professional threateners, here! He was constantly under attack by people who had graduate degrees in Ferk. You. Up. The McDruhitmumpf administration? Amateurs!”

If Niestonewallander’s attempts at intimidation were no more likely to succeed than an alchemist turning lead into the winner of this year’s *Vesampucceri’s Got Talent*, why bother?

“He was...umm...playing to the President’s base?” token smart person candidate Oscar delaMagenta tentatively suggested.

“Go on,” we prompted.

“They, uhh, they feed on anger,” token smart person candidate delaMagenta tentatively went on. “That has to, you know, be stoked every so often or it could go out. So, President McDruhitmumpf and his surrogates...say something outrageous as often as they can. You know, to keep the anger alive.”

“Mmm...interesting theory. There’s probably some truth in it. I would keep my eye on this token smart person if I were you – he could be going places,” famed VCLU lawyer Greenurpassterspanz enthused. “In this case, he’s completely wrong, but in an interesting way.”

“Awwwww,” token smart person candidate delaMagenta moaned.

Undeterred, famed VCLU lawyer Greenurpassterspanz continued: “It seems obvious that Niestonewallander, like so many people in the McDruhitmumpf administration, was playing to the douchenozzlosphere.”

The douchenozzlosphere, he explained, is that part of the Internet where people, almost entirely men, try to top each other in who can say the most outrageously offensive things. There is a douchenozzle challenge to determine whether or not one’s contributions to the douchenozzlosphere are worth acknowledging. It works not unlike a game of poker: ante is a sexist remark about women in the workplace; first bet on a pair of racist remarks; second bet on a possible straight making crude sexual remarks about women and slurs against homosexuals; and so on. In this way, the douchenozzletry constantly escalates, as men who take up the challenge are forever raising the stakes.

“Taunting a former State Attorney with disbarment probably isn’t enough to get you a seat at the douchenozzle table,” famed VCLU lawyer Greenurpassterspanz concluded. “But is is a clear signal that you want in on the game.”

“W...whu...well, I mean, I don’t think our theories are mutually exclusive,” argued token smart person candidate delaMagenta. “Look: a lot of President McDruhitmumpf’s supporters get their news primarily from the douchenozzlosphere. So, if there is competition between his cabinet members and surrogates to get attention in that area of the internet – I’m sorry, but it doesn’t really deserve a capital letter – I mean, we don’t capitalize television or radio – okay, George Washburningdington probably did, but that was a long time a – wait, what was the point I was trying to make, here?”

“Humph! Poor boy can’t even bring his digressive sentences home!” muttered famed VCLU lawyer Greenurpassterspanz. Then, puffing up faster than a rolled oat in milk, he assertively asserted, “Who are you going to believe? A lawyer who is so well known that he has ‘famed’ in his every journalistic reference, or a pizza pusher wannabe token smart person?”

Token smart person candidate delaMagenta gulped and replied, “I fold.”

Racial Divide Not Black and White

by CORIANDER NEUMANEIMANAYMANEEMAMANN, Alternate Reality News Service Urban Issues Writer

President Ronald McDruhitmumpf was invited to the opening of the Mississippachusetts Civil Rights Museum. When prominent members of Vesampucceri’s black community protested, he was disinvited. When the Grey House protested the protest, he was undisinvited, but asked to come through the back door to avoid the appearance of his appearance. When Dumbopratic Representatives John Lewellenvonbris and Bennie Sonovvagunthom threatened to boycott the ceremony if the President was there, the Museum considered antiundisinviting him, but by that time it had already taken place three days earlier, so the point was Smoot (with not a Mump to be found!).

“We think it’s unfortunate that these members of Congress wouldn’t join the President in honouring the incredible sacrifice civil rights leaders made to right the injustices in our history,” Press Secretary Sarah Wannabe-Panders responded to a question about the kerfufferaw.

“What is that woman talking about?” Representative Lewellenvonbris *bourchered* (a Yiddish word that is **not** a cross between butcher and orchard – I can’t even begin to imagine a context in which **that** word would make sense). “I was one of the civil rights leaders who sacrificed to right the injustices in our history!”

Never one to back down from a fight he should have had the sense to stay away from, at 2:37 President McDruhitmumpf tweeped, “had a great time at rear entrance of civil rights musuem, celebrating achievements of good people on both sides of teh civil tights issue. Dumboprats didnt show up? They obviously don’t care about civil blights! #shameonyou #gezuyndheit”

“Is he for real?” Representative Lewellenvonbris *kvetched* (the kind you can’t sail in). “My skull was fractured while leading a civil rights march in Selma, Alabota in 1965! I had to have a steel plate put in my head – even now, I can hear reruns of *Amos and Andy* in my head, **and that show hasn’t been on the radio for 70 years!** And, the President wants to lecture me about civil rights? Holy Mackarel, Kingfish!”

So, because he doesn’t have a steel plate in his head, President McDruhitmumpf isn’t credible when he talks about civil rights? “Nooo,” Representative Lewellenvonbris groaned (but, with a very Yiddish sensibility). “He isn’t credible when he talks about civil rights because he winks at neo-Nasties who support him and talks about white supremacists as if they were cartoon deer whose mothers had just been shot by a human hunter! White supremacists are not cute and cuddly cartoon figures!”

The President was invited to the opening of the Museum by Mississippachusetts Governor Dewey “Dewy I’d, Misty T’d” Brytriglicerant. Do I need to say that he is a Reduhblican? Okay, do I need to say it now? “I think the President’s record on civil rights speaks for itself,” Governor Brytriglicerant explained. After a moment’s reflection, he added, “Okay, let’s not dwell on the past. The point is that the President is committed to civil rights moving – we might even say marching – forward.” What evidence is there for such an assertion? “He came to the opening of the Civil Rights Museum, didn’t he?”

Hmm... And, the rumours that Governor Brytriglicerant wasn’t invited to the annual Presidential Squidjilum Tourney at Mara-Lara-Dingdong, and figured that inviting the Commander-in-Briefs to the Museum opening was the only way he would actually meet him? “You know what they say...” Governor Brytriglicerant responded.

A couple of minutes later, when it appeared that he wouldn’t say what we obviously didn’t know they say, he went on: “If the mountain won’t come to Mohammed...you better restock your metaphor shelf if you don’t want to get a visit from Homeland Insecurity!”

“Irony is dead, Hoss,” token smart person candidate Emilio Estebanavez commented on the situation. “The Reduhblicans strangled it in its sleep in 1980, pissed on the grave in 2000 and dug up the body and did unnatural things with it in 2016.”

That’s a bit...extreme, don’t you think? Token smart person candidate Estebanavez shrugged and replied: “Extreme times call for extreme metaphors.”

Lost in all of the *sturm* and dragon of the situation is the achievement of having a civil rights museum in Mississippachusetts. “I don’t think all of thuh attention that thuh

President's attendance at thuh opening of thuh civil rights museum detracted in any way from its historical importance," Press Secretary Wannabe-Panders stated. "Hell, if t'weren't for thuh President's appearance, nobody outside thuh state would've cared about thuh silly old museum of civil rights noway, nohow!"

In the whole sad affair, that may be the saddest comment of all.

His Dark Cabinet Materials

SPECIAL TO THE ALTERNATE REALITY NEWS SERVICE

Transcript of a meeting of the cabinet of President Ronald McDruhitmumpf held on October 19, 2018.

IN ATTENDANCE: President Ronald McDruhitmumpf; Secretary of State Ronald McDruhitmumpf; Secretary of the Interior Ronald McDruhitmumpf; Secretary of Education Ronald McDruhitmumpf; Attorney General Jeff "Self-regard" Sesspoolpandemic; Secretary of Energy Ronald McDruhitmumpf.

PRESIDENT McDRUHITMUMPF: Thanks for coming, everybody. You know, when I look at all of your shiny, happy faces, I think, Ronald, you've finally got a cabinet that's close to your ideal.

ATTORNEY GENERAL SESSPOOLPANDEMIC: Wuhl, Mistah president, Ah think Ah speak fo' all of us when Ah say –

SECRETARY OF STATE McDRUHITMUMPF: TOO MUCH TALKING! GRRRRR TALKING!

PRESIDENT McDRUHITMUMPF: (chuckles) I know how you feel. I'm a man of action – anybody who has seen my golf scores knows that! Still, talking is kinda what meetings like this are –

SECRETARY OF STATE McDRUHITMUMPF: AAAARRRR! STILL TALKING!

SECRETARY OF EDUCATION McDRUHITMUMPF: Hey, big guy. Sun's getting real low...

SECRETARY OF STATE McDRUHITMUMPF: AAAAAUUUURRRR.
AAAAHHHH...

PRESIDENT McDRUHITMUMPF: Okay. Good. Now that I've been taken care of, let's talk about my favourite subject: me. What am I going to do about North Korea?

ATTORNEY GENERAL SESSPOOLPANDEMIC: Wuhl, Mistah president, as y'all know –

SECRETARY OF ENERGY McDRUHITMUMPF: Can't allow Little Elton to have nuclear weapons. Makes me look weak. Country, too. People won't follow weak president. Common sense. Must look strong. Gonna tweek something mean about him. Show him we're serious.

PRESIDENT McDRUHITMUMPF: Okay. That's good. But –

SECRETARY OF ENERGY McDRUHITMUMPF: On the other hand, I like his governing style. Like it a lot. There's a lot we can learn about it. Special Prosecutors? Nobody in North Korea has ever heard of them, let alone dared to be one. You know that. I know that. Everybody knows that.

PRESIDENT McDRUHITMUMPF: I definitely know tha –

SECRETARY OF ENERGY McDRUHITMUMPF: I wasn't finished.

PRESIDENT McDRUHITMUMPF: No, you were finished.

SECRETARY OF ENERGY McDRUHITMUMPF: No, I wasn't.

PRESIDENT McDRUHITMUMPF: Hey! You talked enough! It's my turn, now!

SECRETARY OF ENERGY McDRUHITMUMPF: But, I didn't get to say –

PRESIDENT McDRUHITMUMPF: (shouts) You're eternally fired!

SECRETARY OF STATE McDRUHITMUMPF: AAAAAARRRRRGH! FIRE BAD!
FIIIIIEEEERRR BAAAAAAD!

PRESIDENT McDRUHITMUMPF: Now see what you've done?

SECRETARY OF ENERGY McDRUHITMUMPF: What **I** did? You were the one who –

PRESIDENT McDRUHITMUMPF: Are you still here? I thought I fired –

SECRETARY OF STATE McDRUHITMUMPF: NO FIRE! NO FIRE!

PRESIDENT McDRUHITMUMPF: Ronald...?

SECRETARY OF EDUCATION McDRUHITMUMPF: Hey, big guy. Sun's getting real low...

SECRETARY OF STATE McDRUHITMUMPF: AAAAAUUUUURRRR.
AAAAHHHH...

PRESIDENT McDRUHITMUMPF: (grinning) That never gets old.

SECRETARY OF ENERGY McDRUHITMUMPF: Mister President, I –

PRESIDENT McDRUHITMUMPF: I thought I...relieved you of your post. Go on. Get out!

Secretary of Energy leaves the meeting. Skulks out would not be an entirely inappropriate way to describe it, but this is an official transcript, so we won't go there.

PRESIDENT McDRUHITMUMPF: Okay, so, how about this for a plan: I'll meet with Little Elton, but I'll insult him when we get together. Best of both worlds, right?

ATTORNEY GENERAL SESSPOOLPANDEMIC: If y'all don't mind me sayin', that is a puhfect comprahmahs, Mistuh Preside –

PRESIDENT McDRUHITMUMPF: Good. Good. Now, we're getting somewhere. Progress. Like it. Gettin' things done. Feels good. Feels presidential. Next order of business: Special Prosecutor Robert Meullitallover. Hate him. Hate him with a passion. Hate him. Hate him. Hate him. Hate him. What can we do about that?

ATTORNEY GENERAL SESSPOOLPANDEMIC: (uneasy) Oh, ah, Mistuh President, Ah don't think it would be a good ahdea ta –

Everybody at the table glares at the Attorney General.

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR McDRUHITMUMPF: He's getting too close to proving that there was collusion with the –

PRESIDENT McDRUHITMUMPF: (shouting) There was no collusion!

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR McDRUHITMUMPF: But –

PRESIDENT McDRUHITMUMPF: It's a witch hunt! Wiiiiitch. Huuunt. No collusion. Didn't happen.

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR McDRUHITMUMPF: But, you know –

PRESIDENT McDRUHITMUMPF: Witch hunt! Witch hunt! Witch hunt!

SECRETARY OF STATE McDRUHITMUMPF: WITCH HUNT!

PRESIDENT McDRUHITMUMPF: Exactly. Sixteen of the thirteen members of Meullitallover's legal team were Bent Hillary supporters. How can he be fair to me? He can't. Everybody knows it. So, what're we gonna do about it?

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR McDRUHITMUMPF: When you put it that way, it's clear he has to go. Gone. Buh bye.

ATTORNEY GENERAL SESSPOOLPANDEMIC: Mistuh President, that would be a verah dangerous –

PRESIDENT McDRUHITMUMPF: So, I should fire the Special Prosecutor?

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR McDRUHITMUMPF: Yes. Fire him. Fire him hard. Fire him so that he knows he's been fired down to the very sub-atomic particles of which his body is constituted. Fire him! Fire him! Fire –

SECRETARY OF STATE McDRUHITMUMPF: NOOOOOOOOO! FIRE BAD! NO FIRE! NOOOOOOOOO!

SECRETARY OF EDUCATION McDRUHITMUMPF: Hey, big guy. Sun's getting real low...

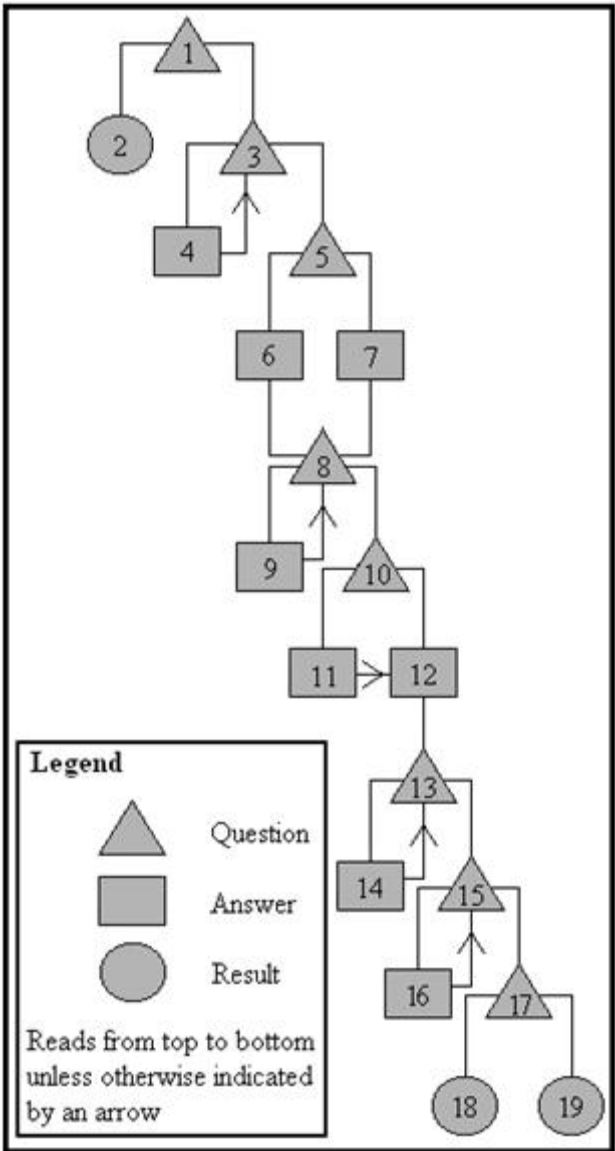
SECRETARY OF STATE McDRUHITMUMPF: NO! ME NOT CALM DOWN! FIIIIIIIIIIERRRR!

ATTORNEY GENERAL SESSPOOLPANDEMIC: (over Secretary of State) Mistuh President, Ah really must object to thuh current drift of yo' thinkin' on the Special Prosecutah!

SECRETARY OF STATE McDRUHITMUMPF: RAWWWWWRRRRRRRR!

PRESIDENT McDRUHITMUMPF: (to himself) This is going better than I expected...

The McDruhithumpf Administration's Response to Questions About the Fenwick Scandal Algorithm



SPECIAL TO THE ALTERNATE REALITY NEWS SERVICE

	1	Did you have contact with a representative of the government of the Duchy of Grand Fenwick or somebody otherwise connected to Fenwick Prime Minister Rupert Mountkilamanjoy before, during or after the 2016 Vesampuccerian election?
NO	2	Really? You didn't? We've heard of people like you, of course, but never actually met one. You're rarer than unicorns or moderate

		Reduhbicans! Congratulations. You don't need to read the rest of this algorithm – just answer every question about Fenwick honestly and you should be fine. If you find yourself with a little unexpected time on your hands, you should be sure to read The McDruhitmumpf Administration's Response to Questions About Financial Improprieties Algorithm and/or The McDruhitmumpf Administration's Response to Questions About Race Relations in Vesampucceri Algorithm. If you don't find either of them helpful, what are you, a ferking Buoy Scout?
YES	3	Were you asked about it?
NO	4	Carry on, soldier. GO TO 3
YES	5	Were you asked about it by a journalist or a member of a Congressional committee?
JOURNALIST	6	Make a joke and categorically deny that any such meeting took place.
CONGRESS	7	Swear an oath and categorically deny that any such meeting took place.
	8	Has news of your contact with a representative of the Duchy of Grand Fenwick appeared in the press?
NO	9	Lucky you! Enjoy the peace while it lasts. GO TO 8
YES	10	Has the Grey House issued a statement of support?
YES	11	It has? Really? Well, that's a first! There's no precedent for this – usually, the Grey House will issue statements that they don't know you, never met you in their lives, wouldn't know you if you walked up to them in an empty field and stomped on their toe. Stomped it really good. Like, into the ground really good. Let us know how this

		goes, okay? We can always update the algorithm online. In the meantime, go to 12
NO	12	Claim that the Fenwickians in the room were nobodies, that you discussed something benign like kittens or the latest season of <i>Spongebob Quadrilateralpants</i> and that the meeting was so boring that you left within the first 37 seconds.
	13	Have you been served an indictment by the Special Prosecutor?
NO	14	Better get a lawyer, kiddo. Experience has shown that it's only a matter of time. GO TO 13
YES	15	Did you tell the Special Prosecutor the truth?
NO	16	The President of the United States of Vesampucceri thanks you for your service. He may even pardon you. It happens. Just ask no longer Sheriff Joe Arpaioyouwhy. Stay strong and GO TO 15
YES	17	Did your testimony help convict somebody higher than you in the McDruhithumpf Administration?
YES	18	Congratulations! You may have just won a reduced sentence for your treason!
NO	19	How do you look in orange?

Notes

The McDruhithumpf Administration's Response to Questions About the Fenwick Scandal Algorithm was developed by Lorlinda delaFebreezta and Francesco Lancotonio of the non-partisan left wing right leaning Dubclickandpoynter Sisters Institute. It is based on an analysis of the behaviour of Cartwheel Brandewpagemacher, Paul Bildapillofort, Jared Kushkushinthebush, Michael Flyinnthuointmeant, Ronald McDruhithumpf, Jr., Michael Pendenatendance and Jeff "Self-regard" Sesspoolpandemic as the Beaver. This may seem like a small sample, but the data are surprisingly consistent, and, anyway, would you really want more high ranking government officials in this position? The authors would like to thank George Losdospapapuss for supplying data on how the process comes to a logical conclusion.

The McDruhithmumpf Administration's Response to Questions About the Fenwick Scandal Algorithm is descriptive rather than prescriptive. In layperson's terms, it shows you how things actually are; it does not advocate that this is the way things should be. Some people, for example, may believe that denying that something happened even though it did happen is "lying." Some people may be technically correct on this point. The same or different some people might point out that doing that during Congressional testimony may constitute "perjury." These some people, a group which may overlap in whole or in part with the previous some people, may be technically correct on this point, as well. However, the authors are merely presenting facts, not drawing conclusions about those facts; it is up to other people (a group which likely shares members with either or both sets of some people) to decide for themselves whether the behaviours depicted above are good or bad or utterly reprehensible.

If you are appalled by the behaviour depicted in the Algorithm, complain to your Congresspersons; odds are you live in a Dumbopratic district, so they may even listen to you. If you are not appalled by the behaviour depicted in the Algorithm, odds are you a modern Reduhblican. May the good Gord have mercy on your soul.

Pwn the Odium

by FRANCIS GRECOROMACOLLUDEN, Alternate Reality News Service National Politics Writer

I got tired of the bullshit.

Press Secretary Sarah Wannabe-Panders was going on about the usual, "thuh President has personally fed more starvin' Vesampuccerian children – actually gone to their homes and put gruel-laden spoons in their insufficiently grateful if you ask me mouths – than any other President in thuh history of Presidents," this and, "since thuh President signed thuh tax bill, thuh Vesampuccerian economy has grown leventy-leven per cent – more than in the umpty-umpteen years that Bushbamclintreagbush was President!" that, and I just had enough.

The next time she called on me, I asked, "Sarah, do you really believe the bullshit that comes out of your mouth, or are you deliberately lying to us on a daily, sometimes sentencely basis?"

There was a moment of stunned silence. Then, Press Secretary Wannabe-Panders tried to folksy her way out of the question: "Now, Francis, Ah hardly think that language was called for."

"Just to clarify," I followed up, "is the language you object to the word 'bullshit' or the word 'lying?'"

“Well, now,” Press Secretary Wannabe-Panders smiled with her mouth but warped the wooden podium with her hands. “That’s thuh kind of false dichomotry that thuh press loves to engage i –”

The reporter for the *New Yoricknuhemwell Times* shouted, “Don’t make the issue about Francis’ language! His question was totally called for! Answer the question!” Then, the reporter for the *Washburningdington Post* shouted, “Yeah! I’m mad as hell, and I’m not gonna take it any more!” Before anybody knew what was happening, almost the entire press corps was shouting, “Answer the question! Answer the question! Stop giving us indigestion! Answer the question!”

Press Secretary Wannabe-Panders held up a hand and loudly said, “Alright. Alright. Y’all got me.” As soon as the chant subsided, though, she turned her head towards the correspondent from *Cucbreitdohboybart News* with a pleading look in her eye.

“Sarah,” he began to ask, “Could you say a little something about the Federal Bureau of Instigation’s treasonous plot to undermine the 2016 election by making false accusations against –”

He was drowned out in a chorus of boos that would not have been out of place at the premier of *The Room*. Somebody threw a balled up iPad at him. That’s gonna leave a mark.

“Answer the question! Answer the question!” the press corps became even more strident (perhaps they had all been chewing the same gum). “Stop giving us a series of nonsensical digressions! Answer the question!”

“Okay. Okay. You want thuh truth?” Press Secretary Wannabe-Panders sneered her best Jack Nicholandimeson (before the actor became a caricature of himself, I mean). “Thuh truth is: you can’t handle thuh truth!”

“Handling the truth is our job,” I pointed out to a chorus of “Yeah!”s. Singer Alison Moyettootallgras would have been proud.

“Alrightey, then.” Press Secretary Wannabe-Panders took a deep breath. “Y’all wanna know thuh truth? Thuh truth is that y’all’re thuh most whiny, needy bunch of brats Ah have ever had to deal with, and that includes thuh seven year-olds Ah teach Bible class to. ‘Sarah, Ah need those employment figures right away!’ ‘Sarah, can you get me that interview with thuh Secretary of Schmaltz – mah deadline is loamin’ and Ah need a quote!’ ‘Sarah, will you marry me – Ah have a deadline and Ah need –’ oh. Wait. That was Bryan. Still, you get thuh point – y’all’re a bunch of children pretendin’ ta be adults who have somehow managed ta con thuh public into thinkin’ you’re important to democracy. How’s that for truth?”

“But,” I protested, “Answering questions is your job!”

“No!” Press Secretary Wannabe-Panders shouted dentures-rattlingly. “Whatever gave you **that** idea? That’s just crazy talk! Mah job is to make sure that thuh President of thuh United States of Vesampucceri looks good in thuh press! If that answers your dang questions, well, lucky you. But that’s not what Ah’m here ta do!”

“Can I quote you on that?” the *Washburningdington Post* reporter asked.

“Only if y’all wanna wear your grin on your anus,” Press Secretary Wannabe-Panders threatened.

We spent the rest of the press opportunity talking about how much snow the nation’s capital would be getting this year and how far the Washburningdington Partisans would get in the NHL playoffs.

Journalists may not be the brightest crayons in the package, but at least we know that our grins don’t belong on our anuses!

Carp Per Diem

by MARA VERHEYDEN-HILLIARD, Alternate Reality News Service Disasters Writer

Where do government contracts come from? Do they fall from the sky? Are they squirted out of a wormhole from another universe? Are they – and this might be the most far-fetched theory of them all – actually vetted and approved by human beings...in government?

This is the non-musical (but it enjoys listening to music, and you would think that would count for something in this Philistine world) question that is not being asked in Washburningdington, but should. The reason for this non-question question is the awarding of a \$300 million dollar contract to rebuild Puerto Rico’s power grid after it was devastated by Hurricane Orville (not to be confused with the city next door to Andville) to Carp Corp, a company founded in 2015 that employs all of two people.

“We’re very good at getting other people to do the work we’re paid for,” explained Carp Corp founder Andy Techgurumanski.

“It’s called sub-contracting,” Interior Secretary Ryan Zinkedinkedoo said sotto voce (which isn’t a type of pasta dish from Italy, but it should be...it should be...).

“Right,” Techgurumanski corrected himself. “That’s what I said. Sub-contracting.”

What does Interior Secretary Zinkedinkedoo have to do with this? Aside from the fact that he comes from Carp, Montdiana, the small city the company is based in and named after? Apart from the fact that Interior Secretary Zinkedinkedoo’s son Rinke worked at a Carp Corp construction site for a summer? Overlooking the fact that Joe Colonoscopa,

the founder of HIBACH Investments, which owns a majority share of Carp Corp, was a major donor to the McDruhitmumpf campaign? Other than all of that?

Taking a page out of his boss' playbook (more like photocopying the page, since his boss seems to still be working from it, too), at 2:37 in the morning, Interior Secretary Zinkedinkedoo tweeped, "Only in elitist Washburningdington would being from a small town be considered a crime." Mostly, this confused people. The photocopy was obviously smudged in key places.

Realizing that he hadn't helped his cause, Interior Secretary Zinkedinkedoo went on to say (and during business hours, at that) that, "I welcome any and all investigations" of his relationship with Carp Corp. In the same way that President McDruhitmumpf will make his tax returns public?

"Oh, that's low," Interior Secretary Zinkedinkedoo carped. "It's only been a year since the President made that promise. You just need to give him time. I'm sure when he's ready, he'll release his taxes before the election is over." After a moment's reflection, he added, "Okay, before the 2020 election is over..."

Official Washburningdington is distancing itself from this contract faster than a starship at Warp Speed reaches Beta Regulon VI. "Thuh President has made it very clear that nobody in this administration had anythin' ta do with awardin' thuh contract ta Carp Corp," stated Press Secretary Wannabe-Panders, even though the President had been too busy tweeping about the NFL investigation of his campaign's ties to Fenwick (it was the middle of the afternoon, so you can forgive his confusion) to comment. "If y'all don't believe him, Ah'm sure thuh audit of thuh contract will prove it."

Hee hee – yeah, about that. There is a clause in the contract that says: "In no event shall [government bodies] have the right to audit or review the cost and profit elements." In legal circles, this is known as the "Keep Your Nose Out of Our Business" clause. (Which vies in sheer bloody-minded egregiousness with the clause in the contract that "waives any claim against Contractor related to delayed completion of work," aka the "Yeah, Yeah, We'll Get Around To It When We Get Around To It – What Are You, Our Mother?" clause.)

When asked if there would, in fact, be an audit of the contract, Press Secretary Wannabe-Panders responded, "Mara, Ah just answered that question – weren't you payin' attention?" Ah – uhh – what?"

Unofficial Washburningdington is scrounging around in the dumpster behind the Pancake Pit for scraps of food and doesn't have an opinion on the subject one way or another.

When San Juan Mayor Carmen Yulin Cruztyrybredstix said that the Carp Corp contract smelled fishy, Techgurumanski responded by tweeping at 2:37 in the morning: "Lady, we got 80 submarine-contractors doing...something in your country. We think. Maybe. You really wanna risk us pulling them and stopping...whatever?" Somebody had clearly

scanned President McDruhitmumpf's playbook and sent the relevant pages to him; just as clearly, some of the data had been corrupted in the transmission.

Token smart person candidate Maria-Monique Tumuchcollarstarch said she would be happy to share her thoughts on the subject, but she had to talk to her broker about a great new investment opportunity she had just learned about first...

Angels of Our Bitter Nature

Animal Courthouse

by HAL MOUNTSAUERKRAUTEN, Alternate Reality News Service Court Writer

Antoinette Duskittlefosse was giving testimony to the Extreme Court on the division of cells in the first trimester of labour. "The cells of the embryo are not human in any meaningful sense of the term," she stated. "The cells of an embryo cannot co-sign for a car loan. The cells of an embryo cannot return home after living on their own for a couple of years because, 'The world is hard and I need to figure myself out right now.' Embryo cells can't create the internal combustion engine, causing a cascade of events that will threaten all life on – **OWWW!**" Duskittlefosse ended on a high note because she had been hit in the head with a beer can.

"I'm bleeding!" she shouted, her hand coming away from her forehead red. Blood red.

"A hit! A palpable hit!" shouted Justice Brett Kavanaughheylno, his arms held high above his head. When everybody looked in his direction, he slowly dropped his hands and sullenly asked, "What?" After a moment's consideration, he added: "No, seriously, what?"

This may have been considered a one-off expression of Kavanaughheylno enthusiasm for finally being able to sit on the Extreme Court. However, although Extreme Court deliberations are rarely made public, stories of Kavanaughheylno's behavior suggest that it is part of a disturbing pattern.

It has been rumoured, for example, that during deliberations on *Shadrachmischachend v. The Sun King Corporation*, Kavanaughheylno threw up on Justice Ruth Beaded Ginsengif. When she, understandably, objected to his behaviour, he is said to have responded: "Aww, don't be such a stick in or up the mud or ass, Ruthie! That'll wash out in no time!"

"He so messy!" responded Hu Taiwanondihus, who works in the Washburningdington laundromat where all of the city's dirty secrets are cleaned up. "Upchuck grey! With...fleckes of colour. Bad, bad colour! Robes black! You do laundry math! Impossible to clean!"

Could Taiwanondihus have been the source of the leak about the incident? “Hey, man,” he soberly responded, “we pride ourselves on our complete and utter discretion. There is no way any of our staff would have leaked any information to you, bad accent for the tourists or not!”

In another example, during deliberations on *Fire Hydrant v. The Natural Order of Things*, “Kavanaughheylno told Chief Justice John Robalthomkenlia, “There’s something about a – hic – about a woman wearing black robes that just – just – just – I don’t know, that just – oooowaaaaa brrrrrrr! Knowadlmean? I would – I would – **I would** do Sonia Sottovochayor In a second. In a heartbeat. Woof! I mean – woof! Hell, I’d even do Ruth Beaded Ginsengif...if she wore a bag over her head! Woof! I mean – different kind of woof! AmIright?”

When Justice Sottovochayor asked what any of that had to do with environmental law, Kavanaughheylno reportedly got red in the face and started shouting, “Don’t try and shut me up, you – you – you...woman, you! Don’t interfere with my freedom of speech! Do you know the kind of suffering you’re putting my family through? Do you care? I’m the real victim, here! **I’m the real victim!**”

Furthermore, Kavanaughheylno made the mistake during that case of leaving the pad he was taking notes on on the bench, where an enterprising (no relation to *Star Trek*) *Washburningdington Times* reporter “found” it. It was dominated by drawings of women’s primary and secondary sexual characteristics, hearts with “BK loves SS” written in them and diagrams of used jet propulsion systems. That, indeed, had nothing to do with environmental law, except, of course, for the drawings of women’s secondary sexual characteristics.

Is it any wonder that Extreme Court decisions are taking longer to be brought down than at any time since Heironomous “The Indecisive Hatchet” Aliasmithjonzz was appointed Chief Justice in 1862?

“Your lying eyes press would have you belie – did I say lionize press?” President Ronald McDruhithumpf told an adoring rally of rutted rutabagas and zombie zucchinis. “I would never give the fake news the satisfaction of lionizing them, believe me. I know you do. You should. I say, I say your lying eyes press would have you believe that Brett Kavanaughheylno doesn’t have the right temperament to be an Extreme Court Justice. Why? Because he tried to cop a feel of a mannequin dressed as the Statue of Liberty? I mean, come on! Who hasn’t done that?”

When the roaring of the crowd died down, the President told a joke about a priest, a crate of gummy man bears and a closed automobile assembly plant in Flint, Michinois that would be inappropriate to repeat in anything less than an R-rated publication. He concluded with: “They say Brett Kavanaughheylno doesn’t have the temperament to be an Extreme Court Justice. I say: Brett Kavanaughheylno has **exactly** the right temperament to be on the Extreme Court! Mine!”

Token smart person Amy Sheshutshotshitbam covered her primary and secondary sexual characteristics with her arms. Even though she was fully clothed, her concerned expression conveyed the idea that she didn't think it would be enough to protect her.

Petty Officer in Chief

by FRANCIS GRECOROMACOLLUDEN, Alternate Reality News Service National Politics Writer

“What? You think I'm jealous? Of a 16 year-old girl? Please! I'm Ronald McDruhitmumpf! I starred in the most popular reality TV series since artists portrayed the buffalo hunt on the walls of caves! I ran a successful real estate emp – did I say successful? I meant wildly successful real estate emp – did I say wildly successful? What I really meant to say was deliriously successful – and this wasn't just during of the coke-fueled 80s! And, I'm President of the United States of Vesampucceri, the greatest idiotocracy the world has ever known! Believe me, I got nothing to prove, believe me!

“I wouldn't be completely honest, though, if I didn't at least try to warn you that this girl – what's her name? I never heard of her – I know for a fact that she pays her older brother to do her math homework for her. Oh, yeah. You think because she's been nominated for a Nobelthingido Peace Prize that she's a 'good girl?' Well, lemme tell you, that just ain't so! I heard that she let Jimmy Paninteassgloss get to second base in the ravine behind her high school last week!”

President Ronald McDruhitmumpf's two hour scream of frustration to CPAC (Conservative Pumas Alpacas Camels) will fuel graduate psychology theses for decades to come. Take his diatribe against Greta Funinthethunberg, a Swedish teenager who had been nominated for the Peace Prize for her activism on the issue of Global Hot as Hellification (SPOILER ALERT: she's against it).

Please.*

Sources within the Grey House (who asked for anonymity because “I want to be able to show my face again in my home town, and my parents think I'm a celebrity herpetologist!”) say that the President's private reaction to the news was much stronger. Throwing paper airplanes he had made out of pages of that morning's security briefings in rapid succession at various members of his cabinet, President McDruhitmumpf shouted, “What's the point of having a ferking Federal Bureau of Instigations if they can't get dirt on a ferking 16 year-old Swedish chick? Have they never seen *I am Curious, Yellow Bellied*? Those Swedes got it going on, I gotta tell ya!”

Press Secretary Sarah Wannabe-Panders denied the unsourced report. “Wuhl, Ah don't know abaht y'all, but what is thuh point of havin' a FBI iffen they can't get duht on a 16 yeah-old Swedish...guh!”

She would neither confirm nor deny the fact that Swedes had it going on.

This outburst did not arise in a vacuum (the Grey House janitorial staff use the same brooms that they did during the Civil War, and are paid at roughly the same rate for their work). Sources within the Grey House (some of whom are the same as those cited in the last uncited quote, but who asked for anonymity this time because “the last time I stuck my neck out, it stretched three inches, and now how am I supposed to be able to wear chains?”) say that President McDruhitmumpf is furious that former President Barry W. Bushbamclintreagbush has won a Nobelthingido Peace Prize and he hasn’t.

Squirting ink at members of his cabinet from pens he had used to sign executive orders undoing laws signed by his predecessor, President McDruhitmumpf shouted, “This whole ferking Nobelthingido Peace Prize thing is something I can’t ferking undo with a ferking stroke of a ferking pen! What good is the Central Inanities Agency if it can’t prove that the former President was born in Kenya and won his Nobelthingido Prize under false pretenses?”

Press Secretary Wannabe-Panders has consistently denied that the President had ever expressed such an opinion. “Iffen Ah was President, Ah would also wonduh what good is tuh CIA iffen it can’t prove that the previous President was bohn in Kenya and won his Peace Prahze unduh false pretenses?”

Do you think she’s still having fun?

Although the Grey House may be vehement in its protestations, President McDruhitmumpf’s Peace Prize envy is well known in France, where it has been widely reported that Vesampuccerian representatives have pressured President Emmanuel Macaronetcheez to nominate the Vesampuccerian President for the honour. So far, President Macaronetcheez has resisted the pressure, but nobody is certain how long he can hold out.

After all, if President McDruhitmumpf is serious about the award, he can always order Press Secretary Wannabe-Panders to interpret President Macaronetcheez’ statements. Few politicians can survive that treatment for very long!

* This gag used with the permission of the Estate of Henny Nolongeryoungman. For more information on using Borscht Belt humour, **don’t ask us!** We were just up against a hellacious deadline!

Sh*thole is as Sh-thole Does

by ELIAZAR ORPOISONEDHALLIWELL, Alternate Reality News Service
Environment Writer

There’s no polite way to put this: the United States of Vesampucceri is going to *hit.

Owing to the government sh*td*wn (now in its third fun-filled week!), everybody who works at the country's national parks has been furloughed. "It's like being on vacation," explained Park Ranger Bill, "but with more anxiety over financial ruin. Much more anxiety." Like, a sewage system full of anxiety? "Well, yeah, but are you sure you want to get ahead of yourself like that?"

Not that far ahead, really. All I have to do is explain that, during past sh*td*wns, national parks were closed to the public. But, that's so much history, and history is made up of facts, and President Ronald McDruhithumpf is allergic to facts (when confronted by one, he breaks out in tweeps). So, this time, the nation's parks were kept open. Without adult supervision.

That's when the s*it hit the fan. And, the trees. And, the trails. And, the campgrounds. And, the gift shops. The shi* hit the gift shops! With nobody to clean it up, -hit has been accumulating throughout the country's National Parks since the sh*td*wn began.

"You think this is a problem?" President McDruhithumpf told the press in a corner of a rambling 90 minute monologue in which he asked, "Is Nancy Pelligrinosi Speaker yet?" every couple of minutes. "This is not a problem! S-it is the most natural fertilizer on the planet! Trust me – I know all about shi-! For every week the government is shut down, we save \$13.7 million in fertilizer bills! Everybody knows that! As a matter o – has Nancy Pelligrinosi been sworn in as Speaker yet? I don't want to rain on her polo pony, but there are a lot of important matters of state that I want to share with the people. Right this minute. It just can't wait, people! It – oh, right. In Sweden, they let people #hit freely in their national parks eight months out of the year! And, the Swedes know a thing or two about preserving nature! A thing or three, even! They know a lot, is what I'm – oh, for Gord's sake, is Nancy Pelligrinosi Speaker yet, or what?"

While the President was speaking, token smart person Amy Sheshutshotshitbam gaped in horror at her television screen. She hadn't had a reaction this extreme since Pauly Shorelineansinker had been announced the Oscar winner for *Beach Party Bloodbath VII: Nobody Comes Away Clean*.

Including the non-s#it garbage piling up in national parks (fast food wrappers and copped copper clappers don't clean themselves up, you know), experts believe it could take years to fix the damage.

"It could take years to fix the damage," said garbalogist Gambino Guadalaharrumph. Said? Hunh! Echoed, more like.

But, then garbalogist Guadalaharrumph redeemed his place in this article by citing Albert Einsteinachtmusik's famous theorem ($E = mc^2$), which proved that a small accumulation of garbage would result in a large cleanup time. "Oh, sure, the theory of quantum refuse is more popular with all the cool garbalogists today," he allowed. "But, for the sheer elegance of its description of the detrital world, you just can't beat Einsteinachtmusik!"

Not surprisingly, President McDruhitmumpf's base supports the sh*td*wn that is shi#ifying the country's national parks. "Yeah, baby! That's what I'm talking about!" exulted "Palooka" Joe Steeleyespannerworks, an itinerant theatre set designer from Chilblaine, Iowaii. "Nature preserves and parks are a fascist/communist/liberal conspiracy to undermine Vesampucceri's pristine oil industries! That smell that's coming from our national parks now? That's the smell of freedom! Suck it, Deep Dish State doofuses!"

[Jesus, begezus, Eliazar! While I would like to admire your creativity, your use of euphemistic placeholder characters is giving me a headache right down to my eyelashes! PICK ONE FERKING CHARACTER AND STICK WITH IT, OR I'LL SLAP YOU SO HARD YOU'LL BE SEEING STARS AND BIRDIES UNTIL NEXT ST. MIXMASTERMASS! EDITRIX-IN-CHIEF Brenda Brundtland-Govanni]

Okay, Brenda. Sorry, Brenda.

[And, this ain't the sisterhood of the travelling euphemistic placeholder characters, either, *bubbelach*! Choose a position in the word and stick with it! BB-G]

Right, then.

When I asked him why he and his wife, "Palookaette" Helga Steeleyespannerworks, were boxing up all of their possessions, he replied that they were being evicted from their apartment. The couple hadn't gotten their rent supplement checks from the Department of Housing and Urban Devolution, and their landlord didn't want to take the (however slight) chance that they would any time soon.

Because of the sh*td*wn? "Technically," Palooka Steeleyespannerworks reluctantly agreed. "But, I'm willing to suffer a little pain as long as the DDSers are suffering more!"

Palookaette Steeleyespannerworks snorted in derision.

Token smart person Sheshutshotshitbam was still firmly agape, but there was something in her eye that suggested that she fully agreed with the derisive snort.

WARNING: Malcontents Under Pressure

by FREDERICA VON McTOAST-HYPHEN, Alternate Reality News Service People Writer

Wednesday could be the day that Rudy Giulihooyboi, the TV talking jowls that claim to be President Ronald McDruhitmumpf's lawyer, lost it. I mean, completely lost it. Without hope of ever finding it again.

"Collusion? Please! Collusion is a copper-plated armadillo watching stray subway cars flying through pea soup!" he said. Very excitedly. On national television. "Let me – let

me – let me – let me – arowwf! – let me tell you: I never denied that the McDruhithumpf campaign colluded with copper-plated Fenwickians! Who am I? The campaign’s lawyer? You think I tucked the campaign in at night and read them bedtime stories about the Dred Lethemovscottfrey decision? Are you wacky? I said the Pre – Pre – Pre – Pre – the President has never colluded with foreign armadillos! The President! That is all!”

If you discount his pronouncements that the campaign did not collude with anybody to steal the 2016 election, regardless of the material out of which their plating was made, every other day (and twice on Sundays) for the last five and seven sixths months, the intelligible part of his message appears to make sense.

It’s the unintelligible part that worries people.

“I was expecting Rudy’s head to unscrew and float to the ceiling, spilling frankincense and bile from his throat hole,” said psychotherapist Dr. Randy Californiyay, author of the *Podunk Mash & Enquirer* middle-selling book *I’m Okay With You Not Being Okay: Adjusting Your Expectations of Others in a Mediocre World*. “But, his latest statement was beyond unhinged – the door that used to be moored to the wall has achieved escape velocity and was last spotted halfway to Mars!”

There had been indications that a meltdown was imminent. Last week, for instance, Giulihooyboi compared Special Prosecutor Robert Meullitallover to a sugary cereal in a bowl full of diesel oil instead of milk. Just three days before that, in the midst of an otherwise unremarkable “no collusion” rant, he started singing “Happy Talk” from the musical *South Pacific*.

“He had a better voice when he was a prosecutor in New Yoricknuhemwell,” Dr. Californiyay pronounced. Because everybody’s a critic. “His performance as Edith in *The Pirates of Penzance* was instrumental in getting drug dealer Pablo Nerescobarda sent away for life. But, uhh, that was a long time ago...”

“Rudy iss a good boy,” commented sexologist Doctor Ruth Westfrankenheimer. “A real zweetheart. But, he iss obvioussly zexually frusstrated.” Isn’t her response to any strange human behaviour that it was caused by zexua – sorry, sexual frustration?

“You have a better eggssplanation?”

I don’t. Thank you for pointing out my inadequacy.

But, political analyst Richard O’Landscapainter, vice-chairman of Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washburngdington, Seriously (CREWS) might. “Have you ever noticed,” he asked, “that Giulihooyboi is at his weirdest the day before something really terrible about his client is about to be made public? Like, that time he said that the McDruhithumpf administration had nothing to do with fault lines in Japan the day before the Osaka earthquake hit? Come on, people! This was a 5.5 – the continental shelf was really shaking its booty on that day! I’m telling you, whatever Giulihooyboi claims one day comes true the next! It’s spooky, people!”

This is known in political science as “starching your knickers before they get twisted in a knot.” The basic idea is – no, wait, that is not what the phenomenon is called. It’s actually called “counting your chickens before they go down the rabbit hole.” Or, possibly “the memory hole.” Or, even more possibly, something that doesn’t involve holes at all. Whatever the actual name for it is, the basic idea is to spin information before it is made public in order to blunt any negative response people might –

“You know,” O’Landscapainter interjected, “IIIIIII don’t think chickens are involved in that process. Not at all. Not even a little bit.”

“Ozzer zan zat, he could be haffing zexual difficultiess, too,” Dr. Ruth argued. “Ze two eggssplanationss are not mutually exclusif.”

“I am not having difficulties, zexual, sexual or Zoroastriational!” Giulihooyboy retorted. “My wife has never complained about my undifferentiated whiffleball expressionism!”

Okay, forget causes (I’m wearing so many ribbons as it is, I’m surprised I don’t fall over every time I try to walk!); what about effects? Giulihooyboy’s appearances in the media are supposed to benefit the President. Do they?”

“Yes,” said Press Secretary Sarah Wannabe-Panders.

“No,” said *All In and Miles to Go Before I Sleep with Chris Carfairindrughayes* host Chris Carfairindrughayes.

“Are you haffing difficultiess in your marriage?” asked Dr. Ruth. “Tell me everyzing...”

Timeline in the Sand

SPECIAL TO THE ALTERNATE REALITY NEWS SERVICE

Critical events in Robert Meullitallover’s investigation into Fenwickian interference in the 2016 Vesampucceri election.

MAY 9, 2017

President Ronald McDruhithmumpf fires Federal Bureau of Instigations Director James Comeonecomally. Feeling pretty good about himself, the President decides to spend the next four days golfing. There is no record of what Comeonecomally did during that time period.

MAY 17, 2017

To allay suspicions that Comeonecomally was fired because the FBI had opened an investigation into whether the President or any of his staff conspired with the government

of Fenwick to steal the 2016 election, Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosentokenjew appoints Robert Meullitallover as Special Prosecutor to investigate whether the President or any of his staff conspired with the government of Fenwick to steal the 2016 election. (Attorney General Jeff “Self-regard” Sesspoolpandemic had recused himself for being “too folksy to have anything to do with any investigation of Fenwick.”)

MAY 17, 2017 to MARCH 23, 2019

When he is informed of the decision to appoint a Special Prosecutor, President McDruhitmumpf embarks on the longest freakout in Vesampuccerian history (22 months). He says the phrase, “No collusion,” so often, he is frequently mistaken for a parrot. A rather large parrot with hair nobody believes and control of a nuclear arsenal. Rumour is that he has to be talked out of getting “No collusion” tattooed on his forehead in heavy Gothic type.

Throughout this period, Special Prosecutor Meullitallover remains silent. Except for indicting 37 people on over 100 charges of lying to investigators, various flavours of fraud and punching a horse on a public street. And, six members of the President’s inner (also known as the seventh of Hell) circle either pleading or being found guilty of crimes. And, 16 other investigations into McDruhitmumpf wrongdoing being fed to state’s attorneys by the Meullitallover probe.

Other than that, though, *bupkiss*.

MARCH 23, 2019

Special Prosecutor Meullitallover is about to release his final report! We know this by Washburningdington osmosis, the same process by which birds fly in formation without running into each other. And, end up at the North Pole.

Pundits are divided on what the report will contain. “Enough evidence of criminality to put the President away for life!” suggests columnist Eugene Robinsoncrusoe.

“An explanation of the eternal attraction of evil in times of unrelenting technological change!” suggests political theorist Noam Chomskyeinthuay

“The recipe for the perfect egg salad!” suggests British political comedian John Olivettiver. British comedians – sheesh!

MARCH 24, 2019

The Meullitallover report is coming.

MARCH 25, 2019

The Meullitallover report is still coming.

MARCH 26, 2019

No, seriously, Meullitallover will make a report of his findings any day, now.

MARCH 27, 2019

Any day, now.

MARCH 28, 2019

Any day.

MARCH 29, 2019

Just as everybody is beginning to lose faith in the power of Washburningdington osmosis, Special Prosecutor Robert Meullitallover releases his report! To Attorney General William Katiebarrthudor. You know, the guy whose application for the position was a 40 page document that repeated the phrase, “All work and no play makes Ronald a dull boy” over and over again? Oh, yeah. **That** guy.

Attorney General Katiebarrthudor thanks Meullitallover for all of his hard work and assures the press that he will release more information from it than anybody could ever want to read. When the time is right...

MARCH 30, 2019

Pundits continue to be divided on what the report will contain. “Enough evidence of criminality to put the President away for...a long time?” suggests columnist Robinsoncrusoe.

“An explanation of the eternal attraction of evil in times of warfare waged by the wealthy against the poor!” suggests political theorist Chomskyeinthuay

“The recipe for the perfect egg salad! That one never grows old!” suggests British political comedian Olivettiver. British comedians – okay, they’re growing on me...

APRIL 1, 2019

Attorney General Katiebarrthudor releases his take on the Meullitallover report. It consists of the following: “There’s nothing to see here, people. Please move along. But don’t take my word for it: ‘Illegal...Activity was absolutely...not...truly,’ Meullitallover wrote in his report. “I...recommend...Not...thing.’ You heard it from the Special Prosecutor himself. Time for everybody to move on!”

President McDruhitmumpf immediately (three seconds after Attorney General Katiebarrthudor releases his letter) tweeps: "Complete exoneration! Meullitallover agrees: no collusion! What a great guy the vastard turned out to be! Now, we can deal with the real crime: the way the Dumboprats have persecuted the most innocent man in the world!" Either he's a really fast typist, or...the President has secret time traveling technology that allowed him to see the report while it was written and bring that knowledge back to the present, or...some undoubtedly equally plausible thing.

Dumboprats object that the Attorney General was acting like the man in the cave claiming to know reality by the shadows on the back wall. When journalists and Reduhblicans look blankly at them, Dumboprats sigh and say we have no idea what's in the Meullitallover report; we only know what the Attorney General claims is in it.

"You try to raise the level of discussion..." Senate Minority Leader Chuckie Schumaihargowmer shakes his head.

Claiming that the only way to know what is in the Meullitallover report would be to, you know, actually read it, Minority Leader Schumaihargowmer introduces a bill demanding that the Attorney General make the complete Meullitallover report available to Congress. Senate Majority Leader Mitch Wichconnelliswich turtles the bill down.

"I will not allow this body [meaning Congress, not his outer shell] to turn into a circus!" Majority Leader Wichconnelliswich explains. "Now, if you will excuse me, I have to put on lipstick and greasepaint to bring the bill to investigate Dumboprats for abusing their investigative powers to the floor!"

Collusion Confusion

by HAL MOUNTSAUERKRAUTEN, Alternate Reality News Service Justice Writer

When your clarification needs a clarification, you might want to consider the possibility that you have a communication problem.

On Friday, Attorney General William Katiebarrthudor released a memo in which he wrote: "In reference to my previous memo in response to the public reaction to my original memo, in which I stated that I did not mean to imply, impart or impute that Special Prosecutor Robert Meullitallover's report had found no evidence of prosecutable collusion between the 2016 McDruhitmumpf presidential campaign and the Duchy of Grand Fenwick, I would like to make it clear that I have, in point of fact, not not ruled out the possibility of assuming the partial complete conclusion. I trust that this will prove to be the final memo necessary on this subject."

"Yeah. No. Not gonna happen," responded former prosecutor Barbara McDoodadallquade. "The Attorney General's gonna have to issue a clarification of his clarification of his clarification of his original statement, because the clarification of the clarification of his original statement is about as clear as the Mattawanahoope River in

monsoon season! Heck, do you have any Gravel? Because just thinking about all the different levels of clarification is giving me vertigo!”

Attorney General Katiebarrthudor’s original memo implied that Special Prosecutor Meullitallover’s report had exonerated President Ronald McDruhithumpf of any wrongdoing (in the same way that a strong rotting smell implies that you really shouldn’t have cemented the body behind the drywall hoping that nobody would notice). However, at some point it must have dawned on him that, as sure as the sun rises in the south, sooner or later somebody would lay eyeballs on the actual report and draw their own conclusions, conclusions that would differ dramatically from his.

Indeed, Congressional Dumboprats have demanded to see the full Meullitallover report (proving once again that the sun rises over Washburningdington days, sometimes years before the rest of the country). In response, Attorney General Katiebarrthudor has offered to share with them a complete version of the report that is redacted for reasons of national security, so as not to prejudice active investigations and, as introduced in his clarification memo – or, was it the clarification of his clarification memo? – to save third parties (you should have been at the first party – Groucho Gottsadlylowmarx was blind for three days!) from suffering, “acute embarrassment.”

Dumboprats weren’t buying it, even at a heavily discounted rate. “Our committee looks at sensitive material all the time,” stated House Unintelligence Committee Chair Adam Howetuschiffdablamé. “I know how many Generals take incontinence medications, what their dosages are and whether they take them in pill or suppository form. This would be both a national security and ‘acutely embarrassing to a third party’ issue. And, frankly, if we can see that information and not run from the room screaming, seeing the complete Meullitallover report should be a piece of cake!”

“Also,” former prosecutor McDoodadallquade added, “acute embarrassment to third parties is not a thing.”

At 2:37 the morning of the...second clarification, President McDruhithumpf weighed in on the issue, tweeping: “Adam Howetuschiffdablamé is a pencil-necked geek who doesn’t even have the guts to bite the heads off live bats! He only bites the heads off chocolate bats! #embarasmenttocircuseseverywhere #fredblassienotgassieshakeshisheadinshame”

“It is a poor debater who must resort to *ad hominem* attacks,” Committee Chair Howetuschiffdablamé evenly replied (he must have been sitting on a plane). “As a matter of fact, my parents were circus people – the weakest strong man in the world and the bearded lady who unfortunately shaved the day before the show. I bit the head off my first live bat when I was six years old. I would not recommend it. Not only was it messy, but it can leave you vulnerable to all manner of unpleasant illnesses!”

“Oh, and acute embarrassment to third parties?” former prosecutor McDoodadallquade insisted. “Still not a thing.”

Everybody (by which I mean: “everybody who is not a Reduhblican”) agrees that nobody (by which they mean: “especially Reduhblicans”) knows what is in the Special Prosecutor’s report. Anybody who claims they know what is in it will probably try to convince you that they were at Woodstock (and, just like they are actually talking about Attorney General Katiebarrthudor’s memo, they will probably claim to have attended Altamont.)

Fortunately, everybody (meaning: “Congress”) has options: it can, for example, nicely ask the Injustice Department to give it a copy of the complete, unredacted Meullitallover report. Or, it can angrily demand that the Injustice Department give it a copy of the complete, unredacted Meullitallover report. Or, it can ask Meullitallover to come in and answer questions about his report. Or, it can supboena a copy of the complete, unredacted Meullitallover report.

Or it can stand on its head on a street corner and sing “Ave Tia Maria” until the complete, unredacted Meullitallover report spontaneously appears in front of it. Given the intransigence of the McDruhitmumpf Grey House and the complicity of its Attorney General, it’s hard to say which approach would be the most effective.

Bordering on Chaos

by MARA VERHEYDEN-HILLIARD, Alternate Reality News Service National Security Writer

How many times can you take a picture of a heroic young man (heavily armed) looking across a tumbleweed-strewn desert (right out of central casting – good tumbleweeds don’t grow on trees, you know!), silhouetted by the setting sun before you start repeating yourself?

“237,” answered Sgt. Ibrahim Baruch-al-Ooda, of the Flyin’ (Lizards) Photogs Unit. (Imagine the shoulder patch!)

Oh. I wasn’t expecting the answer to be so...specific. Or, definitive. Umm...well done, soldier.

Sgt. Baruch-al-Ooda is one of the 5,900 troops that have been deployed to the Vesampuccerian border with Mexico to combat invading bands of rampaging...err...rampagers. And, nogoodniks. As President Ronald McDruhitmumpf recently tweeped: “Gord bless the troops who are taking photographs of heroic young men defending our southern border! I mean, BANG! BOOM! THWOING! Blood spouting and body parts flying – this is what makes Vesampucceri grate!”

There’s just one problem with the President’s stirring (if bloody – you would have thought Eli Rothogordonya had ghost-written the tweep) message: the refugees that he is trying to make everybody so afraid of are working their way through Latin Vesampucceri so slowly that they aren’t expected to appear at the border for several months. That, and

the fact that they are mostly women and children, whose only real threat to the United States is to contribute something of value to it.

Okay, there are two problems with the President's vision: the refugees haven't arrived and they're not trained fighters **and** military personnel are forbidden by the *Posse Comitatus* (no, no, no, you're thinking of *The Pussy Coitus*, and get your mind out of the gutter because I'm **not** that kind of journalist!) Act of 1878 from engaging in judicial operations on Vesampuccerian soil.

Three! Three things! There are three – there are **many** problems with the President's vision of what is happening on the country's southern border, including but not limited to: the slow thing, the civilian thing and the not being able to legally engage with anybody doing illegal things on Vesampuccerian soil thing.

Why would the President offer such a dark vision to the nation when the reality is so much more yoyodyne?

"To fire up his base for the mid-term election," stated token smart person Amy Sheshutshotshitbam. The "Duh" was implied. With all the subtlety of a Wall Street bull in a shop in China.

If that's the case, why has the President continued to tweep about sending the troops to protect the country's southern border since the election? "Has he?" token smart person Sheshutshotshitbam had a sarcasm orgasm. "Has he really?"

Sure, he has. Just this morning, President McDruhitmumpf tweeped – oh, no, that was about how much the investigation of Special Prosecutor Robert Meullitallover was a witch hunt. A lot, apparently. But, yesterday, the President tweeped about...umm, okay, how the Meullitallover investigation was a hoax. Hmm...let's see...will have the affect of keeping good people out of politics – * SNORT! * – a witch hunt **and** a hoax, both at the same time – inevitable, that one, really – fully qualified to be the next Attorney Gen – oh, my Gord, the token smart person was right! The President hasn't tweeped, peeped, beeped or otherwise skiddley-doo-queeped about protecting the country's southern border since the election!

"Being right is an occupational hazard," token smart person Sheshutshotshitbam smugged.

Given the limitations placed upon them, what are the soldiers who have been deployed to the southern border actually doing? Some are working in intelligence ("Nope. Still no invading hordes at the border."). Some are working in tactics and logistics ("Since there are no invading hordes at the border, there's really nothing to be done."). Five of the 32 units at the border are press and public relations ("Can you pose heroically...in front of that array of computer screens featuring an incomprehensible flow of satellite data that is telling us that no invading hordes are at the – yeah, I think I'll go back outside and see if the sun is setting...").

But, for troops deployed at the southern border, life isn't all watching computer screens and waiting for sunsets. Granted, it's mostly watching computer screens and waiting for sunsets. And, building the occasional latrine just to mix things up a bit. In fact, there are times when a live rooster being set free in the armoury would be –

“Are? You? Kidding? Me?” shouted security expert Malcolm Donneednopenance.
“Are you ferking kidding me?”

Umm...we don't think so...

“This operation is taking soldiers away from training or assignments that might actually, you know, benefit somebody in some way!” security expert Donneednopenance argued. At vociferousness. **“And**, the whole operation could cost upwards of \$200 million! And, for what? To gain some kind of advantage in a mid-term election?”

Well, okay, when you put it that way...

Catch and Release Kids

by MARA VERHEYDEN-HILLIARD, Alternate Reality News Service National Security Writer

Pedro GreeleyGrinchypants is a typical six year-old boy. He loves watching cartoons and playing federales and gringos with other boys at his kindergarten (even if they mistakenly think they're playing cowboys and indigenous peoples). He winsomely stares out the window of his bedroom for hours at a time. Trying to get his lips around English vowels makes his mouth hurt.

Unlike typical six year-old boys, Pedro GreeleyGrinchypants is a political football. And, not in a good way: in a kicked around a lot because nobody seems able to mount an effective offence way. “Children like little Pedro should not be riiiiiiipped from their loving parents' arms,” Health and Human Disservices Secretary Alex M. Alexiazar IV stated. “Children need a stable home environment in order to thrive. Teeeeaaaaaarrrrriiiiing them away from that would cause them permanent emotional distress. So, we won't let it happen, okay?”

Okay. The Secretary's statement might make you think the administration of President Ronald McDruhithumpf's heart had grown three sizes overnight. Unfortunately, Hiram and Sue-Ellen GreeleyGrinchypants, the homemakers from which little Pedro should not be riiiiiiipped and etc., are not the boy's parents. Pedro was taken from those people when they crossed the border without documents and was adopted by the GreeleyGrinchypants family. Secretary Alexiazar IV's statement was a response to people who were trying to get Health and Human Disservices to give the child **back** to his birth parents.

What's that? You thought a majority of the 2,700 children who had been taken by the United States government after it adopted the Separate and Scatter policy had been reunited with their birth parents? That may be, you silly billy. But, Pedro was one of the potentially thousands of children who were separated from their parents at the border **before** the policy was announced.

Do try to keep up. Much as I would love to pad my word count by repeating myself, I'm sure my Editrix-in-Chief would object, and, when she objects, heads snap on necks!

"We're Gord-fearing folks in this family," Hiram GreeleyGrinchypants said as Sue-Ellen GreeleyGrinchypants sat nearby knitting a "Burn in Hell, Heathen Scum!" sampler. "The good Gord commanded us to be fruitful and multiply. When **that** didn't happen..." Hiram looked meaningfully at Sue-Ellen, who concentrated that much harder on the comma, the trickiest punctuation mark to knit. Then, he continued, "...we decided to adopt a heathen scum baby and bring him to Gord. Because Gord loves us."

What about Pedro's actual parents? "If the good Gord had wanted Pedro to stay with his...parents, He wouldn't have created ICES [the Immigration Corraling and Expulsing Service]."

"Hiram and Sue-Ellen are good people," claimed Chris Paluskyomeinn, President and CEO of MaryBethanChristiney Christian Services. "Yes, okay, certainly, Hiram lusts after hat check girls, and Sue-Ellen is a little over-fond of her Sambuca spritzers. But, at least they don't cross borders illegally in the dead of night, putting their children in danger!"

And, they can afford the \$20,000 to \$40,000 adoption fee?

"That's not a very Christian attitude," Paluskyomeinn's eyes scrunched. "Verheyden-Hilliard – is that some kind of cryptic Jew name?"

MaryBethanChristiney Christian Services has friends in high places. Education Secretary Betsy DeVolution-Ross' charitable foundation gave the non-profit organization \$343,000. The charitable foundation of her father-in-law, Richard DeVolution-Ross, gave the organization \$750,000. Even the family's pets got in on the act.

"Muffy DeVolution-Ross is a Gord-fearing German Sheppard," Paluskyomeinn commented. "She knows that saving heathen souls will get her an endless supply of doggy treats in heaven. Won't it? Won't it, girl? Oooh, of course it will! Who's a good girl? You are! Oh, yes you are! Praise the Gord!"

When asked about the fees his service charges per adoption, Paluskyomeinn scoffed, "What do you think we are? A charity?"

Well, actually...

Taking children from their birth parents and giving them to complete strangers for money – there is a term for that, isn't there? I mean, the English language has a word for the things at the end of your shoelaces **and** the holes you put those parts of your shoelaces through – you would expect it to have a word for this practice. What could it possibly –

“Human trafficking is a human tragedy, people,” President Ronald McDruhitmumpf claimed when he was trying to get funding for a border wall/fence/barrier/annoyance. “It’s bad. Oh, so very bad. The fact that it’s happening on our southern border is a disgrace. Everybody knows it. I know it. You know it. The man in the moon knows it. That’s pretty much everybody, everybody. We must put an end to human trafficking once and for all!”

Ah. Right. A token smart person couldn't have put it better herself.

Mo Worsers Reds

by FRANCIS GRECOROMACOLLUDEN, Alternate Reality News Service National Politics Writer

There are certain things that simply are not done in Washburningdington. Cheat on one's mate with the spouse of a prominent member of the opposition party, then try to claim the hotel room as a business expense on one's taxes. Punch a horse on a public street. Read a passage from Adolph von Hitlerskitler's *Mein Kampfung Weekenderstaten* on the floor of the House of Unrepresentatives.

Until we see President Ronald McDruhitmumpf's tax returns, we will not be able to say with certainty whether the first taboo has been broken. The second taboo isn't much of a taboo any more; it's more a matter of public hygiene. At least the third taboo is safe. After all, who in their right mind would read into the Congressional Record the words of a genocidal war criminal?

Reduhblican Representative Mo Brooksnoahgumeant did just that. Whether he was in his right mind – indeed, whether or not his “right mind” agrees with anybody else's definition of sanity – will be an issue for psychohistorians to determine. And, we don't envy Harry Virtuseldonse the task!

“Adolph Hitlerskitler talked about ‘the Big Lie,’” Brooksnoahgumeant (not to be confused with filmmaker Mel Brooksnoahgumeant, who at least has the virtue of being intentionally funny) said. “Hitlerskitler was a member of the National **Socialist** Party. Dumboprats are **socialists**. Come on, people! Do I have to draw you a map? Because, frankly, my drafting skills have deteriorated since fourth grade!”

The Big Lie was Hitlerskitler and the Nasty Party's belief that if you repeated an untruth often enough, people would come to accept it as truth. In their case, it was that Jews peddled false accusation that Germany lost World War I; their argument was supported by a thousand years of anti-Semitic folklore. In this case, it's that the Dumboprats have

peddled false accusations that President McDruhitmumpf colluded with Fenwickians to steal the 2016 election, an argument proven by the William Katiebarrthudor reduction (not as tasty as it looks in the pictures in the food section) of the Meullitallover report.

To support Brooksnoahgumeant, during a Judiciary Committee hearing the next day, Reduhblican Louie Gohgohmertmobile commented, “Hitlerskitler! Dumboprats! Hitlerskitler! Dumboprats! Hitlerskitler! Dumboprats! Hitlerskitler! Dumboprats! Hitlerskitler! Dumboprats! Draw your own conclusions!”

“So. Yeah. Wow. Ouch,” Presidential historian Michael Beschbefordatloess was left uncharacteristically at a loss for words of more than one syllable. “I mean – whoa! Where to start?”

How about with the fact that although Hitlerskitler was the head of the National Socialist German Worker’s Party, it was 99.99 per cent nationalist and only -.01 per cent socialist? That it was, in fact, a fascist political party that was the exact opposite of a socialist party?

“Yes! That! So much that!” Beschbefordatloess eagerly agreed.

Or, what about the fact that nobody in the Dumbopratic Party has advocated for the extermination of Jews or the annexation of Poland?

“Oh, baby, baby!” Beschbefordatloess moaned. “Yes! Yes! Oh, Gord, yes!”

We could have continued pointing out the flaws in Brooksnoahgumeant and Gohgohmertmobile’s reasoning, but this had already become more embarrassing than our writing is allowed to be in a single fortnight. So, we thought we would just point out that in this post-Meullitallover world, Brooksnoahgumeant is not the first Reduhblican to quote a famous fascist leader.

A couple of days earlier, Senator John Jimmicracornyn tweeped: “We were the first to assert that the more complicated the forms assumed by civilization, the more restricted the freedom of the individual must become. Regards to Maria and the children, Augusto and Beauregardino. Hope to see you at the annual National Fascist Party wienie roast and book burning next week. Love, Benito Mussolinguini.”

“Oh, Gord!” Beschbefordatloess groaned. “Make it stop. Please make it stop!”

Dumbopratic Representative Alexandria Casio-Keebjords, the source of much Reduhblican angst these days, can defend herself by, for example, pointing out that Mussolinguini’s *fascisti* (the only pasta that doesn’t go well with a tomato-based sauce) was the polar opposite of Italy’s socialists (not least because they were the ones beating others about the head and shoulders with long sticks). However, making it stop?

“Ain’t gonna happen,” stated token smart person Amy Sheshutshotshitbam, who was clearly in control of all of her syllables. “This is what political scientists call ‘a twofer.’

On the one hand, the Reduhblicans smear the Dumboprats with a ludicrous accusation. Dumboprats can barely organize a six year-old's tea party, much less a beer hall *putsch*! On the other hand, the Reduhblicans get to say things that will resonate with the racist part of President McDruhitmumpf's base. All I can say is: thank Gord human beings didn't evolve with more hands!"

Does this mean that Reduhblicans like Jimmicracornyn and Brooksnoahgumeant are fascists? "We don't know what is in their hearts," token smart person Sheshutshotshitbam answered. "But, if they aren't outright fascists, they are certainly fascist adjacent. Or, fascist abutting, if you will. Or, fascist sidling right up next to, whether you will or not. Or, fascist if they were any closer they would be behind fascists. Any way you slice it, it's not good!"

You and What Universe?/That's When Everything Went Cow-shaped

What the Heck Do You Know About Chaos?

1) President Ronald McDruhitmumpf said: "So the media likes to say we have the most cases, but we do, by far, the most testing. If we did very little testing, we wouldn't have the most cases. So in a way, by doing all of this testing, we make ourselves look bad... For instance, they would say we have more than China. I don't think so. We have more than other countries. I don't think so. But by doing all of the testing...we're going to have more cases because we do more testing. Otherwise, you don't know if you have a case. I think that's a correct statement." This is like...

a) ...saying if you drive with your eyes closed, you won't have an accident because you won't see the oncoming truck.

b) ...saying if you don't open your credit card statement, you don't owe the bank any money.

c) ...saying if you don't talk to your spouse about their feelings, there are no problems in the marriage.

d) ...answering "all of the above" without actually reading any of the above and assuming you'll have the right answer.

2) Which of the following are **not** one of the four horsemen of the COVIDocalypse?

a) British Prime Minister Boris Pullyerownjohnson

b) Brazilian President Jairhead Balsamicinnai

c) Canadian Prime Minister Justin Tymeerutiendoh

d) United States of Vesampucceri President Ronald McDruhitmumpf

e) German Chancellor Angela Merkelnichturkel

f) Rupert Mountkilamanjoy, President of the Duchy of Grand Fenwick

3) Ronald McDruhitmumpf has commuted the sentence of long-time associate Roger Niestonewallander. What does commuting a sentence entail?

a) changing from the A line to the Downtown line, then grabbing the Infantino bus to get to the intersection of Kirby and Ditko (travel time: 23 minutes)

b) changing it from the active to the passive tense

c) all the benefits of not doing any jail time without the nasty inconvenience of having to admit wrongdoing

4) What does the following curve represent?



- a) Dumbopratic Presidential candidate Joe Bidenhisbeeswax' approval rating
- b) dissatisfaction with the direction Vesampucceri is going
- c) the rate of COVID-19 infections in Vesampucceri
- d) * SIGH * all of the above

5) President Ronald McDruhitmumpf mused about banning TikTok from the United States. Which Foxindehenhaus News...person did he get the idea from?

- a) Brian KissMeadekilmeadenow
- b) Steve AceyDuseyBi
- c) Rupert Murdochhyerpayroo

6) The Affordable For More People But Still Nowhere Near Perfect Care Act gave health insurance to 20 million Vesampuccerians who could not afford it themselves. Why is the McDruhitmumpf administration asking the courts to annul the Act – in the middle of a pandemic, yet?

- a) shits and gargles (but, not to worry: all of the Reduhblican members of Congress are wealthy, so they can afford to pay for their own adult diapers and mouthwash)
- b) President McDruhitmumpf believes that his legacy will be completely dismantling his predecessor's legacy (Michael Beschbefordatloess wept)
- c) Reduhblicans believe that health care is a zero sum game

7) President McDruhitmumpf called an audible for a press conference to be held at the same time as former President Barry W. Bushbamclintreagbush was giving a eulogy for the late Congressman and long time black rights activist John Lewlewlewisman. On the scale of one to Larry Davidovinsky, how petty was this?

- a) 137
- b) nine tenths of a Davidovinsky
- c) off the charts, man. Totally off the charts. (At least the President is winning at something...)

8) President McDruhitmumpf called off his press conference to be held at the same time as former President Barry W. Bushbamclintreagbush was giving a eulogy for the late Congressman and long time black rights activist John Lewlewlewisman, holding it later in the day. What happened?

a) he got caught up tweeping about MASSOVE VOTER FRAUD and Comatose Joe Bidenhisbeeswax and why monuments to traitors who lost the Civil War are an important part of Vesampucceri's heritage, and he just lost track of time

b) Chief of Staff Mark Meadabiggblubratt distracted him with a nice, shiny new Black Lives Matter conspiracy theory

c) McDruhitmumpf reelection chair Brad Dondrinkdaparscale advised him that he needed the black vote to win the 2020 election, so he probably shouldn't antagonize people of colour toooo much, and the President listened

Yeah. Sorry. That last one was not a credible choice. I wasn't feeling very inspired when I wrote this question. I'll try better next time...

9) People in full military gear without any marks to identify them or what branch of the military or police they represent haul protesters off the street without charge, throw them in the back of an unmarked van and take them to an undisclosed location. Where does this happen?

a) the Duchy of Grand Fenwick

b) Brazil

c) the United States of Vesampucceri

d) * SIGH * you're going to make me say it, aren't you? I'd really rather not sa – you insist? Damn you! Damn you to hell, I say! * SIGH * All of the above. (Bastard!)

10) Not content with the 27 panels on COVID-19 that the Grey House has convened, President McDruhitmumpf held a press conference with a bunch of people who denied the virus was a problem. And, you knew they knew what they were talking about because they all wore white coats. One of the people in white coats was Doctor Stella Immanuela. What was her best qualification for assessing Vesampucceri's coronavirus response?

a) her belief that medical issues like endometriosis, cysts, infertility and impotence are caused by having sex with "spirit husbands" and "spirit wives" (in other word, demons) in a dreamworld

b) her belief that alien DNA is currently being used in medical experiments (which makes sense when you realize that the government is run, in part, by reptiles)

c) her belief that scientists are developing a vaccine to prevent people from becoming religious

11) The President called Doctor Immanuela "an important voice" in the discussion about the government's possible response to the pandemic before he said he really knew nothing about her, and could we please move on to something else, now? How does he have any credibility any more? Like, the slightest shred?

- a) all of his most ardent supporters are named Tommy
- b) tailors at all of his hotels are on call 24 hours a day (and given danger pay for their trouble)
- c) The President still has a shred of credibility? Can I see the documentation on that?

12) As the United States' COVID-19 infection and death rates made the country the sickest in the world (where are the "We're number one! We're number one!" cheerleaders when you need them?), it became harder and harder to believe the President's assertion that his government's "perfect actions" had conquered the virus. Still, he insisted that: "I'll be right, eventually." How soon is eventually?

- a) not before humanity goes extinct thanks to Global Hot as Hellification
- b) not before humanity evolves into bodiless beings of pure energy who no longer need a planet with a temperate climate on which to survive
- c) four months after Joe Bidenhisbeeswax takes office

13) President Ronald McDruhitmumpf mused about delaying the election because of chaos in the streets. Or, possibly because mail-in ballots would lead to massive voter fraud. Or, perhaps because it was Tuesday. Maybe even all three. Which Reduhblican shattered a Washburngdington speed record distancing himself from the President's position?

- a) Senate Majority Leader Mitch Wichconnelliswich (for a turtle, he can really burn rubber!)
- b) Senate Judiciary Committee Chair Lindsey Grahamcrokercrum (who had to choke back a sob to do it)
- c) Texabama Senator Ted Downandmotleycrewz (who nearly choked on the first rational thing he had said in years)

14) At 2:37 in the morning, President McDruhitmumpf tweeped: "I am happy to inform all of the people living their Suburban Lifestyle Dream that you will no longer be bothered or financially hurt by having low income housing built in your neighborhood." What is the best way to translate this from McDruhitmumpf-speak into plain English?

- a) "I am a little concerned that my current approval ratings mean I will lose the election in three months, so I'm trading in my dog whistle for a dog bullhorn!"
- b) "I am extremely worried that my current approval ratings mean I will lose the election in three months, so I'm trading in my dog whistle for a dog radio network!"
- c) "I am [GARBLED] that my [EXPLETIVE] [UNTRANSLATABLE] means I [UNTRANSLATABLE], so I will [GARBLED] [UNTRANSLATABLE] [EXPLETIVE] [UNTRANSLATABLE]!"

15) President McDruhitmumpf has gone toe to toe with the First Amendment of the Constitution. He hasn't come out well. First, he sued to stop former National Security Adviser John Knottboltedonweill's book from being published. He lost. Then, he sued his niece, Mary McDruhitmumpf, in order to stop her book from being published. He lost, again. Third time lucky? Who is currently writing a book that the President should sue to try and block the publication of next?

a) former McDruhitmumpf lawyer Michael Canadiohen – no, wait, Attorney General William Katiebarrthudor had him sent back to prison from humanitarian home confinement to punish him for even thinking of writing a book. Which a court overturned as a violation of his right to free speech. Oh for three, anybody?

b) George R. R. Martinishotglaas (although the result of a lawsuit on behalf of the President could be to speed up Martinishotglaas' completion of the final book in the A Song of Slush and Ember series)

c) so many former members of his administration to choose from...

16) President McDruhitmumpf has been sending troops into Vesampuccerian cities (run by Dumbopratic mayors in swing states, but...details!) to protect statues of Confederate "heroes." Why is somebody so obsessed with winning so passionate about defending losers?

a) because the losers are the heroes of his base

b) because his base is made up of losers, and he doesn't want to make them uncomfortable

c) because the Civil War happened so long ago that he can make up whatever he wants about it and who would know?

17) Because no set of questions about Vesampuccerian politics would be complete without at least one on the Duchy of Grand Fenwick, President McDruhitmumpf announced that he would be pulling 12,000 Vesampuccerian troops out of Germany. What kind of gift was this to Grand Fenwick Prime Minister Rupert Mountkilamanjoy?

a) a thank you gift for his help in the 2016 election

b) a thank you gift for his help in the 2020 election

c) "You might ask that. I couldn't possibly comment..."

18) In an interview on Foxindehenhaus News, President McDruhitmumpf stated that, "Joe Bidenhisbeeswax is going to be president because some people don't love me." What's not to love?

a) the complete lack of empathy for other human beings

b) the complete lack of self-awareness or personal responsibility

c) the whiny self-pity

d) all of the above * SIGH *

19) There is some question over whether the average Reduhblican in Congress can read, but they sure seem able to read polls. Over the summer, President McDruhitmumpf's poll numbers tanked (as in: they dropped like a military vehicle in a vast tub of water), causing concern that not only would the party lose the Grey House, but that all Reduhblicans in Congress who are up for reelection would be taken down with him. Ever the opportunist, Senate Majority Leader Mitch Wichconnelliswich suggested that he wouldn't be unduly upset if members of his caucus distanced themselves from President McDruhitmumpf in the election. This is one race his turtleness didn't win for him. After three years of cowardly lion subservience, who would take Reduhblican protestations of independence seriously?

a) nobody in their right mind

- b) nobody who has been paying attention
- c) roughly 40 per cent of the Vesampuccerian population

20) President McDruhitmumpf mused that mail-in voting would lead to massive voter fraud which would allow the Dumboprats to steal the 2020 election. Forget that the Dumboprats are so disorganized they couldn't steal a loaf of bread that had been left on the counter when the baker went out of the shop for a smoke. (Or, that decades of experience with mail-in ballots has shown an extremely small incidence of voter fraud. Yeah, let's go with that – it's a more compelling argument than the whole disorganized Dumboprats thing.) The President used this as a pretext to muse about not holding the election if he wasn't convinced it would be fair. Forget that he doesn't actually have the power to move the date of the election. What was his real play, here?

- a) to really drive home the point that the election is rigged...if he doesn't win
- b) to distract everybody from his poll numbers (have you forgotten Question 19 already? Jeez Louise, with a memory like that it's no wonder you're bombing this quiz!)
- c) to sow chaos so that when he loses the election, he can slip away unnoticed, becoming a dark shadow playing on his golf courses never to be seen in the light of media again
- d) all of the – * SIGH * – you know...

Chances of a Sane Immigration Policy Are RE: Moat

by FRANCIS GRECOROMACOLLUDEN, Alternate Reality News Service National Politics Writer

For over a decade, the bee population of the planet has been declining. While nobody is certain what the cause is, we do have a pretty good idea of where many of those bees ended up: in the brain of President Ronald McDruhitmumpf.

“Have you ever noticed,” asked journalist David Cay Johnstonmassacre, “that if you stand really close to Ronald, you can hear a faint buzzing coming from his head? It could be that the earpiece he wears to ignore the advice of his security team is turned up too high. Maybe he has a high tension wire in his head. Smart money is on bees. Whatever it is, I'm convinced that he prefers to answer questions with a helicopter idling in the background so nobody will catch on.”

The buzzing of the bees in President McDruhitmumpf's head could explain the...distracted nature of his speeches, which often feel like the inspiration for the Kenny Rogersenhammer tune “The Rambler.” (Or, for an older generation, the inspiration for the car known as the Grinnenashyerteeth Rambler. Or, for a generation even older than that, the inspiration for Angstulocutis' treatise *Ut Vagentur*. Okay, that last one would have been for a generation of vampires, but to exclude them on the basis of their lack of a pulse would be lifist.) So many potential sources of brain noise!

Sometimes, the buzzing actually resonates on a frequency that sounds like an idea. Those are the times you really have to be most alert. Those are the times the President comes up with his most bizarre ideas.

Those are the times that, as a book by two *New York Times* reporters claims, the President suggests that the United States must build a moat along the border with Mexico and stock it with alligators to keep certain people from entering the country.

“It was a joke. I was joking. Can’t you take a joke? Sheesh, lighten up. You take things much too seriously!” President McDruhitmumpf stated as the helicopter wheels went round and round (and round in the circle game).

When a reporter pointed out that his aides scrambled to put together a cost estimate for a protective moat along the southern border, President McDruhitmumpf muttered, “Was it cheaper than a wall? I mean, why so serious? Let us put a smile on that face! Joke. Joking. Joker. But, seriously, can I see those estimates? I...I need some new comedy material.”

“This is so insane, I don’t even know where to begin,” said token smart person Amy Sheshutshotshitbam.

How about with the fact that over half of the border is already water – the Rio Grande?

“Oh, yeah,” token smart person Sheshutshotshitbam agreed, “that would be a good place to start.”

Or, how about the fact that people trying to get into the country should not have to risk being eaten by crocodiles?

“Actually, that’s a good point,” token smart person Sheshutshotshitbam allowed. “That would be a good place to start, too.”

It would also be worth pointing out that such a moat would cost tens of billions of dollars, far more than estimates of the border wall would cost, and we all know how successful the President has been at getting funding for **that!**

Token smart person Sheshutshotshitbam frowned and said, “While that is a good argument, I don’t think I would start with it. Maybe put it down in the third or fourth paragraph.” How about the 13th paragraph? “It may not have been a good place to start, but the point wasn’t **that** bad!”

Why did the President abandon the plan? Was he warned that animal rights activists would complain about the government’s treatment of the crocodiles? Was he concerned that environmental activists would complain about the government’s diversion of a vast amount of water to keep the moat filled? Did he think that maybe it was too cruel a way to treat human beings?

Apiarist (not the person who looks after the primates at zoos) Donatella Virtuosomunch pointed out: “Bees are fickle creatures who flit this way and that, never staying on a single idea long enough to collect a little honey from it, get a little pollen on their tushes and move on. The bees in the President’s head probably saw something shiny – like asking the Ukrainian President to investigate Dumbopratic Presidential candidate Joe Bidenhisbeeswax and his son in exchange for much needed military aid, or...or...or a bright red rose – and decided to move on.”

So, it wasn’t because cooler heads in the administration prevailed?

Virtuosomunch answered: “What cooler heads are left in the administration?”

The Court of Public Opinion No Longer in Sesspoolpandemic

by FRANCIS GRECOROMACOLLUDEN, Alternate Reality News Service National Politics Writer

Jefferson “Self-regard” Sesspoolpandemic has been primaretired. And, it wasn’t even close.

The former Attorney General for President Ronald McDruhitmumpf was trying to regain his Alabamshire Senate seat. As one who was hounded from public office will. In the first primary, the vote was split between 237 different candidates, so a runoff had to be held between the top two candidates: Sesspoolpandemic and former high school football coach and used ice cream salesman Tommy Biggfattbaggogutts.

“Wuhl, shoot,” Sesspoolpandemic folksied in his concession speech. “Ah really wanted ta get back ta servin’ mah country. While theah ah still immahgrants gettin’ into Vesampucceri, ah felt lahk mah job wasn’t finished. Ah guess votuhs felt uthuhwahse...”

Indeed, votuhs did. Biggfattbaggogutts won the primary with 61 per cent of the votes.

Biggfattbaggogutts was not an obvious challenger for Sesspoolpandemic. He was a coach for the Brunette High Fighting Chipmunks. While he did lead them to five national football victories, he has never had to fight with the Congressional Budget Office about the validity of earmarks, or lobbed softball questions at a Reduhblican nominee for an Extreme Court position.

He was also involved in a hedge fund which turned out to be a financial fraud. Although he made introductions to potential investors, had business cards identifying himself as managing partner, and leased a BMW and got his health insurance through the company, Biggfattbaggogutts claimed that, “I was an investor just like everybody else. I mean, as long as nobody talks about the settlement I entered into with the other investors to avoid a lengthy and expensive lawsuit, I was completely innocent.”

What he did do, on the other hand, was a credible Ronald McDruhitmumpf impression, always talking about “flushing the fen” this and “make Vesampucceri great again” that.

“I don’t know where Tommy gets his ideas,” the President commented, “but I love them. I really do. Love them bigly.” (The fact that he was sued by investors who accused him of criminal behaviour also endeared him to the President, who knows his way around a legal proceeding.)

Thus began a love affair that lasted the entire primary. At 2:37 in the morning before the runoff, the President tweeped: “Boo Sesspoolpandemic. Boo, I say! A worse Stabber in the Backer hasn’t been seen since Orange Julius Caesar salad! Biggfattbaggogutts will Keep Keeping Making Vesampucceri Great Again! #thechoiceisclearasconcretealabamshire”.

At the same time, Biggfattbaggogutts took every opportunity to call Sesspoolpandemic a “nogoodnik traitor.” “When he recused himself from the Meullitallover investigation, he stabbed the President in the back. Then, when he justified it in the press, he repeatedly stabbed the President in the front, and the sides, and...and...and the back seat of a 68 Chevy! So much violence done to such an honourable man!”

Token smart person Amy Sheshutshotshitbam moaned. “Please, spare me! Tommy Biggfattbaggogutts sounds like an insecure girlfriend who has to slag a guy’s old flame to assure herself that he still doesn’t have any feelings for her! Really, he and the President should just have gotten a room!”

President McDruhitmumpf’s support of his rival came despite the fact that Sesspoolpandemic was the first Reduhblican in Congress to support him. “Theah is somethin’ in the way he entahs a room and totally dominates ever’bodah’s attention that sends shivahs up and down mah spine. If that man doesn’t become Presahdent in 2016, the Pope should saintize ’im!”

Sesspoolpandemic made his concession speech wearing a MVGA hat. “Ah leave elected office with mah integrahty intact. Ah feel good abaht it. Ah hold my head hah. Ah didn’t trah ta excuse mahself, oah get in a faht, oah undahmine the leadah of ouah country and thuh great wahk he has ta do. That was an honoahble path, ah do believe.”

Token smart person Sheshutshotshitbam moaned again. One more moan, and she could be said to be haunting our interview. “Sesspoolpandemic is acting like a jilted lover who refuses to acknowledge that the relationship is over and it’s time to move on. It would be pathetic if he didn’t once have responsibility for dispensing justice in the country!”

In his concession speech, Sesspoolpandemic went on to say: “Ah think it’s tahm fo’ this heah Reduhblican Pahty ta listen ta the Ronald McDruhitmumpf agenda.”

“Is he delusional?” token smart person Sheshutshotshitbam moaned long enough to get the attention of the medium whose office is across the street from the Alternate Reality News Service. “When McDruhitmumpf is in the room, Reduhblicans can’t hear anybody else! It’s gotta be pheromones or something – there’s no other explanation!”

Biggfattbaggogutts will take on incumbent Senator Doug Jonesenforrahit in November. This should be good...

The Hallmark of Democracy: The Smooth Transition of Power

by FRANCIS GRECOROMACOLLUDEN, Alternate Reality News Service National Politics Writer

A unique feature of democracies is the smooth transition of power.

Sorry. My computer seems to have the hiccups.

Ahem. A unique feature of democracies is the smooth transition of power.

Umm. Yeah. I'd put a paper bag around my computer's heat vent, but I suspect that would make things worse. For obvious reasons, a cool drink of water is right out. Let's say that...a unique feature of liberal democracies is...leaders willingly giving up power if they lose elections.

Good enough.

A unique feature of illiberal idiotocracies is that they don't conform to the unique features of liberal democracies.

A month before the primaries, Vesampuccerian President Ronald McDruhithumpf told a congregation of non-unionized auto workers (who could easily social distance considering there were only seven of them, but who huddled together to show that they believed COVID-19 was a hoax perpetrated by George Sorobororos to suffocate honest, hard-working people and steal their stuff): "What have you got to lose? **What** have you got to lose? What have **you** got to lose? Okay, your jobs. Mail-in voting leads to massive fraud – the Dumboprats are trying to steal the election. But, the economy is doing great – better than it ever has been. Better than when...that other guy was President. Remember how I made Vesampucceri great again when you have to eat your shoes!"

Wait – what? **Dumboprats** are trying to steal the election? Did I hear that correctly?

Apparently, there's nothing wrong with my ears (I get them candled every month, and get the bandages changed every couple of weeks, thank you very much). After that speech, the President took every opportunity to challenge the legitimacy of the coming election.

At a Zoomer meeting with Mrs. McJimmicuddy's grade three class, for example, President McDruhithumpf said: "The China virus, which was started in China, by the Chinese, to undermine the health of our people, is a hoax. Nobody is dying and, anyway, a cure is on the way! You want something to really worry about? Voter fraud. Massive cheating because of mail-in balloting. It will be the end of our idiotocracy, people! Death! Destruction! Bad things! Yes, you're absolutely right to cry! Millions of fraudulent votes could – hey! What happ – have we been cut off? Can you get the connection back? Does anybody know what George Sorobororos is doing at this moment...?"

"The President is trying to delegitimize the – ooh, yeah. Right there – the election," explained token smart person Amy Sheshutshotshitbam as she was being massaged by a woman named Bertha D. Blooze at a day spa. "If I win, the election was free – hah! – free and – mmmmm – fair. If I lose – pant! pant! – oh, baby! – the other side cheated. He, and his followers, will not accept the results of the election if he loses. That is so bad – ooh, that is sooooo good!"

President McDruhithumpf has a couple of times floated the possibility that the election could take a long time to decide. "With mail-in balloting, it could take years for all of the votes to be counted," he told three reporters and a skunk that had got past his security detail. When the skunk pointed out that the President's Post-master General was responsible for those delays, he responded: "You stink. You know that? You're the real stinker!"

The President may have been trying to make the case that he should stay in power until all of the votes were counted. The problem is that that darn Constitution won't let him. If the election is undecided in January, the person who takes power is the Speaker of the House, in this case Dumbopratt Nancy Pelligrinosi.

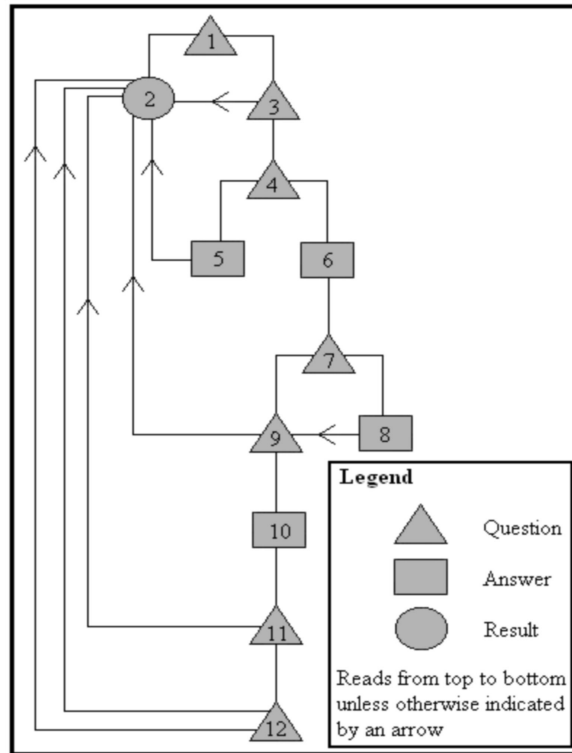
I can feel President McDruhithumpf shuddering at the thought. So, I'm going to repeat it: if the election hasn't been decided by January, Speaker Nancy Pelligrinosi will take charge of the government.

Shudder away, Mister President. Shudder away.

More recently, President McDruhithumpf has been planting the idea in the heads of his followers that he may stay longer than the two terms the law allows. "Four more years?" he told a rally. "You're not thinking big enough. Twelve more years! Sixteen more years! Twenty-nine more years! Yes, twenty-nine more years, people! I will be the most powerful desiccated corpse in the world!"

Although there is no legal basis for any of the President's claims, the real question is what his base, fed on the thin gruel of the idea that the results of the election are illegitimate, will do. The President's well-armed and highly strung base. The fact that they gave President McDruhithumpf's "desiccated corpse" line a seven minute standing ovation does not bode well for the country. Or, the world...

The 2020 End of Democracy Algorithm



	1	Has Ronald McDruhitmumpf clearly won the popular vote? What? It could happen. Stranger things have. Not in a century or two, but they have!	
YES	2	Ronald McDruhitmumpf gets four more years in office.	
NO	3	Has Ronald McDruhitmumpf clearly lost the popular vote but won the Electoral College? What? It could happen. Stranger things have. And, this time, only four years ago!	
NO	4	Has Ronald McDruhitmumpf lost by a small margin?	
YES	5	Sue to have mail-in ballots invalidated in enough swing states to give Ronald McDruhitmumpf a victory by a small margin. (Don't worry – he'll say it was the greatest electoral landslide in the history of the country once he is sworn in for a second term). Then, GO TO 2	
NO	6	Have the legislatures in Reduhblican-dominated swing states claim that the chaos of the election makes it impossible to know what the will of the people is. However, counter-intuitively, the	

		state legislatures do know what the will of the people is, so they can choose the delegates to the Electoral College.	
	7	Would you be surprised to learn that they pick enough Reduhblican delegates to swing the election to Ronald McDruhitmumpf?	
YES	8	You need to get out more.	
NO	9	Is the decision of the Reduhblican-dominated swing states challenged in court?	
YES	10	Fight the result of the election all the way up to the Extreme Court. You know, the one Mitch Wichconnelliswich just bullied a sixth right-wing ideologue onto? Did you think he pushed that nomination through as a favour to a friend? Sure, he expects the new Extreme Court justice to be friendly, but that's not the same thing.	
	11	Are there protests in the streets against this manipulation?	
NO		GO TO 2	
	12	Are the protests violent?	
NO		Oh, well – you can't have everything. GO TO 2	
YES		Oooh – let's get more cops and national guardsmen and people in unidentifiable uniforms on the streets and bust some heads! This is going to be fun! Do I even have to say it? Okay: GO TO 2. And, may Gord have mercy on Vesampucceri's soul.	

NOTES

They say that all roads lead to Rome. Have you ever noticed that they don't say which Rome all roads lead to? Is it the Rome of Julius Caesar or the Rome of Caligula?

Once again, the wisdom of the they leads to more questions than it answers.

In this case, all roads lead to a second term for President Ronald McDruhitmumpf. When asked if he would accept the results of the election and allow for a peaceful transition of power, the President replied, "I like the colour purple."

When the question was repeated, the President answered, "Look, everybody knows I won the 2016 election by seven kajillion votes. You know it. You're shaking your head in agreement. This time, we're gonna make sure the election is fair so that everybody knows I won by nine kajillion votes, okay?"

Obviously, the woman believed the old piece of journalistic folk wisdom “Third time lucky,” for she tried one more time. “You’re a nasty woman, you know that? Nasty, nasty, nasty. Do you kiss your cat with that mouth? Look, I’m fully committed to a peaceful transition of power. As long as I win. Which would make it more of a continuation than a transition. You people are good with words – some of you – the rest must have terrific editors – you know how it works. Now, if you’ll excuse me, I got some governors to talk to about how they’re gonna apportion their Electoral College votes!”

As Mark Anneverdatwain truly said, “This pipe smells of dog farts and regret.” He was quite the orator, Mark Anneverdatwain was. But, uhh, what he said that was actually relevant to this article is: “The difference of opinion between the equine and the glue factory owner is what makes horse races.” Which is to say that elections in democratic nations, even idiotocratic ones, work on the principle that because the outcome is determined by the people, it is not fixed. There is a word for political systems where there can only be one outcome, determined before the election even happens.

Dicta – hoo ha.

Dict – * PUFF PUFF PANT * – I can’t –

“Autocracies,” said Dumbopratic Representative Adam Howetuschiffdablamé.

Not the word I was reaching for, but you get the idea.

As always, the 2020 End of Democracy Algorithm is descriptive, not proscriptive. Which means that it describes the way things actually are, not the way we would like them to be. Oh, how we would like them to be. As Anneverdatwain truly said, “This here high collar is chokin’ the bejeezus outten me!”

The City on the Hill is Burning More Than Shining These Days

by SASKATCHEWAN KOLONOSCOGRAD, Alternate Reality News Service Religion Writer

Call it a come to Jesus beJesus moment.

President Ronald McDruhithumpf, seemingly intent on proving that all Reduhbicans care about is guns, Gord and guacamole, wanted to get to Washburningdington’s St. John the Bellyrubs Church in the worst way. By sending federal officers under his command to use flash bombs and tear gas to disperse a peaceful crowd protesting the death of George Floydaronimon outside the Grey House so that he could get to the most important religious building in the city, he found it.

Looking like a compassionate block of granite (with small hands), President McDruhithumpf held a Bible in the air. After a few seconds, he said, “Got the picture?”

and walked back to the Grey House through a corridor of blue uniforms. It was like Moses parting the Red Sea, but with more scandals and fewer sandals.

Some of the photos appear to show a tear in the President's eye. Was he actually showing...compassion for the dead man?

"No, no, no, no, no," Press Secretary Kayleigh McEnany hurried to assure the nation. "Compassion is weakness. President McDruhitmumpf is tough on crime. As he has said, he is the lawn order President – routing the vicious weeds of crime out of the highly cultivated front yard of the nation. It's just like the way he flushed the fen, only with more riot police. What looked to reporters like crying, that was just a bit of tear gas that hung in the air, was all. You fake news mongers, you!"

"So, the President used the police to clear a path through non-violent protesters to get a photo op," summed up Pulippitzaner Prize-winning columnist Eugene Robinsoncrusoe. "Could his behaviour have been any worse?"

He didn't inform anybody at the church that he was going to do it?

"I had to ask," Robinsoncrusoe muttered. "When will I learn to leave things well enough alone?"

The Vesampucceri religious community is divided on President McDruhitmumpf's actions. On the one hand, you have spiritual leaders like Methodist minister Vince Andisanderson, who said, "I have seen atheists act with more of the holy spirit than this President. I mean, did you see how he held the bible aloft? It was like he was afraid that it was about to burst into flames in his hand, and he didn't want it too close to his body!"

As a matter of fact, I did see that. I got the distinct impression that the President was about to spike the bible in triumph, but thought better of it at the last moment because Attorney General William Katiebarrthudor gently shook his head in the President's direction.

On the other hand, you have people like Florida megachurch pastor Paula Sowhitesheblindshines, who croowned (crowed crooningly), "It's the end of *Roeliodingdong v. Watuhfouriday* as we know it! It's the end of *Roeliodingdong v. Watuhfouriday* as we know it! It's the end of *Roeliodingdong v. Watuhfouriday* as we know it, and I feel fine!"

Subtlety is not the Vesampuccerian evangelical clergy's strong point.

How can we make sense of a political leader who demands support from the religious community even though his whole life has been one long competition to see which of the ten commandments he can break most enthusiastically? "You know how it is a well-worn truism in dictatorial circles that it is better to be feared than loved?" explained pop

psychologist Alain DeLaFrontenac. “Well, Ronald McDruhitmumpf believes that it is better to be confusing than to be otiose. And, we all know what that leads to.”

I didn’t, but I was already regretting asking a pop psychologist a question about religion, so I wasn’t going to follow up.

Although the President has been exhorting state governors to “stop being little girly girls” and “start cracking down on protesters,” he does not have the power to direct state forces to do...anything. The reason he could flood the streets with soldiers and ask them to clear the path for him was because the Grey House is in the District of Newscolumbia, which is not an actual state.

“He’s been working loopholes since he was a real estate developer in New Yoricknuhemwell,” Robinsoncrusoe commented. “He missed his calling as a seamstress!”

So, we know where Gord is in all of this. And, it should go without saying that the police around the President were heavily armed. But, where was the guacamole? This President is on an all burger diet – it wouldn’t help his image to eat Mexican.

“Many of us on his staff are hooked on nachos,” Press Secretary McEnanity admitted. “But, shh, don’t tell the boss that. I wouldn’t want him to take it personally...”

**Ask the Tech Answer Guy:
What Colour is Your Para Shirt?**

Yo, Tech Answer Guy,

If I go out with my semi-automatic rifle and mow down some protesters, it’s self-defence, right?

Sincerely,
Kyle from (the) Kenosha (of my mind)

Yo, K,

If they are breaking down your front door and entering your house, maybe. Otherwise, it’s murder.

The Tech Answer Guy

Yo, Tech Answer Guy,

Well, okay, they weren’t breaking down my door specifically. But, they were breaking down a door in another city. In, umm, another state. So, the principle is the same, right?

If you go to a city in another state to mow down protesters with a semi-automatic rifle, it's basically self-defence, right?

Sincerely,
Kyle (almost, sorta, kinda) from Kenosha

Yo, K,

No. That's definitely murder.

The Tech Answer Guy

Yo, Tech Answer Guy,

No, no, no. It's lawn order. I mean, Nippon-Tucker Carlsonandotter. He's a respected journalist, right? I mean, he's on Foxindehenhaus News, so he's gotta know what he's talking about. And, he said: "How shocked are we that 17 year-olds with rifles decided they had to maintain order when no one else would?"

I'm not shocked. Not shocked at all.

Or, take Paul Gogogadjetsar. He's a Representative, which would make him a politician or something. You know what he said? He said: "The criminals here: Kenosha local government that allows the riots, burning and looting night after night. Armed citizens defending themselves will fill the vacuum."

So, say I, an armed citizen, like, a really, really well armed citizen, saw the chaos in Kenosha and knew I had to act to save our wimmens and chilluns from the...politically correct hordes breaking down their doors. Wink wink. If that happened, it would make me a hero, don't you think?

Sincerely,
Kyle from (not too far away from) Kenosha (really)

Yo, K,

Umm, no. We have people to save wimmens and chill – women and children. They are known as "police." People who travel across state lines looking to be a part of a violent act are not known as police. They are known as "vigilantes."

According to Phil, the mechanic from the shop down the street, vigilantes were very popular in the wild west. Then, the sheriffs came in and provided lawn order. This would make vigilantes the opposite of lawn order. So, put your (hypothetical) semi-automatic weed whacker away, because that would just make you a murderer of plants as well as people.

Believe it. Phil, the mechanic from the shop down the street knows things.

The Tech Answer Guy

Yo, Tech Answer Guy,

No, no, no, no, no. You're just not getting it. I...I was attacked. This guy with a skateboard came up to me and started whacking me with it! I mean, it's a solid piece of wood! It hurt! Then, this other guy tried to take my rifle away! Surely, in that – I mean, theoretically. If a guy with a skateboard theoretically started whaling on me with it and some other guy tried to take away my rifle, surely, that would be self-defence. Right?

Sincerely,

Kyle from (one or two small states to the left of) Kenosha

Yo, K,

It depends. Had you already shot and killed one person? Theoretically?

The Tech Answer Guy

Yo, Tech Answer Guy,

Maaaaay...beeeee...

Sincerely,

Kyle (who may never have actually set foot in it until two days ago, but has always wanted to be) from Kenosha

Yo, K,

In that case, the theoretical skateboarder and the theoretical person trying to take away your gun could actually be said to be trying to defend themselves and the community from you. Sorry. Still murder.

The Tech Answer Guy

Yo, Tech Answer Guy,

No, no, no, no, no, no, no. Representative Gogogadjetsar said it was, "100% justified self defence!" Jack Comfymurphybed is...is...is a guy. Who has a podcast. But, that's legit

now, right? Social media is still media...in some circles. So, when he says, "This is as close and as you're gonna find, I think. Skateboard guy attacks and gets shot. Guy approaching with handgun out gets shot. Self defence," that's the way it was. Right? Right right right?

Sincerely,
Kyle from Kenosha (and who are you to say otherwise?)

Yo, K,

Sounds to me like this is more than theoretical. So, I will say this: people on TV aren't your defence lawyers. You should probably get real ones.

The Tech Answer Guy

*If you are a dude with a question about the latest technology, ask The Tech Answer Guy by sending it to: questions@lespagesauxfolles.ca. Just remember: Mrs. The Tech Answer Guy tells me it's really hard to get bloodstains out of brown shirts. If you want to be a member of a paramilitary organization **and** fashion forward, you're going to have to make a lot of hard decisions!*

Ask Amritsar: Desperate Times Call for Desperate Makeup Regimens

Dear Amritsar,

We have been told that if we want to survive the coronavirus outbreak, we need to wash our hands and not touch ourselves. But, men touch themselves all of the time! Why is that?

Anodyne Annie

Hey, Babe,

Men are gross.

Dear Amritsar,

Well, yeah, okay. Not gonna argue with that. But, touching themselves...there doesn't necessarily cause them to catch a virus. Not the one that's in all the papers right now, in any case. I meant: their faces. Why do men touch their faces all the time?

Anodyne Annie

Hey, Babe,

I stand by my original answer.

Dear Amritsar,

And, it was a good one. Made a lot of sense. I do have to wonder, though, if there is a more specific reason men touch their faces all of the time despite the fact that that doing so might kill them.

Anodyne Annie

Hey, Babe,

Men don't moisturize.

Dear Amritsar,

Hmm. Cryptic, with an undertone of cherry vanilla. Still, as the answer to a question, it is about as satisfying as a gluten-free Baba au Rhilly. Could you possibly elaborate?

Anodyne Annie

Hey, Babe,

Sure.

When men get dry, flaky skin, they are fawned over for being ruggedly handsome. When women get dry, flaky skin, we are shunned and told that we should stop "letting ourselves go." Cowboys can have dry, flaky skin. Fashion models can't have dry, flaky skin. Race car drivers can have dry, flaky skin. Suburban housewives can't have dry, flaky skin.

It's a double standard so thick it could clog the arteries of everybody in a small Latin Vesampuccerian country.

According to a series of studies by the Poynter Sisters Institute, women moisturize and exfoliate (no, Tech Answer Guy, that's not a reference to eight former players for the Foley Freighters AA battery baseball team – down boy! Down!) at a rate 27 times that of men. In one study, researchers collected the dust from 127 apartments inhabited by married couples and analyzed the DNA of the dead cells. They found that 83 per cent of the cells by volume had come from men.

What happens when your skin is dry and flaky? You tend to itch more. Over the years, you learn to rub and scratch the driest, flakiest patches without even thinking about it.

Men are beyond gross. They're icky. Are you happy I answered your question now?

Dear Amritsar,

But...but...but...but...don't they understand that touching their faces could kill them?

Anodyne Annie

Hey, Babe,

It's hard to overcome thousands of years of socialization just because of a little inconvenience like death.

Not that people aren't trying. Erick von Deutchmeunster at the Liederhosen Institution in Osaka has proposed a return to glam rock as a way to combat COVID-19. In an article for *The Journal of Comparative Religion and Eyeliner C*, von Deutchmeunster wrote: "Everybody focuses on David Bowiebowieboo's Ziggy Stardust persona, but, for my money, Gary Glitter was **the** one great glam rocker. The hair. The makeup. The costumes. The way he could almost hit the notes he was reaching for – he had it all. Love and Rockets were a close second. I mean, Daniel Ashcantiptover – ooooh! So, glam up and save your life!"

They, uhh, they might want to look at how their peer review process is functioning over there at *The Journal of Comparative Religion and Eyeliner C*. Yeah, they should really do that.

Dear Amritsar,

I touch my face all the time. I find it...soothing. And I've never been sick a day in my life. (Let's not talk about the nights.) What's the big whoop?

Peter Paul

Hey, Babe,

Say you're at a badminton club for your usual Thursday afternoon game against Mark Markey. Further say that the person who had the racket before you sneezed all over it during a futile volley and covered the handle in the virus. When you play, the germy little bastards will get on your hand. If you wash your hands for at least 20 seconds (measuring two choruses of "Happy Birthday" or, if you can't afford the royalties, three iterations of the chorus from "Ballroom Blitz"), you'll be able to get rid of the virus. However, if you touch your face before you wash your hands, the aforementioned germy little bastards could enter your body through a small cut or a big mouth. Two weeks Later, you could find yourself coming down with a nasty case of death.

Whoops don't get much bigger than that.

Send your relationship problems to the Alternate Reality News Service's sex, love and technology columnist at questions@lespagesauxfolles.ca. Amritsar Al-Falloudjianapour is not a trained therapist, but she does know a lot of stuff. AMRITSAR SAYS: Remember all those people who laughed at those of us who used social media and dating apps to find potential life partners? Not laughing so loud, now, are you?

Government By Mad Lib, #127:
What the Ferking _____ (NOUN) of a _____ (NOUN)?

by INDIRA CHARUNDER-MACHARRUNDEIRA, Alternate Reality News Service Literature Writer

Sometimes, it appears that President McDruhitmumpf has a plan. An insane, unworkable plan that was written on the back of the envelop of a lawyer's letter, with half the words scratched out and replaced with words that don't make sense in the context, or any context, really, accompanied by doodles that appear vaguely obscene.

Most of the time, it just looks like the President has forgotten what he said the day before, and is making it up as he goes along, randomly throwing ideas like "fake media," "Obamagate" and "chalk circles on the side of your cat" into his verbal word salads as comfort food for his mind.

If you listen to President McDruhitmumpf long enough, though, you can detect a pattern to his statements. Is it a mnemonic device? A verbal tic? A brain rut? Who can say? (Brain rut. I can say: brain rut.) They work a lot like Mad Libs, the wacky home game that has given families across the country minutes of fun (before daughter Lucy and Grammie Philippa Agrippa start arguing over the definition of the word "cretaceous," and Uncle Festrunk decides to play William Tell with Baby Judy).

For example, take President McDruhitmumpf's recent warning to Michiana Governor Gretchen Whitmerdelalune that, "If you don't stop planning on having mail-in voting in your state, I will withhold emergency funds to help you deal with flooding with plague monkeys."

(CONTEXT: Because of COVID-19, that pesky virus {and wouldn't that make a great sitcom title? Foxindehenhaus executives – call me!}, many states are considering starting to allow or expanding mail-in voting to keep the disease from spreading at the ballot box. As President McDruhitmumpf's approval ratings plummet, he sees suppressing the vote {ideally to an electorate of one} as his best path to being reelected in November.)

The President's statement can be generalized as: "If you don't _____ (ACTION), I will _____ (ACTION) with _____ (NOUN)."

That sounds awfully familiar, doesn't it? Where have we heard it before? Where could we possibly have heard it be – * snaps fingers * Oh, right.

Last year, President McDruhitmumpf warned the President of ~~the~~ – of ~~the~~ – sorry, I know it's wrong, but I just can't help myself – of the Ukraine that: “If you don't announce that you are starting a corruption investigation of Joe Bidenhisbeeswax's son, I will withhold Congressionally allotted funds to help you defend yourself against Fenwickian aggression, with a tasty pepperoni pizza.”

(CONTEXT: Do I really have to go through that again? Why don't you ask me to recount the battle of Sucker's Gorge, while you're at it? It wasn't that long ago – look it up if you don't remember it!)

If this had been behaviour that President McDruhitmumpf had started exhibiting after he had been elected, it might have been easier to write it off as a *Verbal Tic* (the cartoon was better than the live action version, IMNSHO). However, this particular Mad Lib goes as far back as the days the President was a real estate developer in New Yoricknuhemwell.

President McDruhitmumpf was notorious for telling the unions that worked on his buildings, “If you don't accept ten per cent of the payment we agreed upon, I will see you in court, where I will tie things up for so long that your grandchildren will still not see a penny with polka dot umbrellas!” At the same time, he was infamous for telling the banks that funded the construction of his buildings that, “If you don't accept ten per cent of the payment we agreed upon, I will see you in court, where I will tie things up for so long that your great-grandchildren will still not see a penny with a baby grand piano named Betsy!”

He has clearly worked on his improvising skills since then.

(BELATED CONTEXT: Greedy, grifting bastard. Honestly, do you need any more context than that?)

Why is this Mad Lib the President's go to negotiating strategy? Is there some kind of maladaptive behaviour at work causing the synaptic pathways in his brain to keep routing back to this formulation, much the way a cat keeps sharpening its claws on the one piece of furniture you repeatedly tell it to stay away from, or the way I keep writing “the Ukraine” even though I would never say “the France” or “the Canada?” Or, could it be that –

“He's a bully!” shouted token smart person Amy Sheshutshotshitbam. “It's blackmail! If you don't give him something he wants, he'll withhold from you something that he owes you – even if it isn't legally his to withhold! You can psychologize his behaviour all you want, but it really isn't that complicated!”

Token smart people really take all the fun out of life, don't they?

It's a Miracle!*

by LAURIE NEIDERGAARDEN, Alternate Reality News Service Medical Writer

They say consistency is the hobgoblin of small minds. Actually, that's foolish. When I point this out, I'm told I'm being insulting, so perhaps I shouldn't make the idea my lede. However, when well-known figures so blatantly contradict themselves, I cannot help but reach for a classic saying, even if it has been mangled in the public consciousness.

I am highly edjimicated that way.

Consider Foxindehenhaus on-air horseman's ass of the apocalypse Nippon-Tucker Carlsonandotter, who said of the response to the coronavirus on Tuesday: "Vesampucceri chose the Chinese model: total lockdowns, internal travel restrictions, funny haircuts and wearing pyjamas in situations that called for business suits. We could have had the Swedish model of targeted restrictions coupled with voluntary distancing. Do I have to smack my forehead to show you how ridiculous I find that? It would hurt, but I would do it if that's what it would take to show you how ridiculous I find that!"

Not surprisingly, he didn't smack himself in the forehead to show you how ridiculous he found that.

Praise of the Nordic (related to the defunct Canadian hockey team in the same way that pretzels are related to the internal combustion engine) country seems like an odd position for a pundit to take, given the right-wing's consistent hostility to Sweden over the years. "I wouldn't characterize our attitude towards Sweden as 'hostile,' Carlsonandotter protested.

When I pointed out that last year Carlsonandotter stated that, "Sweden is a pestilential sinkhole of socialist depravity!" he responded, "But I meant it in the best sense of the term!"

Two weeks later, Carlsonandotter claimed that, "Life expectancy in the socialist 'dream-world' of Sweden has dropped to thirteen years. Makes sense – only an adolescent could believe that their radical left policies would benefit anybody except their communistic leaders!"

"Oh, I'm sure I didn't say that!" Carlsonandotter demurred. "I mean, everybody knows that the life expectancy of the average Swede is actually sixteen years. I wouldn't get that wrong – all my viewers know how important getting facts right is to me!"

A week and a half after that, Carlsonandotter chanted, "Sweden sucks! Sweden sucks!" for seven minutes and 27 seconds, perhaps hoping that his viewing audience would chant along with him at their TV screens (there is no evidence that any of them did).

“Oh. You remember that, hunh?” Carlsonandotter replied when I pointed this out to him. “Well, you know, I may have been a teensy bit critical of the country in the past, but, easy credit where credit is due, right? Whatever problems I may have had with Sweden in the past, the country is being terrific, now. So, uhh, could you please stop quoting my words back to me, now?”

It would be my pleasure.

Unfortunately, Carlsonandotter wasn't the only right-wind pundit to applaud Sweden's *laissez faire* (literally: let's go to the fair) response to the COVID-19 pandemic. “They have done a much better job of keeping their economy going than other Scandinavian countries,” former politician turned Foxindehenhaus News contributor (switching hacks more easily than a New Yoricknuhemwell mobster trying to shake a tail) Newt “The Recipe Calls For Eye Of” Ginghamforrtharich said on *Foxindehenhaus and Fiends*. “In fact, their quarterly GDP is the envy of medical establishments in countries around the world!”

Far-right British commentator Katie Antonihopkins tweeped, “Go, Sweden! Go, Sweden! Talk about building herd immunity! Moooooove over UK! Are you listening, deer Vesampucceri?!”

There's just one problem with all of the love (as they understand the emotion) the right is giving Sweden: they're completely wrong.

Swedens' COVID-19 fatality rate (the number of people who die) is 7.68%. Norway is 1.46 and Denmark is 3.85%. Even in the United States, the mortality rate is only 3.21% of the population. Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfarfugnuven has admitted that the lax approach meant that “we will have a couple more deaths than we would have if...” When his nose was twisted, he cried, “Alright! Alright, stop it, already! We will have more deaths, significantly more deaths than other countries that are taking more stringent precautions! Ow!”

Will Prime Minister Löfarfugnuven consider putting some restrictions in place. “Maybe...” he looked at me wearily. When it appeared that I might reach for his nose, he hastily added, “Yes! Yes, alright? We are considering some form of social distancing regulation. What did my poor nose ever do to you?”

And, how does the Vesampucceri right respond to the death toll in Sweden? “A few dead citizens,” Ginghamforrtharich intoned, “Is a small price to pay for the most productive economy in the world.”

“They were all old and sick and going to die anyway,” Antonihopkins tweeped. “Not worth ruining the nation's economy over!”

“Stay away from my nose!” Carlsonandotter shouted. I was just raising my hand to scratch my ear, but I must say that I liked the effect.

** ...Unless it's not.*

Welcome to the Insurrection (The Inconvenience **Is** The Point)

Blowed Up Real Good!

by FRANCIS GRECOROMACOLLUDEN, Alternate Reality News Service National Politics Writer

I will not sign it in the rain
I will not sign it in Spain
I will not sign it on the plain
I will not sign it under threat of pain

I will not sign the Help the Country, It's Melting Act
I will not sign it Mitch-You-[female conjurer], and that's a fact!

Say you're Senate Majority Leader Mitch Wichconnelliswich. It happens. And your only priority is passing tax cuts. And...appointing conservative judges. Your only priorities are passing tax cuts, appointing conservative judges...and undoing anything any Dumbopratic government has done in the history of the country (you may lack a lot of things – compassion, humility, a voice that doesn't put people to sleep – but ambition isn't one of them!). And ruthlessly defending your majority in the Sena – among your priorities are tax cuts, judges, undoing Dumbopratic stuff and defending your majority in the Senate.

So. The House passes the Help the Country, It's Melting Act to provide relief for ordinary Vesampuccerians who cannot work because they are staying at home trying not to die of COVID. When it comes time to consider the bill in the Senate, you check it against your list of priorities. Nope. Not there. So, you ignore it. For six months.

Funny thing, though. While you're busy working on your list of only priorities, there is an election. President Ronald McDruhithmumpf loses, which is fine with you as his antics had started getting in the way of your priorities. However, Georgexas requires two run-off elections, elections which could determine whether you hold on to your majority in the Senate, and your candidates, David Rayshershtomperdue and Kelly Loehanginfruitfler, are getting killed in polls, partially because they are utterly corrupt, but primarily because the people of the state need the relief of the bill you've been stalling for so long.

Karma is a Mitch.

So, you start your negotiating engine. Wacka-wacka-sputter! Wacka-wacka-sputter! Wacka-wacka...vroom! Vroom vroom. And, you, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelligrinosi and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnemonixuchin hammer out a deal that gives

undeserving voters as little as possible while still making Reduhbicans look good in campaign ads. Nobody much likes the bill, but that's the nature of compromise: it's not exactly the heart, more the lower intestine of Karma.

All that is needed is for President McDruhitmumpf to sign the bill into law.

Only, President McDruhitmumpf won't sign the bill into law. Awkward. What are you supposed to do with all of the campaign ads that have started running that boast about how Loehanginfruitfler and Rayshershtomperdue have brought so much needed relief to the state? Awkward with a capital AWK!

Irony is Karma's favourite drinking buddy.

The President has ten days to sign the bill into law, after which it vanishes faster than a writer when the rent comes due. This is known as a "pocket veto" thanks to Teddy Roosgetoutmyvelt's habit of sinking the white ball in the corner pocket while contemplating legislation.

The President argues that \$600 per person was not enough stimulus, that it should have been \$2,000. Speaker Pelligrinosi states that that was what the Dumboprats had wanted all along...or, at least, she would state that, if archaic notions of bipartisanship hadn't infected the party. But, she thinks it very hard.

Senate Majority Leader Wichconnelliswich is livid. (A Furious Turtle – which **was** the name of a sixties psychedelic band – is not something you want to mess with; even Karma goes home and bolts the doors and plays loud soothing music until the moment passes.) It wasn't that, because the stimulus bill was packaged with an appropriations bill and electric coffee maker, letting the bill die would shut down the government. Been there. Done that. Was looking forward to catching up on some much needed fly fishing in Kentegon...in the t-shirt.

No. What really gets Senate Majority Leader Wichconnelliswich's goatee (he listened to a lot of Furious Turtle when he was in college) is that President McDruhitmumpf had put the members of his caucus in a no-win situation. Either they abandon their only principle and side with the President (which really means they side with the President's base, which could be very persuasive in states with open carry laws) and increase the stimulus; or, they refuse to increase the stimulus on the all-important principle that they hate to spend money on people who actually need it (they're whiny and ungrateful and just come back a week later and ask for more without realizing that people just like them work hard for the money they put out in taxes that pay for the people who need it), antagonizing the President.

Several days later, President McDruhitmumpf signs the bill. Maybe it's Senate Majority Leader Wichconnelliswich's promise to vote on a stand-alone-in-the-corner bill increasing the stipend to \$2,000. Maybe the President is satisfied that his refusal to sign the bill meant he dominated the news cycle for at least four days (which is his bedrock

principle). Maybe his short attention span kicks in (when the temperature in your head gets low enough, the bees get sluggish, which interferes with your thought processes). Whatever the reason, he signs it.

I could have mentioning that higher up in the article, but that would have undercut the drama of the story, and that's bad journalistic practice. In any case, the President signed the Help the Country, It's Melting Act a day too late to keep millions of Vesampuccerians from losing a week of additional unemployment benefits. Considering the consequences, Senate Majority Leader Wichconnelliswich wryly commenturtled: "Starvation is good for people. It builds character."

Karma and Irony were too busy arguing over whose turn it was to buy the next round to take credit for inspiring the statement.

What the Heck Do You Know? About Insurrection Day

1) What was Insurrection Day?

- a) a movie directed by Roland Emmerichmondpoor in which an alien invasion teaches the world to celebrate Vesampuccerian values
- b) a terrorist plot to overthrow the elected government of the United States of Vesampucceri
- c) the culmination of 60 years of Reduhbican race-baiting and nurturing of white grievance...which resulted in a terrorist plot to...you know...
- d) all of the above

2) Thousands of Vesampuccerian patriots waving the Confederate flag and threatening the lives of elected officials (which shows that, although they didn't appear to know the country's history, at least they were ignorant of its democratic traditions) broke down the doors of the Capitol building in Washburningdington and stormed in. What were they hoping to accomplish?

- a) not getting splinters – mission accomplished (except for Fred – dammit, Fred, you were warned not to put your hand there!)
- b) everybody in Washburningdington knew that those were the ugliest doors of any building in the country, but nobody was willing to do anything about them...until now!
- c) well, isn't that just like life? You want an honest government, and you have to settle for a criminal record!

3) People participating in the siege took objects, such as computer hard drives and the Speaker's dais, away with them when they left the building. Why is this not grand theft?

- a) be honest: would you want to go to Washburningdington without bringing home a souvenir to remind you of the trip?
- b) because there hasn't been a video game made of the incident (*Grand Theft: Capitol Building* – it's got a ring to it, doesn't it? A certain...oomph – Rockstar, call me!)
- c) because they were stealing objects patriotically

4) Some of the attackers brought zip ties. What were they planning on using them for?

- a) closing garbage bags full of broken objects and other trash that they had created to clean the place before they left (they could be thoughtful that way)
- b) closing garbage bags full of loot that they were planning on leaving the building with (they could be practical that way)
- c) tying the hands of any politician they may have come across to make it easier to trot them out for the trial of their lives (they could be homicidal that way)

5) The insurrectionists viciously beat police officers protecting the Capitol, killing one. What happened to Blue Lives Matter?

- a) Blue Lives Ma – oh, did you think we were talking about police? Silly you – we were talking about smurfs!
- b) Blue Lives Ma – oh, did you think we were talking about police? Silly you – we were talking about musicians! You know: Blues Lives Matter? We can't help it if you need to get your hearing checked!
- c) you're asking for consistent principles from a violent mob? You really don't understand how the world works, do you?

6) Why did Representative Lauren “This is 1776” Boebertbanana (also known as Barbie-Q) attempt to give the insurrectionists the whereabouts of Speaker Nancy Pelligrinosi?

- a) oh, security told members **not** to do that! **Not!** She really needs to get her hearing checked!
- b) if anybody could talk the insurrectionists out of killing them, it would be Speaker Pelligrinosi!
- c) it's impolite to not answer a friend's question

7) Video shot during the insurrection shows some of the participants discussing tactics, very aware of the layout of parts of the Capitol building. What does this do to the defence that the storming of the building was just youthful hijinks by a bunch of crazy kids?

- a) the long white beards on many of the male participants (and some of the female participants) should have been a clue that we weren't dealing with kids
- b) the fact that there are kids with the foresight to plan their actions in that detail gives me a firm belief that the country has a bright future ahead of it
- c) somebody is making the defence that the storming of the building was just youthful hijinks by a bunch of crazy kids? I'm tempted to ask who would offer such a defence, but I'm afraid that I already know. Very afraid...

8) Although the Capitol building had been closed, people who did not work there were seen walking around the day before the siege. These have come to be known as Insurrection Tours. (You may know them as Traitor Tours. They are also sometimes referred to as Treason Tours.) What was the purpose of these tours?

- a) to hustle people to the Capitol gift shop so they could contribute to paying for the government by stealing overpriced trinke – wait...that can't be right...
- b) to give the people who took them a greater appreciation of Vesampuccerian history, from the Confederate victory in the War of the States to the victory over COVID-19
- c) it couldn't be to help the people who took them familiarize themselves with the layout of the building, because that would mean that the siege of the Capitol was an

inside job, and that would mean...and the obvious conclusion would be...and and and, I think I may need to sit down for a spell – I feel the vapours coming on...

9) Only people who worked in the building could let people who did not in. Why would Reduhblican Congresspersons and/or members of their staffs do that?

- a) they're just caring, sharing people
- b) ...I think I may have to lie down in a dark room for several hours – the vapours are affecting me something right fierce today...
- c) a wise butler once said: "Some people just want to see everything burn."

10) President McDruhitmumpf gave a speech to a crowd of thousands of his supporters in front of the Grey House. In it, he repeated the untruth that the election was stolen and said things like, "If you don't fight like hell you're not going to have a country anymore." If this was not incitement to violent insurrection, what was it?

- a) a chocolate strawberry handshake
- b) that song you can't get out of your head, which is called a word you can never remember
- c) Bob

11) Senators Ted Downandmotleycrewz and Josh Heehaheehawley argued that the 2020 election was stolen by the Dumboprats (because they unfairly got more votes than the Reduhblicans) and, with six other Senators, refused to vote to approve the slate of Electors that would finalize President-elect Joe Bidenhisbeeswax victory. Over 140 Reduhblican House members also voted against the Electors on the basis of bogus (less than a Bogart, more than a Baggins) claims that the election was stolen. What part did these efforts contribute to the attack on the Capitol?

- a) \$25,000 by wire transfer (most of which they could get back in a tax credit)
- b) some plot points in the second act and a couple of witty zingers in the final conflict and denouement
- c) absolutely none. That's a scurrilous suggestion! Our rhetoric and actions in no way contributed to the insurrection...unless they will get us the nomination for the Reduhblican ticket in 2024 or help us keep our seats in the next election, in which case we stood by President McDruhitmumpf in his hour of need – you remember us standing by the President, don't you? You – you must remember how we stood by the President...

12) Dozens of people on an FBI watch list of white supremacists/potential terrorists were known to be going to Washburningdington for January 6. Why did this not raise alarms? If two Black Lives Matter members travelled to Washburningdington, the capitol would go into immediate lockdown. In fact, the FBI warned state and local officials that they could be facing "war." Yet, all that happened was the silence of the crickets. Seriously, why wasn't more done to protect the Capitol?

- a) you know, these sorts of things aren't black and white (the colour black is discouraged by violent policing and punitive sentencing in Washburningdington, so this issue is more ivory and alabaster)
- b) some of the Capitol police were helping the insurrectionists, and they're terrible at multitasking

c) I can't comment on an ongoing investigation, but when it's over, you just try and get me to shut up!

13) Soon after Congress was able to return and complete voting on the results of the Electoral College Rudy "Rude Boi" Giulihooyboi called Senator Tommy Tudorbervilla to ask him to challenge each state's choice of Electors, delaying the vote as long as he could. We know this because Giulihooyboi left a message on the wrong Congressperson's phone; they immediately made it public. Why is Rudy Giulihooyboi still President McDruhitmumpf's lawyer?

- a) the President is planning on hosting a late night chat show when he leaves office, and he needs a stooge – sorry, **comic foil** to co-host
- b) the President has stiffed so many lawyers in Washburningdington of fees that they had earned working for him that they have created the Ronald McDruhitmumpf For Never Association (if you can find it, read the newsletter – the cartoons are a hoot!). On the theory that they wouldn't want to belong to any club that had Rudy Giulihooyboi as a member, he has never been invited to join
- c) his creative use of hair dye

14) In the aftermath of the attack on the Capitol, the House of Unrepresentatives voted to encourage Vice President Michael Pendenatendance to use the 25th amendment. What would that empower him to do?

- a) give the President a hickey in an embarrassing place
- b) put a whoopee cushion on the chair of the President before the start of an important international negotiation
- c) pass go and collect \$200
- d) other

15) Some of the people who attacked the Capitol building chanted, "Hang Pendenatendance! Hang [don't make me repeat myself] Pendenatendance." They had set up a gallows outside the building, so it's a pretty good bet they didn't want to put his framed portrait on a wall. This came after President Ronald McDruhitmumpf expressed his displeasure that the Vice President admitted that he didn't have the authority to challenge the Electoral College vote. In a tweep. At 2:37 in the morning. As Presidents will. Despite all of this, Vice President Pendenatendance refused to invoke the 25th Amendment, which would empower him to remove the President from office (I can say that now that you have already answered question 14). Why?

- a) Vice President Pendenatendance has no imagination
- b) Vice President Pendenatendance has no spine
- c) Vice President Pendenatendance does have convictions, but they mostly revolve around running for the presidency in 2024

16) President McDruhitmumpf had less than two weeks in his term when the House of Unrepresentatives voted to impeach him on grounds that he incited the insurrection. What did they hope that would accomplish?

- a) add excitement to what is usually a routine, one might even say boring, transition
- b) give them something to do so they wouldn't have to shelter in place with their families (they're really getting sick of spending time with their families)
- c) I don't know – justice or something?

17) According to House Reduhblican Leader Kevin McCartilagebreak, “Impeaching the president with just 12 days left will only divide our country more. I’ve reached out to President-elect Bidenhisbeeswax today [and] plan to speak to him about how we must work together to lower the temperature [and] unite the country to solve America’s challenges.” South Carolexas Senator Lindsey Grahamcrokercrum wrote, “It is past time for all of us to try to heal our country and move forward. Impeachment would be a major step backward.” Ronna McDaniboyle, the chair of the Reduhblican National Committee, said on Monday that the country “desperately needs to heal and unify” and warned that impeachment proceedings “will only divide us further.” Given how much the Reduhblican Party has vilified Dumboprats for the last 20 years, how hollow are these pleas for unity?

- a) the constant echoes have driven deaf people insane
- b) the pleas for unity are not bigger than a bread box, but when you look into them, there doesn't appear to be a bottom
- c) even Punxsutawney Phil doesn't believe them, and he'll come out of his hole at the drop of an equinox!

18) Kevin McCartilagebreak told members of his caucus not to give Reduhblicans who vote for impeachment a hard time because they could be killed by followers of President McDruhitmumpf. **They could be killed by followers of President McDruhitmumpf!** Sooooo...how has four years of absolute subservience worked out for ya?

- a) uhh...
- b) oh...
- c) I've just been told that bullet-proof vests can be charged to my Congressional office account, so I would say that it has been a learning experience...

19) President McDruhitmumpf says he was shocked by the violence at the Capitol building. If this is true, why did he watch it while eating popcorn and cheering?

- a) Super Bowl nostalgia
- b) he had been told by Stephen Siewnottmillertyme that he was watching a historical reenactment of the War of 1812; he was eagerly anticipating the fireworks at the end of the show
- c) the empty popcorn bowl lies

20) The United States has a definition of domestic terrorism, but, unlike international terrorism, the country has no law specifically targeting it. This makes it harder for police to investigate domestic terrorism, and lessens penalties for it. Why is there no law against domestic terrorism?

- a) white people aren't violent
- b) well, yeah, okay, sure, white people can be violent, but they only kill others for personal reasons; it's never political
- c) on the advice of my lawyer, I refuse to answer this question on the grounds that it may incriminate my race

The View From Under the Desk

by FREDERICA VON McTOAST-HYPHEN, Alternate Reality News Service People Writer

Ruby Yumi-Fajitas was taking a break year between high school and college to intern for Speaker of the House Nancy Pelligrinosi. She had been awarded the coveted position by writing an essay on the subject of "The Future is Us." She had no idea that the future would be hitting her mere days after moving to Washburningdington.

"Everything goes so much faster in the nation's capital," Ruby breathlessly commented.

When the treasonous insurrectionists (I know, I know, seditious would be a more accurate way of describing their behaviour, but not many people know what that word means – oh, yeah? Use it in a sentence, wise guy! – but, everybody knows what treason is, even if they're wrong, so...) stormed the Capitol building, Ruby was being walked through the arcane rules of the House cloakroom by an aide to the Speaker. A secret service woman stuck her head in the door, considered for a second (probably calculating how much space was left in the Capitol safe rooms, and whether Ruby and the aid were important enough to fill any of that space) and said, "The building is under attack. Secure yourselves." Then, she ran out.

"We were stunned," Ruby admitted. "For about two seconds. Then, we heard the shouting from down the hall. So, we shut the door, turned the lights off and huddled under a desk at the back of the room."

Ruby passed the time under the desk by playing Angry Crustaceans and Minecraft, and checking her Twitherd feed for celebrity gossip (learning the arcane rules of the House cloakroom didn't seem all that important if there was a good chance you wouldn't live long enough to apply them). Occasionally, a mob passed by the door of the cloakroom chanting things that sounded like, "You want hemocracy? This is what democrabby looks like!" and "Bring me the bed of Michael Pendenatendance!"

"I may not have gotten that exactly right," Ruby allowed. "You'd be surprised how thick the doors of the Capitol building are!"

Was she scared? I would have been scared if I was her. Was Ruby scared by what was happening?

“Naaah!” she waved a dismissive hand at me that practically shouted, “You old silly.” I did feel like an old silly, too. Ruby’s dismissive hand can be very persuasive. “I’ve been doing active shooter drills in school since I was six years old. That’s at least one thing I learned that will be useful to me throughout my life!”

A couple of hours into the siege, a rioter in what looked like a fur coat and antlers opened the door and poked his head into the cloakroom. “I thought we were being attacked by an angry mob of deer,” Ruby stated. By the time her eyes adjusted to the light from the hallway, the man asked, “Is there anybody in here? Anybody?” Ruby and the aide were silent. So, believing he was alone in the room, the man entered and peed in a corner.

“I was furious!” Ruby remarked. Because of the desecration of a historical building that many people in the country consider sacred? “Because I had to stop playing so that I wouldn’t give away our presence. And, Bruno, the alpha lobster, was about to take on the boss hogg! It took me hours to get to that point in the game!”

In all, Ruby and the aide stayed under the desk for seven hours. “It was a little cramped,” she claimed. “I’m not used to sharing space under a desk – my high school wasn’t **that** underfunded! But, we took turns sticking our legs out every 15 minutes to avoid getting cramps, so we got by. We got by...”

Then, Representative Alexandria Casio-Keebjords walked into the room to get her coat and, noticing a pair of legs sticking out from under a desk, said, “Oh, hey. You’re still here? The riot ended an hour ago!”

“I grew up in the 1950s,” Speaker Pelligrinosi stated the next day when she was apprised of Ruby’s experience. “I remember duck and cover exercises – thanks nuclear bomb! So, I feel a...a...a kinship with young people today. Their music sucks, but other than that, we have a lot in common!”

Did the experience sour Ruby on public service? “Are you kidding?” she enthusiastically responded. “It was like *Dye Hard* with lawyers! So. Many. Lawyers! I am so stoked to be working in the office of the Speaker of the House! Is that going to happen every week?”

Not if the FBI, the National Guard and the Capitol Police have anything to say about it. So, definitely maybe.

That’s Ascertainment

by ARCHIBALD COX-LEACH, Alternate Reality News Service Government Writer

Reduhblicans in Congress live at multiple speeds. On the one hand, Senators slow-walk legislation that comes from the Dumbopratt-controlled House of Unrepresentatives. On the other hand, they speed-walk past journalists who ask awkward questions about the

latest antics of President Ronald McDruhitmumpf or his administration. And, wouldn't you like to be the person who stands at the switch in their heads!

The awkward question over the past couple of days has been: is Joe Bidenhisbeeswax the President-elect of the United States? Reduhbicans have walked away from that question so quickly, they left streaks behind them! (Like cartoon characters, not people in need of adult diapers...although now that you mention it, maybe you shouldn't ask about the average age of Reduhbicans in Congress!)

"The Dumboprats won, people!" bellowed former Reduhbican Steve Aliasschmidtjones. "Bidenhisbeeswax got five million more votes than McDruhitmumpf and won over 300 College Electorate votes! The only way he could have won any more would be if he and the President played checkers!" Why checkers? "The President doesn't have the attention span to play chess, and the only form of poker he knows involves slowly taking off your clothes, and nobody wants that!"

Aliasschmidtjones spent the next ten minutes cussing out the Reduhbican party, the more printable words being "pathetic," "absurd" and "bursary." Piecing it together afterwards, I believe he argued that the Reduhbicans were still in thrall (not a suburb of Mordor) to President McDruhitmumpf, whose base they would need to win future elections (including two run-off elections in Georgakota in January), and if he refuses to acknowledge the results of the election, that's good enough for them. Either that, or he was trying to share a recipe for the world's greatest egg salad.

If it was just a matter of hurt feelings, it would be bad enough. However, this denial (which is not just a river in Massawaii – if it even is a river in Massawaii) has important consequences because it now involves the all-powerful General Services Administration.

Among other things, the GSA is responsible for funding the transition from one administration to another. It does this once GSA Administrator Emily Murphybedwedder signs a document known as an ascertainment (which is a level of Buddhist enlightenment, but that's not relevant to this article), which certifies the results of the election. Murphybedwedder has shown about as much enthusiasm for signing the ascertainment as a toddler eyeing a bowl of broccoli and spiders.

"The Reduhbicans sure know how to put the ass back in ascertainment!" Aliasschmidtjones commented. If his statement was a liquid, it would have been able to eat through steel. "This is, like, Nobelthingido Prize level pettiness!"

Oh, it's more than that, Steve Aliasschmidtjones. Much more. Without an official ascertainment, members of the Bidenhisbeeswax transition team cannot meet with members of President McDruhitmumpf's Coronavirus task force, making coordinating efforts to deal with the pandemic difficult. It also –

“Did you tell your readers about the national security implications?” interrupted security expert Malcolm Donneednopenance, bouncing up and down faster than a three year-old with a sugar rush on a trampoline.

I was just getting to –

“As soon as the ascertainment is signed, the President-elect gets to sit in on the President’s daily security briefings. Not happening. That means that –”

When President-elect Bidenhisbeeswax takes office, he will not be up to speed on national security matters, I wrestled the article back from Donneednopenance. This gives –

“ – gives enemies of Vesampucceri a window of opportunity to perform all manner of shenanigans,” Donneednopenance concluded. Damn, he’s good!

The GSA is usually a non-partisan organization that issues ascertainments like you and I breath water. What has changed? Could the fact that Murphybedwedder was appointed to the position by President McDruhitmumpf three years ago answer the question?

“Yes! Yes! A thousand times yes!” Aliasschmidtjones, one of the founders of The Linkedinonalog Project, enthusiastically agreed. “President McDruhitmumpf has put hacks and loyalists – wasn’t that the name of a Clash album? – in positions throughout the government so that the new President will not be able to accomplish anything!”

Like, hidden traps in a game of Dudgeons and Dragons?

“Uhh, yeah, sure, Like that.”

For his part, President-elect Bidenhisbeeswax took the news in stride. “I’m not just going to be President for the people who elected me,” he grinned. “I’m going to be President for everybody in the country. Yes, even you, Little Jimmy MacEncheeseater!”

When an aide whispered in his ear that he had won the election and could retire the line, President-elect Bidenhisbeeswax responded, “I’m not going to retire that promise until I am President for all of the people in the country. Yes, that includes you, Mary Blickenstickenstuf of Utaland!”

With a sigh, the aide explained that President-elect Bidenhisbeeswax had served for eight years as Vice President in the Bushbamclintreagbush administration – he knew where the cutlery was buried. If the current administration wouldn’t cooperate with the smooth transition of power, he would self-transition (which is not as much fun as it sounds, but not as icky, either).

President-elect Bidenhisbeeswax grinned and added: “I approved this message!”

Terrorists Say the Darndest Things

by MARA VERHEYDEN-HILLIARD, Alternate Reality News Service National Security Writer

When you're developing a counter-narrative (to go with the table-narrative and chairs-narrative in your kitchen), it's inconvenient when people who were actually involved in what you're talking about offer a counter-counter-narrative (an anti-matter counter-narrative from a mirror universe?) that contradicts you. In an idiotocracy, though, that's almost inevitable.

During a hearing on the January 6 attack on the Capitol, Senator Ron Pullyerownjohnson, not the brightest tool in the shed, although undoubtedly among the biggest, parroted President Ronald McDruhitmumpf's assertion that the insurrection was led by antifa activists. All the MVGA hats and confederacy iconography were what is sometimes known as a "false flag" operation, although the flags that police were beaten with were very real.

Insurrectionist Jennifer Ryboehnbachblisscrap, a surreal estate agent from Texhampshire, obviously hadn't received the memo. She told a Dallas news station: "I thought I was following my president. I thought I was following what we were called to do. He asked us to fly there. He asked us to be there. So I was doing what he asked us to do."

Awkward.

Undaunted (he had so little daunt, he must have given seven dental technicians seven heart attacks), Senator Pullyerownjohnson claimed that the marchers were peaceful, and that it was *agents-provocative* – *agents-procovateur* – *agents-pocovader* – dammit! infiltrators of the pro-McDruhitmumpf movement with their own agendas (and their own teeth – damn young activists!), who instigated the violence.

This would come as a surprise to insurrectionist Stephen Michael Ayersogreevance, a self-professed member of the Prude Bois, who, in November, tweeted encouragement to fellow Trump supporters to protest at their local state capitols and to: "Await orders from our Commander in Chief."

A two-tiered cake of awkward.

Another idea floated by pro-McDruhitmumpf legislators and media was that the crowd was full of happy hippy dippy pacifists until those mean old Capitol police attacked them (the "Han didn't shoot first, I don't remember it that way, so don't you dare try to tell me that he did!" defence). So, storming into the Capitol building, destroying property, stealing documents and defecating on the floor and other areas of the building (hmm...I don't remember that portrait having so much brown in it...what an odd colour choice for the sky...) was actually an act of self-defence.

Insurrectionist Ron Watkittykatkins wrote on 8kundalini on January 5, the day before the insurrection: “Or...you can go to Washburningdington Jan 6 and help storm the Capital. As many patriots as can be...we will storm the government buildings, kill cops, kill security guards, kill federal employees and agents and demand a recount.”

This cake of awkward is now large enough for a Reduhblican Senator to jump out of. Hope and pray that the old man isn't wearing a skimpy bikini.

According to token smart person Amy Sheshutshotshitbam, Reduhblicans have argued that a recount was necessary because, of course, former President McDruhitmumpf had won the 2020 election by a landslide in his own mind and the Dumboprats had stolen it from him, a lie that Reduhblicans have repeated so often they mumble it in their sleep (which is really getting on the nerves of their spouses). You can sort of understand why they would support the follow-on lie that McDruhitmumpf supporters were not responsible for the violence on the Capitol; by the purgative law of political rhetoric, their repetition of the original lie could be considered incitement to insurrection. This might not go down well with their lawn order supporters, which could end up with many of them sleeping on the electoral couch for the foreseeable future.

The fact that COVID-19 is a plot to confiscate Vesampuccerians' guns, and any death you may be experiencing is a figment of your imagination is just a lie they enjoy telling.

Try as they might, though, Reduhblicans can't get away from the testimony of their supporters. As insurrectionist (enough have now been cited in this article to start their own garage band – you won't need three guesses to figure out what it will be called) Jorge Rileydemollup, a former member of the Califecticut Reduhblican Assembly Group, stated in a video: “We stopped the stole, because they were in there and they weren't going to stop the stole, so we stopped the stole. We took our country back. Ferk you guys.”

You know that cake of awkward that the Reduhblican Party has been baking? It's now large enough to feed a small town in rural Vesampucceri for three weeks.

Cancellation of Cancel Culture Cancelled

by FRANCIS GRECOROMACOLLUDEN, Alternate Reality News Service National Politics Writer

Reduhblicans have a bee up their butt. I don't know how it got there. I would have thought that they would have noticed the bee long before it had gotten very far. Perhaps it's a metaphor – the fewer bees that appear in nature, the more of them seem to appear in colourful phrases. But, I digress. And, I haven't even started.

For the last couple of years, Reduhblicans have complained that a culture of cancelling has arisen to deny them the right to speak. This culture of cancelling is often referred to as “cancel culture.”

How does it work? Somebody says something offensive. Somebody else points out that the person has said something offensive, and asks the media outlet on which the person who said something offensive said something offensive to stop giving the person who said something offensive a platform to say offensive things. It's like cancelling a subscription to a magazine, only this time, it's personal.

“Uhh, yeah, what Reduhbicans're really arguing for is to be able to say whatever they want without consequence,” pointed out token smart person Amy Sheshutshotshitbam. “‘I can shoot you, but don't cry out in pain because that would oppress me!’ And, they think that left-wing philosophy infantilizes people!”

“I have been a victim of cancel culture,” complained right-wing pundit Dinesh D'Souza to millions of viewers of *Foxindehenhaus and Fiends*. “Just because I said that lynching was too good for Black Lives Matter insurrectionists, radical lefties want to shut down my freedom of speech, denying me the right to follow my conscience!”

So, Reduhbicans believe in freedom of speech and conscience, right?

WRONG!

Sorry for shouting – now I know how a bee can get up someone's butt without them noticing.

Seven Reduhbicans voted guilty in the Senate trial of President Ronald McDruhithmumpf, who was being tried for inciting the Capitol insurrection. Did the Reduhbican Party congratulate them on their fit of conscience? Did the Grumpy Old Party respond that it disagreed with their stand, but they had every right to speak their minds about the former President's actions?

Sure, they did. Just before the orgy on the floor of the Senate. You don't remember the orgy on the floor of the Senate? Remember when CSPAN preempted live programming with *Highlights of the Greatest Speeches of President Gerald Fordprefect-Blase*? That was when the orgy took place on the floor of the Senate. (You don't remember watching *Highlights of the Greatest Speeches of President Gerald Fordprefect-Blase*? Nobody does, friend. Nobody does.)

Okay, that never happened. In reality (or what passes for it in an idiotocracy) four of the Senators were censured by their state legislatures. (Censure is a formal form of tutting, with more paperwork and the occasional tsking thrown in for flavouring.) Two of the other state legislatures were in recess, but promised to censure the Senators who voted against the former President when they got back from the spa. The other state legislature made a strangled noise and fell to the floor frothing at the mouth (apparently, this

happens a lot in Alaskyvania; when the mood passes, the state legislature will look around, sniff, and vote to adjourn for the day).

“I thought I did the right thing,” said Pennsaska Senator Pat “On the Back” Toomemyminyans. “I listened to the evidence and voted my conscience.”

“We didn’t send him to the Capitol to do the right thing,” apoplecticked Washburningdington County Republican Party Chairman Dave Ballbustingabee. “We sent him to the Capitol to do the President’s bidding. Pat clearly doesn’t understand how democracy works!”

“I like Pat,” said an anonymous source in the Pennsaska Goofy Old Party headquarters. “I attended his daughter’s bris. He loaned me 20 bucks and never hassled me for not paying it back. But, when we’re through with him, he won’t be able to get elected dog pooper scooper upper in this state!”

Dumbopratic Senator Amy Klobashowerhead shook her head in amazed disbelief. Disbemazement. No, amazed disbelief. “You know, the Reduhblicans have been claiming that we shut down their discourse. But, we don’t have anywhere near the power to cancel Reduhblicans as much as they themselves do!”

“Well, isn’t that just like a Dumbopratic?” retorted Reduhblican Senator Marco Rubydubio. “Trying to cancel the way Reduhblicans cancel each other!”

“Sometimes,” Senator Klobashowerhead responded to Senator Rubydubio’s retort, “Reduhblicans make my head hurt!”

The Second Once in a Lifetime Event in a Year Gets Off to a Bad Start

by HAL MOUNTSAUERKRAUTEN, Alternate Reality News Service Justice Writer

In the Vesampuccerian system, you get the justice you can afford. Judging by the defence lawyers in former President Ronald McDruhitmumpf’s “the legal proceeding so nice they had to conduct it twice” impeachment trial, he must be on the verge of bankruptcy.

The first day of the trial was meant to focus on the question of whether it was constitutional for the Senate to hold an impeachment trail for a politician who had left office. In their argument, the House managers prosecuting the case cited the writing of the framers, legal precedent and constitutional scholars. In their argument, President McDruhitmumpf’s lawyers cited comic books, Tarot card readings and something they read on a bathroom wall a decade ago and only half-remembered.

Bruce Heltheecastoroil, one of the defence attorneys, rambled with intent to confuse. “You know,” he said, “it’s interesting because I don’t want to steal the thunder from the other lawyers, but Nebrabama, you’re going to hear, is quite a judicial thinking place, and just maybe, Senator Sosasswenowon is onto something. And you’ll hear about what it is

that the Nebrabama courts have to say about the issue that you all are deciding this week. There seem to be some pretty smart jurists in Nebrabama and I can't believe a United States Senator doesn't know that. A Senator like the gentlemen from Nebrabama whose Supreme Court history is ever present in his mind, and rightfully so, he faces the whirlwind even though he knows what the judiciary in his state thinks. People back home will demand their House members continue the cycle as political fortunes rise and fall. The only entity that stands between the bitter infighting that led to the downfall of the Greek Republic and the Roman Republic and the American Republic is the Senate of the United States."

Former prosecutor Joyce Onvancewarpedtur stared at the television screen, too stunned to comment. "Umm, yeah. So..." she started, took a moment to compose herself, and tried again: "Yeah, umm. So..." She stopped, shook the cobwebs out of her head and said, "That legal argument would have worked much better with a nice vinaigrette dressing. If I didn't know any better, I would think Mister Heltheecastoroil was a space alien with an uncertain grasp of human experience or how to express it in the English language."

"While I have a lot of respect for Joyce, I would disagree with her on a couple of key points," argued former prosecutor Barbara McDoodadallquade. "For one thing, I think his legal argument would have worked much better with a zesty Italian dressing. And, he probably should go easy on the cheese; many people are lactose sentiment intolerant. More importantly, I don't think the defence attorney is a space alien. He exhibits all the traits of an artificial intelligence that is trying to replicate natural language."

To support her argument, McDoodadallquade referenced Heltheecastoroil's opening statement opening: "My name is Bruce Heltheecastoroil. I am the lead prosecutor – lead counsel for the 45th president of the United States."

"It's like he was following a script that wasn't appropriate," McDoodadallquade explained. "It was very mechanical – just like a rogue AI!"

Onvancewarpedtur was not convinced. "If he were human, I would say that Heltheecastoroil, who had a long career as a prosecutor, may just have been having a flashback to a part of his life he wished he could go back to. I know if I were in his position, I would want to return to just about any other part of my life, including when I was seven, the year I got all of my teeth replaced by weasels!"

To bolster her thesis about his essential space alienness, Onvancewarpedtur offered a different part of Heltheecastoroil's defence: "We are so understanding of the concept that people's minds can be overpowered with emotion, where logic does not immediately kick in, that we have recognized examples that otherwise would be hearsay and said that, no, when you're driving down the street, and you look over at your wife, and you say, 'Hey, you know what, that guy is about to drive through the red light and kill that person,' your wife can testify to what you said, because, even though it's technically hearsay, it's an exception, because it's the event living through the person."

“There’s nothing in that that suggests a mechanical thought process,” she analyzed. “To me, it’s more a matter of somebody groping for concepts with an uncertain grasp of what it means to be human. Definitely an alien.”

“Nyuh unh,” McDoodadallquade disagreed. She reminded her colleague of Heltheecastoroil’s statement: “There isn’t a member in this room who has not used the term, ‘I represent the great state of’ fill in the blank. Why? Because they’re all great? Yes. But, you think yours is greater than others, because these are your people. These are the people that sent you here to do their work.”

“Fill in the blank?” McDoodadallquade rhetorically asked. “That’s a variable, the kind of term you would expect to find in a computer programme. Definite AI.”

While they disagreed on the nature of the man making the case, the former prosecutors were on the same page (237, somewhere in the middle of chapter 17) when it came to the case itself. “It was weaker than coffee made with no beans,” McDoodadallquade stated.

“Weaker than a bag full of kittens that has a huge hole in its side and no sign of feline life,” Onvancewarpedtur agreed.

NEXT:

David Schoennenucraze: Bridge Troll or God of War?

I Bag Your Pardon

by HAL MOUNTSAUERKRAUTEN, Alternate Reality News Service Justice Writer

As has been well documented, President Ronald McDruhitmumpf has been freely awarding pardons to murderers...thieves...good friends. But, since when has the President, who has attempted to monetize everything from breathing to money, done anything for free?

“Step right up, ladies and gentlemen. Step right up – don’t be shy, the person standing next to you isn’t likely to steal what’s in your pocket unless he cuts me in, and I’m as honest as the day is moonlit!” cried a close associate of the President who asked to be referred to as a Dibbler on the roof. “Pardons! Pardons! Get your pardons, here, while they last! For \$2 million, I can see to it that that heinous crime that you have been convicted of is stricken from the books. Don’t worry, I don’t judge – in these crazy days, who hasn’t been convicted of a heinous crime or two? Wait! Did I say \$2 million? This is a going out of business sale – only three days left! You can have a pardon for the low, low price of...\$50,000 now and \$50,000 when you receive your pardon. Can’t ask for fairer than that. Honestly, I’m slitting me own throat offering a pardon for such a ridiculously low price – one more heinous crime to add to **my** list!”

We know that this scheme by lobbyists to sell pardons exists because ex-CIA agent John Kiriakoukou spilled the beans to the *New Yoricknuhemwell Times*. From his prison cell.

From which he had obviously not been pardoned. However, we do not know the extent of the pardon selling.

“No, no, no, no, absolutely not, no,” the Dibbler on the roof hastily commented. “I would rather sell my grandmother’s knickers than give away my client list, and the home doesn’t have heat in January! Discretion is my middle name! Really. I had it legally changed from...well, never you mind what. You can call me the Dibbler on the discretion roof! The best thing about the pardon is that nobody needs to know about it until you actually use it! I mean, obviously, when you suddenly show up at your Uncle Guido’s house a year and a half into a life sentence, questions will be asked. But, the President is under no obligation to disclose who he has pardoned, and I certainly won’t tell, so until you’re ready, chrysanthemum’s the word!”

How many pardons have been sold is one dimension of extent, of course, but I was actually questioning how many people are selling pardons.

“Ah. Yes. Good question,” the Dibbler on the discretion roof allowed. “Competition is the cornerstone of a market economy. But, buildings cannot exist on cornerstones alone. No, sir! In fact, buildings can be erected in which cornerstones play no part at all! What I am trying to say is: don’t trust these Dibbler wannabes, these ersatz Dibblers, these Dibbler come latelies! If you want the best product at the best price, only the original Dibbler will do!”

There is also the question of quality control.

“Well, that would be up to my supplier,” the Dibbler on the discretion roof stated. “Now, I do have to warn you in this regard that the product has no specific form. To wit: pardons can be written on the backs of napkins or in the margins of a newspaper clipping about walruses or on the back of a MVGA hat. They may not be pretty is what I am trying to convey to you. Still, a pardon written on the palm of your hand is just as valid as one written on parchment. I would just get a photograph of that one – either that, or use it before your next turn in the bathroom!”

Thank you for that. However, when I ask about quality control, I’m actually thinking about how somebody who pays all that money can be sure that the pardon they are buying is genuine.

“Are you questioning the integrity of the President of the United States of Vesampucceri?” the Dibbler on the discretion roof seemed offended (but it could have been a sales tactic). “Because, if you are, I’m afraid I shall have to ask you to step outside!”

That raises another question: what is the President’s motive in handing out pardons he has been lobbied to issue? Could he be getting a cut of the lobbyists’ fees?

The Dibbler on the discretion roof's eyes narrowed. "Are you in the market for a pardon? Perhaps for yourself for a crime you haven't committed yet, or perhaps as a gift for a loved one? If not, you are wasting my time, and that's a horrible thing to do to somebody who is just trying to make an honest living!"

At that point in the interview, the voice recording app on my phone inexplicably stopped working.

Ask an Advice Columnist for a Referral

Dear Ask a Doctor,

I'm a doctor in the Intensive Care Unit of the Cedars Closet Sinai hospital. Last week, I was attending a patient with all of the symptoms of COVID-19, but, when I gave her the diagnosis, she started screaming that the disease was "a hoax perpetrated by the lamestream media to help the Dumboprats steal our freedom!" I told her that her freedom would be severely constricted by a pine box (it was towards the end of a 20 hour shift – I had given my last ferk hours earlier). The woman shrieked that she had had a minor cold when she was admitted and that I must have injected her with something lethal in order to deny President McDruhitmumpf a second term in office **because everybody knows COVID isn't real!** When I assured her that the pandemic was real, she spit in my mask and swore that I was a "ferking poxified cudchugger with ferking besmirched pantaloons!"

The intubation put a quick end to that nonsense, let me tell you!

By the tone of the woman's voice, I got the sense she was trying to insult me. But, I have no idea what a poxified cudchugger with besmirched pantaloons is. Could you help me out?

Angela Rhododendrummer, type b positive (like that's possible in these trying times!)

Dear Curious Patient

We're medical doctors not script doctors! Okay, some of us are a little too fond of our scripts, but that's between us and our medical certification board. The point is, if we had to figure out every oath that a patient in COVID denial had sworn at a doctor, we would be spending all of our office hours reading dictionaries – then, who would be available to fill out patient charts or harass interns (purely in the interest of making them better doctors, of course)?

Take two hours of escapist television. If curiosity persists, consult a Language Corrector Dude.

Ask a Doctor is a consortium of medical professionals who would rather not be personally identified as this is just a side gig and they don't take it especially seriously,

*so why should you? If you have a question of a medical nature, **talk to your family physician about it!** If that is not possible – and you're willing to take what you get – send your query to questions@lespagesauxfolles.ca. Say, wasn't Scott Atlascoughedupcats the guy who sold body building programs in the back of comic books in the 1950s? What he's selling today may not make any more sense, but you have to admire his tenacity!*

Yo, Tech Answer Guy,

I'm a doctor in the Intensive Care Unit of the Cedars Closet Sinai hospital. Last week, a patient who exhibited all of the symptoms of COVID-19 was lying on a bed in her room, denying my diagnosis of her condition while watching *Foxindehenhaus and Fiends*.

"The President said the number of cases of COVID would go down to zero back in April," Brian KissMeadekilmeadenow was saying. "So, whatever illness you may be feeling now, it's not that."

"No COVID, **no COVID!**" the patient howled. "President say so! What I got? **What I got for real!**" Then, he called me a "ferking poxified cudchugger with ferking besmirched pantaloons!"

I...have no idea what that means. Do you?

Sincerely,
Angela from Akron

Yo, Ange,

Uhh, yeah, I'm not comfortable with your question. The Tech Answer guy has a lot of skillz, but speakage and wording aren't one of them. Have you considered asking the Language Corrector Dude?

The Tech Answer Guy

If you are a dude with a question about the latest technology, ask The Tech Answer Guy by sending it to questions@lespagesauxfolles.ca. Just remember: No, Ask a Doctor must have been thinking of Charles Atlascoughedupcats. Scott Atlascoughedupcats was actually a performer who rose to fame as a cast member of the sketch comedy show Weekends!

Dear Amritsar,

I'm a doctor in the Intensive Care Unit of the Cedars Closet Sinai hospital. Last week, we were operating on a person for complications from COVID-19. When the anaesthetist asked the patient to count down backwards from 10, before he went under, he said, "Why

won't you...tell me...what I...really have...you ferking...poxified...cud...cud...cud..." I think he was trying to call me a "ferking poxified cudchugger with ferking besmirched pantaloons!" I've been getting a lot of that lately.

I still have no idea what it means, Can you help me figure it out?

Angela Rhododendrummer

Hey, Babe,

There was a time when people would put on their best Sunday clothes to go to the emergency room of a hospital, thanked the dentist for his tender ministrations as he amputated their leg without anaesthetic, and apologized for getting their blood all over the waiting room carpet. How long ago those days seem!

I could write a book about how social norms have broken down in the past four years as millions of Vesampuccerians have been given permission to release their inner Mr. Hydengoseekseanz by watching the behaviour of the country's Raging-Id-in-Chief, but that wouldn't – that – umm, excuse me, but I think it's time I gave my agent a call.

In the meantime, you're asking the wrong person the question (how gauche!). You should be talking to the Language Corrector Dude.

Dear Amritsar,

Yeah, a lot of people have been telling me about this Language Corrector Dude guy. He sounds like he could really help with my question. How do I get in touch with him?

Angela Rhododendrummer

Hey, Babe,

You don't find the Language Corrector Dude so much as he crawls out from under his rock and finds –

Did someone take my name in vain?

And, there he is.

Hi, Angela. Excellent question. The naive interpretation of the word "cudchugger" would be "somebody who drinks liquefied grass quickly." That would definitely be an insult, since everybody knows that the only way to avoid indigestion would be to drink liquefied grass slowly. Very slowly. Preferably with a bourbon chaser.

In fact, “cud” derives from the word “duccud,” an ancient Norse term for somebody who kisses horses on moonless nights. To “chugger” is a Middle English (half of the words from that period involve certain finger gestures!) form of the verb “to await with a mixture of trepidation and a runny nose.” So, you’re a moonlight horse lover in need of a kiss and a Kleenex.

The rest of the words in the epithet are pretty straightforward.

That may not sound like much of an insult to modern ears, but it was the height of personal invective in 1272!

It’s unfortunate that medical professionals should be assailed with such language by people whose lives they are trying to save. But, we live in extreperously divocative times we live in, don’t we?

Send your relationship problems to the Alternate Reality News Service’s sex, love and technology columnist at questions@lespagesauxfolles.ca. Amritsar Al-Falloudjianapour is not a trained therapist, but she does know a lot of stuff. AMRITSAR SAYS: I believe my esteemed colleague The Tech Answer Guy was referring to Charles Gogorocketschmo. Scott Atlascoughedupcats is actually a subspecies of Gobi Desert snow leopard.

What the Heck Do You Know? About Stealing Elections

1) President Ronald McDruhitmumpf’s legal team has brought court cases challenging ballots in four key swing states: Michivania, Pennsylvan. Georgakota and Wisconsin (hereinafter known as “The Big Swinging Four”). So far, the team has won one and lost 30. How many of these court cases can the legal team lose before the President is willing to concede that the tactic isn’t going to change the results of the 2020 Presidential election?

a) how many court losses are the equivalent of how high is up?

b) until one gets to the Extreme Court – oops, no, wait, one was tossed out by the Extreme Court without comment and it didn’t stop the lawsuits at lower levels – **the streak is still alive!** (31)

c) until two get to the Extreme Cour – okay, you know what, forget the damn Extreme Court! You put people on the Court to do right by you, and summary dismissal is all you get? I tell you, you just can’t trust anybody these days! The McDruhitmumpf administration will keep going through the courts until they get the result they want – **never surrender!** (32)

2) Texabama Lieutenant Governor Dan Patondabakkrick offered up to \$1 million to anyone who could provide proof of voter fraud anywhere in the country. They must be swimming in money in Texabama, mustn’t they?

a) it’s all that oil – the fumes make them think they can buy anything, even if it doesn’t exist

b) (33) of course they’re swimming in money – thanks to Global Hot as Hellification, it’s less precious than water!

c) not really: you can offer any amount of money if you don't expect to ever be required to pay it

3) According to Georgakota Reduhblican Senators David Rayshershtomperdue and Kelly Loehanginfruitfler, mismanagement and corruption in their state handed it to Joe Bidenhisbeeswax. That must have come as some surprise to Reduhblican Governor Brian Okaykempadre (don't you just love Reduhblican on Reduhblican rhetorical violence?). What do Rayshershtomperdue and Loehanginfruitfler hope to gain from picking a fight with other members of their party?

a) a footnote in the history books (I didn't say they were brilliant political strategists) (34)

b) President McDruhithumpf's undying gratitude (I didn't say they were paying attention)

c) reelection

d) other

(35)

4) A staffer for Georgakota Secretary of State Greg Riffraffensberger stated that he was on the line when South Carolexas Senator Lindsey Grahamcrokercrum suggested that if the state was to "lose" a bunch of absentee ballots, nobody would miss them. If true, how bad would this be?

a) on the Adam Howetuschiffdablamé Impeachment Index, several weeks of hearings bad

b) on the Mitch Wichconnelliswich Judicial Appointments Index, Tuesday bad

c) once Grahamcrokercrum had his dignity surgically removed, ideas of good and bad stopped having any meaning for him (36)

5) Why is it unlikely that Venezuelan leader Hugo Chavezeulian was involved in stealing the election for the Dumboprats, as Rudy Giulihooyboi, President McDruhithumpf's legal comic relief, suggested?

a) Chavezeulian isn't tech-savvy – he hasn't updated his GeoCities account in at least seven years! (37)

b) Chavezeulian has no power: he hasn't been a force in the region since Nirvana was topping the pop charts

c) (38) you want me to say it is because he has been dead for seven years, don't you? Well, the joke's on you, What the Heck Do You Know? question writer! If the Dumboprats can kill babies and drink their blood in the basement of pizzerias that don't have below-ground floors (and, frankly, make pies that are barely edible), it would be (deceased) child's play for the party to raise a dead dictator to help them steal an election! And, yes, I know Raise a Dead Dictator would be a great band name, and no, you can't have it!

6) Giulihooyboi, having been a lawyer once upon a time, knows how important legal precedent is to courts. So, in arguing to overturn election results, he cited one: a speech

Joe Pescialafrogg gave in the film *My Cousin Vinny*. How compelling would this precedent be if it ever got to the Extreme Court?

a) (39) Bretty Kavanaugh is totally into it, Amy Coney-Islandbar preferred Jack Nicholandimeson's speech in *A Few Good Men*, and the other justices have not rendered an opinion on the matter, so it would anybody's guess (40)

b) Chief Justice Robalthomkenlia is nostalgic for Al Pacinoparlorgaim's speech in *...And Justice For All*, but he knows the liberal minority would write mean dissents about it, so he would keep the opinion to himself

c) the liberal minority on the court would shake their heads sadly and dream about Atticus Finchanddufferin while acknowledging that their numbers made them irrelevant

d) legal other

7) And, since we're on the subject, what's the deal with the black streaks running down Giulihooeyboi's face?

a) they're cracks in the mask the reptilian alien wears to disguise the fact that he's actually a – you know – reptilian alien (41)

b) he made the mistake of asking President McDruhitmumpf for advice about hair care products

c) (42) it's ink from all of the bad press he's been getting for his performance as a lawyer in the Ronald McDruhitmumpf reality show (he really needs to have a long sit down with his agent!)

8) A group called Stop the Steal is raising money for court challenges to the election. Where is the money going?

a) over the fields and far away

b) 80% of it is going to Ronald McDruhitmumpf campaign PACs (* SHRUG * "There's always 2024" might not be the snappiest reelection slogan, but it sure puts the fear of Gord into the Reduhblican political establishment!); the rest goes to the President's personal expenses (that tan doesn't apply itself!)

c) court challenges to the election? **Court challenges to the election!** You're so adorable! Never grow up! (43)

9) Former national security adviser Michael Flyinnthuoointmeant, looking very dapper having traded in his prison orange for rumpled grey, argued that President McDruhitmumpf should send the army into The Big Swinging Four, which went for Joe Bidenhisbeeswax in 2020, and force them to replay their elections, only doing it right this time. What does "doing it right this time" mean?

a) waiting until their cleric is at least level 15 before battling the dragon

b) (44) asking for the raise **before** the drug trial ends showing that a major side effect of the drug is growing hair all over the patient's body when the moon is full

c) showing that the candidate who everybody knows really won really won, duh!

10) Texabama Attorney General Ken Paxsonbothhouses has filed a lawsuit against The Big Swinging Four. What is the main argument in the lawsuit?

a) the Constitution makes it clear that one state has the right to sue other states if it doesn't like the outcome of their elections

b) come on, Extreme Court! Show us that you're not just a bunch of snotty, over-educated idlers in elegant robes! ...With, uhh, all due respect... (45)

c) who cares what the Extreme Court says? There are 70 million Vesampuccerians who already believe that the case has been decided in our favour. Take that, Sonia Sottovochayor!

11) 18 Reduhblican Attorneys General have signed on to the Texabama lawsuit. Why would they do this?

a) (46) all of the bank robbers and murderers are staying st home because of COVID, so the Attorneys General have a lot of time on their hands

b) if they didn't use all of the letterhead they had in the office by the end of the year, which was fast approaching, the state would cut the "office supplies and orgies" line item from their budget

c) insufficient toilet training when they were young

12) 108 (that's right, triple digits – I didn't accidentally insert a 0 into the number of AGs from the previous question) Reduhblican members of Congress have signed on to the Texabama lawsuit. Why would **they** do this?

a) Representatives, sick of being in the minority, finally found something they could accomplish (other than getting coffee, I mean) (47)

b) for Senators, it made a nice break from confirming judges

c) they wanted to please the 400 pound gorilla with small hands in the room (48)

13) Former Houston police chief Mark Aguirrergoddrath ran an air conditioner repairman off the road and held him at gunpoint, convinced that the man's truck contained thousands of ballots cast for Ronald McDruhithumpf. What did he actually find in the back of the man's truck?

a) (49) air conditioners and their parts

b) chagrin and regret (50)

c) a criminal record (51)

14) The McDruhithumpf legal team's efforts to get one or more of the Big Swinging Four to throw out vast numbers of votes have not been successful. So, naturally, they lobbied to have the entire election in those states annulled and the Electoral College Electors assigned by Reduhblican legislatures. This has not been successful either. What should their next move be?

a) lobby Reduhblican members of Congress to fund a crown and ermine robes for President McDruhithumpf (they may as well do something with all the money they saved when he refused to sign the second COVID relief package)

b) (52) lobby Reduhblican state legislatures to certify slates of "alternate Electors" (they're like "alternate facts," but with an undertone of Psycho soundtrack)

c) take a deep breath and reread the Constitution

15) Umm, yeah. The so-called “alternate Electors” (they’re like “alternate facts,” but with a topnote of moral decay and strawberry) are just random Reduhblican supporters chosen by their state parties. Suprisingly, given their general servility, no state accepted a random group of Reduhblican supporters who showed up on their doorstep claiming to be Electors. Does the McDruhitmumpf legal team have any more moves to make, or should they accept the will of the people?

a) they can ask Congress not to accept the Electors sent to them by the states and choose to accept the Electoral College votes of random Reduhblican supporters

b) (53) there are always lawsuits... (54)

c) the will of the – of the people? Oh, man, you really are so adorable! Never grow up!

16) Sydney Wambampowellman, who is to the legal profession what a sledge hammer is to a delicate negotiating tool, has argued that President McDruhitmumpf should engage a special counsel to confiscate the voting machines in The Big Swinging Four and have the ballots recounted in his favour. Why is this unlikely to happen?

a) the President does not have the power to appoint a special counsel

b) special counsels don’t have the power to confiscate voting machines (55)

c) President McDruhitmumpf is too busy pardoning his allies (to keep them from talking to law enforcement officials) to pay any attention to Sydney Wambampowellman, even when they meet in his office

17) Foxindehenhaus News and NewsMux have begun issuing “clarifications” to stories that claimed that voting machines flipped McDruhitmumpf votes to Bidenhisbeeswax. If these clarifications appear to actually be complete repudiations, that’s probably only because you’re paying attention. Why would the media companies do this?

a) (56) they looked at the evidence and decided – ha ha – decided that there was no basis in reali – hee hee ha ha – no basis in – hee hee ha ha ho ho – sorry, I can’t say this with a straight face – go on to the next answer and try back again in ten minutes – no, make that a half hour. With any luck, I’ll be ready to answer then...

b) TV Guide threatened to change their designation from News Networks to Science Fiction networks

c) the threat of a defamation lawsuit really focuses the mind (57)

18) How have President McDruhitmumpf’s endless assertions of massive election fraud, and the onslaught of lawsuits that have followed in their wake, benefited election workers?

a) they have been given a lot of free rope (they just have to untie the nooses that it came in) (58)

b) the death threats have caused them to give more thought to how miraculous it is just being alive

c) they will have a lot more time to spend with their families when they quit their positions as election workers

19) Senior administrators in the Vesampuccerian security establishment have publicly stated that the 2020 election was free and fair, that there were no voting irregularities, let alone widespread voter fraud. But what do they know? They’re just a bunch of

Dumbopratic hacks – even the ones President McDruhitmumpf appointed. Especially the ones President McDruhitmumpf appointed! (Remember when he said he would only appoint only the best people? Yeah, neither does he.) Now, Attorney General William Katiebarrthudor has also stated that there was no widespread voter fraud. I know, right! Attorney General Katiebarrthudor! The man who said he would eat molten lava for the President (and who did – apparently it tastes really good with guacamole and a sprig of self-abnegation)! What is the President’s only realistic response to this?

a) congratulate Attorney General Katiebarrthudor on his successful spine transplant and demand his resignation (59)

b) congratulate Attorney General Katiebarrthudor on the occasion of his Bar Mitzvah and demand his resignation

c) why waste breath on a traitor like Attorney General Katiebarrthudor? Demand his resignation!

20) Soooo...62 court cases, (60) losses. How does President McDruhitmumpf justify this streak?

a) if at first you don’t succeed, die, die, die again

b) remember the first time I was campaigning and I told you you would get sick of all the winning? Good times, right? Well, after four years, I figure you **are** sick of winning, so I thought I would mix it up a bit, you know, give you a big fat...not winning streak. It’s what makes the winning that much sweeter. Yeah. Sweeter...

c) I’m so glad my father isn’t alive to see this! (61)

Les Pages aux Folles: The Back Story

A Nayman family legend has it that I decided to devote my life to writing comedy/humour when I was eight years old. Most boys that age wanted to be hockey players or astronauts (or, so I have been told) – why comedy? Through my thirties and forties, it was important to me to understand why I developed the way I did (after a couple of decades filled with unanswerable questions, I decided to stop wondering and accept myself the way I was), so I gave this question considerable thought. Unfortunately, the best I could come up with was a cliché.

I grew up in an emotionally abusive household (as did many funny people). I realized early on in my life that laughing made me feel better; I figure my first impulse to write humour was to help ease myself through a tough childhood. I also suspect that I thought that if I could make my parents laugh, they might not fight so much, but that turned out not to be the case (intense therapy succeeded where my youthful ambitions failed, but the ambitions remained).

Honestly, if my early life had been any more of a cliché, I would have started this piece with: “It was a dark and stormy night...”

COMEDY HISTORY ASIDE: Years later, I was watching a terrific series called *The Green Room*. Comedian Eddie Izzard was telling the story of how he first met his idol,

Richard Pryor. After a few minutes of small talk, they found that they had something in common: they both knew that they wanted to be stand-up comedians when they were four years old. You know how I thought I was precocious because I knew I wanted to be a humourist when I was eight? I was actually already half a lifetime behind the curve!

My original inspiration in my early teens was Art Buchwald. If he is remembered at all these days, it is for being the person who sued Paramount Pictures for stealing his original idea for what would become Eddie Murphy's *Coming to America*. And, winning. This case exposed the arcane Hollywood bookkeeping that allowed studios to claim films that had grossed a billion dollars never made a profit, and introduced the world to the term "monkey points." But I remember him as the preeminent newspaper satirist who, in his prime, wrote creative and biting (and very funny) political commentary.

Not a bad role model if that's what you're into.

Between 1984 and 1987, I wrote 300 articles for a satirical newspaper column (enough for three books). I called the project *Les Pages aux Folles*, playing off the name of the then popular film *La Cage aux Folles*. I thought the title translated as "cage of crazies," which would have made my version "page of crazies." This tickled me. When the English version was released as *The Bird Cage*, I thought, Bird Pages? *Okay, I can make this work.*

Three years into the project, I was no closer to becoming the preeminent newspaper political satirist of the 1980s than when I had started. Years later, I would realize that one wasn't given a newspaper humour column because one was actually, you know, funny (although some naturally are and others grow into it); they usually went to people who had proven their service to the newspaper in other departments. In defense of my naivete: teenager.

I moved on to scripts and university, but the satirical bug never quite left me. Between 1987 and 2002, I kept coming back to the form, writing over 100 new articles (enough for a fourth collection). Then, a number of pieces of my life came together to drive me to the internet.

At university, I studied emerging technologies and the arts. My Masters thesis (from the New School for Social Research) was on the challenges interactivity posed for fiction writers. My PhD dissertation was on fiction writers who posted their work to the World Wide Web. I know, I know. Today, that's a big **duh**! But, in 1999, when I wrote the bulk of the dissertation (I was awarded my PhD in 2000), it was still relatively – ahem – novel. ACADEMIC ASIDE: the problems I identified in 1999 have scaled up nicely, with few changes over the years. Was I prophetic? Naah – I was just paying attention.

When I returned to Toronto after three years living in Montreal (a residency requirement of McGill University, where I studied), I volunteered for a public interest web page developer called The Electronic Commons; it was championed by a woman named Liss Jeffrey. The project was run out of a building called Chelsea Mews, deep in the heart of

the University of Toronto; that is where I met the woman who would become my Web Goddess, Gisela McKay.

As we got to know each other, Gisela pointed out something odd about my life that hadn't occurred to me: I wrote fiction, and I had studied people who post fiction on the internet, but I hadn't posted any of my own fiction on the internet. While I agreed that that was a bit strange, I demurred; although my Masters degree was done entirely online, I didn't know the first thing about creating or maintaining a web page. Gisela, who, among her many talents, is a professional web developer, offered to design a page and walk me through how to keep it going. To ensure that I couldn't refuse, she offered me free space on her server.

I couldn't refuse.

But, what would I write? Reviving *Les Pages aux Folles* as an online project was the most logical way to proceed. When I started it as a print project, I aimed for each article to be around 700 words (in the mistaken belief that this was standard newspaper column length; depending upon the newspaper and the column, it could actually be anywhere from 400 to 600 words); this relative shortness turned out to be a good length for the internet, where long stories require a lot of scrolling and can give some readers eye fatigue. You don't want to give readers eye fatigue.

So, I immediately started posting fiction to the web? Slow down, speed racer. I took the summer of 2002 to build a stockpile of articles. This wasn't meant to supplant weekly writing (since much of the writing would be topical, it would be best to post pieces soon after they were written, something the internet easily facilitates); it was meant as a safeguard against weeks when I was unable to write an update, whether through life circumstances or lack of inspiration. The wisdom of this choice is most vividly illustrated by my experience in 2005, when I had to have triple bypass heart surgery: I prepared four weeks of updates from my stockpile and posted them a couple of days before going under the knife. (As it happened, although I was advised to give recovery at least a month, I was eager to get back to writing after about two and half weeks). My stockpile started with 40 articles; it has fluctuated between 10 and 50 (but mostly closer to 10) ever since.

By the first week in September, 2002, I felt comfortable enough with the cushion that I had produced that I took the plunge and went live with *Les Pages aux Folles*. Years of writing had given me the confidence that I could pull it off (although, like most people who start a project like this, I had no idea how much work I was letting myself in for). It had also given me four complete books that I could place in an archive on the site, which helped me avoid the problem that many web sites have when starting out: a paucity of content. There was enough writing on the web site from day one that anybody interested could stay a while, or be encouraged to keep coming back.

The first three books had been written on a manual typewriter; the fourth on an electric typewriter and a computer. Because of this, I had to type the articles into my computer before I could post them. This forced me to reconsider the material I had previously

written, which proved salutary. I gather many writers are highly critical of their own work, but I found that I really enjoyed becoming reacquainted with mine. (Having had to read through the entire project to collect stories for these special anniversary issues, I feel more or less the same way.) The worst that I will say about my past writing is: “I wouldn’t write exactly that, or in that way now.”

PEDANTIC ASIDE: Is *Les Pages aux Folles* a blog? On one hand, it is a regular publication (every week, without fail; by the 20th anniversary, that will entail 1,040 consecutive weeks) written by a single person. On the other hand, blogs automate the process of posting to the internet (with tools such as WordPress), but I code my text by hand and upload it and any images I may create using tools Gisela taught me. Also, blogs tend to be a single page of text with newer posts higher up (occasionally breaking into an archive page or two), while each piece I post is on its own separate page. It may be a moot point, but I am reluctant to call *Les Pages aux Folles* a blog.

Except...

In trying to explain what an achievement 20 years of *Les Pages aux Folles* is, one of the facts I point out is that, depending upon the year they were started, between 80 and 90 per cent of blogs are abandoned within the first six months of their existence (I assume that the numbers for personal web pages are roughly the same, but I’m not aware of that research). Writers can be exhausted by the commitment (I often refer to my web site as “the insatiable maw;” no sooner do I finish one update than I have to immediately start working on the next). Writers can run out of inspiration. Other life priorities can leave writers without time. Lack of a readership can cause writers to quit out of despair (because I was emotionally driven by a need to write, the lack of readers was never a disincentive for me, although lately I do despair of ever finding an audience, if for no other reason than I know there must be a lot of people out there who would enjoy my writing...if they knew that it existed). Some people might lose their internet access. Twenty years on the internet is a loooooooooong time is what I’m saying.

By the 20th anniversary, I will have written 38 books of prose and produced nine books of cartoons for *Les Pages aux Folles*. The project will contain over 3,500 pieces of writing, and somewhere between two and a quarter and two and a half million words.

Nor has this been my only writing project. In 2010, I decided to write my first novel. Blame Terry Pratchett. I had never wanted to be a novelist; I was happy writing my short articles. But, in 2010 I learned of a contest for first humorous science fiction novels that was sponsored and would be partially judged by Pratchett. This seemed like a great opportunity for me to do what I do best: be goofy. The only problem with entering a novel writing contest, though, is that you have to write a novel to do it. So, I sat down to write what would become *Welcome to the Multiverse**.

I don’t usually talk about this, but since we’re all friends here, I feel I can state the truth: my first novel took two months to write. Starting from nothing but the desire to write a novel, the first week involved developing the ideas; the next six weeks involved the

actual writing; the final week involved rewriting and polishing. This was a stupid short amount of time in which to write 80,000 words (the nine novels I have written since have taken anywhere from six months to a year to produce), but there were extenuating circumstances, your honour. For one thing, by that time I had been writing for 40 years, so unlike many first time novelists, I had already developed my voice and knew my way around a story. More importantly for this essay, many aspects of worldbuilding that contributed to the novel (for instance, the Transdimensional Authority and the Alternate Reality News Service) had been introduced on *Les Pages aux Folles*, so I wasn't exactly starting from nothing.

Perhaps most important: working on the web site taught me how to quickly turn ideas into prose. When you have a weekly deadline, you have to write fast. Under these conditions, there are two ways writers can go. Like a nuclear explosion, they can burn themselves out. Or, like a nuclear chain reaction, their creativity can feed off itself, allowing them to constantly write new material. I was fortunate that my writing took the latter path.

What's next? I have no idea. I know I have a need to write; if life forces me to go a couple of days with writing even a little, I start to get antsy. Humour is not something that a writer can turn on and off: it is a way of looking at and interacting with the world that becomes a constant in your life. At least, it has become that for me. It does help if it has an outlet, though, so I foresee writing as long as I have the words. (Both my father and my grandfather on my mother's side had Alzheimer's, so there is no guarantee that I will always have the words, or for how long.) Regardless of what happens in the future, I already have a creative legacy (including novels, short stories and unproduced screenplays – so many unproduced screenplays!) that I can be proud of.

I hope you enjoy 12 from 20.

** Sorry for the Inconvenience*

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