

Stupes on the Loose: Add-a-Nope

Written by Alex Baer

Sunday, 06 September 2015 09:46

Welcome to the Bonus Round on today's episode of "How to Cope with Stupes on the Loose, and the Holy Hypnosis of Nope-a-Dopes!"

Please welcome today's special Scope-a-Dope guest, Judge Vance D. Day!

JUDGE: [waving energetically] Howdy!

ANNOUNCER: We'll be right back, after this word for Dammitol ointment, for personality schisms and hard-of-thinking disorders -- just massage into the scalp, and, presto! You're a Tea-Bagger, and all your logic has been magically whisked away!

* * *

Yes, we have another stupe, someone looking directly at the thumbs-up, same-sex marriage ruling from the Supreme Court of the United States of America, and then turning to the camera, and saying, in effect, "Nope, ain't gonna marry them people, and you can't make me."

This would normally be followed by an extended tongue-raspberry, and a thumb touched to the tip of the nose, while wagging four fingers upwardly. But, that salute was stylistically popular a long way back. We now go a much more economical route, using only ***one thumb, or one finger***

Not shaken or stirred, but served **straight up**. (Usually on the rocks, too, so to speak, come to think of it.)

Yep: It's part of the nation's enduring fanaticism of the past couple decades, in the culturally-mandatory reduction of thoughts, syllables, actions, and catch-phrases -- call it a sort of a lazy-man's energy conservation program. Something best handled from a La-Z-Boy, in front of a blaring wall screen, tuned to Fox.

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On the one hand.... You've already heard about the county clerk in Kentucky. Now, we've handily swapped out our two, key, functional digits -- going from that major thumbs-up, thank-you motion to the Supreme Court, and now, converting it, and flipping an ever-bolder, screw-you, middle-finger, ante-upper to the Justices of SCOTUS -- this time. from a judge in Oregon.

Yes, this particular no-can-do is from yet another balky judge, one of those lengthily-schooled, highly-trained law professionals who are certified to have *something right next door to a clue* on How to Recognize the Legally Right Thing to Do When One Encounters One of Those Law Thingies.

Especially one of those *Highest Court in the Land* Law Thingies. On paper, and *everything*.

* * *

Screwballs are now going mad in the streets, ready to launch into religious orbit that Kentucky clerk into some form of commercial sainthood and Disneyland martyrdom. Surely the judge won't be far behind, and will, in turn, be vaulted into far-flung, earnestly-felt, freshly-hand-wrung fame -- but, for what reason?

For refusing to do the job he took an oath to do? For allowing his poor understanding of a set of 2,000-year-old myths to violate the rights of people wanting to enter into a legal contract? For letting his personal belief system violate his oath to serve?

Some mighty high principles, there, Bubba -- getting awards for refusing to do your job, after swooping in, acting like a brain-damaged super-hero, keeping people from dabbling in contract

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law! *Gasp!*

* * *

Blind faith in rote superstition is so much easier than wrestling understanding from actual facts. It's even easier if the ancient texts being quoted are from the *Book of Do As I Say and Not As I Do*

To heck with all that love, forgiveness, and live-and-let-live junk, and all that let's-get-along-and-sing-Kumbaya nonsense from that long-haired guy in the beard. *Let's get back to war and hate and killing!* □ *And, you know, the beatings will continue until morale improves!*

* * *

[facepalm Sunday]

I'd be willing to bet that pious people here wouldn't correlate any understanding, if presented with comparisons of their own nonsense beliefs against the nonsense beliefs of pious people abroad -- especially if the comparisons included Muslims, and if the comparisons interrupted the passage of community bans on the churning local demand [yawn] for Sharia Law.

You know -- wasn't that one of the tests of determining how nonsensical one's own religion is, by seeing what kind of nonsense is believed by devotees of other religions?

* * *

[facepalm Sunday, reprise]

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One person's genuflecting dogma is another person's knee-jerk dilemma, I suppose. The rest of us just end up feeling knee-capped and sidelined.

Gee, I wish we could belong to a species who thought about doing things which actually made sense, and then actually did them.

There goes most of the modern American economy, right there, if *that* one caught on.

* * *

Something I don't get, though: I grew up in a time when it was a common belief that Americans were smart, had common sense, pulled together, and wanted to help each other succeed -- where everyone got to win, and nobody had to lose.

I mean, once, there was a time when there were businesses and workers actually trying to do the right thing for one another. There were two sides, but one similar effort: two wins. After all, the CEO lived up the street, and made only 20 times what the average worker made. Now, the CEO is stashed away in a gated community or one of a dozen homes, making 300 times the average worker's pay -- or more.

Work is now one-sided but two-faced. Call it the new corporate math. It's the same math which lets mega-corporations qualify for welfare, while regular workers pick up the tab. You know -- Too Big To Fail math.

Anyhow, I remember the times, and it's my crazy belief that everyone winning is a Good Thing -- and nobody's trying to make me saint or martyr, no-one's trying to give me book-and- movie deal, there are no crushes of people trying to get my face on Happy Meals -- thank your lucky stars about that last part.

* * *

[vigorously rubs face all over, shakes head, jumps up and down erratically...]

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I'm ready for any situation now, like pharmacists refusing to dispense certain medications because of conflicts regarding their personal beliefs in... oh, wait -- we've done that one already. Let me begin again.

* * *

[does slow head rolls, bunches and relaxes shoulders, skips rope...]

Take Two: I'm ready for any situation now, like military professionals halting wars over suddenly-developed beliefs as pacifists, and no longer willing fight for the corporate right to.... (Hang on. This one would actually be fine with me. Let me begin again.)

* * *

[bounces off walls, walks on ceiling, does triple-gainers from opposite diagonals of room...]

Take Three: OK -- I'm ready for any situation now, like lactose-intolerant cheese-tasters on strike... or acrophobic airline pilots who refuse to fly.... or seasick cruise-ship staff who hang out at the railing or hide in their cabins clinging to their beds.... or bustrophobics picketing terminals, refusing to ride Greyhound, tickets in hand... or ergophobics everywhere simultaneously appearing in the world's workplaces, coming up for air, surfacing, uncamouflaged, refusing to work ANY job anywhere doing ANYthing, only getting PAID for it, like that Kentucky clerk, and now, this Oregon judge.

The Kentucky clerk's in jail, waiting for religious, right-wing favors and cash to cascade in. The Oregon judge will be getting a fitness review. He may be awarded Hawaii as his personal property, the way things are going.

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But, you know, there's still signs of hope. I mean, I'll be damned -- here it is, the 21st Century, and it looks like humans will actually have to do the jobs they've voluntarily undertaken, and have said they will do -- taken oaths and been sworn to do -- and then, sometimes, they will be more-or-less forced to act with the authority they've been granted and directed to use in the public interest.

Golly. *Wonders never cease.*

* * *

At this rate, we should be ready to be *Star Trek* in a couple million years -- except that we're on track to suffocate ourselves from the stunning side-benefits of our bottomless addiction to fossil fuels, and much faster than anyone had ever thought possible.

We're no longer talking in terms of generations, but, maybe, a single lifetime, maybe two.

There's a thought.

Cheer up, though -- if that one doesn't get us, we still have the eternal fetishes of war and power, which could just as easily doom all of us silly tool-and-weapon-making apes, where canny cleverness has always trumped wit and wisdom, and where we can always be found, Kubrick-like, whittling away on our self-satirizing, self-strung, *Doctor-Strangelovian* prayer beads of gold, gasoline, gunpowder, gristle, and guts.

- *Our wisdom teeth still come in, but they don't last like they used to. □ (I hear Solomon stopped the warranty program right after that half-a-baby dust-up that one time.)*

But, we primates still metaphorically toss the big, bleached bone in the air -- only, in real life, there are no more space ships to the moon, and no more waltzes in airless space, and no more slow-motion mating twirls with massive, orbiting space stations, and no more imaginative engagement with grand ideas against the backdrop of the universe.

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No, we have too many fears to tend to. We have too many people with jobs who couldn't do them, because of their personal beliefs. And we ran out of people whose beliefs allowed them to build more jails to house the people who wouldn't do their jobs. And then, we ran out of people whose personal beliefs allowed them to keep working on scientific solutions to problems people made, and in helping keep human beings alive...

... which is *another* way this thing might end -- poets' whimpers, physicists' crunches, and CO2 *smotherfication* notwithstanding.

* * *

It's so easy getting off-track here, bouncing ideas around in the handball court of my head, all these ping-pong balls launched from sprung mousetraps in this ground-floor terrarium of life.

However, Kurt Vonnegut remains an anchor for me in this, as in so many other things. He once talked about not caring much what people did with their *fleshy appendages*, so long as everyone was an adult and everyone approved of the proceedings.

Kurt came from a sensible period which involved a world-wide Great Depression we cannot now truly imagine, and the second time the whole world went berserk and decided global war would be fun again.

We are living right through a period nearly as sensible, given the Great Recession, and an era of endless war, so we should be able to wrap our square heads around this singularly round thought, too.

* * *

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I'm willing to bet that Republicans would not stand for Trained Observers to be in their bedrooms and doctors' offices and work environments, and elsewhere, ready to give people a taste of a tazer or bullwhip or nunchucks or shotgun if they disliked any of the proceedings -- even though those same Republicans are happy to place Trained Observers in those same exact spots others occupy.

There are many words for this sort of behavior. Hypocrisy is one of them, but none are pleasant or enviable achievements, and all of the descriptions, no matter how accurate, would be immediately denied by the self-righteous doers. There is simply no arguing with a sick mind, and no teaching opportunity with anyone sporting a spirit that's slammed shut.

* * *

Meanwhile, back in Legalsville, for the supremely challenged, we could also point out that contracts are asexual, which is to say, neutral. Or disinterested. Or enviably care-free on that point.

There is no such thing as a gay marriage license, any more than there is a gay auto insurance policy or a heterosexual municipal bond investment program, or a bisexual life insurance contract.

- I mean, aren't you tired of hearing about the Republican-manufactured crisis of gay marriage? The phrase is straight out of the think-tank shop, from the same conveyor-belt line of fears that brought us the death tax, and death panels, and every other asinine, self-contradicting language construct.

As pay-back, I'd like to park a viral bug in Republican minds right now: In fact, since gays live in our communities, all over the country, that means that, technically speaking, there are gay-tainted contracts everywhere -- *gay car loans!* *gay business investment!* *gay colleges!* It also means there is a mass of gay-tainted infrastructure everywhere, too -- *gay elementary schools, gay hospitals, gay airports, gay highways, even gay military bases!*

- Now, we understand that this is a LOT of sex for you pious folks to consider, so we'll pause here for a moment, while you frantically fan yourselves with newspapers, magazines, and

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free stick-mounted paper fans from the same funeral parlor the courtroom audience used in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, so as to not overtax your delicate systems and pass out like water buffalos in a heat wave.

Funny how often discrimination of all kinds pops up in our human family -- *funny-peculiar*, I mean. Not *funny-ha-ha*.

* * *

I am a simpleton, so I still enjoy the elegance and ease of this kind of logic:

- If you don't want to marry someone of the same sex, don't do so.
- If you don't want an abortion, don't get one.
- If you don't want to vote for self-aggrandizing morons, don't do so.
- If you don't want pizza, stop ordering them.

(You pizza-haters might even want to play it safe, and consider no longer hanging out in pizzerias, too.)

I swear, I have no earthly idea how it is this simple stuff doesn't catch right on. A child could do it.

Even one in a manger.

* * *

But, then again, I guess that's how life works here now. After all, it's almost time for the

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religious in this country to gird its loins and prepare for another round of discrimination, and bitching about being picked apart mercilessly as the majority they actually are. See, it's time for another **fictional** *War on Krissmuss*, and the troops are growing restless after eight long years of relative calm and no new **actual** wars of convenience.

* * *

I wish I had better answers -- almost as much as I wish I could stop observing, stop asking questions, stop wondering about things.

But, I am a blue dot in a purple state, awash in a sea of red, away from the nurturing blue islands of cities. I am on a blue water world, noticing that a mindless *RedBlobism* is taking over the entire planet.

I am ancient enough to see the old Sherwin-Williams logo in my mind's eye: Red paint -- or is it blood? -- pouring from a suspended bucket in space, dumped on an unsuspecting blue-green world.

Today, people elevate inanity to artful consideration and complex discussion, while civil discussions of civics and community get the same sort of glazed-over, gaping stares normally reserved for zoning hearings.

Thing is, no one goes to zoning meetings, not until a sheet-metal factory opens under the bedroom window, and the place clangs along like church bells falling down flights of stairs, 24-7, day in and day out. *Then, there's plenty of interest.*

The ones who participate in zoning hearings have good cause to take part -- usually self-interest. Everyone else provides a marginal and apathetic awareness of zoning-board-meetings and processes, but thinks they know exactly how things work, despite a howling lack of hands-on experience.

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This remains a fairly accurate condensation of our current political system, in many ways.

* * *

How things change: Fear works best, as any Republican will tell you. And any military commander will tell you one must dehumanize the enemy for a really hearty turn-out of the shock troops. And any psychologist will tell you how oligarchy controls its society by turning all groups upon one another, busying their attention, and away from the elite. And any fascist will tell you that scape-goating is essential to turning the blame away from one's own group, and onto others, to promote an artificial union.

Welcome to the preparatory phase of the new program, just before the TRUE enemy is pointed out, and named, here in *RedBlobbia*, just before The Really Bad Things start happening, right out in the open.

There are a lot of candidates in the wings, warming up, trying out one-liners on where to start the scape-goating. to help shore up what was already begun.

- How far a jump is it from *Wars on Krissmuss* and refusals to accept the right of all citizens to love whom they wish? How far is it from the right to make a legal contract with whomever citizens wish, and Kristallnacht?

- How far is it from denying the science on climate change to choking to death from our planet-wastin g, home-shredding habits as a species?

* * *

Cause and effect are too far apart, so learning for humans is difficult, if not impossible. By the time the effect is learned, it's too late for a change or a cure -- like voting Republican, in that regard.

Sure wish we could channel all that faith we so often, and so loudly and proudly say we have on

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hand, in abundance, and use a bit of it to cut our fellow humans, and our planet, some slack.

- You know -- like the so-called Good Book *commands* us to do.
- As logic, self-interest, and as the Golden Rule *asks* us to do.
- As scientists and humanists have been *begging* us to do.

... for centuries.

* * *

[Postscript]

I worry about my sanity from time to time. The generally-accepted wisdom is that if there is enough of you left, mentally, to suspect you might really be going mad, it's a safe bet you aren't going there at all, and are probably not holding a ticket for the Crazy Train -- that your own personal choo-choo is probably not going to jump its tracks.

However, I tell you this, in all confidence: *The crazier the world gets, the saner I look to myself.*

Did you ever hear anything crazier than that?

Or, maybe you *also* feel like you have one foot on the Crazy Train, too...

{ *All aboooooooooooooooooaaard!* }

Hang on tight. See you down the line, somewhere.

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RESOURCES:

Humor *and* fact: New, ripe ground for Republican fear exploitation! <http://phobialist.com/>

Decoder ring special: *Credo Quia Absurdum est.*

Soothing Musical Interludes:

The Quickie Uplift: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cwqhdRs4jyA>

The Full Wazoo: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oy-9rHmXCmw>