

◇ Defenestration ◇

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Overeducated, Underemployed
by
Bentley Snow Davis

The secretary holds a masters degree.

She's even ABD,

but those aren't marketable skills

Filing, dictation, basic math fit the bill

much better. She could kill

herself every time asking "How may I help you?"

What is an overeducated girl to do

in order to make it through

each tedious and humiliating day?

Already weak self-esteem goes away.

Fear of poverty makes her stay

watching her IQ slowly sink.

It is far too painful to think.

Only obstinacy saves her from resorting to drink -

alcohol costs too much anyway.

when i am a hundred
by
John Bryan

will be sucking
through a straw,
blended meat

animals
whose great, great,
maybe even great great great
, maybe more,
parents i patted
when five,
wanting to keep

Some Senryu Poems
by
John Tiong Chunghoo

1.

packed subway train
the cinderella of her blouse
kisses the donald duck of my shirt

2.

the fugitive -
behind the daily
splashed with his picture

3.

peeing
into the sea
peeing at himself

Scurrilous Poetry
by
Richard Gibson

Note from Defenestration: Richard Gibson sent us one of the strangest e-mails we've seen. Ever. While he was sending us some poems for consideration, the entire e-mail was so damn weird that we decided to publish it in its entirety. Enjoy!

Dear Andrew, Eileen, Genevieve, Haratron, Elm Tree, and Bigfoot,

Yesterday, a seagull pecked out my left eye. In retaliation, I wrote the following three poems.

POEM 1

Bogus Nasal Hair

You don't impress me with your
BOGUS NASAL HAIR!
You freak, you animal from outer space!
BOGUS NASAL HAIR!
I would beat you with a stick, for you have
BOGUS NASAL HAIR!
You are SICK SICK SICK! with your
BOGUS NASAL HAIR!
I cannot take your
BOGUS NASAL HAIR any longer.

BOGUS NASAL HAIR!

(In explanation, my girlfriend recently shaved her ears.)

POEM 2

Oh Janice

(Note: Janice is no relation to Mollie "Dumplings" O'Gnagh. In case she calls. Mollie, that is. Janice has no pajamas. Not that it's relevant.)

Oh Janice, why did you leave?
I'm so lonely now, in my lonely bed with just
Tina, Wendy, and Rita.
Tina has learnt that new thing with the
Peanut butter and linseed oil and
Yes, I know Wendy and Rita do the Dutch Burst almost as well as you.
But it's not the same.
Why oh why oh *why* did you leave, Janice?

Was it my leopard skin thong?
I told you it was fake!

POEM 3

Choogly Nogs

(Note: Janice wrote this on the back of a piece of paper. I know it's the back because she wrote "This is the back of this piece of paper" on it, a habit of hers since the accident with the lawnmower [a poem about this was burnt by the cat, we never found out why. Btw, we have no idea who Trevor is, 'we' being Emperor Hirohito, a man from Venezuela who claims he's a nun, and a banana of no fixed abode.]

I love your choogly nogs
Your choogly nogs
(BOOM BOOM)
I love your hoogly chogs
Your hoogly chogs
(BOOM BOOM)
Your ching is doogly splee
Doogly splee!
(YEAH!)
I love your poogly glee
Your poogly glee
(YES YES)
Oh Trevor, ever since you
CAME
into my life
I've been singing
TOODLY KNEE, TOODLY KNEE
(BOOM BOOM)
Always, when you stroke my shins I cry
OOGLE WOX, OOGLE WOX!
(BOOM BOOM)
OGLE SOCKS, BOGLY POX!
(BOOM BOOM)
YEAH!

(Okay, I don't expect you to put 'em on your site, but I hope I got a chuckle on a Tues. afternoon. All the best, Reginald Elephant (Lord Protector of Unborn Ukeleles), but you can call me after six if you have a satellite.

56-56-56 (and hairy with it.)

A brief resume:

Lord Reginald Elephant of Banghlaudlee studies the third eye of his fourth wife (deceased.) It looks like an eye, he decides, then he sits down and writes, in Russian, the following: "Moscow vodka mozjebitz!" He feels his fourth wife's eye for a moment or two before collapsing; as he falls to the floor, the following poem springs from his pocket and opens, like a flower...

Ozymandias Beer

I met a silver-back gorilla in an antique shoppe
Who said: "Two pissed and legless editors from defenestrationmag.net
Stand in the car park. Near them, on the tarmac,
Half drunk, a shattered bottle lies, whose liquid,
And wrinkled label, with its promise of satisfaction,
Tell that the manufacturer well those passions read
Which yet survive in the pissed and legless editors (three others lie nearby), stamped on
their lifeless chins.
The other office workers have mocked them, as have the cleaning staff.
And on the label these words appear:
'Ozymandias Beer, Drink of Kings:
Drink my chilled 5.2% abv. contents, ye drinkers, and Have Fun!'
Nothing beside the broken glass and the pissed and legless editors remains. Round the
decay
Of that colossal wreck of editors, boundless and bare
(due to an unwarranted and, frankly, unwise game of strip poker)
The lone and level carpark stretches far away.
And to think, they all came by bus.

**Resignation
by
Adam McGrath**

To: Mr. R. Sole
Managing Director,
Grabbit & Leggit Financial Services

Dear Sir,

I am writing to explain my actions re. my recent departure from your employment, and clarify the manner of my behaviour during said departure. It has been suggested to me that some of the things I may have said or done were perhaps unorthodox, and I would like to avoid any misunderstanding.

Firstly, and on a personal note, my language. Although I firmly stand by my voiced suspicions regarding the canine nature of your maternal lineage and your copulation with same, I can appreciate that my use of the vernacular in conveying my opinions may have been unsettling. This was not my intention, and I hereby wholeheartedly apologise for the tone, if not the content, of my statements. Similarly, my speculation upon the corpulent and porcine nature of your spouse.

The destruction of the priceless Babylonian artefact which, until recently, resided on your desk is quite lamentable, and I deeply regret my part in the application of extreme kinetic force to said object. In an attempt to make some small restitution, I have been in touch with your (formerly our) contact in Pockett & Filch Insurance Ltd. regarding the compensation on this item, and have even taken the liberty of informing the Revenue officers of your forthcoming windfall in order to save you any undue paperwork. Mr. Filch informs me that he will indeed pay out in full on your claim, upon receipt of the necessary paperwork of legitimate ownership from the Overseas Artefact offices of the Govt. Heritage Department (who I have also been in contact with). A gentleman from said department informs me that he was unable to find the necessary documentation, but will be in touch with you shortly to clear up any legal matters arising.

Naturally, and given the abrupt nature of my leaving, there are some matters of business outstanding which you may wish to tie up or re-assign. These are as follows:

1. While tidying up my affairs I discovered a discrepancy between our internal accounting systems and those disclosed to the auditors and various regulatory bodies. In order to resolve this matter I have forwarded copies of our internal accounting systems (for the periods 1980-2003) to the appropriate bodies with an explanatory cover note. I appreciate that this may result in an exposure to certain taxation liabilities and penalty charges, but I am certain that a gentleman of your integrity would wish to have this error corrected.

2. Due to a technical error (arising from my unfortunate blending of a large cappuccino with the internal electronics of my former computer) I was unable to reverse a purchase of certain stocks and shares before my departure. Sadly, these shares (mostly high-risk tech stocks, purchase value £5.7bn) have fallen significantly in value during recent days, some having depreciated by as much as 95%. While this admittedly represents a significant

impact on the capital of your company, I am confident that further damage can be limited by swift action on your part.

In closing, I would like to formally tender my resignation, as I believe I neglected to do so in the correct fashion during our initial parting discussions. I have transferred an appropriate severance package to my bank account, commensurate with my length of service and level of seniority within the company; I feel obliged to inform you that I have also taken a full copy of your personal finances for safekeeping, against the unfortunate eventuality that such documents should be obtained by the Inspectors of Taxes.

With kind regards,

George Grey, B.A. M.Acc. FCA ACMA

Riot at Halifax Town Hall

by
Alex Keegan

I know it's not black but it's so dark brown it's almost black, I reckon, and anyway it's not the colour of the tie that matters, is it? It's me being here to say my goodbyes to Tom (and to Jenny, and Cedric, Peter, Margaret, the four dogs, the parakeet, and the traffic-warden who was passing).

I told Tom, "Gas, mate? Don't mess about, call in a professional, call in a bloody professional. It might save yer life one day! It's pissing down, of course. Well what do you expect, from this bloody place? It's a Monday in January, half-past-four in the afternoon, (there's a discount after four on account of it gets dark soon) like Tom, Jenny and all are worried? I'm at a funeral in Halifax, and it's raining. Ring the BBC. It's piggin' Halifax. HAL-I-FAX. It would be raining if it was mid-July. "It were a good summer in Halifax last year but I was having a bath and I missed it." Right that's it, no more funeral stuff. They're dead. In the ground they go (all the bits in one coffin saved a few bob, I can tell you) and it's us down the Crown now for happy hour at six.

Cedric's very good friend is here, a little bit too close if you ask me. He's all long fingers and that look you know? "Are You Being Served?" "Shut That Door!" walking along like he's got a couple of sheets of greaseproof paper between the cheeks of 'is arse and doesn't want t'lose them.

Margaret's husband's here too. Poor sod didn't know she was having it off with Peter, did he? Well he bloody does now! When they found 'er arm, guess what she 'ad in 'er 'and? That was the only reason the two of 'em attended Halifax North End's Creative Writing Group. Why else would anyone go to something as dumb?

OK, OK, so I have to explain Tom and Jenny. Tom and Jenny, the perfect couple. They went jogging in identical track-suit bottoms, matching strides; they even threw up at the same time in the Ilkley Moor Half-Marathon. You know the type. The matching pair. Tom was Jenny's feminine side, and she was his masculine side (but with a better moustache). If Tom got a cold, Jenny sneezed, he wiped, she got the sore nose. Made for each other.

It was Tom; he got interested in creative writing (and D-I-Y gas boiler repairs) and, quite naturally Jenny came along. I shouldn't have to tell you, but they had matching A4 Folders, matching pens, bought two matching Dell PCs and got writer's block at exactly the same time, then somehow had their taste of glory (other than the few seconds flying and free-fall at the end, but I don't think that counts) when they were chosen as story for the day on some internet site called "Why Not Be a Writer?"

So we're in the Crown and Cedric's friend asks for a G&T, ice and a slice. I have to tell the daft bugger (well he isn't very bright, geddit?) that this choice of drink is both cliché and passé. He looks at me as if I've just asked him what happens if we extrapolate the imaginary number i , parse a derivative and matriculate his isosceles. A gay goldfish. You do not want to spend Monday evening staring at a gay goldfish.

The traffic warden's widow looks a bit of a slapper. I think I might've bin with her once, but

then it's tricky as I'm mostly pissed when I go out on the razz and there aren't that many I haven't, if you get my drift. But I'm feeling a bit charitable and I do one of those "Ah, life!" deep looks, and give her a real sad wink. She bursts into tears and runs into the toilets, mascara everywhere. Nice one! While she's in there I finish my first Tetleys (flat and tastes like piss) and tell Jack (that's Margaret's husband) that if he plays his cards right he could be in there.

Jack asks me, "Don't you have any respect?" and I tell him the Halifax North End's Creative Writing Group has made a very good career move, getting to be dead, and let's face it we're none of us getting any younger, and the traffic wardens wife, isn't a bad shag. (I've remembered).

"Oh, Norman," Jack says, "How could you? And so soon?" The black widow comes back as my second Tetley's starts to kick in. One of her eyelashes has got summat thick and gooey on it. It looks like she's caught a low flying creepy-crawly in the face. I'd tell her, but then:

"OK," I say, "Listen up everyone. It's all over, very sad, blahdee-blah. I've got two hundred-weight of fish-paste sandwiches round at my place. We can get off there, eat a few, bore each other faceless, OR. Or we can give the Halifax North End's Creative Writing Group a proper send off by getting legless here and then going on to a club I know. Should we take a vote on it, or shall I just go now?" They just look. Oh bollocks.

Y'see, I'm Tom's executor. I'm Jenny's executor. Actually, I'm Jenny's brother, too, but we don't talk about that too much. And guess who Cedric put down as his executor? And Peter. And Margaret. Do I sound happy?

They all had one wish. That if they should die, their work would be read in public. At Halifax Town Hall. At seven-thirty tonight. And guess who is the star of the evening? Guess who is the bard, the raconteur, guess which tosspot drew the short straw, and tonight, in front of five hundred people or so, is going to have to read this crap?

"We must hold the performance, Norman."

"Cedric would expect, no less."

"We have to, for Margaret."

And then Jack adds, self-sacrificially, "And Peter."

The warden's widow smiles.

Hello, Dead Man Walking.

It's seven-twenty-five and Halifax Town Hall is bursting at the seams. The stage is decked out in pink (for Cedric) and in black and navy for the rest of the very dead low-flying Halifax North End's Creative Writing Group. The Town Hall is full. I was expecting six train-spotter types, a couple of lost people, and maybe a wino or two, but the place is freaking full. What the hell?

And then it clicks. Tom's piece is Les Bean Wrestles (a serious, deep, philosophical monologue on the tragedy of needing to eat versus the need to express one's inner self

darling. Jenny's work is called New Dancing (a poem on finding love again at fifty). Cedric's essay is called Full Frontal, a New Ditty.

It hits me like a wet football in the mush. I didn't send a letter to the press did I? No, Norman doesn't need to bother with formality. Just pick up the telephone, get the newspaper on the line. I'll tell them, no need for a letter, no need to dick about.

"The editor is out, but you can take a message? Fine, fine."

I'm looking up now, looking at the back row, some very big blokes wearing leathers, one has a nail going through his nose. All of a sudden, as I wish I'd been sitting on that gas boiler when Tom said, "It's OK, it's just the pilot light." I find myself standing, hear myself start to speak. As I begin, I hear what the cub-reporter heard: "Lesbian Wrestlers, Nude Dancing, Full Frontal Nudity"

What I'm thinking as I speak is what will it be like? Will they merely throw rocks? Will they rush up to the stage and merely beat me to a pulp and leave me dying in a pool of blood? Or will they drag me into the streets, strip me, rip of my testicles and fry them in the nearest chippie?

I know I'm talking, and I know I say, "Les Bean Wrestles" and I know that not a person in the building hears the words, they hear what they want to hear. I tell them about Cedric's essay. That's a waste of time, I know what they hear, and as I finish explaining the rest of the readings, I suddenly wish I had led a slightly better life, that I could go to Him, purer of heart and soul.

"And finally, a collaborative venture, a complex poem by Peter Flint and Margaret Wagstaffe. An unusual piece, a poem in a rarely-heard dialect from Denmark. It is a deep, spiritual elegy, a lyric poem about men at war. In it Orlof ByeKas, Ars Vankas and their friend Puffs meet and discuss Valhalla. This is my tribute to my sister, her dear friend, and the Halifax North End Creative Writing Group.

And now I have to say it. I close my eyes. The title is etched on my heart and it will soon be tattooed on my dick. Ladies and Gentlemen.

"Orl Bikas, Are Wankas, and Poofs."

The Café Latte Guide to Bad Karma **by** **Brendan Bouffler**

In spite of having lived in the Land of the Free [Refill] for the last five years and having been forced to listen to too many requests from elected leaders for someone's god to bless America, I've never been a terribly spiritual person. Recently, though, I've started to wonder if the Buddhists are on to something with their concept of Karma.

If it really is true that bad behavior in past lives gets paid for in the present one, then I must have spent several cycles of existence as a lawyer, then maybe a slave-owner or possibly a recruitment officer for the US Republican Party because I've been forced to come to Las Vegas five times now to attend a convention for work. Catholic penance would never be this severe, so if there is a higher power in the universe, it's clear to me that he is a vengeful god and that my name is right at the top of his shit-list.

You see, every time I fly into Vegas I look out the aircraft window and the frontal lobe of my brain twists around inside my skull, turns itself inside out, emits a shrieking noise and makes a run for the back of my head all in an attempt to avoid dealing with the impossible scene on the ground below me.

> the port-side window of the plane, I gaze out on a five-thousand room hotel - the largest in the world, no less - that is painted exactly the shade of bright green that you would not choose were you designing the largest hotel in the world. It has lime-green neon trim around all the windows and giant yellow neon letters depicting the name of the place, just in case you happen to overlook it, which you might do were you to be looking out the starboard window of the plane where you would see a gigantic black-marbled Egyptian Pyramid replete with what appears to be a big white laser beam pulsing out the top, as though scanning for sentient life-forms. Based on the near total state of gambling-induced apoplexy in the woman from Tennessee that was sitting next to me on the plane, the laser probe is unlikely to detect anything in the near future, but it's still there, year after pointless year, pulsing away into the sky.

The upside of this is that the light from the laser beam will eventually land on another planet far out in space and alert them to our existence. The downside is that you and I won't be around to see the extremely confused and fucked up look on the alien archeologists' faces when they try to work out what a black marble Egyptian Pyramid was doing a mile away from a Roman palace and how the canals of Venice came to be in place with four inches of annual rainfall.

In order to make sense of all this, as soon as I touched down I went to one of the bars in my hotel where Borg Drones (of the Star Trek kind) serve drinks called "Warp Core Breaches". Naturally, they arrive in large blue fish-bowl-like glasses with steam bubbling out the top. Glowing under the UV lights and containing an offensive amount of alcohol, the drinking of a Warp Core Breach brings to mind the Pan Galactic Gargle Blaster so very amply described by Douglas Adams as "like having your brain smashed out with a slice of lemon wrapped around a large gold brick". It's the singular way to make sense of Las Vegas, since once you've consumed one everything starts to take on a semblance of normality and the fact that your frontal lobe has twisted around inside your skull, turned inside out, emitted a shrieking noise and made a run for

the back of your head no longer presents a problem. Finally, I felt equipped to deal with the place.

The first thing to know about Vegas is that, geographically speaking, it's a big square slab of bitumen and concrete in the middle of a desert waste-land. In order to differentiate itself from the dozens of other square slabs of concrete that make up this great nation, it has five billion light bulbs and nearly as many buzzing, jingling and bleeping poker machines that surely use more electricity than Africa and have the same effect on Elvis impersonators that fluorescent tubes have on mosquitos.

In the ten years beginning in 1990, the population of Vegas nearly doubled which resulted in all sorts of competition for those four inches of water. Clearly, someone in the Nevada Electricity Authority left the porch light on. The main source of the population growth (apart from the tripling in numbers of people with large side-burns swinging their hips) appears to be retirees arriving from various part of America where people have large butts, judging by what I saw sitting in front of the acre-and-a-half of slot machines in my hotel. Their bulbous posteriors appear to function in a similar way that humps do for a camel, serving as a reservoir for the long stretches of time between drinks in the desert, though the drinks here are mainly Bloody Marys and the distance between bars doesn't seem to justify the size of their reserves.

Anyhow, they're all here to escape the cold weather in their home towns and cities, and thus the arthritic effects that come with old age and a foot and a half of snow fall. Up until recently the old duffers mostly moved to Florida for their sunset years, but the simplicity of the Keno slips compared to the Florida Butterfly Ballot in the 2000 election clearly has its attractions, not least of which is that in an election you have absolutely no chance of winning your shirt back and at the very least you know who you're working with when you gamble with the Mob.

The second thing to know about Vegas is that culturally it's a waste-land in it's own right. There's a very good reason you've never heard of The Las Vegas Philharmonic Orchestra - it's hard to take one of their performances seriously when the entire brass section is made up of bryll-creamed mustachioed men named Tony who describe themselves as "entertainers" and spend most of their time in lounge bars singing old Sinatra songs.

[As an aside, I feel compelled to point out that Frank Sinatra never wrote a song called "Las Vegas, Nevada". He did write one called "New York, New York" and in spite of (or perhaps, because of) the Pan Galactic Gargle Blaster still running through my veins I found myself humming it to myself as I walked through the casinos each day. This was, perhaps, my subconscious S.O.S. beacon vainly bleating away in the hope that someone would notice that I was sentient and so would Medivac me out to safety. In fact, I would go so far as to speculate that if there were a song named "Orange, New South Wales" that would have had the desired effect, I would have been singing it in baritone whilst affixing bryll cream in my hair and growing long sideburns. But, I digress...]

The third thing to know about Vegas is that varicose veins don't go with mini skirts. With a world-leading surplus in retirees and President George II's world-leading deficit of the economic-variety, lots of the old duffers that live in Vegas are forced to work for a living. Vegas, in the heady days of the past, was famous for scantily clad young women serving drinks in seedy cocktail bars. Today, they are scantily-clad old women serving the drinks in seedy cocktail bars. I really wanted to lean across the bar, give one a hug, slip her a twenty and tell her to go back to the nursing home for an afternoon nap or some bingo. I

have to get some good Karma somehow.

But in spite of having experienced all this repeatedly over the last few years it's only now in the relative safety of the mid-west that I came to ponder, and to research, the history of Sin City USA.

According to the World Book Encyclopaedia, in the 1850s Brigham Young (the early leader of the Mormons who led them through the desert to establish Salt Lake City) tried to convert the local Indians living in the area that is now Las Vegas. He found them so morally bankrupt that he retreated with his followers and all seven of his wives to find somewhere comfortable to sit whilst forging the documents for Utah's application to the US Congress for statehood.

The area was left alone for fifty years, until the turn of the last century when Las Vegas proper was founded as a water stop for steam locomotives on the rail line running between prosperous Los Angeles and Mormon Salt Lake City. In doing so, Hollywood became fully connected to graft, corruption and sexual promiscuity (thus explaining several future films involving Kevin Costner) but it would be another forty years until these historically Mormon values were exported back upstream to Las Vegas, thus saving the movie moguls the need to travel the extra stop (and go without a drink) when coming up with a script for yet another wholesome family movie.

Finally, sometime during the 50s city officials perfected the combined application of modern technology (in the form of electricity) and Mafia marketing techniques to gambling and created the post-modern form of crass that is the Las Vegas Strip today. The next time you see a Mormon on Liverpool Street trying to hit you up for a sermon or a donation, ask him to go to the Blackjack table with you at Star City. He's sure to be 'connected'.

So far all this makes sense (through the lense of a Pan Galactic Gargle Blaster, anyhow), but there is one troubling anomaly: when you watch a Hollywood movie which is set in New York you no doubt get the feeling that Hollywood has hammed things up a bit. New Yorkers are nowhere near as rude as Hollywood depicts them (we're not rude, just honest) and few people living in America are anything like Kevin Costner (no, really). Vegas, however, is an exception.

It is utterly everything that Hollywood depicts and more. It's possibly the only thing the moguls consistently understate. This could be self-censorship in action so as not to dissuade America's youth from their belief that the world really is like Fox News says it to be. Or perhaps it's an attempt to keep all the good movie scripts from being discovered by someone else. I'm more for the former theory, myself, but you'll have to make your own mind up on that, I'm afraid. "I report, you decide. Fair and Balanced" - just like O'Reilly says.

But there is one thing the alien archeologists won't be able to explain, no matter how much carbon dating they do. By the pool, at the bar, in the airport, or next to the fuel pump at the petrol station the slot machines (or as I prefer to think of them: the "Karmic Stabilisers") ring, buzz, jingle and dazzle 24 by 7, reassuring me that the next time I come back to life, it'll be as an Elvis impersonator. Or maybe even a cockroach. I'm bound to move up in the world eventually.

Four Possible Personal Ads by **Jose Tungol**

Since I know I'll be in New York soon, I realized that I don't know too many people there, especially the female variety. So I decided to join an online dating service and I've come up with four possible ads. I think they all have their strengths and weaknesses, so I'm still debating on which one to use.

#1 NON-COMMITTED GUY SEEKING NON-COMMITTED GIRL FOR NON-COMMITAL SEX.

I like this one because it cuts directly to the point, however I should be open to a "relationship" shouldn't I? That's why I came up with number two.

#2 AVERAGE GUY SEEKING AVERAGE GIRL FOR AVERAGE SEX. RELATIONSHIP OPTIONAL.

See again, I'm cutting to the point, yet I've opened up the possibility for a relationship, which I know all women essentially want. But the problem with this one is that it's bland. I mean, who wants average? Right? So here's number three.

#3 GREAT GUY FROM GREAT LAKES SEEKS GREAT GIRL FOR GREAT SEX. RELATIONSHIP OPTIONAL.

I like how I spiced it up with the word "great," yet I feel it is, shall we say, shallow. I don't want to be shallow. There are more important things, right? I should look for what's on the inside rather than the outside, like her faith. And as the good Catholic boy that I am, I should seek out a good Catholic girl.

#4 CATHOLIC GUY SEEKS CATHOLIC GIRL FOR NON-CATHOLIC SEX. RELATIONSHIP OPTIONAL.

I think this one holds resonance, but it also limits my options to Catholic girls doesn't it? I mean, I should be open to protestant girls, and Jewish girls and Hindu girls as well right? I can't let a girl's faith stand between me and a good night of DNA exchange.

So there's my quandary. I can't determine which ad to use. The Internet is a great place to bust a nut, but without the right ad, I might be busting a nut solo.

Wax On, Wax Off
by
Kelley Cousineau

I finally figured out why Blondes have more fun. It's not the private jets and the mind-blowing sex. It's that they don't have to wax as often as their raven-haired sisters.

Every year, right before bathing suit season starts, the conversation invariably turns to the same subject: what to do about the pubes? "Should I tuck 'em in, shave 'em, wax 'em or wear a sarong and forget the whole thing?"

This is a decision no one can make for you. It's between a woman and her God.

The only advice I can give is this: the women who neglect this chore are infamous at the town pool. Watch out lest you become known as Sas-crotch or a similar moniker coined for the Let-It-All-Hang-Out set.

For my latest adventure in good grooming I decided to go to the local day spa instead of the cheap nail salon. I don't know what the actual difference in the end result would be. But if I'm going to submit myself to excruciating pain in the name of a fuzz-free summer, I deserve my complimentary cup of coffee and Milano cookie first.

I walked into the wonderfully scented room, relieved to detect the pleasing scent of Aromatherapy instead of the offensive note of Ass. Especially considering what went on in there.

All the room was designed to put me at ease and relax me. The warmed towels on the table, the professional-looking white coat, the soothing color scheme. Hmm. This brings back a memory. Yes, that's it! The birthing room! Why do people think women can only spread their legs in a pastel-colored room festooned with white linens?

I slipped into out-of-body mode as I dropped trow. I think it's easier to deal with the fact that a perfect stranger is going to rip out your pubic hair when your mind is in a faraway happy place.

I climbed onto the table and waited as the waxer prepared her palette. Surprisingly she didn't flinch when she turned and saw the job ahead of her. She only made a comment expressing her understanding of my burden, being a dark girl herself and similarly endowed.

Not like the Korean waxers I've visited. "TOO MUCH HAIR!" they shout at me. Like it's my fault somehow. They're tough, especially the fat ones. They sweat over their cauldrons of hot wax and they slap your thighs before they rip.

I'm sure they compare the worst offenders and scream with laughter when they gossip at the end of their grueling days in Muffland. I remember walking out of the little private room with my torturer and she started laughing insanely and joking in Korean with her colleagues, obviously about me. "What is it about these European-Americans? What's with the fur coat? Is it that cold in England? I deserve BIG tip! Ha Ha Ha."

Back to the task at hand. She asks me how much I want off, and I never know what to say.

I mean, are there names for different do's, like "the Hitler" or "the Truncated Triangle"? I just smile weakly and say: "Oh, you know. Like everyone else gets."

OK, let's get started, sister. If you can take it, I can.

I stare at the wall and listen to the "so soothing it's creepy" new age music, sort of a cross between a bubbling brook and Kenny G playing the pan flute, trying to ignore the fact that a Brazilian chick is practically going down on me.

The music, the awkwardness; this is a scene out of a David Lynch film. There might as well be a midget with a clown mask in the corner beating on a snare drum.

The unfortunate girl gets down to it and performs wonders. Thinking about having her job makes me more thankful than ever that I stayed in school. When she's done my hoo-hah looks brand new, and friendly, sort of, if you can ignore the vaguely menacing landing strip.

Then it's onto the face. The moustache, the eyebrows, and increasingly as I get older, the soul patch under my lower lip. So let us please put to rest once and for all the claim that waxing makes hair grow back lighter. The next person to say that should be forced to have a complete and total Brazilian wax without the benefit of anesthesia.

As I bite through my lip to keep from screaming I'm tempted to ditch the whole "bald eagle equals beauty" mentality and go natural. But let's face it. I'm too chicken. Let someone else be the pioneer. I'll lose my appointment at the salon if I go marching in my Birkenstocks.

It's the sad truth that, when it comes to turning men's heads, everything unnatural is catnip. We can't eat when we're hungry, we can't hair grow where it clearly wants to grow, we can't wear comfortable shoes.

I say bring back the luxuriant '70s bush! That's why our mothers always wore bathing suits with skirts. At least it's a start in the right direction. If this movement picks up steam pretty soon porn stars will be having sex in ballet flats. And maybe enjoying themselves for once.

But for now I'm stuck. Literally. I walk out of there with my jeans sticking to residue wax in my butt crack. I'm sporting a puffy pink lip and looking like a kid who just drank cherry Kool-Aid from a oversized cup. I paid fifty dollars for this privilege.

Oh well. There's nothing natural about natural beauty. It takes time, money and pain.

In the Absence of Evil
by
Michael Hulme

The heavy-set, spectacled journalist and the freckled photographer ambled across the metropolis, through streams of carefree pedestrians walking unafraid. They stopped outside a bar; the journalist checked his watch and pushed thick-framed glasses back onto the bridge of his nose.

"No point being early, Peter. Quick drink?"

"Why not," the photographer replied.

It was cool and dark inside, gunfighters and bulls drawn in earthy shades on the walls. Two crossed swords were mounted above the bar. Flamenco music drifted on the fanned air.

"My friends!" The black-haired barman with pencil-thin moustache looked up from his lemon slicing. He clutched a knife in his hand. "What brings you here?"

"Press conference," Peter said.

"Ah," the barman said. "I understand." He sliced the head off the beers with a flash of the knife, then slid them over.

Peter took a gulp from his beer. "How's business?"

"Boring."

"Yup." The journalist yawned. The barman adjusted his cape and sliced more lemons.

"Scuse me." Peter took a leak in the men's room, smiling to see the 'Z' flashed in blue bleach across each urinal. He returned and finished his beer.

Reunited with sunshine and the traffic's low rumble, the pair reached a mansion, separated from the road by exotic gardens. A tubby young man forced golf clubs into a sports car. The older, jowly man waved as they approached.

"Long time, no see," he said. They shook hands.

"Off for a round?" Peter asked.

He nodded and sighed. "Same as always. Ready, Dick?"

"Holy long-lost comrades!" Dick said, shaking their hands. "Fancy a game?"

Peter shook his head. "Thanks, but we're working."

They waved as the car pulled away.

"They're getting fat," the journalist said. "They should join a gym."

They walked on. A scrawny beggar sat with his dog beside a rusted, graffiti'd camper van.

"Like, spare any change, sir?" asked the beggar. He had a squeaky voice, an untidy beard. The dog whimpered something unintelligible.

"Sorry," Peter said. They kept walking.

Peter stopped. "Hey! That dog just called us 'rastards'!"

"Well," the journalist said. "They should have learned a trade. Something to fall back on."

Peter went back and gave them ten dollars, nodding at the 'rank you's' he received in return.

"Listen," he said, returning to the journalist. "I know the final showdown was amazing and everything, but—well—do you ever think maybe we were *too* successful?"

The journalist nodded. "Honestly, Peter? All the time."

As they passed beneath trees, they heard an insistent mewling. High in the branches, they saw the grey cat stranded.

"Showtime," the journalist said.

Peter fired a web, ensnaring the cat; the journalist leapt higher than a building in a single bound and landed, feline under his arm. He stripped away the web, set it free, then straightened his glasses.

"We've still got it," he said.

They looked at one another and burst into tears.

Seven Counts of Lying to a Federal Investigator

by
Stan Lyness

Look, I know why you're here and you can just turn off the damned recorder and don't even worry about taking note of possible lies because I'm not dumb enough to lie to a federal investigator. Why are you writing that down? Stop it! I'm sickened by how you guys have made lying a crime in and of itself whether or not it serves a lower cause. I mean, remember Clinton? Federal investigators, a special crew, but investigators nonetheless, spent - how much? 70 million? - and the man was nearly hounded from elected office because - get this - when confronted over the Bad Thing by investigators, Hillary, or his conscience, his first reaction was to lie. Duh! I mean, I'm about as honest as they come - quit writing! - I'm as honest as the next guy - whew! - but if some stranger brings up the subject of sexual wandering, and let's say I had been, which of course I never could - stop that! - but supposing I could and did, then when some stranger says, "Hey Stan, been cheatin'?" of course I'm going to say "No!" even before "Why, what have you got?"

So you guys made lying about something that isn't a federal crime a federal crime. And it didn't used to be, and it shouldn't be. And you're doing it more and more, and, let's face it, if your job is to catch people lying that's pretty much full employment forever isn't it? Look at the job you guys did on Martha Stewart! Her stock sale smelled to high heaven like trading on an inside tip, so all you guys had to say was, "Say Martha, why'd you sell ImClone?" and the minute she said "Well, as you may know I'd converted some of my own Omnimedia options to shares" - stop your jotting, I'm imagining what she might have said, not lying - "and these Omnimedia certificates were printed in a soft terracotta-on-sand and that carried the whole inside of the strongbox into sort of a muted Southwest theme, and - dear, try half-blending two tones of jackboot polish for that just-in-from-the-garden look - and I was saying that the ImClone certificates were simply fighting everything in there, so I exchanged them for US currency, green to be sure, but a muted forest green that fully supported the look" - the minute she said "so I exchanged them", you guys figure it's worth nearly 40 million of our hard-earned money - our earned money, then, you scribbling moron - 40 million bucks proving the obvious, but not an obvious crime - and getting all your career tickets punched. How hard was that, waiting for Martha to lie when you're pretending to go after her on an insider trading case you knew was stillborn?

Kind of like how Whitewater was about a real estate deal. And now it's not just the feds - half the Massachusetts AG's office and Spitzer's battalions from New York state are hell-bent on outdoing you jackasses - you're right; a lie, I confess; you're actually a human; "jackass" is just a figure of speech - hell-bent on helping people screw up their reputations, people with no need of your help. And while the dark glasses and slick hair work for you - sarcasm does not count! - we can't afford to have an entire generation becoming you now can we? So the next time your wife says "So does the brown houndstooth print make my ass look big?" I sincerely hope you'll do the right thing. And get sent up for it.

Extinction
by
John Atkins

WHY THE STICK PEOPLE DIED OUT.

Where in the HELL is my penis!?!?



Ummm, am I a BOY or a GIRL?



Snappy Shotz

(C) 2004 John Aktins John@farshot.com

Marshmallows and Cigarettes
by
Valerie (Photograph)
and
Top Defenestration Scientists (Text)



Recently, photographic evidence of a new trend among sweets has come into our possession. Smoking. That's right. Not content with pushing their products onto middle-aged men, college girls, bikers, billiards players, cowboys, small children, unborn fetuses, and small dogs, the Cigarette Industry has started targeting candy, pastries, and other forms of delicious sugary treats.

The photographer, who chooses to be known only as "Valerie" (possibly because that's her name), has informed us that this common marshmallow Peep, or *Marshmallotus easteri*, was seen taking long drags of a cigarette in what was described as "a redneck diner in the middle of Pottville, PA." We were also told that the workers of this establishment, Phyllis and Red, made no moves to stop the Peep from smoking, even after the unfortunate marshmallow started coughing violently and hacked up what could only be called a tiny marshmallow lung.

Obviously this trend cannot continue. If we are to enjoy life as human beings, our sweets are not to be tampered with. After all, who would want to bite into a donut only for it to taste like the bottom of an ashtray? Who wants to open a Pixie Stick to find nothing but grey dust inside? Let this serve as a warning to cigarette companies: stop tempting our confections with your product, damn it!

Contributor Biographies

Bentley Snow Davis says: "I am an overeducated, recovering academic living in a small town in coastal Maine, but I spent most of my life in the urban midwest. I spend countless hours reading and writing poetry as an effective excuse to avoid finishing my dissertation in philosophy. Besides, living here, there isn't much else to do.

John Bryan is an ockernaut spreading misinformation in journals such as *Unlikely Stories*, *The Muse Apprentice Guild*, *Tin Lustre Mobile*, *Double Dare Press*, *Indie Journal*, and *Unlikely 2.0* to name a few. Interests include swear words, Dhampirs, shades of red, The Final Solution and computer verbs...

John Tiong Chunggoo says: "I have been writing poetry for many years. I specialize in haiku, tanka and free verse poetry. I take world freedom to mean that I too can work towards becoming a poet laureate."

Richard Gibson really wrote all of that stuff. Just like we said.

Rising star of a literary scene of one, **Adam McGrath** has also solved chess, successfully quit smoking hundreds of times and had work rejected from such prestigious publications as *The New Yorker* and *Granta*. He can order a pint of beer in over two dozen languages (including Arabic, although he must keep getting it wrong because they always give him odd looks when he does). He has an IQ of 158 and a range of minor super powers.

Adam was born in England, grew up in Australia, lives in Ireland, and holidays all over Asia and Africa. Top that. <http://screamingcuttle.livejournal.com>

Alex Keegan is occasionally serious and writes a lot of stuff. Some of it is almost OK and his website is <http://www.alexkeegan.com>. He runs a writers group which is seriously helpful but definitely kick-ass called Boot Camp.

Brendan Bouffler is a native of Sydney Australia and has just recently moved back there after 5 years of living in New York City and appreciating all the wondrous things that make America truly the Land of the Free [Refill]. He is happy to be back somewhere with proper weather (sunny and 70 has a nice ring to it) but is desperately missing Barnes and Noble, Circuit City and various skeevy East Village bars. Now that he's home, he intends to turn his sarcastic attention to the foibles and strange behavior of his fellow Australians, given he's sufficiently American to notice all the strange things they do, such as raffle platters of raw meat on Friday nights at the pub.

Jose Tungol was raised in Ann Arbor Michigan. He is a graduate from the University of Michigan with a degree in Fine Arts. In his spare time he likes to read, watch movies and play violent video games. He has a cat named Nisse. He thinks the greatest invention in history is the sandwich. He currently lives in New York City.

Kelley Cunningham Cousineau is an artist/illustrator and writer. She is a frequent contributor to *The Funny Times*, *Brain Child* and *Mamalicious* magazines. Her three darling sons continue to inspire her, and she hopes to hell they never stumble across this particular essay. She lives with her long-suffering husband in Maplewood, New Jersey. That's exit 50B off 78 East, in case you're tempted to ask that tiresome Joe Piscopo New Jersey joke.

Michael Hulme recently turned thirty, to the sound of the Grim Reaper sharpening the scythe, and in keeping with the generic conventions of the decade, he has recently acquired a far-reaching knowledge of house prices, mortgage rates, where to buy quality cane furniture, which wine goes with which meat group, the rules of Bridge, and sundry practical tips on coffin-dodging. Email him for top tips - but be warned, his eyesight isn't what it used to be. Young people's music? It's all a noise...

When **Stan Lyness** is not rushing to the defense of such unfortunates as Bill and Martha, he writes poems www.stanlyness.com/poetry/ and songs www.stanlyness.com/songs/ that are funny, some intentionally, as well as computer programs that are simply carrot-spitting hilarious.

John Atkins lives in Tuscumbia, Alabama (A state known for its close family relations and extreme fondness for two-ton monuments of the Ten Commandments). John learned to read at age four by reading the comics, and has never lost his passion for them. John also creates animation shorts which have been showcased on Atom Films, and he's won several awards for his flash films. Currently, John is working on his latest comic strip, "Snappy Shotz," which can be seen at www.farshot.com

Valerie said to Andrew, upon a request for a bio: "I'm a 17 year old non-smoker with no life. I hang out at that redneck diner and drink endless cups of cheap coffee around people who do smoke! Let me tell you it's no fun getting oogled by men in various trucker hats and plaid. Believe me, when you're thin and have a full set of teeth there's no telling what will happen. I'd suggest a fine looking young man like yourself to never set foot in this diner! We've all seen *Deliverance*..."

The scientists at Defenestration have more credentials than a speck of dust, but less than the average euglena.