

1

Pardon My Tutu

President Biden's attendants seek to rehabilitate him.

“Come on, man!”

Georgie yelled back, “come on man your fucking self!” and threw his biodegradable coffee cup, half full of a four shot flat white, right at the TV. It had no effect of course. President Biden continued to speak, informing his fellow Americans of the coming roll-out of the Corona virus vaccine. Georgie’s long suffering partner Fiona lay on the couch, groaning.

“Georgie, you better get the car ready,” said Fiona with a faint smile.

“Already?” asked Georgie, “so soon?”

“I know. But there may be something wrong. Better sure than sorry.”

Georgie drove Fiona to Bethesda Hospital where she would give birth to their twelfth child. He did not wait for the arrival, though, because he had other matters of State to attend to. President Biden’s speech infractions had to stop. It was a terrible example for all Americans, and undermined his committee’s work. He punched “Clinton Cleaners, Pennsylvania Avenue, Baltimore” into the GPS. He would raise this issue at the weekly meeting. They met in secret because of the many threats they had received from extremist republicans. Of course, there were no republicans on his committee.

Georgie looked around quickly at the interior of his old Toyota Prius to make sure all the doors were locked. He had chosen this place in Baltimore because he wanted the committee to meet far away from the Capitol building, but also on the assumption that the press would never look for them in one of the worst places of Baltimore. Besides, members of the “unofficial” undercover squad of “genderamerie,” basically hate-speech spies, always attended his meetings and they were paranoid of

having their covers blown.

If you are as prejudiced as most people who are not good democrats, you are no doubt wondering how come a life-time democrat has a partner, wife, that is, in old terminology, and eleven going on twelve kids. The answer is a bit complicated, but the simple one is that he was born a catholic and remains a good catholic, and in spite of the modern catholic doctrine of turning a blind eye to birth control, he does not believe in it, obviously, though he is of course in favor of abortion and all the rest. That's the short answer, the official one that he tells when asked by prying individuals and other friends so-called.

The real answer is quite different. It goes way back to the time at high school when he was changing in the locker room for gym. He was a teenager as were all the others, some a little more advanced, one might say. There were bullies and the usual fools mucking about, flicking towels at each other. Then one of the kids spied him trying to cover himself up, so he pulled Georgie's towel away from him and pointed, laughing, "look, he's hardly got one! It's so small!" The kids danced around and made fun of him. All Georgie could think to say was, "you wait, it might be little but it's a good squirter!"

Now on Pennsylvania Avenue, Georgie stopped at the lights, checked again that all the car doors were locked, then perused with some detachment the continuous rows of boarded up houses or shops that lined each side of the street, and the frequent vacant blocks where there was once a house. As the lights turned green, he saw the sign "Clinton Cleaners" painted in black letters on a dull yellow board that covered where there was once a window. Who would have anything cleaned in this neighborhood? It would be all they could do to buy food at the local store, let alone dry cleaning. The answer was that locals did not use it. Rather, people from the suburbs or from downtown places of work, the university being one of them, found it a convenient drop-off place, and easy parking. Mind you, they all looked over their shoulders when they got out of their cars.

Georgie pulled into the vacant block next door. The meeting house was the boarded up place right next to the dry cleaners. He had made sure it was comfortable, though. Fitted out with standard issue office chairs, two multi gender toilets, basic

kitchen for making coffee and reheating take-out meals that many brought with them, and of course the essential refrigerator. He had, after special request, installed a refrigerator with a very large freezer compartment, because one of the genderamerie hate unit had a fetish for stracciatella gelato.

There were about a dozen members of the committee, including the few from the gender and hate police who sat in on discussions. To be honest, it was not his first choice of committee assignments. Georgie was a bit embarrassed when he had to admit it to himself. A loyal democrat all his adult life, working his way up the ladder, first a council man, then chair of the school board, then assistant to the state congressman that represented his county in Bethesda. There he had remained locked in and unable to move up, until after some twelve years and the birth of his eighth kid, an opening came up to assist the congressman representing his district in the congress of the United States. This, he thought, would at last provide him with a way up, though he was not quite sure where “up” would take him.

The trouble was that, after four years of Trump, his unexpected rise to power, and the incredible rallies he conducted, one memorable one in Virginia, Georgie and most of his committee members had come to the conclusion that Biden had no hope of winning the presidential election. So they mostly, for the year leading up to the election, fooled around a lot of the time. They did draft the incredible document that Speaker Pelosi would sanctify, the one that erased all mention of gender in official documents of the United States Congress. When they drafted it, many of them did so after quite a few drinks, combined with a few whiffs of weed. So they were all amazed when Biden won, and of course invigorated by the upset. Now, Georgie had banned liquor or weed for the entire session of their meetings, and allowed them to imbibe only after they had finished their business.

These meetings were now ones of great excitement. The real possibility to make a difference. A President who thought what they thought. Or so Georgie thought until that morning when President Biden had begun his TV speech with the well-known favorite opening words, “Come on man!” He would, on this very morning, raise this issue that had bugged him from the very first

day he was appointed chair of this now very powerful committee. Indeed, its power was unfettered. It could publicly accuse anyone of hateful, gender-biased speech, on Twitter or anywhere else, and it would automatically result in the character destruction of that individual. He had the power to destroy people's lives, without actually killing them. What more power could one want? But should he do it to the president? Surely he did not want to destroy him, the president of his own party?

The answer to his quandary came from an unexpected source, the genderamerie, gender police.

Now at the risk of revealing classified information, the genderamerie was the brainchild of none other than Hillary Clinton. It was she who gave it the French sounding name, telling Georgie, her hand covering her mouth, that it would be enough to confuse the far right Russian spies. At first, Hillary resisted Georgie's appointment as chair of the committee, because he had more than one child. But his unmasking of many of her enemies as gender offenders, especially, well, we should not list their names for fear that the information is classified and stamped as "FOR HER EYES ONLY," that she reserved the right as the only one who had permission to reveal the names, which she did so at the most opportune moments. It was she who ordered the committee to go on a rampage of unmasking many greats of old. She had commanded Georgie to begin the committee's work by ferreting out all the salacious details of J. Edgar Hoover's cross-dressing, which Georgie found when Hillary told him the file was in the hands of Edward Kennedy's grandson, Owen Kennedy. Actually, this proved to be not quite true, but did lead to an amazing revelation. The file, actually the manuscript of an unpublished book written by Woodward the Watergate hero, according to Owen Kennedy, lay hidden in the President's oval office, sat on by every president since JFK's reign. Each had promised that they would release it for publication, but once in office, none did. Would Biden do the same?

That was the question that Hillary had put to Georgie, one that he promised he would investigate. He had been trying to get an interview with President Biden for several weeks, in fact since the very day of his inauguration, in order to follow up this lead. And now, with that insulting and unempathetic opening line of

“Come on man,” it was time to call him out on it. He had asked Hillary if she could get him a meeting with the president, but she had cut him off in her well known crabby manner. He was annoyed with himself for asking her. Should have realized that Biden had the job that she coveted. Fair enough.

Georgie called the meeting to order. We need not go into all the boring procedures and silly addresses and questions to “Mister Chairperson.” Georgie insisted on as much congressional double-talk as possible to maintain the decorum of the meeting, also demanding that all the gender permutations of Mister chairperson be used throughout the entire meeting. This required a recorder, usually appointed by him at the beginning of the meeting, to keep track of each permutation, to inform the person who spoke, which permutation to use, and at the end of the meeting if not all permutations were used, the recorder for reasons of equity, was to address them all to the chair before Georgie would declare the meeting closed.

Georgie called the meeting to order. We need not go into all the boring procedures and silly addresses and questions to “Mister Chairperson.” Georgie insisted on as much congressional double-talk as possible to maintain the decorum of the meeting, also demanding that all the gender permutations of “Mister chairperson” be used throughout the entire meeting. This required a recorder, usually appointed by him at the beginning of the meeting, to keep track of each permutation, to inform the person who spoke, which permutation to use, and at the end of the meeting if not all permutations were used, the recorder for reasons of equity, was to address them all to the chair before Georgie would declare the meeting closed.

At this meeting, an important piece of information was unmasked by the genderamerie. One of the gender police operatives had a close relationship with the FBI liaison to the White House. He had observed Biden reading the secret manuscript during one of the weekly briefings with the FBI. Why not ask Woodward what’s in the manuscript that every president finds so interesting and that the public must never know about? After all, everyone knows about Hoover’s cross dressing.

Now, Woodward was famous and revered because he always made sure that he had three independent sources for any

salubrious piece of dirt he dug up on his quarry, usually a president. Thus, anything he wrote and published was absolutely true. The operatives of the genderamerie had pressed Woodward on this secret manuscript, even threatened him with leaking false information, and claim that it was in his manuscript. This thoroughly annoyed Woodward, but he would not give in. Speculation had it that whatever was in the manuscript was the reason why every president since JFK, allowed Woodward access to the Whitehouse and was able to write a revelatory book about each president. Why did he have such access? It had to be what was in that secret manuscript.

Georgie had an idea. He turned to a genderamerie spy. "Can you get me into the weekly meeting of the FBI with the President?"

The operative shifted uncomfortably in his seat. "I could try," he said looking sideways.

"Good. Then you can pick me up and we will go there together," said Georgie with a big smile that reminded the operative of Georgie's close relationship to Hillary.

President Biden was enamored with the Oval Office. He treasured the few times he had sat opposite President Obama chatting and waiting for Hilary to show up (she always did). And on the day of his inauguration, President Obama had sidled up to him and slipped something into his pocket.

"I don't smoke," joked President Biden, "if that's what you're sneaking to me."

"Neither do I," grinned President Obama. "I've just given you the key to the long kept secret of every president going back to the time the Whitehouse was built."

The President felt in his pocket and discovered a small, round disk, smooth to the touch. "Feels like a poker chip," smiled Biden muttering through his PPE mask that was decorated with a likeness of Hillary.

President Obama looked around to make sure there was no hidden camera or person eavesdropping. "Every president hands it down to the next occupant of the oval office. But given, well you know, Trump, I decided to hang on to it until someone respectable was back in the Whitehouse."

"That's very kind and wise of you, Mr. President, if I may

say so,” said the President.

President Obama continued. “And I replaced what was a big key and tag with a remote ID chip. All you need do is wave it near the inset bookcase with the semicircular top to the left of your presidential desk, and it will open up.”

President Biden looked at President Obama, incredulous. “You mean, it’s a secret door? To where?”

“A small basement, kind of like a man’s cave, you know? When things get to you, and they will, I can tell you that, you can sneak away down there and do your own thing, have a nap, or whatever.”

“Could come in handy,” mused President Biden, “I’m surprised that Clinton didn’t use it.”

President Obama grinned. “Yeh, you’d think so. But he loved the limelight, and besides you know what he was like. He just couldn’t wait.”

“But even to get away from...”

“Yeh. Hillary. Maybe he did. Anyway, Bush passed it on to me and I’m grateful for it. It’s why we’re such good friends.”

“Well, thanks, and stay safe,” said President Biden, in a most presidential way.

It was no small basement. When President Biden sneaked into it after he had dismissed all his entourage of secretaries, interns, assistants and advisers, he waved the disk just like Obama said, and the bookcase responded accordingly. It opened into a large room, not really a basement, though the stairs did go down somewhat. It was crammed with all kinds of mementoes and souvenirs, much of which he had no idea of its significance. But of great interest was a dart board set up in one corner of the room, on which was pinned a black and white photograph of J. Edgar Hoover standing in a hallway, his legs crossed, naked except for a tutu. It reminded him of a painting he had been forced to admire at an art gallery in Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, that featured a special exhibition of Lucian Freud’s paintings. He was there for a charitable opening of some kind, and part of his duties were to visit the gallery’s special showings. There, he was confronted by Freud’s giant painting of an overweight man, legs crossed in a kind of pirouette posture, and every

part of his body showing. It was gross, but he grinned to himself, thinking that it would have been a very funny painting if the man were wearing a tutu.

He picked up a couple of darts and threw them at Hoover. They both missed the board. Then he spied something else lying on the rather dirty floor to the right of the dartboard. It was an actual tutu, tinged with blue. For reasons he still could not explain, he leaned down and picked it up, shook the dust off it, then pinned it to the dart board, and went back to have another throw. He missed again. Then he did a three sixty of the entire room noticing something else that he should have noticed before. There were mirrors all round. That caused him, without even thinking, to start a careful search for hidden cameras. He found none. And why would there be if past presidents had kept this secret for so long? He turned, listened for any noise in the office, and, hearing none, squeezed his key and the door opened for him to return and automatically closed upon his exit.

He was back just in time. There was a knock at the door and Tom Pain, White House chief of staff entered. "Your weekly FBI briefing, Mr. President."

Deputy director of the FBI, Saul Butt, entered followed by an entourage of notetakers and assistants, including Georgie. They were all introduced carefully in order of their seniority, and finally Georgie, to whom the President turned.

"You're new, I think?" asked the President.

"Georgie, sir, chair of the Congressional Committee on Gender Eradication."

"Yes of course. Excellent work you guys are doing. Keep it up. And why are you here at today's briefing?"

"Our committee is working closely with the FBI, sir, to ferret out and unmask miscreant abusers of gender identity and hate speech, sir."

"And why are you here?" persisted the President pressing Georgie.

"Sir, it has come to our notice that there is, in the White-house library, or possibly on a shelf in this office, a manuscript authored by the famed Woodward of Woodward and Bernstein, and that it includes a number of hate speech and gender infractions," said Georgie in his most formal manner.

“That’s serious. In this office you say?”

“Yes sir. Would you mind looking around for it?”

“I don’t have to. It’s in the bottom right drawer where I keep my, err, never mind.”

The President leaned down and withdrew a large manuscript, the edges of its pages torn and grubby. “This what you’re looking for?” he grinned. “The former, er, President told me about it. Said he couldn’t see anything wrong with it and it might as well be released for publication. Said he felt sorry for Woodward, the pathetic little guy. Of course, if that President said there was nothing wrong with it, that was a red flag to me. So I decided to keep it close to me for safe keeping. I have not looked at it myself, though by the look of it, many presidents before me have.”

“Sir, I respectfully request that my committee be permitted to examine it for gender unmasking and hate speech analysis,” requested Georgie, most officiously.

“All for a good cause!” quipped the President. “Here you are, you can have it for one week and one week only, and it must not be taken out of the Whitehouse. An intern will hold it for you.”

“Thank you Mr. President.” Georgie leaned forward and took the manuscript.

“Now what does the FBI have to tell me this morning?” asked The President.

It was, indeed, a remarkable manuscript. The title was “Secrets of the Oval Office: From Taft to Trump.” A large portion of the book was devoted to the so-called secret basement. Georgie easily smuggled it out of the Whitehouse by promising an intern a significant place on his gender eradication committee if she brought it with her to their next meeting. He even picked her up outside the Whitehouse and drove her to their Baltimore meeting place. She was a little nervous when they came to the rundown parts of Baltimore, asking where were they going, did the committee really meet in such a terrible place, fearing that he had designs on her. To which he answered, as he always did, that it was necessary to remind ourselves of how the poorer half lived. He then, out of the blue, made an offhand comment, “by the way,

my wife Fiona is giving birth to our twelfth child probably as we speak.”

The intern tried to hide a gasp and her cheeks turned red. But completely out of nowhere she blurted, “oh, my goodness! Poor thing!” Shocked at her own words, she covered her mouth with both hands. “Oh, I’m sorry. I mean, I meant, that’s wonderful! Congratulations!”

Georgie grinned. “Don’t worry. I’m used to it. I’m proud of it too. Fiona’s fine too. She’ll be a bit sad for a few days, because she loves being pregnant. We both love children. I just hope this time it will not be a false alarm like it was the last time I dropped her off at the hospital on my way to our last meeting .”

He pulled into the vacant lot next to Clinton Dry Cleaners. His Toyota Prius looked a little pathetic beside all the smartly polished black SUVs and Hummers. The comparison made him feel extra good. But he knew that he would face, this morning, a challenge of immense proportions. He would make a proposal to censure President Biden for using gender insensitive language, specifically “Come on man.” Simply arguing that it was a common manner of speech was no excuse. Many of those old words and expressions had been eradicated from all speech and dictionaries. “Come on Man” had to be eradicated or at least reworded so that it was no longer offensive.

Without thinking, Georgie held open the door for his intern who looked at him with a mixture of fear and disdain. How dare he do that? Opening the door for her was an infraction of the gender eradication code, was it not? The intern gave him a disapproving look. He extended his hand and said, “hand me the manuscript if you will.” And she did, making sure that their hands did not in any way touch when she gave it up. She wanted no skin contact with this guy. She did not trust him. He took the manuscript and walked quickly to the entrance. She scrambled out of the car (from the back seat mind you where he had insisted that she sit) and ran to catch him up. “If there’s anything I can do, take notes of something?” She pleaded.

“Thanks, but no. Notes of this meeting are the last thing we want.” Georgie pulled the door open and walked in, leaving her to catch the door as it closed.

Georgie immediately swung into action. “Good morning

members and visitors if there are any. Please place your phones on the table in front of you. I request that you switch them off for the duration of the meeting. No notes or recording permitted. The members sat at a large oval table, at one end of which was a very large office chair that would be his as chairperson. The rest of the chairs were standard prison-made chairs, square metal frame, hard wooden seat.

Now, one must understand, that, when a group of more than three or four people comes together to deliberate on a plan of action when faced with a difficult problem, the odds are that it will reach an illogical, strange or unpredictable conclusion. What was about to happen would prove that to be true.

Georgie called the meeting to order, then produced his own phone, fiddled with it until YouTube came up, and then started a video, turning the phone so that all present could see it. He had made a composite video of the opening remarks of the last several speeches Biden had made over a few weeks. This resulted in a video that repeated many times over “Come on man!” All members of the committee stirred uncomfortably in their uncomfortable seats. Georgie began his well-rehearsed speech.

“I regret that I must broach this very difficult problem of President Biden’s favorite opening remarks to almost all his speeches that implore the viewers to do or agree with a particular policy or action he is promoting. Is he not speaking also to women, I mean those other than men – my apologies? The expression is incredibly gender insensitive, and violates the common sense of inclusiveness and diversity.”

One of the genderamerie interrupted. “Then tell him to stop! Problem solved!”

“It’s not that simple,” put in an unmasking gender eradication expert. “Our work requires us to uncover all past infractions and make perpetrators pay for their past mistakes. None can be allowed to get away with their lack of empathy. And that includes the president. I applaud Georgie for having uncovered this blatant infraction that has occurred hidden in plain sight on a daily basis.”

“Then what would you suggest be done? Impeach the President?” put in another.

“That’s a bit of overkill. Censure would be more appropriate,”

put in yet another.

And so it went.

Until finally, Georgie produced the secret manuscript. “We have heard many good suggestions. Let us break off to talk informally, then come together to make a resolution. During the break I am passing around a bit of a bombshell. It is the secret manuscript by Woodward that many of you have no doubt heard about. Look through it and see if you find anything that might be applied to solve our problem with our miscreant president.”

With money and equipment donated from Farbucks Coffee, Georgie had set up an espresso bar, complete with a barrista (the gender of that term he was not sure of) to serve the best coffee in town, as everyone had heard. The secret of the coffee was simply that the barrista routinely served double the shots customers asked for, and they predictably responded with “wow what great tasing coffee.” The caffeine therefore did its job, and had everyone talking animatedly, though there was some jostling around the single copy of the secret manuscript. However, always thinking one step ahead, Georgie had installed a small office copy machine so they were able to make copies of the more interesting and relevant pages. Those pages turned out to be those that described the dart board and J. Edgar Hoover in a tutu.

As a favor, Georgie had his intern call the meeting to order. “Before we get down to the business of the day I would like to make one personal announcement,” said Georgie. He put his phone down carefully on the table. “My dear wife Fiona has just given birth to our twelfth child. They are both doing well.”

The intern smiled excitedly and blurted out, “boy or girl?” She immediately put her hand to her mouth when she realized her mistake. A hushed silence descended on everyone around the table. A gender spy took notes.

Georgie forced a grim smile. “I’m sure we can overlook that offensive remark,” he said, “they are both doing well regardless.”

The intern abruptly got up and left, crying on the way out.

Georgie continued. “Now, what ideas do we have for the Come-on-man fiasco?”

“Before we get to that,” interceded a gender spy, “what does this manuscript have to do with it? Besides, I wouldn’t be surprised if Woodward made it all up.”

“Very perceptive,” countered Georgie. “It has nothing to do with Come-on-Man directly. But therein lies the idea for how we may get compliance from President Biden.”

The group stirred, feet shuffled.

“Do tell us,” said the head of the genderamerie, with a heavy dose of sarcasm.

“I thought that, in order for the President to demonstrate how sorry he is for using vile gender epithets, he should go on national television, dressed in a tutu like J. Edgar, and apologize, promise he will never use that manner of speech again.”

“You’re mad!” exclaimed a small spy who sat in the corner.

The room erupted with everyone talking at once. Exactly what Georgie wanted.

Another gender spy stood up to make his point. “I will repeat what I said right at the beginning. Just tell the President to stop saying it. That’s all that is needed.”

Another interjected. “No, it’s not enough. He must make up for this egregious error. He must apologize. He’s the great example to all citizens and especially children. He must show everyone that he understands his error and convince the viewers that he is really sorry for what he has done. After all, it must amount to several hundred, even thousands of infractions of the gender code.”

Yet another spoke up. “Yes, it’s not enough to simply say you are sorry. He’s on TV. He must truly show that he is sorry. The question is, how does he do that convincingly?”

Everyone looked each way and that, waiting for a bright idea.

The intern returned and quietly took its seat.

“I still say, just tell him to stop it. That’s enough,” insisted the gender spy.

The intern spoke up in a querulous little voice, “I did tell him to stop it. Well, not exactly, I just mentioned once that maybe the Man part wasn’t appropriate.”

“And what did he say?” asked the gender spy.

“Nothing. I don’t know if he heard me. I’m only an intern, you know. I probably shouldn’t have said anything.”

The group murmured as one. Shoes scraped the floor.

“Then it’s clear that we must educate him,” responded

Georgie. Then he held the manuscript up, turned to the page on J. Edgar and the tutu. “Here is a way out suggestion, but I think it would do the trick. We have him dressed in a tutu just like J. Edgar, while he gives his sorry speech.”

Shuffles and silence. Georgie looked around the table, challenging each one to look him in the eye. None did. They all looked down to the table.

Except the intern who blurted, “great idea! He’ll look just like that Lucian Freud painting, except he’s not quite fat enough.”

It’s doubtful whether any of the group, except the gays whose numbers were unknown, knew what painting the intern was talking about. But Georgie did, and responded with a loud laugh and all followed. It was done. Now it remained who would convey this demand for the punishment of a sitting President?

The Director of the genderamerie decided that it was about time he asserted her authority. “I hate to say it, but isn’t this unconstitutional? The only way a punishment can be delivered to a sitting president is to impeach or censure him-her-it.”

“We are not punishing, just asking for an apology and correction of past wrongs. It’s a bit like a confession,” answered Georgie quickly.

“Is there a second for Georgie’s proposal?” asked the intern.

“I’ll second,” answered the genderamerie director, “though I want it noted that I still think it’s unconstitutional.”

“Any more discussion?” asked the intern very businesslike and not waiting for any response. “Then all those in favor, say, aye.”

Of course, the ayes had it, unanimously.

“Who should convey this demand, I mean request or suggestion, to the President?” asked Georgie.

Silence. All eyes turned to the intern.

Georgie checked his phone. “I have to run. My wife is giving birth to our twelfth child, as some of you know. I have to run. I’ll leave it to you all to decide who conveys the message.” He shoved the manuscript in the direction of the intern and left.

Predictably, the gender eradication and hate speech committee failed to appoint the messenger, though it was pretty clear that they wanted the intern to do it. It was the logical solution. It

had nothing to lose, whereas the futures of all others were at stake. They were not prepared to stick their necks out.

The intern, however, would have been overjoyed to do it, anything to get close to the President, the most powerful gender-thing in the world. But he-she-it did not speak up. Instead, gathered up the manuscript and hitched a ride back to the Whitehouse with some gender spy who spoke not a word to it-her-him.

When Georgie finally arrived at the Whitehouse VIP gate, he was fearful of how the President may respond. While he sat at the gate awaiting the security guard to clear him, he thought of poor Fiona, who had let out her last gasp, truly the last, the baby born with all, and we mean all, the necessary equipment to become a thoroughly successful gender addition to diverse America. A truly fitting replacement for Fiona.

The security guard informed him that he was not on the list for today, but made the mistake of addressing him as “sir” to which Georgie quickly pointed out his hate speech error, so the guard let him through. He quickly made his way to the outer office adjoining the west wing lobby, where all the interns were kept in voluntary captivity. His gender eradication intern sat immediately outside the door to the oval office.

“Do you have the manuscript?” he asked.

“It’s in my desk. The President has been in here twice asking for it. I didn’t want to give it up without you saying so. He, sorry, I mean the President, was quite angry.”

“Give it to me,” ordered Georgie crossly. He marched straight into the oval office only to find that the office was empty. He stopped, embarrassed and returned to the intern room. “He’s not there. I have to go. My wife Fiona...” He held out the manuscript and just as the intern was about to take it, it was snatched away. And there stood the President, an angry smile on his face, all those teeth, his eyes reduced to little horizontal cracks in his forehead.

“Give me that,” growled the president.

“Your Presidential Self,” addressed Georgie, “my apologies for keeping the manuscript for so long. But my committee on gender eradication and hate speech met this morning and it took

quite some time to come up with a solution to the Presidential problem that I must now urgently inform you of.”

The President looked at him, trying to process the jumble of words that Georgie had just tossed his way. “Step into my office. I have just five minutes. It better be good.”

Georgie beckoned to the intern to follow. The President sat at his desk, looking all business-like. “Come on man!” he said. “Out with it.”

The intern put hand to mouth to cover the shock of hearing this abomination yet again. “Your Highness, I mean President, that’s hate speech! You can’t say that!” Sobbing loudly, she-her-it turned and ran out of the office, slamming the door behind her-she-it.

All those white, gleaming teeth burst into yet another grin, this time not angry but empathetic. “You better go and console her,” said the President to Georgie.

Georgie ignored the advice. “I have to inform you that the gender eradication and hate speech committee resolved unanimously this morning that you must make a public apology for using your most used offensive expression, ‘Come On Man,’ further, that you must make amends for having spoken such hate so many times. One of our interns has counted several hundred occurrences in the last six months.”

The teeth remained in their smiling position, this time surrounded by disbelief. “You mean I have to go on TV and make an apology?” asked the President.

“Yes, First Citizen, if I may call you that.”

“You may. Indeed I quite like it,” answered the President still smiling.

“And there’s one more requirement,” said Georgie, a little nervously, “it comes from the secret manuscript.” He pointed to the dog-eared pile of papers sitting on the president’s desk.

The First Citizen looked down, and flipped through the manuscript pages with his thumb. “Let me guess, you sons of bitches...”

“Please! First Citizen! No more hate speech. That’s shocking. I don’t want to have to go through this all over again with yet another infraction of the gender code.”

“My apologies, what’s your name again?”

“Georgie, sir, I mean First Citizen.”

“Well, Georgie, out with it. What’s the committee’s recommendation?”

“It’s not a recommendation. It’s an order.”

“I don’t think you understand, No one can order me to do anything. I’m the President, First Citizen.”

“Yes, First Citizen. But in this case, we are dealing with thousands of infractions against the gender code. If you don’t get out in front of this, your opponent will slaughter you in the next election. You will be a one term president.”

“That’s not too bad a thought,” quipped the President, First Citizen.

“First citizen!” cried Georgie, demanding attention.

“All right then. What do they want me to do?”

“That picture of J. Edgar Hoover, dressed in a tutu...” murmured Georgie.

“You mean the one pinned to the dart board?” said with a very large presidential smile.

“Yes, First Citizen. We know about the secret basement.”

“You know more than I do. I assure you there is no such basement. That manuscript is all crap.”

“Whatever, First Citizen. It is the committee’s unanimous verdict that you must dress in a tutu, a tutu only, and apologize for your past gender infractions and hate speech, on live TV, or we are prepared to allow it to be done on You Tube.”

“But they’ll think I’m...” The President managed not to say what would normally have come naturally.

“Indeed they might. But then, is this not very much in your favor? You will be the President of all the people, all diversities, all genders. It will be a magnificent triumph of unity!” Georgie couldn’t believe he had come up with such a fantastic proposition.

“What’s your name again? Georgie, of course. Georgie my boy, I mean my premium citizen, I thank you for this great opportunity to empathize with my people.” As if it could not get larger, his smile truly reached from ear to ear, and those teeth gleamed as the sun’s rays penetrated the oval office window that looked out on to the lawn. “Let’s get to it!” he shouted. He picked up the phone and shouted, “send in the media people. I am going

to speak one-on-one with all my citizens!”

Georgie remained rooted to the spot. He thought briefly of how proud Fiona would be of him at this moment.

The President turned to Georgie, now with an affectionate smile. “You know, maybe you should come and work for me. Your talent is wasted out there with the gender spies and hate speech researchers.

“First Citizen! I would be honored! When do I start?”

“What about right now?”

“First Citizen?”

“Yes, Georgie?”

“Have you ever seen the painting by Lucian Freud? The one with a naked individual showing all its equipment?”

Moral: The masking of truth is its revelation.

Copyright © 2021, Harrow and Heston Publishers
All rights reserved.

