

Election Fraud

By Robert Keith Smith

“Good afternoon gentles and ladies men,” said the new speaker at the forum on Issues in the Developing World. I was working for The Star, covering conferences and symposiums. That usually involved boring stuff, though it wasn’t as deadly as my previous assignment, sitting at a desk in a windowless office writing obituaries.

He looked down at the podium, shaking his head, an obvious grimace on his face. “Sorry,” he continued. “Sometimes when I’m nervous, my tang gets toungeled and I wix my mords.” He paused again, the expression even more pronounced. He resumed, “I’m afraid someday that will happen when I have to introduce someone important, like a hundred and fifty years ago I might have introduced Britain’s foremost author as Darles Chickens, or before that, the founding president of the United States as Wash Georgeington.”

The laughter we had been sympathetically restraining burst out as we realized his gaffes were intentional.

He continued, “When that happens, I need to get it out of my system. So before I talk about” – he paused, then enunciated very slowly and carefully - “Election Fraud Reduction,” – he halted briefly again, then said, “I almost called it ‘Flawed Erectile Dysfunction’,” then continued, “give me a minute to talk about something else and get it out of my system.

“Maybe I’ll tell you about the reception I had to go to at Hetro Mall last night. The manning planager for this erection confluence told me when she invited me to speak here this afternoon to bring a toot and sie. Only the airline lost one of my suitcases, the one with my shoes in it. So I had to wear my sancy flippers. See?” he said, holding out one leg and wiggling a gold-sequinned foot. “My granddaughter’s really into Prinderella and The Cince right now. She gave them to me for Christmas, and pretended she was my gairy fodmother. She wanded her wave over them and told me I would always be a smelly fart vellow as long as I had them with me. So they were in the case with my toot and sie when I needed them.

“Anyway, that’s what I wore to the reception. Everyone pretended not to notice, but when I left at midnight, I had to run to catch a taxi out front, and I slopped a dripper just as I got into the cab. I didn’t notice ‘til I got back to the hotel. When I climbed out, I discovered the car had plopped right in a studdle. I went back to the hall to find it this morning in boots I borrowed from the janitor, but I didn’t take the other

one with me. So they made me sly on the tripper to make sure it was mine. Fortunately, the foo shit.”

He paused, then finished, “Hopefully that got me over it. Now, Election Fraud Reduction.”

The session, which I had assumed would be tedious and dull, had taken on a new life.

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