

How silly can you get?

Written by Jim Tatum



Remember that early 80s movie “Top Secret?” It was a sleeper, brought to us by the zany folks who brought us such masterpieces as “Airplane!” and “Kentucky Fried Movie.”

Here was a classic line:

He: “I’m not the first guy who fell in love with a woman that he met at a restaurant who turned out to be the daughter of a kidnapped scientist only to lose her to her childhood lover who she last saw on a deserted island who then turned out fifteen years later to be the leader of the French underground.”

She: *“I know. It all sounds like some bad movie...”*

I had this eerie feeling of déjà vu when I started following the election results last week -- I had seen this movie before. Pretty soon, I had a song from the movie running through my head: “How silly can you get, yeah, yeah; how silly can you get...”

Alvin Greene is currently the Democratic Party’s contender, the guy who will go up against Republican Senator Jim DeMint in November. Mr. Greene is unemployed, questionably discharged from the military, and seemingly incapable of uttering a complete sentence, much less discussing a political issue. To top it off, he’s facing a felony obscenity charge after being

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arrested for showing college freshman pornography and propositioning her.

That, as National Lampoon used to say, isn't funny; that's sick.

What is funny is the predictable plethora of conspiracy theories oozing out of the woodwork, from Internet chat boards to Capitol Hill. Meanwhile, the SC Democratic party is running scared because they obviously did a lousy job of checking up on Greene – it seems they just merrily took his ten grand and slapped his name on the ballot. And the alleged heir apparent reportedly spent the last several days “poring over election results” to see how this...person...could walk away with the nomination.

Here are a few thoughts. First, I generally dismiss conspiracy theories because in order to believe them, one has to assume that those accused of perpetrating the conspiracy are far smarter than they actually are.

A more likely and believable explanation is good old-fashioned equipment failure – I've seen these voting machines in action now for several years, and they're far from fail safe no matter what the sales rep told the State Election Commission.

Second, if there is this vast, highly detailed, carefully choreographed, top-secret plot afoot, how is it that everyone on the Internet – which is essentially everyone on the planet -- knows about it? Is everyone in the comments section working for the CIA? And if that's the case, wouldn't that be another conspiracy about which to theorize?

Finally, who really has the time, charisma, organization and intelligence to perpetrate such egregious calumny?

The answer to that is found in my first point.

As a voter who mostly vacillates between disgusted and amused, over the years I have written

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in such candidates as Frank Zappa, Hugh Hefner, and my dog for various and sundry elected offices. And yes, I agree, such actions are cynically wasted votes.

But it does make it easier to believe that what has happened is the result of a widespread epidemic of voter disgust coupled with an unconscionable case of willful ignorance.

The truth is, the heir apparent is entitled to the nomination only because he believes so – and he believes this because the party elites have told him such. The perception to many of us down here in the trenches becomes “business as usual” again – which, in today’s environment, extrapolates to a realization that in party politics, the will of the people never really enters the equation, except as an unintended consequence.

In short, given the mood of the electorate these days, it’s not so hard to believe voters would pull the trigger on a complete unknown just to stick a thumb in the eye of “the establishment.”

On the other hand, the high-level arrogance too often demonstrated by said establishment may well find it easier to believe a conspiracy theory than a slap in the face with a wet fish.

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