

Mysteries

by Ulrik Remy

Any campaign for the presidency is a serious matter. Whether it's about the presidency of the nursing home association, the presidency of the kennel club, or the presidency of the United States, it matters, and it is serious.

It's downright funny at the same token. And it makes for an excellent exercise of the gray matter that's between your ears (if there is any). Because, just like in a real good murder mystery, you have to keep track of all the characters (if there are any), all the twists and turns of the plot (if there is any), all the pros and cons, the backs and the forths.

Alright, so the phone is ringing, the caller ID says "restricted", meaning, it is not my ex-wife, therefore, I can pick it up.

"Good afternoon, Sir. I am calling on behalf of the XYZ campaign, and I would like to ask if you have made up your mind already".

"Yes, as a matter of fact, I have. Would you care to know – "

"Well, I assume – "

"You're right. Those pork chops were on sale at Publix, and I still have some turnips left over, plus a delicious baby bella mushroom sauce over baked potatoes."

"I – I am afraid, I don't understand – "

"Pork chops. Turnips. Mushroom sauce – "

"Sir, I was asking if you had made up your mind as to who will have your vote for President."

"No. You asked me if I had made up my mind."

"Well, and have you?"

"Of course. I will definitely cast my vote for your guy. Which campaign are you calling from?"

"XYZ. The only choice there is, to be entirely honest with you."

"Oh – are you?"

"Yes, Sir. Our candidate represents everything you are asking for in a leader. Leadership, experience, judgement – "

"He has a judgement against him?"

"Not against him, Sir. Her. Our candidate is a woman. And the judgement is in her favor. It means her ability to form an opinion independent from special interests, from lobbyists, independent from any kind of facts, generally speaking. The kind of leadership our country so desperately needs."

"Alright, I hear you. Can you tell me something about her opponent? You see, I am kind of new to this – "

"Well, our opponent – I can only tell you what's already out there in the media. We have gone to great length to inform the general public about his preference for underage children, his suspicious behaviour, you know – always within the speed limit, always stops at red lights – the man has something to hide, that's for sure. And his eating habits – "

"What about them?"

"Well, we all know that he is killing babies – his stance on abortion, you understand – but he is rumored to devour them, without fork or knife, and of course that is just a rumor. We would never raise that suspicion if it was not supported by the fact that he associates with terrorists and members of the satanic cult he is trying to propagate."

"Alright, that's all I need to know. Thank you very much for your information."

"So, have you made up your mind yet?"

“Yes, Sir, I absolutely have. Thank you so much for enlightening me.”

Pork chops, turnips, mushrooms, the phone, again. An 800 number.

“Good afternoon, Sir. May I ask you if you have just received a phone call from someone claiming to represent the XYZ campaign?”

“Yes, you may.” Five seconds, then he gets it.

“Uhm – have you, by any chance, just received a phone call from someone claiming to represent the XYZ campaign?”

“As a matter of fact, I have.”

“May I inform you, Sir, that this person, for all we know, did not represent the XYZ campaign. I am calling you from the national headquarters of the XYZ campaign because it has come to our knowledge that a certain political action committee supporting our opponent has initiated this type of phone campaigning in order to spread misleading and untruthful outrageous information about our candidate.”

“Well, the outrageous information was about your opponent. I mean, eating babies – who hasn’t done that yet, but without a fork and a knife, that truly is outrageous.”

“My sentiments exactly. But you see, they are spreading this outrageous information about our opponent in order to make our campaign look like we would resort to that type of smear tactics, thus making our candidate look bad.”

“Well, from all I can tell, she looks good. But how – “

“Sir, this is politics, and it’s a devious game. We have, to be perfectly honest with you – “

“Oh – are you?”

“Yes, Sir, absolutely. That’s why I am telling you, this person may have received orders from someone within the opposing organization. Maybe even from someone within our own organization, who knows. Look: If we would run a phone campaign smearing our own candidate in the most outrageous way possible, claiming to represent the opposing campaign, then we would have every reason in the world to accuse the opposing campaign of smear tactics, Right?”

“Right. But – “

“Allow me to finish my thought, please, Sir. Thank you. Now, if the opposing campaign would become aware of our plan to smear our own candidate and blame it on them, they would have no choice but running a correspondent campaign smearing their own candidate and blaming it on us. And that would give us the perfect opportunity to expose their devious and misleading trickery to all the world. Are you with me?”

“Hardly ever. But keep going.”

“That’s all there is to it. It’s a game of give and take. And he who blinks first, loses. Or wins, for that matter. Have I made myself clear?”

“Absolutely. Wanna come over for pork chops?”

To be perfectly honest, it does matter. And it’s serious. And it’s paid for by the National Association Of Silverware Manufacturers. They approved this message.