

# Following the Science

by [Armando Simón](#) (May 2021)



*Interior*, Georges Rouault, 1912

“So, when the EEG showed that epilepsy starts on one

hemisphere of the brain and spreads to the other hemisphere, doctors tried to abolish the seizures by severing the *corpus callosum*. Naturally, this was done only in those individuals whose seizures were so severe and so frequent that the patient was constantly debilitated and nothing else had worked to alleviate the intensity of the seizures. The patients were in misery. The surgery did not eliminate the epilepsy altogether, but it certainly diminished the intensity. For less severe cases, medications are helpful.”

Dr. Magnus Nyström was in his early forties, with a tall, unexpectedly athletic build, a handsome face, having a few silver strands here and there in his thick hair. He had a permanent twinkle in his eyes, the consequence of his lifelong compulsive joking, which only disappeared during his lectures. He was only serious about science, which he considered sacrosanct, his religion. Nyström was immensely popular with his students in spite of his firm grading policy and he had already published two books, over four dozen research papers in technical journals, and several articles in popular websites and magazines. He went out of his way to help students in academic matters, but had no patience, or respect, for students who just went through the motions, or thought that they were entitled to a good grade just for showing up to class. He was a research dynamo, whom had once been told that his brain had a broken “off” switch.

“Is it true that flashing lights cause epileptic seizures?” one student asked.

“Only in a tiny minority of epileptics. It’s not common.”

“What about an ‘aura’?” another student asked. “I’ve heard that epileptics get something called an ‘aura.’”

“That’s the name given to the feeling that some epileptics get just before experiencing a seizure. It’s a

feeling, an advance warning, you might say, that the brain is preparing to go haywire." Nyström paused and looked at his watch. "Well. Be sure to read chapter 6 by next class period."

Class time was over and the students left the room, except for the inevitable two or three who had additional questions. Then, they too left, followed by Nyström.

On the way to his office, the psychologist stopped by his colleague, since all the offices were on the same floor.

"Hello, Dan. How was the weekend?" Nyström's colleague was short, stocky, with a beard which brought to mind a good natured gnome.

"Oh, hi, Magnus," Dan said, looking up from some papers that he was reading. "It was good. It was good weather, so I did some yard work, planted some flowers. And you?"

"I had a great weekend! Initially, I was going to train for chess boxing, but ended up out all weekend celebrating the death of my ex-wife. Got the news Saturday."

"What happened to her?"

"Got hit by a car driven by a drunken illegal alien from Mexico. How about you? Anything interesting happening with you?"

"No, same old thing. I have a question here from one of my students who asked me how would I define a feminist? I don't want to sound too critical, or noncritical enough. How would you define feminists?"

"As mad demons from hell."

"I'm serious, now."

"So am I."

"Never mind. Don't let Dolores hear you say that."

Headed to your office?"

Magnus got the hint. "Yeah. See ya." He went inside his office and sat down. Less than five minutes later, he got a call from the departmental secretary telling him that the chairperson—actually, chairwoman—wanted to see him. Could he come over?

He walked down the corridor to where the secretaries were, one with pink hair and the other with blue hair. He was motioned in to the departmental chairperson.

"Hello, Dolores."

"Hello, Magnus."

As usual, he controlled his facial expression while having dealings with her. Dolores was pleasant enough and they had never butted heads, but there was a reason for his dislike of the chairwoman. First, Dolores was a believer of an offshoot sect of the feminist movement, which was disliked by even other feminists. This sect adhered to a chain of reasoning that went like this: all men see all women as sex objects, nothing more. Most women were tricked into believing that this was normal and had to obey men's desire, so they put on makeup, acted syrupy sweet, shaved their armpits, dressed in alluring clothing and wore bras that accentuated their breasts. Therefore, true liberation for women could only come by dressing like pigs. Dolores was an example of this outlook. Her hair was cropped short and had wide streaks of grey hair. She wore no makeup, her legs would have felt prickly to the touch while her armpits looked like tarantulas lived there. Her dress, she made at home because no self-respecting store owner would have had it in their inventory and was just a sack with holes, albeit it had a subdued color. She never wore brassieres, so that on a couple of occasions at home her breasts had plopped onto her soup with painful results. In 20 years' time, they would probably sag down all the way to her

navel. On top of that, although, as stated, her demeanor and voice were pleasant enough, she wore the perpetual sour look of anyone, male or female, who has not had sex in years. So, overall, one automatically felt averse to being in her company. It was an involuntary reaction.

Nyström was about to sit down.

“Oh, don’t bother sitting down. This won’t take a moment. I called you in because President Moroni would like to talk to you.”

“Really? What for?”

“He didn’t say. Maybe you got another grant approved and he wants to congratulate you. Who knows?”

“When did he say he wanted to talk with me?”

“He said any time’s good today. He’s free all day.”

“Of course he’s free all day. He’s president of a university. He has nothing to do all day except get paid big bucks for sitting at his desk and look important while he picks his nose.”

“You shouldn’t talk that way. He is the president of this university.”

“He’s dead weight. Ballast. Useless. Like the majority of administrators in any college.”

“Well, I can’t disagree too much with that. By the way, do you know where’s his office?”

“Yeah, way on the opposite side of campus.”

“Are you going there now?”

“Might as well.”

"I'll call his office and tell them that you're on your way."

"Before I go, I need to tell you that there's an Andrea Perkins that's going to submit her vita for the position that opened up in the department, now that Smith's retiring, and I'm going to be supporting her. She's a chronobiologist who switched fields a few years ago to ethology, and we've been too long in this department without a specialist in animal behavior. I know her personally: sharp, sharp as a tack."

"Great. I look forward to seeing her resume."

"And, to make her candidacy more enticing, she's black and a woman, which is a plus to those people in the university, particularly HR, who think those things are more important."

"Yes. Absolutely. Those are plusses in her favor."

"All right. See you later."

Magnus left the building and walked towards his destination. The university was a complex of buildings that stretched in a rough one-mile diameter, two if one counted the parking lots. He rarely traveled through the campus anymore since he parked his car near the psychology building, access to the libraries' periodicals was easily done through his office's computer and he ate lunch in his office, or off-campus. Now, as he traversed the sidewalks, he realized how out of touch he was with all of the activities in campus and made a note to correct that.

Near the Student Union, there were numerous tables, most of them trying to recruit members for the various clubs, or pledges for the different sororities and fraternities. He remembered his days as a student. Going into a fraternity, the testosterone was so thick that one could cut it with a knife,

and if he visited a sorority to pick up his date, there was so much estrogen in the air that he instantly felt he was starting to grow breasts.

There were a couple of tables with signs asking passersby to sign petitions and, out of curiosity, he stopped at one and read it. It was a petition to Congress to pass the following Constitutional Amendment: "No black person who has an outstanding warrant may be arrested if he/she does not feel like being arrested. Also, no black person who is in the process of committing a crime may be arrested if he/she does not feel like being arrested."

Magnus chuckled at the humor until he looked up at the white students sitting at the table. They seemed serious. "This is pretty good. It's a joke, right?"

"No! We're in earnest," one of them said, shocked at not being taken seriously. "Too many blacks have been shot by cops when they tried to arrest them. George Floyd. Jacob Blake. These black guys, they were in the process of committing crimes."

"Wasn't Blake a rapist who had a warrant for his arrest, and he pulled a knife on the cops?"

"Yes, but he was black!" the other petitioner said, as if that excused everything.

"Cops are racist!" the first one added. "Those cops were white and their victims were black. That's why they were shot."

"Then, you're serious," Magnus said, not believing his ears. The sullen petitioners nodded, offended at his tone of voice. "Somebody must have circumcised your brains," he muttered and walked off.

He finally reached his destination and gave his name to



the secretary, who announced him.

“Go right in.”

He did so. The university president’s office was huge compared to his, his colleague’s, or the departmental chairwoman, designed to impress. Magnus was not impressed. Neither by the office, nor the patrician figure inhabiting the office. Such a sumptuous office for someone who did absolutely nothing only made him more contemptuous. But, considering the fact that President Moroni was going to praise him made him suppress his contempt even more.

“Ah, Dr. Nyström. Good! Good! Come on in.” They shook hands. “Please sit down.”

“Thank you.”

“And thank you for coming. I wanted to talk to you about an article you wrote recently for a popular website, on the covid pandemic. There’s been a lot of reaction over what you wrote.”

“Good. It needed to be said.”

“No, not good.” Moroni said. “A lot of the reaction was negative. We’ve received a lot of demands on our own website and tweets that you be fired.”

This was unexpected, and momentarily took him off balance. The psychologist had come in expectation of receiving kudos. He instantly recovered his footing.

“So what?” was his response and now it was Moroni’s turn to be surprised at Nyström’s retort. He seemed genuinely unconcerned, almost defiant.

“So what? My dear fellow, I don’t think you understand how serious it is. I read your article and I’m also perturbed. You say that elementary and high schools should reopen- “

“Which is true.”

“—that the lockdowns to halt the spread of the virus be immediately lifted and businesses allowed to reopen- “

“Which they should.”

“—that face masks are useless in halting the spread of the virus—“

“Which they are.”

“—and that superspreader events like dances, birthday celebrations, proms, beach parties, should not only be allowed, but encouraged.”

“Which they should be.”

“Dr. Nyström, you’re being irresponsible by encouraging people to get sick, or die!”

“Non sequitur. First, sunlight contains ultraviolet rays, which destroys the virus. Most of the infections occur indoors. That’s what the data shows. Therefore, people should be outdoors.”

“We need to follow the science,” Moroni countered. “Continue the business lockdowns, wear face masks, avoid superspreader events, obey authorities.”

“President Moroni, you use the phrase, ‘Follow the science,’ a phrase that a lot of people are parroting, but the people parroting that phrase are going against the science. The data is in, has been in for a long time. States and countries that imposed lockdowns have the same number of fatalities, per million, as those that do not. Therefore, lockdowns should be abolished so that people can resume their normal life.”

“As for small children and teenagers, the data shows

that they are practically immune. Something like, I forgot, eighty or ninety percent of fatalities have been in people over 65 years of age. Therefore, schools should reopen and kids should go back to school. This university just reopened this semester, a year after the 'six-week temporary lockdown' was imposed."

"We got special dispensation from the governor."

"And that's another thing: the politicians themselves don't believe their own rhetoric. They impose lockdowns but go on trips, or visit restaurants and stores that they order open but regular people cannot go to. They are often caught not wearing masks. Obviously, they don't believe there's that much danger, or the propaganda coming out of television."

"We have to follow the science," Moroni repeated the mantra. "The authorities have our best interest at heart. And a lot of people agree. They're asking that you be fired."

"Does it matter? Does it anti-matter? I pay no attention to the Twitter mob and neither should you. It has been my observation that the Twitter mob loses their power to intimidate instantly if one simply ignores Twitter altogether."

"Well, a lot of people think that what you wrote is dangerous and it will be dangerous to the public."

"Sir, in science, which obviously includes medicine, it is elementary, if not mandatory, to consider all possibilities and alternatives, question all results and numbers, examine treatments and procedures, give different opinions based on the data. And that is also the role of universities. I'm surprised you don't know that. What I wrote in the article, the data I presented and the arguments put forth, are in line with scientific principles. This is self-evident in looking over the paper. You would know this if you were a scientist."

“Nonetheless, I must ask you to apologize for the article you wrote.”

A brief, but loud guffaw escaped from Magnus’ mouth. He smiled as he spoke. “For presenting facts to counter the herd’s panic? I . . . don’t . . . think so,” he concluded, still smiling.

“Dr. Nyström, you should know that I am seriously considering the option of firing you.”

Previously, when others had been presented with such news, President Moroni had seen them wilt before his eyes and grovel, a spectacle that he relished and always looked forward to. But Nyström’s reaction was different, unnerving. He did not wilt. He stiffened. His eyes narrowed as he slowly put the fingertips of each hand together at his chest. But it was the tone of voice, quiet, measured, deep, but unmistakably menacing. Physically menacing.

“President Moroni, I have made what is for me an extraordinary effort to remain civil during our discourse.” He paused for a moment. “I will defend science. Should you decide to go that route, you will find me an implacable enemy. Believe me when I say that you do not want me as an enemy.” He paused ever so briefly. “Let me remind you of the obvious. Aside from the scientific foundation of that article, this is a state university, which means that my Constitutional guarantees of freedoms of speech and press are in force. You fire me and I will slap a lawsuit on you so hard and so fast it will make your head spin. This is not a threat; this is a promise. And I will win that lawsuit, *and* I will rip a hole in your budget, *and* I will make sure that everyone knows it was because of you. On top of that, you will have to reimburse all the grant monies for the research that I am currently working on to the agencies that granted me those grants. My reputation will have been damaged with those granting agencies, which means further damages in the lawsuit. I will be laughing all

the way to the bank. Prior to returning to my position at the university.”

“And, trust me, that is just the beginning of what I can, and will, do.”

He stood up. “And speaking of research, I have wasted enough time with this and have to get back to work. Good day.”

He exited the office, leaving a stupefied Moroni, who had seen his own power evaporate. Needless to say, Nyström was not in a good. On the way back to his office he passed three coeds, talking with each other, one of which said, “I’m thinking of dropping out of school.”

As he passed, he said, “Good! The world needs more strippers!”

Dan was peacefully reading *I Am A Cat*, chuckling, when he marched right up into his office. He told his colleague what had transpired. Dan shook his head in disgust.

“Dan, let me ask you: if Pushkin comes to shove, do you think the faculty will back me up? I mean, we’re talking about the essence of a university. That’s the issue here. They have a stake in this.”

Dan pursed his lips, leaned back in his chair, hands behind his head, looking up at the ceiling. He spoke slowly. “Magnus, let me let you in on a little secret, in case you haven’t realized it by now: Intellectuals are cowards. Always have been.”

“I think it was Martin Luther King who said, ‘In the end we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.’” He chuckled.

“There is a cherished myth among intellectuals, which they hold dear to their hearts. It is that they are courageous individuals who will defy authority for the sake of The Truth

and for Humanitarianism and for Intellect and for Compassion, and so on, that they will do so regardless of the punitive consequences and, if necessary, will die for that idealism. Actually, that's a bunch of bull. Anyone that's ever been around intellectuals long enough knows that the vast majority of them are cowards when confronted by authority, or by common thugs. Men like Solzhenitsyn and Thomas More are the exception to the rule."

"You see, Magnus, you forget one very important thing and that is that universities turn out thousands of graduates, most of whom can't get a job in their academic fields, so for every academic position that is already filled, there are 8,000 salivating replacements, waiting, just waiting. Everyone who's employed in college knows this and they are terrified that if they somehow lose their job, they will end up working outside their field. And by that, I mean actually *working*. It's always been that way throughout history."

"Well," said Magnus after taking a few seconds to digest what his colleague had said, "and what about you? If this thing with Moroni goes through, where do you stand?"

Dan looked at him. "I will cross that bridge when I get there."

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Another neurological disorder is Parkinson's disease. It often starts as a slight tremor in one's hands and over the years it progressively gets worse as a person loses muscular control, though speech remains fairly secure until the end. The Canadian actor, Michael Fox, and the British actor, Terry-Thomas, had it. In fact, Terry-Thomas said that in the period when it was really bad and he needed to enter a room, he would

trick his body by doing a little dance towards the room. Mind you, the tremors are a well-known symptom of the disease, because it is so dramatic, but not all persons with Parkinson's have tremors."

"Anyway, the root cause of the problem lies in the *substantia nigra* in the midbrain. Its shape looks like a U, but it is actually two separate sections. The neurons in that structure slowly degenerate."

"The symptoms of Parkinson's can be alleviated for long periods by various medications, such as L-Dopa. No jokes, please." Nyström smiled at his students. "But aside from the illness itself, the patient also has to deal with depression caused by the breakdown of the patient's social and vocational life."

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Nyström was in his office hard at work trying to make sense out of the results of a discriminant analysis he had undertaken. He decided to take a break from work and check his emails. One in particular caught his eye, sent by someone within the university named Okatu Bukabutu, head of something called the university's Bias Response Team. As he read the contents, he frowned. It read he was accused by a student of using a racial slur. A hearing would be held this coming Friday at 2PM and he was told to be there.

He wrote back, asking for details: who, when, where. Back came the response: the details would be provided at the time of the hearing.

Nyström frowned. Racial slur? No way. He tried thinking of any possibility at some time that he might have been misinterpreted. He racked his brain, but couldn't think of anything. Then, he thought about his encounter with the petitioners wanting signatures for that Constitutional Amendment, but he had not used a racial slur. Besides, the

imbeciles had been white. Could it be they lied? Most likely. They were the type.

And what was this Bias Response Team, anyway?

He left his office and asked around of some of his colleagues. In mentioning the name of Bias Response Team, and the nature of the email, their eyes had widened and they had instantly become distant.

All but Dan.

“It’s the university’s version of the KGB. I’m surprised you haven’t heard of it. They encourage students and faculty to snitch on each other, denounce any words or action that goes against the ideology of Political Correctness. Very nasty. Very dangerous. I’d say your job’s on the line.”

“The damned thing is, I can’t fathom why I’d be called in.”

“These days, it doesn’t take much.”

“And they won’t tell me ahead of time. And I’m not given any of the details.”

“Typical. I suggest you go in with a lawyer and a recording device. Ask first, though I doubt that they’ll consent. They don’t like the light of day. Like vampires,” he chuckled.

Nyström later e-mailed Bukabutu, asking about bringing a recording device and an attorney and the answer was no to both. He then asked if the student was going to be there at the meeting (again, no) and if anyone else would be there. Two administrators by the name of Rojo and Goldman would also be present.

By the next day, Nyström’s anxiety was gone, replaced by his usual self-confidence.



On Thursday, he and Dan went to a nearby, very popular, Chinese restaurant for lunch, to continue their discussion on a potential collaborative research project.

“Well, speak of the devil,” Dan muttered, looking up from his moo goo gai pan.

“What?”

“Wait, don’t turn around! It’s the trio that you’re going to see tomorrow. They just walked in.” Across the restaurant, the trio walked to the other half of the restaurant, followed by the psychologists’ eyes, heads at a slight angle, peering at them.

“I know those three,” said Dan. “Goldman has a degree in Women’s Studies, Rojo has one in philosophy, and Buka-whatever has one in Communications. The only place where they could get a job with those useless degrees is a university.”

“How do you know them? You had problems with them?”

“Oh, no! A while back when the Bias Response crap was first set up, there was a get together to get to know them and let down our guard. I remember you didn’t go.”

“I guess I didn’t get the memo,” Magnus joked. “I don’t remember. What else you know about them?”

“What else? Not much, nothing that will help you. I remember getting the impression that Goldman sleeps with a picture of Che Guevara by his bed. Probably has erotic dreams of him and Che together. I don’t know, there’s something about his face that just makes me want to smash it.” He paused. “Rojo? Pfft.” He shrugged. “Philosophers nowadays are useless. The real intellectual advances these days have nothing to do with philosophy. These days, the only thing that philosophers can argue about with any authority is whether pizza should be round, or flat.”

Magnus chuckled. "And the third?"

"The fat one, the one with three, four bellies on her. Don't know anything about her other than she's married."

"To a man?" Magnus asked, surprised.

"Oh, yes, she's taken all right. All 40 acres of her. She even comes with a mule."

"Dan, I like you. You're just like me," Magnus grinned.

"Magnus, what can I say? You've been a bad influence on me." He had his moo goo gai pan halfway up to his mouth. "Oh, damn! I just now remembered! I was going to tell you the other day, but you weren't in your office. I guess you were in class: if they tell you at the hearing to resign, *do not resign!* Under no circumstances resign, no matter what they tell you, that if you resign, you'll get a good letter of recommendation when you apply to another job, or that if you don't resign, you'll get fired and that will look really bad in applying for the next job. Whatever! Do-not-resign! I've been reading about others in universities who have had run-ins with these types of people. And do not apologize!"

"I'll keep that in mind."

On Friday, Professor Magnus Nyström was in time for his appointment. The trio would have been surprised to learn that he was eager to start. They all introduced themselves and shook hands while smiling. As they did so, Magnus remembered that hyenas laugh while ripping apart a poor animal to pieces.

"Dr. Nyström, thank you for coming. I'm Okatu Bukabutu."

"Yes, you are."

"Pardon?"

"I'm agreeing with you. You're Okatu Bukabutu."

"O . . . kay. And this is Josef Goldman and Fred Rojo."

Like them, he was also smiling. And this puzzled them, but only on a subconscious level.

"Please sit down." They sat around a small round table. "First, I must ask you to take out your cellphone and turn it off and put it on the table here. That way, we won't be interrupted."

"And I won't be able to record," he added. They just smiled. He flourished his cellphone and put it down. She saw that the cellphone was, indeed, off.

"Dr. Nyström, you were recently accused of—"

"By who?"

"Well, we can't tell you that. We have to protect the students from possible retaliation by a teacher."

"So, this is a tribunal, but I cannot confront my accuser. I cannot be represented by an advocate, and there's no impartial recording of the contents of this hearing. This goes against every type of tribunal, in every society since civilization started. Oh, wait, I'm wrong! Communist regimes did the very same thing. I stand corrected. Please go on." He had a smile of mockery in his face.

The trio looked at each other, annoyed looks in their faces. This was going against expectations. Always, the person in the hot seat was cowed, apologetic, groveling, occasionally briefly combative in a mild manner, but never mocking.

"Dr. Nyström, you are accused by one of your students—"

“Oh! So, it was a student of mine? In my classes?” He was genuinely surprised. So, his theory of this having to do with that petition was wrong. They all paused a second to let this sink in and then resumed.

“Yes, one of your students said that you used the n-word in class.”

“Mmm? What n-word? Nitwit?”

“No.”

“Well, which n-word? Numbskull?”

“No!”

“Nincompoop?”

“No!”

“Neurotic?”

“No!”

“Well, which one?”

“Dr. Nyström, stop playing games with us,” said Rojo.

“Yes, don’t be coy. This is serious,” said Goldman.

“I’m not a fish. I’m a person.”

“What has that got to do with—Oh!” said Bukabutu. “Dr. Nyström, you’re not taking this hearing seriously!”

“On the contrary, I take this hearing very seriously. It’s you people that I don’t take seriously at all.” They were angry now. “Perhaps my attitude would change if you provided me with the specifics.”

Bukabutu resumed the accusation in a rapid tone, intending to get through the first part of the hearing without

interruption, before passing judgment. "You are accused of using a racial epithet during a lecture in one of your classes." Nyström was now frowning. "Specifically, it was a week ago, during third period, and the lecture was on neurological disorders, in this case, Parkinson's disease. I gather you deny the accusation."

Nyström did not answer. His brow was deeply furrowed, trying to remember that lecture. Parkinson's had nothing to do with race. Asians and blacks are afflicted at a somewhat lower incidence, it is true, but he was pretty sure that he had not mentioned it in class, not that that piece of information was racist in any way. But, these days . . . . Several seconds passed, as he racked his memory, trying to think back.

"I'm . . . sure . . . that student was confused . . . or made it up. Oh, wait!!" He sat bolt upright, his mouth opened and his eyes became big as saucers. This was instantly followed by an explosive guffaw, followed by some laughter.

"Yes?" Rojo prodded. "We're waiting."

"God, that student must be a moron! I even think I know who it is."

"Don't come to any conclusions on the identity of the student," Bukabutu warned.

"No matter. That's not important. I couldn't care less. I know what that idiot's referring to: Parkinson's Disease originates deep inside the brain in the structure called *substantia nigra*. It's Latin. Black substance. All anatomical parts are labeled in Latin. The *substantia nigra* is so-called because, unlike the surrounding area, it's darkly colored. It's *nigra*! It's Latin for black! That's what the moron was referring to! God, what a jackass!" They had winced every time that he mentioned "*nigra*."

"So, you are saying it was all a misunderstanding?"

Bukabutu asked.

“Yes, of course. It’s obvious!” He was still smiling, amused at the whole thing, slightly shaking his head at the idiocy, making a sound of amusement. “Ahhh.”

“You could have used another word for that anatomical structure. Or omit the name altogether,” Goldman suggested.

“That would have been unscientific,” Nyström countered, suddenly serious.

“That student was so traumatized in hearing that word that the student had to go to a Safe Place for comfort.”

“‘Safe Place?’ ‘Safe Place?’ What’s that?”

“You don’t know about our Safe Place?” Bukabutu asked, very surprised.

“No. I admit that my activity on campus is very restricted and I need to pay more attention. Which I plan to do from now on.”

Rojo explained. “Well, it’s literally what the name says. It’s a safe place where students can come to if they’re traumatized by something, like being exposed to racial slurs, or listening to something that Donald Trump said. It’s a place to de-stress. It’s a mellow, nonthreatening environment. There are coloring books there, as well as puppies.”

“You’re being serious?” an unbelieving Nyström asked.

“Yes,” Rojo nodded. “And by the way, it’s a place to go to for people who read your recent article on the pandemic.”

Nyström just stared at Rojo with dagger looks.

“Dr. Nyström, it is my understanding that, in the past, you have used IQ tests for your research,” Goldman

pointed out.

“Yes. So?”

“IQ tests are racist.”

Nyström let loose with an obscenity, followed by, “You don’t know what the hell you’re talking about.”

“You know,” Goldman said, pointing a finger at him, “I used to be just like you.”

“What? Smart?”

“I was going to say arrogant.”

“I prefer the word insolent, if you don’t mind. Anyway, I suppose that to people of a certain intellectual caliber, I come across as arrogant.”

“Intellectual caliber?” Bukabutu asked, arching her eyebrows.

“Yes. Perceptive,” he evaded the trap.

“Dr. Nyström, in view of your attitude, the use of a racial slur, and your past use of racist IQ tests, we must ask for your resignation,” Bukabutu concluded.

“No.”

“No?” she repeated. “Just no?”

“Yes. That’s what I said. I said no. By the way, I find it interesting that you came to that conclusion before deliberating.”

“Well, in that case, since you won’t tender your resignation, we’re going to recommend that you be terminated from the university.”

“As expected.”

All rose from their seats.

“Goodbye. Don’t forget your cellphone,” Bukabutu nodded at the table.

Nyström picked up his cellphone and walked out of the room and the building.

As he walked back to his office, he took a small object and put it in his ear.

“Mike, tell me that you got all that.”

“Loud and clear, Dr. Nyström, loud and clear” said the private investigator. “What a bunch of characters! They have no concept of due process, do they?”

“Nope. Ok, I’m going to drop off your equipment at your office later on today. In the meantime, can you make me a few copies of the hearing?”

“No problem. You gonna drop them off at your lawyer?”

“Yeah. He’s waiting to hear from me, ready to file papers with the court five minutes after I get fired. He’s as eager to get started as I am. He was practically salivating when I gave him all the details. I imagine that he’ll be even happier when he gets a copy.”

“I’ll have it ready for you by four.”

“Ok. See you then.”

“Say, Dr. Nyström, one more thing, if you don’t mind my making a suggestion. Why don’t you post this on social media? Those three are going to be bombarded by ridicule from all over the country and beyond if you do that.”

“Way ahead of you.”

“Oh, good! See you later, then.”



As he kept walking, he took out a second recording device from his pocket, one that he knew would be overlooked once he turned off his cellphone and handed it over. He had confidence in Mike, but it always helped to have backup.

And in his office, there also was a copy of a newspaper story from decades ago about a fraternity Halloween costume party in another part of the country. Clearly visible in the picture, and identified by name, was Moroni dressed as a slave owner with whip, and a hapless pledge in blackface, wearing chains.

Yes, sir, he was looking forward to the coming fireworks.

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