

## Another Round of Hoarse, American Style

Written by Alex Baer

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Round 2 of the Predictably Over-hyped and Inappropriate Over-talking Shouting Match between The Professor and The Spewer is now over. Now, maybe our national, throbbing-temple meltdown of a migraine will back off a bit.

It is a good time in America to drop to your knees, break out the secular hallelujahs, remember there is only one more of these things left to go, and be thankful for this Second Gasp of Conclusion. (While you're down there, do you mind checking if that's a stain, or just the lighting in here?)

Once again, candidates were able to shout themselves raw in the peculiarly childish American game of political basketball -- this one spelled *HOARSE*.

While the Proclaimed Pundits and Talking Immovable Hairdos hungrily dissect and desiccate this meeting to nourish their egos, pouncing on chances to foist forward one candidate over the other as The Official Big Winner (TM), others have mixed feelings and views.

(Meanwhile, for indie rock groups scouting for a new band name, you could do worse than Talking Immovable Hairdos -- or Throbbing Temple Meltdown, for that matter.)

Spokesperson for the Loose National Association of Freelance Pundits, Bloggers, and Yammerers, Desiree Paychek, says picking a winner from the verbal free-for-alls is reflective in nature. "You see what you want to see. To paraphrase Jeanette Rankin's famous quote about war, you can no more win one of these so-called debates than you can win an earthquake."

Paychek continued, "But that doesn't stop politicians from showing up, trying to limit damages, survey the wreckage, shake a few hands, then start begging for more financial help the minute the shaking stops."

Another view comes from the Universal Absurdists Guild. On a one to ten scale, they rated this event, "Blue Monday Aardvark, Number Polka Dot," according to their news release, stating,

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"We think the Red boxer would have won if both Rock 'Em Sock 'Em robots had been made equally well, and if Blue would have refrained from repeatedly knocking Red's block off."

Over at *The Prattle Channel*, the Most Interviewed Likely Voter in America was named at the conclusion of her 1,000th completed political interview last night, midway through the Barely Presidential Shout-Off.

The winner is Anita Nudrugg, 54, of Rutabaga Surprise, Ohio. She is a proud homemaker and mother of three, who insists reporters call her "mom." "I'm surprised I'm so popular, just for giving people a stern, but friendly, piece of my mind."

Nudrugg said she had initially been worried her erratic mood swings might interfere with the interviews, but said she talked it over with her doctors. "In the end, I figured I'd just speak my mind, whichever one I had on at the time, and hope that it didn't much affect the national polling or mood."

She added, "It's been a circus around here ever since the last election, what with reporters traipsing through the house at all hours, sticking their heads in the 'fridge, and filing stories at all hours." She paused and shifted her gaze, pointing, and suddenly bellowed like an annoyed drill instructor. "You there -- National Enquirer and Fox. You bozos get off my nice, clean floor -- can't you see I just mopped?"

Other experts know it's been years of bread 'n' circuses for American audiences, likely as not to give the whole rigamarole a thumbs-down, grimly enduring these meetings in the same way an accidentally-scalded cat nonetheless warily tracks all pots of boiling water from now on.

Romney Prep Team Advisor, V.W. Jedda, says, "Closer maybe to 'bred 'n' circuitousness,' maybe. You almost have to be bred to this political beast to make friends with it, otherwise you just go 'round and 'round, trying to dodge the long fangs at one end and the sharp tail-spikes at the other."

Jedda said, "Since Romney's cult doesn't allow him caffeine or stimulants, we had to find other

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ways to get him really pumped up before one of these shindigs. Ann's worried about his mental state, but I'm only concerned his heart can take the training stresses."

Jedda's methods reportedly involve exposure to attack dogs, random gunfire and explosions, the cracking of whips, the sudden dropping of bathtub- and piano-sized objects near him, and not allowing bathroom breaks until long pages of GOP talking points have been successfully blurted out.

He would not confirm or deny his methods, which he says are trade secrets. "But I can tell you we no longer do those 'North By Northwest' swoop-downs while candidates are out walking or jogging," he lamented, sighing regretfully. "Prop-jockeys can't keep their dang yaps shut, and jets are just too fast for those buzz-cut runs."

Jedda also prefers rules of safety now. "First-Lady-in-Waiting wannabe Ann's already said it's their turn to be President, so I don't feel entitled to presume to assume, if you know what I mean. The pay's too good."

For most people, though, this was just another entry in this cycle's long, long, chain of endless, deeply-disturbing quirks featuring the inane default methods used in picking the next President of the United States.

Chad Hangen, senior editor for *Political Hack Weekly*, said, "Most people in foreign countries suspect these things are really game shows to find 'Fussy Squabbler of the Year,' or something, and are astonished to learn this is actually a functional part of the American leadership selection process."

He added, "The rest of the world views these odd contests like everything else that originates here. It's an attitude of, 'These people are insane, but have lots of weapons and enjoy using them on foreign soils and peoples, so let's try to play along for time.'"

Hagen said, "In all, Romney showed his true colors as a millionaire, and the spoiled son who's never had to take instructions or guff from anyone, ever. He plainly wasn't going to answer

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anyone's questions or abandon his GOP talking points and myths, and he sure wasn't going to sit still and start telling the actual truth all of a sudden."

"Obama, on the other hand," he continued, "was presidential, at least, and not a ruptured firehose of misinformation like Romney -- plus, the President stopped looking at his shoes, or taking notes or playing 'Angry Birds' or whatever. And, he even spoke a few times."

Hagen concluded, "But I'll never understand why it is we have moderators. They're totally useless. They moderate nothing. They have no real powers -- they're like a substitute teacher parachuted in to a classroom filled with angry third graders in the midst of a full-blown, food-chucking, eraser-throwing, spitball melee."

"Maybe if they have the power to cut off an offender's mic, after a final warning, or drop them through a trapdoor on the stage -- until then, candidates who feel privileged, special, and entitled to office will run riot over moderators."

Meanwhile, a revealing overnight survey was released by The Home Furnishings Council. Debate viewers who beat their padded furniture with two-by-twos, to help relieve tension or anger, said 3-to-1 there was no clear winner, except for reupholsterers.

Viewers who viciously swatted their sofas and recliners using only a *TV Guide* for the same reasons, said 4-to-1 they had lost respect for the entire election process, while also expressing surprise at all the ink smears from the

*Guide*

, and did anyone know how to remove them from furniture.

A majority of subscribers to *Crossword Aficionado Magazine*, on the other hand, were less beat up and more upbeat, saying Obama appeared fervid, fervent, and somewhat transfixed, while adding that Romney was seen as being extremely gushy, vaporous, hazy --  
*and one other trait, you know, whaddyacallit: seven letters, has a "dubya" at dead center...*

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