Scathing Atheist 680:

The “Downchuck Edition” Edition

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Sponsor:

This week’s episode of the Scathing Atheist is brought to you by ... the new gasoline alternative for creationists that don’t believe in fossils; facile fuels. Facile fuels: Because acknowledging any real thing fucks up your worldview, so you might as well stay put.

And now, the Scathing Atheist.

Intro:

It's Thursday!

It’s March 26th,

And it's National Make Up Your Own Holiday Day!

Day of the LAMP...DAMN IT.

Maybe next year. I’m Noah Lugeons,

I’m Eli Bosnick,

I'm Heath Enwright, and from Kellyanne Conway's New Jersey; Ann Arbor, Michigan; and Waycross, Georgia ... this is the Scathing Atheist.

On this week’s episode,

- Pete Hegseth puts the A hole in a holy war
- A top-level FEMA official makes up a lie about being the worst X-Man ever,
- And we’ll make sure our obituary skills are warmed up for when the big one happens.

But first, the Diatribe...

Diatribe

When I first thought about doing these diatribes, it was because pretty much every week at least one thing would happen to me that would make me want to yell about it for five minutes. Okay, sorry, *dozens* of those things happened every week, but at least once a week, one of them would be about religion.

Now, to be honest, those experiences are far less common in my life now. My job allows me to stay home most of the time, and — with the exception of an inbox full of rabid trolls — all the people I interact with at work are atheists. And pretty much all the people I know are at least well aware that I'm an atheist and mostly avoid talking about religion around me; either because they're polite or because I'm better at it than them. So it's far less often that life triggers a random diatribe for me nowadays. Hell, half the time I have to go looking for shit to get outraged about online… which is why so many of the diatribes these days center around interactions I had on social media.

But sometimes life still just drops one in my lap. As it did on Monday morning.

So I'm in the hospital waiting room waiting to get some blood drawn for a cardiologist appointment. Nothing to worry about, routine checkup stuff. And apparently Monday morning is the exact wrong time to do that shit, because the place is packed. The waiting room at the heart center is standing room only. And sharing the room with me that morning was a young man, maybe in his mid-twenties, who was developmentally disabled, gregarious, and evangelical.

And at first, it's enough to melt my atheist heart. He's striking up conversations with random strangers in the waiting room by asking them to pray for his dad, who's having heart surgery that day. And look, he didn't ask me, but if he did, I'd have said yes. I may even have bowed my head and said "mumble, mumble, mumble, amen." Maybe there's a better, more atheist way to handle it, but I'm not gonna challenge a mentally disabled person's religious convictions while his dad is under the knife. So when I first saw that, I just felt sympathy for him.

But, given that he had no trouble finding fellow evangelists in a South Georgia hospital waiting room, he elected to have a very loud conversation with several people littered throughout the cramped little area about how great Jesus is and how sad he is that some people don't have Jesus in their lives. And at this point it becomes annoying, but that's all it is. I look at it like I'd look at a precocious seven year old loudly opining on his favorite Pokemon. But then he started talking about Charlie Kirk.

And now I'm obviously just learning what shitty people his parents are. He brings up Charlie Kirk and one of the old ladies who's been roped into his conversation doesn't know who that is, so he has to explain. And the lady is African American, so luckily he doesn't know a lot of details. He does, at one point, kind of graphically reenact what Charlie looked like when he got shot, which was low key hilarious, but it certainly moved outside the realm of precocious at that point.

Still, I sat there with my eyes on my phone, reminding myself that he doesn't have the capacity to understand what is and isn't an appropriate conversation to have in public. Even as the conversation turns to how angry he is that some people won't talk to him about God and how terrible people who don't believe in his god are. Eventually his mom gets done with whatever she was doing and rejoins him. And — shocked as I was — she doesn't remind him that in a room of 40 random people there are almost certainly non-Christians (yes, even in my deep south town), and that it's very impolite to talk about how gross they are in public.

And, it should be noted, he wasn't just having this conversation with the ceiling tiles or anything. There were three other people seeded throughout the waiting area that were yes-anding the *fuck* out of his bigotry. "They're just in love with their sin," "they're afraid of what they see in the mirror," "they're just not ready to face the lord." Those are all direct quotes from the conversation and none of those came from him. Those are just the kind of oblivious "fuck yous" Christian people can freely toss out when they're in a confident majority.

So eventually he and his mom get called back. But the conversation continues in his absence. For the rest of the time I'm sitting there, which is another five or six minutes, all these newfound friends, united in a common bigotry, continue to talk about how sad it must be to be me. Y'all, I feel like my fucking blood samples should have an asterisk next to them. I don't want my cardiologist thinking I'm walking around with that much cortisol in my shit all the time. Luckily they weren't checking my blood pressure on this one or I'd have wound up admitted.

But, of course, it was one of those situations where I was mad as hell, but I wasn't mad *at* anyone. I mean, sure, the ladies who were disparaging atheists in the waiting room knew better. But one of them was a septuagenarian taking her blind, deaf father to his heart appointment. Another was in a wheelchair sporting supplemental oxygen. I mean, as you hear me recount the story, there might be part of you wishing that I'd interjected and had some kind of clever tirade in the moment that knocked them down a peg. But there's nobody at the waiting room at the Satilla Memorial Heart Center on Monday morning who you really wanna knock down any pegs. So what I did was sit in a room listening to people talk about what a piece of shit I was and reminded myself how nice it is that I at least get to yell about it to you later.

Headlines

Joining me for headlines tonight are the Prizefighter and Compensated Anarchist to my Bomb Squad Tech, Heath Enwright and Eli Bosnick. Fellas, are you ready to show some class?

GLURP GLURP MOTHERFUCKER

Can't tell if that's a reference I don't get, or if Eli descended 2% further into madness.

And with the sad realization that it's both, we'll pause for a word from this week's sponsor, The Council for an Ad-Free Future.

And now, back to the headlines.

In our lead story tonight, a couple of weeks ago, we talked about the VERY dubious claims from the Military Religious Freedom Foundation founder Mikey Weinstein about how 110 different people from 40 different units on 30 different bases told him (and only him) that their commanders were telling them Trump was anointed by Christ and the war in Iran was gonna trigger his return. Literally no other source has heard anything about this, including other atheist watchdog groups. And Weinstein refuses to show reporters from other outlets any of the 110 emails he got, even redacted, even if they agree not to publish. So there are plenty of reasons to doubt that claim and no reasons to believe it.

Dont worry mikey. I ALSO have been the only one with evidence that a thing I said on the internet was true. Heavy is the head that wears the crown.

That being said, Pete Hegseth *is* a Christian Nationalist with calls to crusade tattooed on his body. So it's not like he doesn't actually think that shit. Which we're reminded of virtually every time he opens his goddamn mouth in an official capacity.

Even when he opens it to vomit. Sometimes he holds it, and he's like...yeah do a crusade.

So let me just walk you through a couple of disturbing comments he's recently made about his campaign of holy retribution against the infidels. Like, for example, when he turned the disturbingly ubiquitous call to "pray for our troops" that ends wartime press briefings into an altar call, asking people for prayers (quote) "Every day, on bended knee, with your family, in your schools, in your churches, in the name of Jesus Christ" (end quote). Which doesn't even hit that bullshit line of secularity that forgives "In God We Trust."

Did we just FORGET to pray about Vietnam and Afghanistan?...or maybe Jesus isn't always a big fan of the US.

I mean he is middle eastern.

But in case we weren't clear on which divine deity is keeping our casualties so low, he reminded viewers on *60 Minutes* that (quote) "The providence of our almighty God is there protecting those troops" (end quote), unmistakably implying that their God didn't really have the spoons for it. He's also claimed in the past that (quote) "[t]here's a direct throughline from the Old and New Testament Christian gospels to the development of Western Civilization and the United States of America" (end quote). Which is pretty fucking rich because there's not even *really* a throughline between the old and new testaments.

Temple of israel. Kill my kid. Then like a couple thousand years later. Gold conspiracy theorists are gonna genocide there way to the perfect example of the failure of capitalism. It's all part of the plan.

And look, I get that the Trump administration's whole thing is failing to pay heed to the typical conventions of diversity. I get that we're not gonna get inclusivity from Hegseth. But when we're in the middle of bombing a Muslim country with no plausible justification for the war, maybe we be as un-crusadey as possible? But no, apparently the best we can hope for with Pete "Let me show you how to kill a man with a comb" Hegseth is that he doesn't arrive at the podium wearing Templar armor.

I mean he's already got the tattoo.

Are we SURE those naked kids in the children's crusade didn't part the Mediterranean? Because waterbending could really help with the Strait of Hormuz.

And honestly, the main reason I wanna bring it up is to emphasize what a terrible disservice Weinstein did by throwing out demonstrably bullshit to this effect at the beginning of the conflict. He's armed Christian Nationalists with a ready made refutation that they're already over-applying to shit that Hegseth and Trump have said *on the record*. It's just another great reminder of why it's so dangerous to throw out plausible bullshit that supports your side, and so dangerous to share information from an unreliable source.

If this is your way of firing me you have to tell me.

Mikey Weinstein's full of shit, but Hegseth is still being WAY too Christian about killing Muslims: https://www.nytimes.com/2026/03/20/us/politics/hegseth-christianity-military.html

And in "Jdub blud flub" news ... Like the drunk driving train wreck from high school you kept on your Facebook to hate watch, the J-dubs have been cleaning up their act the last couple of years. <that is NOT like my drunk driving train wreck from high school> They lost a bunch of legal stuff about being rapey…not really an internal improvement, more of an outside-in thing…but still, they also let their members wear T-shirts sometimes, and now they've added one of their deadliest and dumbest policies: their policy against accepting blood transfusions.

Here's all you need to know about Jehovah's Witnesses: Eli had to come up with a list of three good things they did. One was the story he was covering. He wound up with a lawsuit they lost and a thing the Mormons did that he forgot wasn't the J-dubs.

Yeah, so first off, a big thanks to Jason at Fanthorpe Cleaning and Hand Dug History for the pun AND for sending us this story to scathingnews@gmail.com. If you think about it, by sending us atheist news to scathingnews@gmail.com, Jason has bought himself a free ad for our MILLIONS of listeners for Hand Dug History. What does Hand Dug History sell? Are its wares beautiful? Affordable? A fantastic emblem of reuse in a world that throws too much away? Only our curious and sexually powerful listeners will know. scathingnews@gmail.com and of course Hand Dug History…

To be clear, we're not including an ad for your thing when you send us news. If you want free ads for your podcast, you still have to send a Farnsworth Quote.

Right, so for those of you out of the know, Jehovah's Witnesses started forbidding their cult from getting blood transfusions back in 1945 because the Bible says not to "use" blood. To be clear, the passage in question is about sacrifices and eating; if it was referencing a technology that wouldn't be around for millennia, this podcast would be called The Scathing Jehovah's Witness Who Is Convinced His Religion Is True Because the Bible Predicted Blood Transfusions.

...and his two equally important friends.

And his two equally important friends, exactly.

…there was only one of us when I named it…

But weak as that explanation is, that policy has caused the death of tens of thousands of Jehovah's Witnesses and has led even more to drop the bit and be disfellowshipped and shunned for the grave crime of…saving their kid's life. Now you're probably asking yourself, okay, what about saving your own blood just in case? Great question, Jehovah's Witness Heath. No deal. Or at least it was no deal in the year 2000 when the church explicitly addressed this and said, quote, "such collecting, storing, and transfusing of blood directly contradicts what is said in Leviticus and Deuteronomy. <So does the germ theory of disease, but okay.> Blood is not to be stored; it is to be poured out—returned to God, as it were. Granted, the Mosaic Law is not in force now. Nevertheless, Jehovah's Witnesses respect the principles God included in it, and they are determined to 'abstain from blood.' Hence, we do not donate blood, nor do we store for transfusion our blood that should be 'poured out.' That practice conflicts with God's law."

Yeah, surgeons had to call their J-dub patients months ahead of time and say: "I need you to start hoarding your own blood because you're crazy." And most of those people responded with: "NO I'm not crazy"...and then recited that whole thing about God not accepting returns or exchanges for blood.

Yeah, I'd love it if the explanation of your medical treatment sounded a little less like an argument about Dragon Ball Z lore.

Side note: as a Jew, you know…the people who AUTHORED the Old Testament and didn't get fucking duped by a sequel. There is NOTHING better than fooling God. Sin-filled chicken? Bag of gold coins. Can't go outside? Dangerous wire around your new neighborhood. God is Wile E. Coyote and we are the goddamn Road Runner.

Can't turn off lights or stoves after sundown on Friday?...and can't TECHNICALLY ask for help? Get Heath to go into your apartment with wild miming and eventually get him to turn off your

stuff with a crazy grunt-based game of warmer/colder during which your unwitting Sabbath goy thinks you're mad at him the whole time and he doesn't know why.

Exactly. But the Jehovah's Witnesses, sadly, are not able to duck season wabbit season their god, <The Elmer Fudd of religions. I've always said that.> so they just gotta fucking DC reboot their religion every now and then, this week when Governing Body member Gerrit Lösch announced that, quote, "The Bible does not comment on the use of a person's own blood in medical and surgical care. Regarding the use of one's own blood, our position has been, as is stated in the October 15, 2000 issue of The Watchtower. There, it says, 'A Christian must decide for himself how his own blood will be handled in the course of a surgical procedure, medical test, or current therapy.'"

Apparently Gerrit Lösch is Eli in a mustache and glasses over his beard and glasses.

LYING, exactly. He concludes, quote, "Therefore, after much prayer and consideration of the scriptures, the Governing Body has decided to clarify our position on the use of a patient's own blood in medical and surgical care. The clarification is this: Each Christian must decide for himself how his own blood will be used in all medical and surgical care. This includes whether to allow his own blood to be removed, stored, and then given back to him."

So they're willing to revise the inerrant word of God, but not in a way that would keep all those kids from dying. Cool, cool, cool. Very cool.

So yeah, that's not a clarification…that's just lying about what you said before. Though I will be trying to use that trick on Keith in the near future. <you did the KEITH thing again> Let me clarify…no, I didn't. And look, this is good news, right? All moves away from evil, life-destroying policies are good ones, but they are also proof that they NEVER had to have these policies in the first place. So congrats to every city corner's weirdest old lady duos, and hopefully you get a birthday sometime this century.

Jehovah's Witnesses issue "clarification" on blood transfusion ban after decades of suffering: https://www.friendlyatheist.com/p/jehovahs-witnesses-issue-clarification

And in "Western Sieve" news ... That's S-I-E-V-E. <It's actually quite clever, you just can't tell.> You know when you make a pot of french press coffee...and when you clean up, you should really be pouring the used grounds over a sieve so you don't fuck up the garbage disposal? According to a Christian Right congresswoman, it's the same with abortion and miscarriage. GOP Representative Mary Miller of Illinois wants every abortion and miscarriage to happen over a colander so it doesn't fuck up the plumbing.

I mean…you can WANT whatever you want…

Yeah, I'm still putting my abortions in the garbage disposal. I don't know what to tell her.

So it might sound like this is yet another anti-choice ghoul who wants to restrict bodily autonomy in the name of a hippie rabbi from 2000 years ago who never mentioned anything about any of this. But no it's not; you're being too cynical. It's about the ENVIRONMENT. Mary Miller cares about CLEAN WATER. And that's why she introduced a new bill last week called the "Clean Water For All Life Act." Because whorish women all over the country are constantly polluting our ecosystem with tiny little dead babies. The new environmental law has 3 main components. (1): It would ban all telemedicine for prescribing medication like mifepristone. <for the environment!> (2): It would require a doctor to be physically present during the process of the medically-induced abortion. To be clear about the logistics, that's a doctor just hanging out for several days and following patients into the bathroom. <Or just watching her take the pill and then checking that she didn't hide it in her cheeks, maybe?> And (3): It would require a colander, or in the words of the bill...a "catch kit."

For…for the environment

Okay, there's no way to say "fine mesh fetus sieve" without making it sound weird, but you'd be hard pressed to find a worse term than "catch kit."

You're probably wondering...ARE YOU FUCKING SERIOUS?!? Great question. And yes. The bill would require every patient to "catch" their abortion or miscarriage, and then bring it to a medical facility "for proper disposal." Robyn Pennacchia covered the story at *Wonkette* and found an example of the "catch kit" on Amazon and provided a photo in the article. And it's literally a colander that attaches to a toilet seat. And it comes with accessories, including a bag with a decorative heart on the side.



Yeah to be clear these kits are for crazy people to wrap their period blood in a satin bag so they can have a hamster funeral for it and the only more insane that than is MAKING people do it.

It comes with a little plastic Dairy Queen spoon.

So according to a press release from Mary Miller's office: (quote) "The murder-for-profit abortion industry <Tall Tyler in the background mumbling 'environment' really loud under a throat-clear> has completely ignored the dangerous and unethical disposal of pre-born baby remains and toxic chemical waste produced by abortion pills" (end quote). <and I say this without bias> And during a press conference last week, Miller added that medically-induced abortion is polluting our water. But here's the crucial detail: No it's not. She's lying. There's evidence that trace amounts of certain medications make it through our public water filtration systems, but mifepristone and misoprostol are NOT. They break down quickly inside the body. Also, the trace amounts of other drugs that DO show up are tracey as fuck. And that's a science term that most people haven't heard before, so here's a more detailed description of "tracey as fuck" from environmental chemist Sébastien Sauvé of the University of Montreal: (quote) "If you were to drink 2 liters of water a day for 70 years, at the end of those 70 years, you would've taken 1% of the normal daily dose of someone taking that prescribed medication."

Your welcome for the free zoloft everybody

I feel like there's an implied asterisk for the water filtered out of your piss, Eli. "With Eli's piss water, you get it in the first 90 days" kind of thing. Also, "Sebastien Suave" sounds like a cartoon lethario.

Also worth noting: The bill would allow for exceptions in which the abortion was deemed medically necessary. That might sound good, but it's clearly just a way to make the terrible bill more likely to pass. And it also gives away the game. If this was about the environment, they wouldn't have that exception. OR...and this is possible...Mary Miller thinks the water can sense it when there's a sinister motivation at play. Or in the sarcastic words of Robyn Pennacchia: "The water can totally tell whether you didn't wanna have a baby, or if you wanted a baby and it didn't work out. Sort of like when Masaru Emoto 'proved' that 'water has feelings' by yelling at one thing of water, and praising another, and then freezing em both to see which produced the prettiest ice crystals."

Heath if you're proposing we do this with abortions to see if the fetus is smiling or frowning…I'm IN.

So fuck all of that. But the bill's not gonna be passing in Illinois. That being said, it clearly represents a ridiculous new angle that anti-choice theocrats are gonna be using in other states too. And if you're thinking about some sort of prank involving a tiny little flying spaghetti monster showing up at the office of a Christian theocrat...that would be crass and possibly illegal...and whether or not it would be super funny is neither here nor there. And I would NOT be allowed to give out Heath points for that.

Christian Right congresswoman wants you to put your abortion in a potty colander:
https://www.wonkette.com/p/very-sane-congresswoman-wants-you

And since we're already on the misogyny subject anyway, we should take a quick break and hand you over to my lovely wife, Lucinda.

HEADLINES B:

Thank you, Lucinda. And in "Last of the Pro-Deacons" news tonight, you know, we give the Catholic church a lot of shit for failing to punish deacons when it comes to child sex abuse. So it's only fair that we also highlight it when they *do*. Which was the case with Scott Peyton, a Catholic deacon that was excommunicated over child molestation. Except that he wasn't the child molestor. He was the victim's father. And when his kid was molested, he left the church. And *that's* what they excommunicated him for.

Gotta parent better...git gud...fiat fiat fiat excommunicatio.

So first of all, huge thanks to Stormy for sending the article to Scathing News at Gmail dot com, and for giving me the excellent opening pun. To be honest, I was on the fence about whether to do this story or a different one and it was that "last of the pro-Deacons" bit that pushed me over. Well done.

Honestly you give noah and heath a good enough pun they'll do your dad's obituary

Now, I need to be clear that Scott's story isn't new. This all happened back in 2024. We covered it on episode 580 when it first happened. But the short version goes like this: Scott Peyton was a Roman Catholic deacon in Louisiana. In 2018, a priest he'd ministered with confessed to molesting his son and was arrested. A few years after that, the church and the family agreed to a $350,000 settlement to avoid a civil trial. So at this point, he's like "not super comfortable going to the church where my son got molested… especially since it's the church that's kind of synonymous with letting people's sons get molested," so he quit and joined a different congregation. So they excommunicated him.

When victims and their families get a little too sassy, there's a salt-based divine protector in Happy Science Cult Buddhism who can help with that and teach em a lesson.

Of course, from our perspective that's nothing. He left their club so they put a hex on him. But for a believer, that's some serious shit. It's the highest level spell in the priest-class and, unless you get some serious debuffs between then and death, it ends in eternal damnation. Which is easy for me to make fun of — because it's fucking silly — but if you genuinely believe this shit (which Peyton clearly does), this is some "keep you up at night" type stress.

Okay can we get some pass interference from pope bob here? Quick bibbidity **bob**bidy boo if you will?

Now, when this was in the news a couple years ago, the narrative the Vatican was trying to subtly push was that this was all the work of one overzealous local bishop and would probably get overturned on review. But that review was supposed to be over a year ago and Peyton *still* hasn't heard anything from the ecclesiastical appeals court (or whatever.) In the meantime, by the way, the same diocese has had another priest charged with three counts of felony indecent behavior with a juvenile. Very likely because they were more focused on punishing the victims than the perpetrators.

Catholic deacon excommunicated for being all mad about his kid getting molested: https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2026/mar/22/louisiana-deacon-excoummunication-appeal

And in "Antarcticult" news ... One of the great benefits of our job is the ability to re-adjudicate old arguments with a headline introduction. For example, almost a decade ago, when I was handing out atheism pamphlets on the streets of New York with a colander on my head <sorry ladies he's taken> I handed one of the <get your own "catch kit"> I handed one of the pamphlets to a guy a little older than me who looked at the pamphlet, thanked me, and said, "I just think atheism is a little silly," and I will admit to you, podcast listener, that his answer has stuck with me. <Yeah, hard to argue back with a colander on your head.> Not because it was dismissive or mean; during that brief period, I met literally dozens of normal people who announced their state of full psychosis when I did to them what their religion had been doing to others for about 2000 years. It's that I have no idea WHAT he thinks is silly. Is it our refusal to see that a man with a boat saved all the animals from the biblical flood? Our refusal of the rewritten, retyped, and heavily edited gospels? Is it bald heads and a goatee, in which case he's fucking got us. Well, if he were listening today, I would have a proper repost for him, and that repost is soon-to-be convicted rapist Russell Brand baptized a guy in the penguin pool at a Christian zoo.

Atheism is silly...cool...I raise. I'll see your silly, and I'll raise you silly and incredibly tragic somehow all at the same time. And I say that as a guy who sells rubber thumbs with a colander on his head.

Okay, just — for anybody listening who hasn't *been* to the penguin pool or hasn't been around penguins much… they are in a *constant* state of shitting. Penguins shit like it's part of their respiratory process. Just make sure you keep that at the front of your mind throughout this story.

Exactly. So first off, a big thanks to the Prospector, the one and only Stormy D, for sending us this story and the fantastic pun to scathingnews@gmail.com. If I were baptized into the Church of Stormy D, I'd do so into the loving embrace of your helpful information, Stormy. scathingnews@gmail.com

But let's keep the penguins...I like that part...they fancy.

Constantly shitting. If there was a penguin in this room, he'd have shit three times during this story.

Right, so in case you're unfamiliar with how weird the guy from Forgetting Sarah Marshall has gotten, let me catch you up. Brand is due to stand trial next year after pleading not guilty to two charges of rape, two charges of sexual assault, and one charge of indecent assault at Southwark Crown Court in May. Brand has FOUR accusers, but they all got together in a conspiracy to take down the internet's 9th most irritating YouTuber.

And those aren't all the accusations, just all the ones in this particular class-action suit or whatever.

But if there's one solid takeaway from our podcasting career, it's that when someone fails at a mainstream thing, they start doing the Christian version, so last May Brand was baptized in the River Thames by a guy who thought he needed a televised excuse to drink his own pee, Bear Grylls.

Seems like the TV show was gravy for Bear.

Okay… Thames probably has more shit in it than the penguin pool. I get it if that's the alternative.

Ever since then, if Russell isn't ranting about the hordes of Illuminati out to get him, he's delivering the lamest possible Christian narrative he can get away with, and very obviously THIS week that included a trip to the zoo with his kids, where he also agreed to do some stupid Christian stuff if they got free baseball helmets full of Dippin' Dots.

Okay, to be fair, you catch me on the right day and I'd get baptized for a baseball helmet of Dippin' Dots.

And if you're wondering what kind of zoo lets rapists dunk people in their penguin pool, it's Christian ones. Emerald Coast Zoo in Florida, which describes itself as a "Christian-focused" park with a "focused on God, working for the enjoyment of His people and the happiness of His animals in our care." A priority order which I find DEEPLY concerning.

And the penguin narrative is extra crazy when you're claiming intelligent design instead of evolution. That means God created a bunch of birds...that could FLY THROUGH THE AIR...and then he was like "also penguins...you get...tuxedo hair...go fuck yourself."

"Eagles can't waddle" is a pretty lame consolation, yeah.

But this isn't Brand's first trip to "animals are our 3rd from top priority zoo." According to the Times.com, he visited twice in September to lead the zoo's Halloween event, and I've gotta

admit, “We’re going to the zoo to watch Russell Brand lead a prayer over a group of children” sounds absolutely terrifying.

He looks like Jesus had a really bad divorce and became a mentalist.

And I wanna HIGHLY encourage you, podcast listener, to watch this video. First of all, this is the saddest looking zoo I’ve ever seen. It’s 4 sheets of plexiglass around a golf course feature, and it’s obvious that Russell Brand is going for some WHIMSY. But it’s hard to go for whimsy when you’re…awaiting your rape trial, so he narrates the whole thing like a death row child murderer trying to really play up how delicious his last meal is. <He also looks more ready to shit in that pool than the penguins.> Either way, that zoo is gonna have a convicted rapist to scrub out of a LOT of their social media in a couple months. Really not thinking ahead. And green eyed guy near the 59th Street columbus circle again, I hope you’re listening…cause I THINK THAT…is rather silly….got him.

Russel Brand baptized a guy in the penguin pool at a Christian zoo: https://www.thetimes.com/uk/religion/article/russell-brand-baptism-penguin-enclosure-zoo-kvnd9pmb5

And finally tonight, in "Zoop there it is" news ... A top-level official at FEMA thinks he can teleport. And that sounds like a pretty great magical power that might help streamline the process when you're doing emergency management all over the country. But apparently this guy doesn't have the USEFUL kind of teleportation. It just happens. He's an intel. The official in question is Gregg Phillips...with 3 Gs...and he's the head of FEMA's Office of Response and Recovery. And on top of being shitty at teleporting, he's also an anti-vaxxer conspiracy theorist and a supporter of the Big Lie about the 2020 election. Gregg is allowed to drive and be in control of anything ever, including a major piece of the federal government.

Honestly given how the Trump administration has handled…everything a guy who will stand there going myeh myeh myeh

Also Heath, not to be pedantic, as much as I love “Zoop there it is” as an opening pun, the correct onomatopoeia for teleportation is “Bamf.” Don’t embarrass us in front of the nerds.

And a big thanks to Ray for sending a link to ScathingNews@gmail.com. Ray gets 3 wishes involving our X-Men powers here at Puzzle in a Thunderstorm. No wishing for more wishes, and YES, this is very clearly a Monkey's Paw scenario. Good luck.

Don't worry Ray. The things I want are already bad for me. The wishmaster was just like “okay I guess.”

So here's what we learned about Gregg from CNN. In January of 2025, he appeared on a podcast hosted by who the fuck cares, and he told the story of getting zooped. Where did the

dark warlock who Gregg wronged end up sending him? That would be...a Waffle House. This is Gregg telling the story: (quote) "I was with my boys one time and I was telling them I was gonna go to Waffle House and get Waffle House. [got it] And I ended up at a Waffle House. [yup] This was in Georgia and I end up at a Waffle House like 50 miles away from where I was."

Okay so Gregg's wife checked his location and he was blowing a dude in the Waffle House bathroom and he was like "it was…magic"

Yeah, Gregg, I wanna be clear — I, too, have been hanging out with my friends in Georgia and then suddenly I'm at a Waffle House with no memory of how I got there. That's how almost ALL trips to Waffle House start.

Continuing the story from Gregg: (quote) "They [my kids] said, 'where are you?' And I said, 'a Waffle House.' And they said, 'a Waffle House where?' And I said, 'Waffle House in Rome, Georgia.' And they said, 'That's not possible, you just left here a moment ago.' But it was possible. It was real." (end quote) ... Apparently the two kids were asking questions in unison like a Shakespearean chorus. Weird dynamic. So you're probably wondering about the emotional content of Gregg's magical travel. Well...he's got you covered. He also added: (quote) "Teleporting is no fun. <BUT WHY?> It's no fun because you don't really know what you're doing. You don't really understand it. It's scary, but yet um — but so real. And you know it's happening but you can't do anything about it. And so you just go...you just go with the ride. And wow, what an incredible adventure it all was."

A real one…my adventure

Yeah, when recollecting things that have actually happened to me, I often pause to reflect on how real they were and felt.

And in addition to the direction teleportation, Gregg also did some magical flying. <I mean, if we're doing super powers anyway…> But again, he doesn't have any flying powers of his own that might help. He was driving one day...it was a day in Canada...you don't the day...and then all of a sudden, his truck got lifted up and carried through the air. This lasted for about 40 miles, and he got taken from Albany, Georgia to a ditch. Sounds weird, but the ditch was near a church...in Georgia. He wondered at the time whether the source of the levitation and flying was evil or good. The answer remains unclear.

So basically the head of fema tells everyone it was magic every time he drunk drives. Got it.

So following the investigation that uncovered all the magic, CNN reached out to FEMA with an email that said: (approximate quote) "In re: Gregg Phillips — LOTS to unpack. You wanna explain what the fuck you're doing over there?" And here's the official statement from FEMA in response: (ACTUAL quote) "This is so silly it's barely worth acknowledging. DHS, FEMA, and Mr. Phillips are focused on the critical mission of emergency management and ensuring the safety of the American people. Many of the comments cited are taken out of context or

represent personal, informal, jovial, and somewhat spiritual discussions made in the context of barely surviving cancer; in a private capacity prior to his current role." (end quote)

It was "out of context"? First of all, no it wasn't. But let's pretend it was and grant your premise. What the fuck context would make that reasonable?

People often ask me “what things would disqualify me from office well…”

Maybe the answer is congressional hearing? Hopefully yes, because Gregg is testifying before Congress this week. Gonna repeat that. The guy who claims he can teleport...is speaking to Congress. The hearing is for the House Homeland Security Committee regarding the DHS being shut down...sort of...because Republicans *have to have a team of jackbooted thugs in masks hunting down brown people*. Getting rid of that is a non-starter. We'll see what Gregg has to say about his very serious job, but hopefully we get at least one question about the teleportation. We'll report back next time if any crucial details about teleportation get revealed.

Top FEMA official says he once teleported to a Waffle House:
https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2026/mar/20/fema-gregg-phillips-waffle-house

And quick before any of us get nonconsensually bamfed to a Waffled House, we’ll wrap the headlines there. Heath, Eli, thanks as always.

And when we come back, we’ll see if roundhouse kicks can reach you from beyond the grave.

Son of a Bituary

Some days, the only thing that keeps good-hearted Americans going from day to day is the sure knowledge that people in their eighties die *constantly*. Which we’re reminded of again in this week’s … Son of a Bituary.

So this week we’re going to be celebrating the demise of action icon and conservative MAGA piece of shit Chuck Norris. Who, despite being an absolutely shitty human being in almost all the measurable ways, probably still has quite a few crossover fans with our audience. And I get it. Because I love cheesy, stupid action movies. I don’t necessarily love the ones with Chuck Norris in them, but Jean Claude Van Damme endorsed Trump and I’ll still be sad when he dies. Wait … googling… yeah, he’s still alive. So yeah, point stands.

Yeah the only real downside to Chuck Norris dying is not seeing him fight against Van Damme at the kumite on the White House Lawn that we're having for the 250th birthday of our delightful country. Somebody needs to represent the fighting style called "stand still while I roundhouse kick you in the face."

Andrew tate…oh sorry you meant DO the kicking

So Carlos Ray Norris was born in 1940 in the only Ryan worse than the airline, Ryan, Oklahoma. And he was such an insufferable “tactical water flask” jackass of a white guy that the two paragraph long “early life” portion of his Wikipedia entry mentions his father’s (quote) “distant Cherokee roots” (end quote).

Sorry to grind things to a halt, but my amazing new leather belt has a tactical water flask, and people are gonna be confused. Noah's saying it's *bad* in the context of Chuck Norris.

It's not a water flask. We're really worried about him guys.

Little Carlos was a shy kid. He didn’t sports well, he didn’t smarts well, and he was desperately introverted through childhood. His parents were divorced by the time he was sixteen, and his dad was an occasionally-employed alcoholic. <occasionally employed dad...well LAH-DI-DAH> LIKE REALLY WORRIED He wouldn’t earn the moniker “Chuck” until he joined the Air Force in 1958 and, presumably, got picked on for having a Mexican name. He spent most of his Air Force career stationed in South Korea, and this is where he started studying Tang Soo Do.

And if Chuck was alive today, he'd be telling you about his grand master while you're cornered at a party. But alas, I'll have to do it for him. For everyone who's not a karate pervert, here's the description of Tang Soo Do, straight from TangSooDo.com: (quote) "Tang Soo Do is a traditional Korean martial art [...] combining Okinawan karate, Taekwondo-like kicks, and Chinese, internal, fluid movements. Founded in 1945 by Grand Master Hwang Kee, it emphasizes discipline, mental, and physical fitness. The uniform is called a dobok. And practitioners focus on techniques like kicking, punching, and forms, aiming for a peaceful life."

Alright craig your kicks and punches suck but you live in a cabin in the woods by yourself so here’s your brown belt

By 1962 he was discharged from the Air Force and decided to become a cop. He also opened a martial arts studio and started professionally encouraging people to “come at him like this.” And look, I know we’ve been guilty of failing to show the martial arts their proper respect on this show, so I wanna be clear that there were parts of that man’s seventies where I’m sure he could’ve kicked my ass. Or all three of our asses at the same time. But given my knowledge of recent American history, I’m willing to bet that the success of his chain of karate schools had less to do with him winning the karate “triple crown” in 1969, and a lot more to do with Americans excited to learn karate without having to talk to a Chinese.

Also he was 1970’s good a karate. I feel like I could a kissed a black guy on the mouth and melted the eyes out of his skull

But the inquisitive listener at home is probably wondering all about that "triple crown." In Major League Baseball, it's awarded for those rare players who lead the league in home runs, RBIs, AND batting average. In horse racing, it's awarded for winning the Kentucky Derby, the Preakness, and the Belmont Stakes. And for karate, according to Wikipedia (via Chuck's 1975 book called *Winning Tournament Karate*), the karate triple crown is for "most tournament wins of the year." It's just the one thing, but you get 3 crowns I guess.

But whatever the reason, his chain of schools did take off, and he became karate-master to the stars, boasting Steve McQueen, Bob Barker, Priscilla Presley, and Donnie and Marie Osmond among his students. So if you were ever wondering how it was that Donnie Osmand and Priscilla Presley kicked so much ass, now you know.

Man donnie and marie are really dedicated to practicing their grappling. They've been at it for hours

But no celebrity friendship benefited Chuck more than his relationship with Martial Arts legend Bruce Lee. By the time they met, Bruce Lee already had an impressive filmography in Hong Kong and was well known in the US through his role as Batman's buddy's sidekick Kato on the far-too-short-running Green Hornet TV series. And it was Bruce who gave Chuck his big Hollywood break, casting him as one of the main villains in the 1972 classic *The Way of the Dragon*. Which, to a degree that he must have remained consciously aware of through his entire career, it was the best movie he would ever have any part in.

Probably accurate. But before I make a final call on that for myself, I'll need to see the upcoming Australian feature *Zombie Plane*, featuring Chuck's final acting performance alongside thespian rapper Vanilla Ice. And probably do a podcast about it. Then we'll know for sure.

550 episodes in and were just doing GREAT movies now?

Now, I would argue that Chuck Norris has the least impressive filmography of any actor whose name everybody knows. I'm willing to bet good money to bad doughnuts that most of the people listening to this show have never seen a Chuck Norris movie unless you count cameos. And if you really wanna know how sad his career really is, you need only to look as far as the subheadings in his Wikipedia bio. Because, despite a fifty-two year film career that spanned from 1972 to 2024, Wikipedia's subheading for "Mainstream success" only spans from 1984 to 1989. After that, it downgrades to "subsequent success" from 1990 through 1999. And then he levels down again to "subsequent films and internet fame." And even that peters out in 2005. After that, it's just "later works."

When the final 2 decades of your film career have the heading "palliative care"...not great. Also, Wikipedia quickly bans the person who made the edit...I've heard.

Now, I don't wanna dwell on his movie career here, because as much as it's the only thing he contributed to the world, it's not very funny to talk about… except the fact that literally nothing he did ever reached a 7 or better on IMDB except for *Way of the Dragon* and a TV show he had a cameo on once… And the fact that 8 of the final 18 of his IMDb credits are WBK Bank Commercials. And four of the other ten are commercials for United Healthcare, Toyota Tacomas, Dodge Rams, and Right Guard.

Probably having a chuckle in the afterlife with the United Healthcare CEO.

Told you to learn a roundhouse kick

But of course, the real reason that we're talking about him is because in addition to advertising for Right Guard, he was also quite a spokesman for Reich Guard. Because in addition to being an international Martial Arts superstar, he was also a big ol' bigot. He was an outspoken Christian — which is pretty much just another way of saying 'big ol' bigot' at this point I guess — and yet another synonym would be "staunch conservative." After the release of his 1984 film *Missing in Action*, he declared himself (quote) "a conservative, a flag waver, and a big Ronald Reagan fan" (end quote).

Fun fact about very important cinematic history: *Missing in Action* came out in November of '84 and then *Missing in Action 2* came out in March of '85, JUST before *Rambo 2* was about to release. So they were clearly glomming off the success and artistic vision of the much more serious *Rambo* franchise.

By the early nineties, he was already forcibly retired from Hollywood, so he turned to the small screen and began the role he's best known for in the overripened cheese of a show, *Walker, Texas Ranger*, in which he played a man so bad ass bears knew better than to fuck with him. Seriously. There's literally a scene in that show where he stares down a bear and the bear thinks better of it.

This guy's got a super rapey vibe...I'm gonna take off.

No wait a bunch of people online need to talk about us in a way that is neither useful or honest

But, of course, the most significant thing that ever happened to his career was when the internet adopted him as a punchline for jokes about badassery. Chuck Norris Facts started populating the internet in the mid-oughts (or apparently as early as the eighties if you listened to them on vinyl), and they had him seasoning his meat with pepper spray, parallel parking trains, and dribbling bowling balls until the bit was coopted by Mexican beer brands and podcasters thanking their patrons.

But if you give us money at Patreon.com/ScathingAtheist, you actually CAN cause a pregnancy by pointing at a belly and saying BOO-YAH. That one's real.

But, unsatisfied with his new career as a punchline, Norris delved ever further into the political world. He'd been an outspoken homophobe for a while but — as with so many aspiring American bigots — his activism really bubbled over about the time it looked like a black man might become president. In 2008, Norris was the first big name in Hollywood to come out in favor of California's Proposition 8, which would've banned same-sex marriage in the state if the courts had allowed it. He also endorsed the far less successful Mike Huckabee in 2008, who didn't even make it as far as the courts.

Because he was raising the perfect comedy foil in his daughter noah

But, of course, Obama *did* become president, so Norris shifted gears to birtherism. He was among the loudest conservative voices demanding Obama's long form birth certificate. And when he ultimately tracked that down, Norris (and all the other birthers) just moved on to a different conspiracy theory. In 2011, he released a five-part investigation about the (quote) "infiltration of Sharia Law into United States Culture" (end quote), which was published on World Net Daily. He would remain a regular contributor to World Net Daily until he died.

Yeah that sentence is part of the obituary for everyone who writes for World Net Daily.

And honestly should be listed in causes of death as well

But eventually Chuck found a pet conspiracy that allowed him to marry his hatred of Obama to his homophobia — which was legal by then whether he liked it or not. When the Boy Scouts voted to overturn their longstanding ban on gay scouts and leaders, Norris denounced them and claimed Obama had secretly paid them off.

Classic Obama...and now we wait.

NOW who's afraid of running into a bear in the woods

But of course, as 2012 rolled around and Obama looked poised for reelection, Norris kicked his bigotry into high gear. He and his wife famously released a video warning that if we re-elected Obama, America would have 1000 years of darkness and (quote) "our country as we know it may be lost forever" (end quote). And, sure, he's probably *technically* right, but only in so much as people like him would get so pissed about it, they'd go on to burn the presidency to the ground rather than let a black guy have it again.

Yeah if Skynet predicts Judgment Day on Judgment Day Eve, it's not really that impressive. You just fired the nukes you took over.

Also there's no money for you to have won on polymarket. This doesn't make any sense

Norris's penchant for bigoted endorsements that would go on to lose would eventually (and inevitably) lead him to one Roy Moore in 2017. You'll remember him for getting himself elected

to the Alabama Supreme Court twice and getting removed for ethics violations both times, once over an illegal ten commandment monument, the other over gay marriage. Well, with pretty much nothing but that on his resume, he decided to run for Alabama's open senate seat in a special election. And Norris was among his first celebrity endorsers. Of course, it pretty much immediately came out that Moore was a pedophile and a molestor and an all around sick fuck. At which time Norris did *not* rescind his endorsement.

Really duggared in your heels there, Chuck. Damn the tor-paedos, full speed ahead.

And, fearing that perhaps there were some Scathing Atheist listeners that wouldn't hate him enough yet by this point in the segment, in 2022, he decided he wanted to make Paltrow money, so he started a wellness brand called (and yes, this is the name I'd give it if I were making this up but that doesn't mean I'm making it up) *Roundhouse Provisions*. And yes, it specializes in *healthy* prepper buckets. And also supplements. Because why the fuck not?

Checked out RoundhouseProvisions.com and the landing page says: "FREEDOM. FAMILY. FITNESS. FAITH. FIGHT. We are deeply saddened by the passing of Chuck Norris." And right below that, there's a link to buy their supplements that were marketed by Chuck Norris as the way to stay "healthy and strong in your 80s."

He died harder than ANYONE

But despite what the internet jokes would have you believe, he did turn out to be mortal. He died at his home in Hawaii on the 19th of this month. His family said he was at peace, but I like to think that his final thought was that if I were compiling a list of the hundred greatest martial arts films ever made <which, dear listeners, is something Noah might do at any moment>, true. But if I was making one, Chuck Norris would only show up on it once, and he'd be getting his ass kicked by Bruce Lee.

Or MAYBE Vanilla Ice...we'll find out.

And with that in mind, we're gonna wrap up there and all look forward to a day in perhaps the very near future when we'll have one of these segments that'll take up the whole show and probably have its own song.

Looking at you Bill Donahue.