

WE HAVE THE INTERNET

Written by

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1 SCENE 1 - '90S COURT'

1

An online forum in the form of a small courtroom called "#90s Nostalg", with an empty judge's table which stands between two smaller tables. On one side sits LOLJKS (female) and 90sKidz87 (male). On the other side sits BadSin (male).

They all rise as ClnlMajorMajorMajor enters and approaches the judge's table. As she takes her seat, so do the rest.

CLNLMAJORMAJORMAJOR

Hi guys! Long time lurker, first time poster. Love the 90s nostalg here, be tee dubs. Just wondering - totes random, I know - I'm trying to track down this film my dad took me to when I was like ten? It was about this kid and his sister and they meet a genie. I think the kid's mom was dead and one of his wishes was for his dad to find love. Oh, also the genie was played by Sinbad. Am I going crazy or does anyone else remember this?

90SKIDZ87

Omg, this sounds super familiar. But I can't find anything online?

BADSIN

Are you sure you're not thinking of Kazaam starring Shaq?

90SKIDZ87

No but I remember that one, it was definitely about basketball. The Sinbad one was about a family.

CLNLMAJORMAJORMAJOR

Yeah that sounds right. So glad someone else remembers this!

BADSIN

Guys, no. I mean, just think about it. If this movie was released ever, it obviously would have a record online somewhere.

90SKIDZ87

Yeah, I get that, but how can two of us have the same memory of this movie if it shouldn't exist?

BADSIN

What's it called, then?

CLNLMAJORMAJORMAJOR
That's what I'm asking!

90SKIDZ87
I don't know, but it definitely exists!

BADSIN
You're almost definitely thinking about Kazaam.

90SKIDZ87
I don't think so, but I think it was something like that.

LOLJKS
No, I remember this. Shazaam. Sinbad wore this gold and purple costume. I think the poster had Sinbad with his arms crossed, and he was coming out of a lamp.

90SKIDZ87
Omg yes! Yes that is eerily familiar.

CLNLMAJORMAJORMAJOR
Yes! Gold and purple costume! Omg yes!

BADSIN
Guys...pics or it didn't happen.

LOLJKS produces a photo of Sinbad dressed in a gold and purple genie costume, with arms crossed.

LOLJKS
Exhibit A! If he wasn't a genie, why's he dressed like a genie? Hashtag truth.

90SKIDZ87
That's the one! I remember!

BADSIN
So that's obviously pathetically photoshopped.

CLNLMAJORMAJORMAJOR
How can you tell?

BADSIN
Just look at the pixels!

LOLJKS changes the image to a rather convincing poster for the film.

LOLJKS

Exhibit B. If it's not real, why'd they make a poster?

CLNLMAJORMAJORMAJOR

That's totally the poster. Oh my god that's exactly it!

BADSIN

Because you described it...

90SKIDZ87

Badsin, why are you so against this movie being real?

BADSIN

90sKidz87, why haven't you found either of these when you look it up?

CLNLMAJORMAJORMAJOR

Loljks, where'd you find these?

LOLJKS

The dark side of the web.

BADSIN

What would be the point of hiding a shitty 90s film from the world?

LOLJKS

Shame, obv's. It bombed in the box office because Kazaam got released around the same time. Even Sinbad couldn't compete with 1990s Shaquille O'Neal popularity.

CLNLMAJORMAJORMAJOR

But wait, there's loads of awful 90s films. This is starting to look a bit weird.

90SKIDZ87

Yeah, but that's definitely Sinbad in the photo.

BADSIN

Yeah, well this is definitely Sinbad's Twitter.

BadSin presents Sinbad's official Twitter post denouncing the existence of shazaam.

CLNLMAJORMAJORMAJOR

Right. That kind of seals the deal.

90SKIDZ87

But why's it such a vivid memory?

LOLJKS

Well obviously he'd say it's fake.
He's part of the team trying to
bury it. Bury that shame, Sinbad.
Like we won't dig it up.

CLNLMAJORMAJORMAJOR

I have to admit, it is really
vivid.

LOLJKS

Because it's real.

BADSIN

Fuck's sake, why is this still an
argument? The plot of shazaam, from
what it sounds like, is the plot of
literally every family film in the
90s.

LOLJKS

Then where did this come from?

LOLJKS presents a piece of video evidence. Meanwhile,
BadSin begins doing some research on his phone and
assembling documents.

90SKIDZ87

Omg I knew it.

CLNLMAJORMAJORMAJOR

Omg. What.

LOLJKS

Hear that, Badsin? That's the sound
of hard, irrefutable proof.

BADSIN

Right, let's investigate this so-
called proof once and for all,
shall we?

LOLJKS

Be my guest.

90SKIDZ87

What, BadSin, are you going to try
to sell the idea that that's
Sinbad's evil twin?

BADSIN

Oh no, it's Sinbad. It's an exerpt
from an April fools prank he pulled
a few months back. Did you see
which account uploaded it?

ClnlMajorMajorMajor checks her phone.

CLNLMAJORMAJORMAJOR

The username on YouTube is "Shazaam is love shazaam is life."

BADSIN

With the same email as LOL-DICKHEAD.

LOLJKS

What is this, some sort of tribunal? Let's get back on topic here.

90SKIDZ87

What about the poster?

BADSIN

It's from his stint as a presenter in the late 90s. Where he was dressed up like a genie. Briefly. On tv. Take a look.

He hands ClnlMajorMajorMajor a sheet of evidence. She puts on glasses and investigates the document.

BADSIN

(Continued)

See, that's where that genie photo came from.

LOLJKS

Slander!

BADSIN

Did you try a reverse image search? Go ahead, I'll wait.

90sKidz87 and ClnlMajorMajorMajor pull out their phones and start searching.

LOLJKS

These accusations are downright preposterous!

BADSIN

Not as preposterous as your little poster.

CLNLMAJORMAJORMAJOR

I can't find the source.

90SKIDZ87

Me either.

LOLJKS

Dark web!

BADSIN

ClnlMajorMajorMajor, would you do the honours of downloading the poster and telling me the source name?

ClnlMajorMajorMajor downloads the image on her phone.

CLNLMAJORMAJORMAJOR

"Shazaam Mockup Final 3".

90SKIDZ87

Mock up?

BADSIN

As in mockery. Because LOLJKS has been making a mockery of this thread! Do you deny it?

LOLJKS

Why should I deny the truth?

CLNLMAJORMAJORMAJOR

Which truth?

LOLJKS

The truth that we can all remember this movie so vividly, from the use of Sinbad to the widow dad!

90SKIDZ87

Hey, yeah!

BADSIN

Ever hear of Mandela Effect?

CLNLMAJORMAJORMAJOR

No?

LOLJKS

No?

90SKIDZ87

No?

BADSIN

It's a surprisingly common phenomenon of mass memory fabrication.

90SKIDZ87

No way.

BADSIN

Look it up. Unlike with shazaam, you'll get a real result.

90sKidz87 does so and gasps.

90SKIDZ87

Omg. My life is a lie.

BADSIN

Exactly.

CLNLMAJORMAJORMAJOR

But wait, I don't get it. I mean yeah - maybe it has a lot in common with Kazaam but we knew the plot, and the characters, and all these details. It doesn't make sense.

BADSIN

It's like an association game. If you think about it, a lot of the film "Shazaam" has plot clichés that occur all over 90s films. A broken family, an outsider kid, and a wacky celebrity role. It's textbook!

90SKIDZ87

But I swear it was him!

CLNLMAJORMAJORMAJOR

Because of the costume? From that presenter role?

BADSIN

Which is why it sticks. You're trying to figure out why seeing Sinbad dressed like a genie makes any sense.

LolJks quietly tiptoes away.

90SKIDZ87

But then are any of my memories real? Is my life a lie?

CLNLMAJORMAJORMAJOR

I'm freaking out you guys. I should know my brain!

BADSIN

No you shouldn't. Nobody does. Why does the Mandela Effect happen? Why are there so many reported cases of people breaking into a "dancing mania"? Why can we still function fine after a partial labotomy?

As BadSin speaks, ClnlMajorMajorMajor is doing research on her phone.

CLNLMAJORMAJORMAJOR

There's loads of explanations for these things. Fuzzy trace theory, neuroscience studies - people get it. I don't.

BADSIN

They don't get it. The clues are in "theory" and "studies." Nobody gets this shit. But if people like LolJks keep stirring the pot with false evidence, you're bound to start doubting yourself.

90SKIDZ87

Hmm... I guess. What say you, ClnlMajorMajorMajor?

CLNLMAJORMAJORMAJOR

Case closed, really. Shazaam isn't real.

90SKIDZ87

LOLJKS?

They look around and realise she's gone.

BADSIN

LOLJKS has left the conversation.

2 SCENE 2 - 'EXPOSURE'

2

A stage with a single partition in the middle. BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23 enters stage right. As he enters, he is swiping right on his phone through a series of individuals who don't match up with him, all appearing on the projection behind him. He is getting no matches.

A ringback tone calls three times, followed by the Paleo Cherub jingle.

PRE-RECORDED VOICE

Calls may be recorded for training and monitoring purposes.

IRIS

Good evening, you're through to 'Diagnostics'. Iris speaking. May I take your user name for verification?

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23

Yes, it's boywhocriedwolf23.

IRIS

One moment please.

A projection appears behind him with the dimensions of a Smartphone screen. At the top is the 'Paleo Cherub' logo, with 'BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23' as the heading below in front of a blank avatar logo. The rest of the page is empty for now.

IRIS

How may I help you today,
BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23?

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23

I'd like to report a bug please.

IRIS

I see, and what seems to be the
problem?

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23

The problem is that I've been using
this stupid app for two weeks now,
and I've not had a single match.

IRIS

Well a cursory glance at your
profile would suggest...you lack
any discernible appeal.

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23

Gee thanks. Can you help me with
the glitch?

IRIS

Our matching algorithm has been
development-tested with a one
hundred percent success rate. There
is no glitch.

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23

So why am I not getting any
matches?

IRIS

Because you clearly fail to offset
all profile variables correctly.

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23

What does that mean?

IRIS

It means that the dating pool finds
your online persona to be vague,
inconsistent and unrelatable.

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23

Okay...can you do anything?

IRIS

Following our branded formula for success, we will fine-tune your profile in order to reveal your more marketable traits, and thus maximise your exposure to the user base. Think of it like search engine optimisation.

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23

Great, so you can fix me. I mean it- the problem.

IRIS

Yes. Now, please verify that the following information is correct.

The projection reads: "Male. Age: 33. Looking for something serious." BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23 takes a second to read it.

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23

Yep, all correct.

IRIS

Wrong. Age is a crucial variable. Be vague wherever possible.

The projection reads: "Male. Age: 26-34. Looking for something serious." BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23 inspects it.

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23

Uh, ok.

IRIS

Now, first impressions are paramount, so you will need a profile picture.

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23

Yeah, I thought you might bring that up.

IRIS

I suggest this cached image of yours, which fits our formula perfectly.

IRIS taps the keyboard, and a picture of BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23 and his father appears on the projection, dressed smartly.

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23

No, not that one. Me and grammy don't get along.

IRIS

(ignoring him once again)
Great.

(MORE)

IRIS (CONT'D)

With this you portray a homely base, and that you seek to maintain a healthy bond with loved ones.

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23

But I just said-

IRIS

We find that users with the highest match rates tend to straddle a line between fact and fancy.

IRIS tinkers with her keyboard, and BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23 and his father now appear to have their skin bleached.

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF recoils in shock.

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23

And now I look white.

IRIS

Precisely. Let us review your biography.

The following text is projected as Iris reads aloud:

IRIS

(Continued)

"Only looking for somebody to bring to family events so they'll stop thinking something's wrong with me. Six foot - perfect big spoon, winner of the beauty pageant in Monopoly, and hopeless cat lover. The only things lower than my standards are the suspension on my un-insured Nissan Micra."

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23

Funny, right? You know, British humour. Self-deprecating!

IRIS

Self-pitying. Take a moment for reflection: is this really advertising your best traits?

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23

I actually like to make fun of myself.

IRIS

Please review the suggested alteration.

IRIS makes a few brief keyboard strokes. The original bio is replaced with new text, which BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23 reads aloud.

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23

"I like discussing all the things you're not meant to discuss in polite company, and believe sincerity and honesty go a long way. Hopeless dog lover." This could describe literally anybody.

IRIS

(ignoring him)

Perfect. And you are a writer.

IRIS taps her keyboard. "Writer" is now projected.

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23

That's right.

IRIS

(Cheerily)

Wrong.

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23

That's what I do. I write scripts and kindle novels.

IRIS

Then at the very least, say so.

IRIS pauses to type, replacing the previous line with "Screenwriter & Novelist".

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23

"Screenwriter and Novelist". Isn't that embellishing it a little?

IRIS

Hobbies and interests leave a lot to be desired.

IRIS taps her keyboard once more. Profile reads:

Literature: 'Chekov, Hemingway, Beckett, Faulkner, Proust, and Tolkein.

Television: Battlestar Galactica, The Singing Detective, The Sopranos, Utopia, The Office (British).

Cinema: Kurosawa, Polanski, Tarkovsky, Hertzog.

Music: Coltrane, Miles Davis, Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds, Tom Waits, Leonard Cohen, Janice Joplin, Arethra Franklin, Talking Heads, Bert Jansch, Wu-Tang Clan, Nujabes, Bonobo, Jeff Buckley, Nick Drake, Talking Heads, Tame Impala, Courtney Barnett."

IRIS

(continued)

One should never parade a proud following of fringe media.

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23
Tolkein is not fringe media. Leave
it in.

IRIS taps her keyboard more and the profile now reads:

"Literature: JK Rowling, E L James, George R.R. Martin."

"Television: Big Bang Theory, Sherlock, Dexter, The Office
(American)"

"Cinema: Frozen, Jurassic Park, Pulp Fiction"

"Music: Radiohead"

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23 takes a beat to read the changes.

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23
I don't like any of those things.
Especially Radiohead.

IRIS
A music section must be succinct.

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23
This is ridiculous.

A symbol appears on the smartphone screen for a new message.

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23
(Continued)
Wait, a direct message!

SPAM MAIL
Hey cutie, it's me! Let's get
straight to the point. You and I
are both heirs to a Nigerian
fortune, but I need your help.
Please send your credit card
details-

IRIS
Shall I connect you?

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23 doesn't respond.

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23
No! Don't you know spam mail when
you see it?

IRIS
Evidently not. Let us move forward
and talk sexuality.

Profile reads "Looking For: Men/Women."

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23
Not much to talk about. I'm bi.

IRIS
Yes, but hetero is trending right
now.

IRIS taps her keyboard. Profile reads "Looking For: Women".

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23
You can't just turn someone
straight.

IRIS
Not with that attitude.

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23
Put it back.

IRIS
What is your religion?

Profile, "Religion: Buddhist."

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23
That stays. Now put back-

IRIS
Our metrics suggest that there are
presently more popular alternatives
to Buddhism.

Profile reads, "Religion: Christian".

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23
Stop, this is crazy. You know, I
think I'm done with this.

IRIS
You recently experienced a break-
up.

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23 is surprised by this statement.

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23
Yeah, I did.

IRIS
After a lengthy spiral of self-
pity, a friend, possibly co-worker,
who persistently claims you are a
'prize catch', suggested you try
blind dating.

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23
Where are you getting this-

IRIS

However, unable to face potential rejection, you turned to online dating platforms as a more guarded means to romance in order to preserve your ego.

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23

I'm hanging up-

IRIS

You signed up for the first service you discovered, but finding "Gluten Free Cam Queens" to be too casual, you opted for a more serious medium, Paleo Cherub. Believing the only explanation for your lack of matches must be a glitch, you connected to this call centre today.

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23

And what's your point? I didn't call out of desperation, if that's what you're thinking.

(beat as he becomes more contemplative)

You get scared and lonely. Everyone has their own battle they're fighting inside. You just want to share it with someone who understands the struggle.

IRIS taps her keyboard, and pastes the words from his previous line into the biography section, which appear on the projection.

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23

(Continued)

Oh God, no, no! Don't put that, it's obscene! It's- hang on...

Profile reads: "One Match: FAIRISFOULISFAIR."

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23 contemplates further as another message appears.

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23

(Continued)

Oh, another 'message'...

FAIRISFOULISFAIR

Hey cool, you're a screenwriter.

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23

This is a genuine message.

IRIS
Because your persona is consistent
and relatable.

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23 looks up at the projection.

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23
That's relatable?

IRIS
You'd be surprised. I believe my
work here is done.

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23
Uh, right, but I don't understand-

IRIS
I wish you all the best in your
future Paleo Cherub encounters. May
you find passion and romance
amongst London's diet-conscious
dating scene.

The call disconnects. An instant message conversation now
occurs between him and FAIRISFOULISFAIR.

FAIRISFOULISFAIR
Hey, took ur time! I thought you
were another bot.

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23
Hey cutie, it's me!

FAIRISFOULISFAIR
Haha. How come I've not seen you
here before? Says you've been on
for 8 days now.

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23
No idea lol.

FAIRISFOULISFAIR
So, you're a screenwriter?

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23
Apparently.

FAIRISFOULISFAIR
Well it's nice to meet someone on
here who sticks out from the usual
fare. I feel like almost every
person on here is just a cut and
paste job of the next, u kno?

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23
Lol yea totally

FAIRISFOULISFAIR

So what's the latest script? Ooh I know, a thriller about the Nubian Princess scam! "Emily Blunt and Keanu Reaves star in..."hey cutie, it's me!".

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23

haha. A motion picture fraught with suspense, tragedy, and identity fraud

FAIRISFOULISFAIR

You know I'm starting to see why we got paired up.

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23

Really?

FAIRISFOULISFAIR

Yeah, do you not?

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23

lol well I'm not sure. This all happened so fast.

FAIRISFOULISFAIR

So what? Is that a problem?

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23

Maybe. Who do you think you're talking to right now?

FAIRISFOULISFAIR

This is weird. The person in the picture, of course.

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23

But that's not me.

FAIRISFOULISFAIR

Is this some kind of prank?

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23

No, see you think you got matched with that person in the picture, but I'm actually someone very different. I'd never go in for any of that vapid, mindless cinema. Radiohead suck. And dog people are just idiots.

FAIRISFOULISFAIR goes offline.

BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23

Hello?

The projection continues to display, despite no further activity. BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23 stands up from his desk, closes

his laptop, picks it up, and walks off stage.

3 SCENE 3 - 'SOAPBOX'

3

Outside a public park on a bright, sunny day. Downstage, ANNA_NONYMOUSE sits on a bench with a book in hand. Nearby, ALLOWMETOMANSPLAIN and SJW2014 enjoy a romantic picnic on a blanket.

FAIRISFOULISFAIR enters with a small speaker and a soapbox and positions it in the centre of the stage. She audibly clears her throat until she gains everyone's attention.

A projector shows the website fairisfoulisfair.justiceblogs.com with a post so long that goes offscreen.

FAIRISFOULISFAIR

So, recently I signed up to this site, Paleo Cherub. And before the slut shaming begins: I go on online to find people I can connect with on a deep, cosmic level. Because, as you all know, I don't buy into the patriarchal concept of "relationships" or "marriage" but I do accept that sex is a real, beautiful, and magical experience that supercharges our chakra energies.

ALLOWMETOMANSPLAIN rolls his eyes. SJW2014 nods her head. ANNA_NONYMOUS sets her book aside completely.

FAIRISFOULISFAIR

But that's not what I'm here to talk about today. Today we're going to talk about sexism and elitism in the art world. I met a man-

FAIRISFOULISFAIR and SJW2014 spit.

FAIRISFOULISFAIR

-on Paleo Cherub who claimed to be this great writer. He went on and on about his big movie deals and incredible talent. So, I try to show him the conversation isn't just him, him, him - and he actually fucking accuses me of being this vapid, ignorant slut and not only did he accuse me of not having the intellectual capacity to appreciate his work, he even went so far as to say the programme itself was flawed for pairing him with someone so inferior.

ALLOWMETOMANSPLAIN is now trying to contain laughter.
 SJW2014 smacks his shoulder and crosses her arms.
 ANNA_NONYMOUS leans forward with a skeptical expression.

FAIRISFOULISFAIR

Now let's cover the facts. What did he know about me? Number one - I am a woman. Oh, look, what do you know? That's it. Because not only did he accuse me of being uneducated, but he never even gave me a chance to speak up. And speaking up, as my regular followers can confirm, is not something I struggle with. So as a matter of public service, I call on all men - hashtag yes all men - on dating websites to designate themselves five minutes in the conversation to show you that we women do, in fact, have brains. Or are you scared because you know ours are bigger? Get over yourselves, men. And, BOYWHOCRIEDWOLF23, if you're out there - I hope your script bombs. Peace and love! FAIRISFOULISFAIR.

FAIRISFOULISFAIR looks around with a smug grin.
 ALLOWMETOMANSPLAIN stands up.

ALLOWMETOMANSPLAIN

Hashtag not all men!

SJW2014 shoots up from her seat.

SJW2014

Omg, are you even serious right now? You're totes the problem. Hashtag go girl!

ALLOWMETOMANSPLAIN

Sure some men suck but it's pretty sexist saying we're all pieces of shit. My girlfriend never has a problem finding time to express herself with me.

FAIRISFOULISFAIR

Oh wow you let her out of her cage sometimes. You're such a pig, and the fact that you can't see what's wrong with you speaks volumes.

ANNA_NONYMOUS

At FAIRISFOULISFAIR, do you have a transcript of your paleo cherub? I'd love to read through.

FAIRISFOULISFAIR

I did but seeing it on my computer was super triggering so I had to delete it. He was such a mansplainer, and totally violent.

ANNA_NONYMOUS

Omg, did he threaten you?

FAIRISFOULISFAIR

No but I knew he would. Speaking as a woman who was in an emotionally abusive relationship, I can see the signs.

ANNA_NONYMOUS

Based on one convo?

SJW2014

ANNA_NONYMOUS, you really have to check your privilege.
FAIRISFOULISFAIR was just super brave admitting her traumatic experiences, and you're just reopening wounds. Exactly what's wrong with hashtag mansplaining.

ALLOWMETOMANSPLAIN

Stand proud against the hashtag feminazis, bro.

ANNA_NONYMOUS

Lol I'm a girl.

SJW2014

How were we supposed to know that? Maybe include relevant info in your posts. Hashtag lazy cow.

ALLOWMETOMANSPLAIN

Hashtag ally.

FAIRISFOULISFAIR

(To Anna_Nonymous)

Excuse you, but I think the term you're looking for is "self-hating woman." We don't call adults of our gender "girl."

ANNA_NONYMOUS

See this is why I hate Justice Blogs. You people claim you're standing up for human rights and all you're really doing is moaning that the world isn't up to your personal standards. Newsflash: you are not the centre of the universe.

SJW2014

Omg, facist much? See, unlike you Holocaust-denying Nazi sympathisers who think we're all idealistic idiots, we actually know it's so possible to make women equal.

ANNA_NONYMOUS

Right, first of all - What? I mean, actually where did that even come from? And second of all, women are becoming equal thanks to the people who marched in the 70's, but these things don't just catch up immediately.

SJW2014

Fucking alt-right neo-con lizard person.

FAIRISFOULISFAIR

Can we please stay on point? The problem, ANNA_NONYMOUS, is that these days we don't have time for grey areas because - guess what? - they don't exist. You're either with us or against us and if you are anywhere in between, all you're really doing here is embarrassing yourself.

ALLOWMETOMANSPLAIN

I don't know if that's fair. ANNA_NONYMOUS isn't really being with one side or the other. She's weighing the arguments on both sides. Hashtag respect. Hashtag fist bump.

He walks to ANNA_NONYMOUS and presents a fist. She bumps it.

FAIRISFOULISFAIR

ALLOWMETOMANSPLAIN has been banned from this conversation!

FAIRISFOULISFAIR, furious, leaps off her soapbox and grabs ALLOWMETOMANSPLAIN by the arm and shoulder, forcing him offstage. SJW2014, seizing the opportunity, jumps on the soapbox.

SJW2014

Can I just say thank you to FAIRISFOULISFAIR? You are one of the few bloggers who really makes your blog a safe space for women while also being fair in the process.

(MORE)

SJW2014 (CONT'D)

Banning dangerous and abusive men from your comments section is an action that makes me feel comfortable and confident enough to post my thoughts and feelings on the important matter of gender discrimination in this patriarchal society. But I would urge you to consider banning allies of meninists. Because that whole movement is degrading and threatening and any woman who would rather live in a world of rape and degrading comments, really is beyond your help. Hashtag just sayin'.

ANNANONYMOUS, annoyed, rubs her temples on the park bench.
FAIRISFOULISFAIR returns and shakes SJW2014's hand.
ANNANONYMOUS storms to the soapbox and pushes SJW2014 off.
 The two stare at her in awe.

ANNA_NONYMOUS

Okay, let me make some things clear. Just because I'm a woman doesn't mean I carry a desire for gender superiority. And do you know how damaging and offensive your ideals are? Last week you posted a photo of a man on a plane with a belt tying his legs together, with the caption "solution to manspreading." Turns out he was just epileptic. Ableism. Three months ago you reposted a blog by a black guy who wrote about the lengths he goes through to make absolutely certain he is nonthreatening to women who walk by him in the street. Racist. And just now you accused this poor guy on a dating website of being elitist and threatening, but won't show me any evidence - sounds like you're making assumptions based on sexism. So, I ask you, what causes do you people actually support, outside of your own selfish, identitarian bullshit?

FAIRISFOULISFAIR and SJW2014 consider the question a moment. They look to each other. There is a flicker of disappointment.

FAIRISFOULISFAIR

ANNA_NONYMOUS has been banned from this conversation.

SJW2014
 ANNA_NONYMOUS has been banned from
 this conversation.

SJW2014 roughly takes ANNA_NONYMOUS off the soapbox and escorts her offstage. Fairisfoulisfair grabs the soapbox and marches off with her head held high.

4 SCENE 4 - 'CUTIE PIE PARADE'

4

Birds tweet, the sound of a brook babbling nearby. A lush green mountain top paradise at dawn. The sun rises, bringing with it a rainbow across which reads "Cutie Pie Parade", coloured sketchily in felt-tip pens. MODSQUAD, an angelic being adorned with a halo, approaches a podium underneath the rainbow. As it begins its addressing speech to the audience, the remaining cast of sock and glove puppets - ADAM001, ALLOWMETOMANSPLAIN, LOLJKS, THEOLOGISE_THIS - approach the stage and sit downstage.

MODSQUAD

Welcome fellow snooflers. This is Cutie Pie Mountain, your place to showcase the best of your puppers, kitenettes, an other zoomie-type creatures. I am ModSquad, your community representative whose job it is to ensure that the Cutie Pie Parade is conducted in a fair, equal and politically neutral manner. If you suspect any unsuitable behaviour or suspicious practices and your attempts to resolve the issue directly with a commenter has left you feeling dissatisfied, ModSquad is empowered to investigate and intervene, operating a two-strike policy. Now, with all the horrid housekeeping out of the way, let's begin today's parade, shall we?

The puppets all cheer.

MODSQUAD

Who would like to go first?

ADAM001

Me, please!

The puppets all cheer with excitement.

MODSQUAD

Adam001, excellent. What better place to start than with Adam? What do you have to show the group today?

ADAM001

I have this to show you all, my old girl having a fun time!

Adam001 claps it's hands and the ModSquad drops in front of the podium a picture of a Shiba Inu riding a playground swing.

The puppets ooh and aah.

ALLOWMETOMANSPLAIN

It's beautiful!

MODSQUAD

LOLJKS, how about you next?

LOLJKS

This is my kitteh, refusing to bathe lol!

LOLJKS points to the podium a-la The Price is Right and the ModSquad reveals a picture of a cat desperately avoiding taking a bath. Oohs and aahs galore.

MODSQUAD

Wonderful, wonderful!
ALLOWMETOMANSPLAIN, what do you have for us?

ALLOWMETOMANSPLAIN

This is my little Bacon Bitz.

ALLOWMETOMANSPLAIN claps it's hands and the ModSquad drops a picture of a cute piglet wandering in a garden with the footer, "RIP Bacon Bitz". More oohs and aahs.

ALLOWMETOMANSPLAIN

Bacon Bitz, my little zoomer, was tragically hit by a car last Wednesday night and didn't make it back from the operating table. He's in the great pig pen in the sky now.

The rising anticipation is suddenly cut and all fall silent.

THEOLOGISE_THIS

ModSquad, you wanna jump in here?

MODSQUAD

There is no 'sad content' here, such as pictures of Cutie Pies that have passed away, or sob stories. Those things are reserved for our sub-forum, "Bye Bye Cutie Pie".

ALLOWMETOMANSPLAIN

But I'm grieving.

LOLJKS

Bacon Bitz? What are you, anti-semitic?

THEOLOGISE_THIS

What's more, the term 'great pig pen in the sky' carries with it some serious Islamic and Christian connotations. Get your afterlife nonsense out of here, you quack. This is politically neutral ground.

ALLOWMETOMANSPLAIN

What does any of this have to do with politics?

LOLJKS

Religion is conservative rhetoric. Political bullshit!

MODSQUAD

Now now, we don't tolerate cursing in Cutie Pie Parade. I'm going to cut through here and suggest that we return to Adam001. Something more suitable for the forum, Adam, if you please.

ADAM001

Ooh ok, how about my other dogger? This is Jerome, my pitbull.

An image of a pitbull appears at the podium.

LOLJKS

Hang on, his name is Adam. I thought we just said this was no place for politics.

ALLOWMETOMANSPLAIN

Oh God, not this again. I just got done with one feminazi rant for the day. Christ's sake.

THEOLOGISE_THIS

God? Christ? We told you to leave all that nonsense at the door, thank you very much.

ADAM001

Adam is just my name, guys. Let's keep the conversation about the animals, shall we?

LOLJKS

Please don't use the word 'guys'. I'm feeling triggered.

THEOLOGISE_THIS

But you are religious, aren't you?
You'd have to be with a name like
that.

ADAM001

ModSquad, do I have to answer that?

THEOLOGISE_THIS

Well that's clearly a 'yes'.

ADAM001

No, I just don't see how it's
relevant.

THEOLOGISE_THIS

Jeez, you Christians will use any
opportunity to steer the
conversation towards God, won't
you? Those of a secular leaning
should be able to enjoy Cutie Pie
Parade without having to listen to
this nonsense.

ADAM001

I just want to enjoy the parade
with my fellow snooflers. Can we
just calm down-

LOLJKS

He thinks he's better than us!

The puppets are all audibly shocked.

THEOLOGISE_THIS

And now he's trying to steer us
away from the debate. Because he
knows he'll lose!

ALLOWMETOMANSPLAIN

We shouldn't be debating anything!
The Mods should really be stepping
in to be honest.

THEOLOGISE_THIS

Oh no, not you as well. Anything to
avoid a bit of critical thinking,
eh? Why not join the secular life?
We know what morals are, and what
it means to be good to your fellow
humans.

ADAM001

ModSquad won't you do something?
This is a witch hunt.

LOLJKS

Enough with the binaries! The
preferred term is 'sorcerer'.

MODSQUAD

Please, we'll get to gender politics in due course.

ALLOWMETOMANSPLAIN

Oh good lord.

THEOLOGISE_THIS

Enough with that.

MODSQUAD

I must say THEOLOGISE_THIS makes a compelling point. The name Adam001 was clearly an insensitive choice.

ALLOWMETOMANSPLAIN

The problem here, if I may, isn't insensitivity, but the lack of tolerance in general. And I speak to you all. Yes, you may not agree with your agressor, but that is precisely what you sacrifice when you enter an online forum: the right to have your beliefs upheld. Is the dialectic not humanity's greatest window to progress? To transcendence? Without doubt and re-evaluation of one's methods or beliefs, there is only intransigence, and we stagnate as a civilisation.

The puppets are silent for a moment as they contemplate this.

LOLJKS

What an utter pile of wank.

THEOLOGISE_THIS

Sit on the fence much, Mansplain? Your observations only serve to compound the very same intransigence you described. Distancing yourself and self-labelling as a passive observer does nothing to alleviate anyone's problems here.

ALLOWMETOMANSPLAIN

Yes but perhaps you should accept that this is my place in the society I described: to observe, and to ensure humanity stays on track.

LOLJKS

He has a God complex!

MODSQUAD

Speaking of staying on track-

THEOLOGISE_THIS

Fuck all of that. Take action.

LOLJKS

Yeah! Burn down a church. Or a museum. But don't sit there passively watching it all, as if you're above it.

MODSQUAD

I cannot abide the incitement of arson at the Cutie Pie Parade. One strike, LOLJKS.

THEOLOGISE_THIS

Oh, but the Christian gets a free pass?

MODSQUAD

No, he's got one strike, too.

ADAM001

But I never-

MODSQUAD

For choosing a provocative username.

ADAM001

But that's my name! In real life, that's my name.

LOLJKS

Whatever, you knew what you were doing.

ADAM001

This is unbelievable.

THEOLOGISE_THIS

To address my previous point to Mansplain, I posit the following: as a person of an academic leaning, surely you must understand that religion is a direct threat to that transcendence you spoke about. It threatens our freedom as individuals to exercise reason. To think critically.

ALLOWMETOMANSPLAIN

Yes, perhaps-

ADAM001

ModSquad-

MODSQUAD

Hang on, we should see where this goes.

LOLJKS

Yeah, wait your turn, God hugger.

THEOLOGISE_THIS

Religion indoctrinates. How, you ask? Subversion. This shady Adam character thinks they can come in here and sabotage our group, and encourage one-dimensional, mindless dogmatic thinking. Well fuck him-

LOLJKS shoots a sudden stare at THEOLOGISE_THIS

THEOLOGISE_THIS

...or her, and fuck that.

MODSQUAD

Language, please! One strike for you now, Theologise_This.

ADAM001

For bad language? How about harassment?

THEOLOGISE_THIS

This is exactly what they do, people. Victimise themselves. He's trying for the sympathy vote.

ADAM001

How about we just stick to the parade, hmm?

ALLOWMETOMANSPLAIN

Hang on, I for one think THEOLOGISE_THIS raised a valid point back there.

LOLJKS

Religion is the one true evil left in the world.

THEOLOGISE_THIS

Yes, and the violence that occurs because of it's extremism must be stopped.

All the puppets cheer, except Adam001.

ADAM001

Snooflers, I just want to enjoy the animals!

MODSQUAD

Adam001, for the sake of the community, I must insist that you return here only once you have chosen a more suitable user name.

THEOLOGISE_THIS

Here here.

The ModSquad fling a sign over the podium that reads 'Adam001 is offline', and the Adam001 puppet goes limp.

THEOLOGISE_THIS

(Continued)

Finally, some well-reasoned action.

MODSQUAD

THEOLOGISE_THIS, would you like to show us your contribution for the day?

The ModSquad fling a sign over the podium of a giant rabbit surrounded by atomic whirls, immediately followed by a sign over the front of the podium: "NOT_ADAM001 is online".

NOTADAM001

What did I miss?

THEOLOGISE_THIS

This is exactly what I mean. No morals! No consideration for fellow beings.

LOLJKS

You're a threat to us all!

NOTADAM001

I did exactly what you asked me to.

ALLOWMETOMANSPLAIN

No you only drew more attention to yourself.

THEOLOGISE_THIS

Finally, someone is getting the picture.

LOLJKS

It's extremism. He's probably got a bomb!

MODSQUAD

Careful LOLJKS, you're on thin ice right now.

THEOLOGISE_THIS

He's spreading his hatred.

(MORE)

THEOLOGISE_THIS (CONT'D)
 All out of fear for diplomacy,
 democracy and progress.
 ALLOWMETOMANSPLAIN, can't you see
 that he's trying to recruit you? To
 turn you against us? This is the
 subversion I was talking about.
 This, right here, is sabotage.

LOLJKS
 Ban him. Ban him!

ALLOWMETOMANSPLAIN
 It wasn't a very subtle move,
 ADAM001. I feel like you're up to
 something.

THEOLOGISE_THIS
 Exactly. Hijacking the forum again.
 Threatening people's ability to
 think for themselves. ModSquad are
 you going to step in?

MODSQUAD
 Adam, there is no tolerance towards
 this sort of behaviour. This is
 your second strike.

NOTADAM001
 This is ridiculous. You're allowing
 me to be persecuted by a militant
 atheist, and none of you know
 anything about me. I'm not even
 religious. I don't care about God!

MODSQUAD
 Adam, you have now been in
 violation of the rules of Cutie Pie
 Parade two times, and considering
 your blatant disregard for the
 wellbeing of your fellow snooflers,
 I have no choice but to banish you
 from the mountain.

ALLOWMETOMANSPLAIN
 What happens now?

LOLJKS
 Do it. Do it.

MODSQUAD
 Adam, please approach the ModSquad.

NOT_ADAM001 approaches the podium.

THEOLOGISE_THIS
 Finally, justice.

ModSquad approaches Adam, and strokes his head. There is a moment of silence. ModSquad then tears off Adam's arm, and beats him over the head with it until he lays motionless on the ground, dead. The puppets cheer.

MODSQUAD

NOT_ADAM001, you have been banned.

THEOLOGISE_THIS

Praise be to the moderators!

The remaining puppets cheer again.

MODSQUAD

THEOLOGISE_THIS what's your next contribution to today's parade?

THEOLOGISE_THIS

Here you go!

THEOLOGISETHIS points to the podium, and a picture of a baby tapir, again with atomic whirls. This time THEOLOGISETHIS starts saluting the picture in a 'Heil Hitler' motion.

ALLOWMETOMANSPLAIN

You know I just been through Adam's post history and there was absolutely no mention of religion in there whatsoever.

THEOLOGISE_THIS

That's how they operate. They build a sock puppet account and sit on it for while, waiting for the time to strike. Now check out my tapir!

ALLOWMETOMANSPLAIN

That's ridiculous. People, this is all wrong.

MODSQUAD

Mansplain, are you questioning the divine right of the ModSquad?

ALLOWMETOMANSPLAIN

No, I just...it didn't seem very well justified, if I'm being honest. Wish I hadn't got so carried away with the mob.

MODSQUAD

So you are questioning my judgement. One strike!

THEOLOGISE_THIS

Who are you calling a mob?

ALLOWMETOMANSPLAIN

It's just, you kinda ganged up on Adam. Or NotAdam, or whatever.

LOLJKS

Oh no, he's sympathising!

THEOLOGISE_THIS

With the enemy, no less. An enemy of reason!

ALLOWMETOMANSPLAIN

Quite the opposite, I just don't really know how the mods can justify this sort of ruling. Maybe I need to take it to a higher arbitrator.

The remaining puppets gasp in shock.

LOLJKS

There is no higher arbitrator.

THEOLOGISE_THIS

Sounds like he's questioning you again, ModSquad.

ALLOWMETOMANSPLAIN

No, I just think that we had no plausible deniability. Let's just finish the parade, shall we?

THEOLOGISE_THIS

Oh fu...ish suppers, ModSquad, can't you see?

MODSQUAD

See what?

THEOLOGISE_THIS

Mansplain's been proselytised.

LOLJKS

It's a brainwashing! Burn the sorcerer.

ALLOWMETOMANSPLAIN RUNS AWAY. The puppets all cheer together.

The End.