



Old Blue the Talking Dog Humor, By Curtis Jerry Smothers

My Dog, Blue, ate a green piece of ham that was fly- and gnat-infested. One might expect Blue to barf, but not Old Blue. I once saw him hork down a half-decomposed raccoon that smelled worse than Old Blue's own behind.

Nope, Old Blue definitely did not puke up that ham. He snuffled, kind of did his dog grunt, and decided to attend an itchy spot at the base of his scrotum. This was not easy for Old Blue, since he was missing two of his side incisors.

Also, it looked as if Old Blue had a piece of that there green ham stuck in the back of his mouth between his back two bottom molars, a common problem with Old Blue, who would usually solve it by doing his cat-getting-rid-of-a-hairball imitation.

That there piece of ham must have been radioactive or left by an alien dog trainer or something, because Old Blue began to speak in a pretty good imitation of the late Walter Brennan.

"Get me some water, you red-necked jerk" Old Blue said disrespectfully.

I forgot to mention, Blue could talk like any human. It began the morning after that bright light shined on our front porch. Blue yelped as he rose towards the light, and that was the last I saw of him until he showed up the next afternoon on the logging road looking all shocked and confused.

The best I could figure out was that some aliens kidnapped Blue and did something to his brain. "But," said Blue, "it was a failed experiment. Dog brains don't do well in things like cognition, abstract thinking, things like deductive reasoning."

Anyways, returning to Blue's rude comment about me being a red-neck and all, I said, "Okay, Old Blue, no need to get testy just because that green ham isn't agreeing with you,"

I was alarmed, you see. I couldn't have Old Blue getting all uppity and sarcastic. We had this pecking order around my place, and Blue was way out of line.

"Naw," said Old Blue, "it's really that itchy scrotum of mine. I didn't mean nothing by it. Say, would you mind?" he asked, pointing his nose to those nasty nether regions.

"Sorry, Old Blue, I want nothing to do with anything that close to your hind end. No offense. Tell you what. Let me borrow Granny's back scratcher. She's blind as an old post and won't miss it."

Ten minutes later, Old Blue and I were pals for life. His itchy scrotum was tended to, but Granny's back scratcher had sort of a green tint to it. It smelled bad, too.

"Okay, Old Blue," I said. "We need to talk. I know we can make some money off your talking ability. Unfortunately, you're not well educated, so I

guess people ain't going to want your opinions on world issues or politics and such."

"Now that hurts my feelings," said Blue. "I've been listening to the guys at the barber shop and pool hall quite closely."

Come to think of it, these past years I always took Blue to town for my monthly haircut and round of pool next door. Sometimes the political discussions got very heated.

"Old Blue," I conceded, "you may have something there. Let's see what you know and how you do with difficult questions."

I decided to throw him a curve ball and go off topic a bit. "Tell me, Blue, what's your position on animal rights?"

"Are you joking?" Blue replied. "This here's a farm! You humans exploit, use, and sell animal products. You slaughtered that fatted hog last week right in front of her piglets! When old Bossy came down with tit infection, you took her to the slaughter house! You steal the unborn young from the hens in the chicken coop. Rights? What rights do animals have?"

This argument was taking a decidedly uncomfortable turn. I'm not all that educated and not versed in the snappy comeback, especially with alien-trained smart-assed dogs.

"Now, Old Blue, don't get yourself into a dander, old boy," I said. "You might recall that we dried and saved those pig ears just for you. We got an entire side of beef from Old Bossy, and I noticed you enjoyed that leftover soup bone, which was from Bossy's carcass."

"Yes," admitted Blue. "That is the inevitable conundrum of nature's food chain and our position therein."

Yikes, this mutt was beginning to outgrow me in the smarts department, which wasn't ordinarily too much of a challenge, except Old Blue was a goldang dog!

"Say what? I asked. "What in the hell is a conundrum?"

Blue horked out the rest of the green ham. He never again spoke another word. I tried coaxing him. But it seemed his decision was totally and absolutely final.

If I had a dictionary, I would look up the word conundrum. Don't ask me what the word means, because I surely don't know. It's a mystery to me.