

THE VERY VIBRANT VIGNETTES

(cue 2001 theme, SIGNS: DISTRICT 90 PRESENTS, A "RULE #62" PRODUCTION, VERY VIBRANT VIGNETTES, FEATURING, THE "SORT-OF-RESTORED-TO-SANITY" COMEDY TROUPE)

#1. NARRATOR: Welcome to The Very Vibrant Vignettes. We will be guiding you through the Agenda Topic process and performing short theatrical sketches to illustrate the points. We hope you enjoy them. And if not, well, at least they're free.

Agenda Topics refers to items on the agendas of each of the 13 committees of the General Service Conference. The week-long Conference is held every year in April in New York City. It is through the framework of the Conference structure that the "general services" of AA, such as providing uniform literature and an international magazine , takes place.

Alcoholics Anonymous has a unique structure. Unlike most large organizations which start at the bottom and the power goes upward, in the fellowship of AA the *groups* are on top and those entities *under* them are their trusted servants. Our "upside-down pyramid" structure serves us well in AA although it might cause serious problems for other types of organizations. Like this one for instance....

..

(cue Godfather music)

SIGN: THE GODFATHER PART 4

MANICOTTI: Don Vito Corleone, I have bad news for you.

GODFATHER: What is it? Was there a hit on one of my boys?

MANICOTTI: No, Godfather.

GODFATHER: Are the Feds handing down indictments?

MANICOTTI: No, that's that not it either.

GODFATHER: Then what is it, Manicotti?

MANICOTTI: The heads of the four other New York families took a group conscience and they agreed that it is time for you to rotate out as Godfather.

GODFATHER: What?

MANICOTTI: They feel that we should follow the spirit of rotation.

GODFATHER: You hear that, Luca? *<mockingly sarcastic>* "They took a group conscience. The spirit of rotation." In my day, you wanted to get rid of the Godfather, you put a bullet between his eyes!

LUCA: Hey boss, you want I should go put a horse head in their 7th Tradition basket ?

GODFATHER: No, no, Luca. The groups have spoken.

LUCA: How about a goat head?

GODFATHER: No Luca! We adopted the AA structure and so I have to abide by their decision. I mean, I don't wanna become a bleeding deacon .

MANICOTTI: Yeah, cuz our bleeding deacons really bleed!

GODFATHER: True, besides maybe I can pass on to future Godfathers my experience strength, and hope of all my years of service.

LUCA: There ya go boss. Racketeering, extortion, money laundering, you've done it all!

GODFATHER: It's settled then. They made me an offer I can't refuse. I'll rotate out. From now on I'll be known as *(pause for effect)* The Past Godfather .

(cue Godfather music)

SIGN: APPLAUSE

#2. NARRATOR: When an idea for an Agenda Topic is presented to a group and approved it then usually makes its way to the District , made up of many groups, and ends up at the Area Assembly which is made up of many districts. At the assembly, the motion is discussed, debated, and voted upon. Everyone has an opinion in AA and they are all listened to. It is not uncommon for it to take two to three meetings for a decision to be reached. The process is slow and deliberate so it can be thoroughly thought out and discussed. Some might say it is too slow and deliberate...

(cue Monday Night Football music)

SIGN: MONDAY NIGHT FOOTDRAGGING

AL: Welcome to ABC's Monday Night Footdragging! I'm Alice Michaels here with Hall of Fame quarterback Dan Fouts and sort-of comedian Dennis Miller. Do we have a real doozy for you tonight!

DAN: That's right, Al, we have the Mad Motion Makers pitted against the Dug-In Dissenters. Now, the way I understand this, the Motion Makers want to start an agenda topic that we change the 4th Edition of the Big Book and put the well-known acceptance page back on page 449 where it belongs.

DENNIS: That's right Dan-O. And those dastardly Dissenters disagree. You know, this reminds me of Ceasar Augustus and the quintessential quirkiness of the old K.C. and the Sunshine Band hit, "That's the way uh huh uh huh, I like it uh huh uh huh". Whaddy think Al-beano?

AL: Well, Dennis, as usual , I don't know what the hell that has to do with anything, but here we go! The Motion Makers kick it off with an explanation that page 417 just doesn't roll off the tongue the way 449 did.

DAN: Yeah, and I don't agree with this strategy, Al. I mean, in the previous match-up, they conceded that "Acceptance was the Answer" is a more fitting title to the story than "Doctor, Alcoholic, Addict" so why make a fuss over what page it's on?

AL: I agree Dan. Oh! A flag comes in and I think they're going to penalize the Dissenters here.

DAN: Yeah, Al, it looks like Johnson was hogging the microphone and yelling insults about one of the Motion Makers mother.

AL: And that is the call, Personal Foul, Unsportsmanlike Opinion, 15 yard penalty.

DENNIS: You know Al baby, that call reminds me of the scintillating surreptitious musings of late playwright and lumberjack Reba McEntire who said "E Pluribus Screw 'em".

AL: Dennis, don't make me smack you on the air. Now it looks like the Dissenters are going to challenge the call with instant replay.

DAN: That's right, Al, and I think they're going to lose this challenge.

AL: From that angle, if you read Johnson's lips he says *<slowly as if reading lips>* "Your mother is a muskrat!"

DENNIS: I think he's just sending them a little muskrat love like The Captain and Tennille. By the way, what exactly was The Captain a captain in? Do they have ranks for keyboard players?

AL: Could you just pretend you know something about what we're doing here?

DAN: Well, the Dissenters have lost the challenge and have elected to punt and try to regroup after lunch.

AL: I think that's the right call and while we go to a commercial break I am going to thank my Higher Power John Madden is replacing Dennis Miller! You're watching ABC's Monday Night Footdragging.

(cue MNF music)

SIGN: APPLAUSE

NARRATOR: We now return you to your regularly scheduled Agenda Topic workshop already in progress...

#3. NARRATOR: The person who links individual, autonomous groups to AA as a whole is called the General Service Representative or GSR. The GSR represents the voice of the group conscience. She or he listens to the group's thoughts on the Agenda Topics and reports them to the delegate who passes them on to the General Service Conference. The GSR's job requires a significant investment of time and patience. New GSRs can sometimes feel overwhelmed...

GSR: *<visibly agitated and frustrated>*Man, I never should have gone to the bathroom during elections for GSR! This stuff is so confusing! I need some help!

(cue Cops theme—Officers Twelve and Concepts enter)

OFFICER TWELVE: Okay, buddy, pull it over right there!

GSR: Who are you guys?

OFFICER TWELVE: We are *<spin around the reveal writing on back of shirts>* the Self-Will Run Riot Police. I'm Officer Twelve and this is Officer Concepts.

OFFICER CONCEPTS: Hiya doin'?

GSR: The Self-Will Run Riot Police? What the hell is that?

OFFICER CONCEPTS: We are an elite law enforcement body created to keep AA members in line with the 12 Steps, 12 Traditions, and 12 Concepts.

OFFICER TWELVE: That's right, and our specialty is new GSRs. Now come on, you need to come with us.

GSR: I'm not going anywhere, I know my rights.

OFFICER CONCEPTS: If you're talking about the right to remain silent and all that, save it because that ain't what we're talking about.

GSR: Then what rights are you talking about?

OFFICER TWELVE: As a GSR you have the Right of Decision which gives you proper discretion and latitude; the Right of Participation which allows you a voting representation in reasonable proportion to your responsibilities; the Right of Appeal which protects and encourages minority opinion, and the Right of Petition which makes certain that grievances can be heard and properly acted on. Now, do you understand these rights I have read to you?

GSR: Not at all.

OFFICER CONCEPTS: That's because you need to read *<pulls out service manual>* the AA Service manual.

GSR: And that book will explain everything I need to know about being a GSR?

OFFICER CONCEPTS: No, that's why I'm going to write you a ticket.

GSR: A ticket! But I haven't done anything! This is Self-Will Run Riot Police brutality!

OFFICER CONCEPTS: Don't make me strip-search you! Relax. *<pretends to write a ticket>* This ticket just lists ideas and resources for new GSRs like getting a service sponsor, reading the book AA Comes of Age, and pamphlets like The AA Group and The Twelve Traditions Illustrated.

GSR: Hey , this is great. How can I thank you guys?

OFFICER TWELVE: Just to have you communicate the best you can, get an informed group conscience and present it to your delegate at the Pre-Conference Assembly in Marin is payment enough.

OFFICER CONCEPTS: *<pretends to be listening to a police radio>* Okay, Officer Twelve we've gotta go. There's a call for an R-62 violation in Vacaville.

OFFICER TWELVE: A GSR taking himself too damn seriously? Let's rock.

(Cops theme)

SIGN: APPLAUSE

#4. NARRATOR: AA Conference-approved literature and especially changes to that literature are always hot items when it comes to agenda topics. There are those who feel the literature we have is more than sufficient and others who feel we need more literature to meet the changing needs of recovering alcoholics in the 21st century. Group conscience meetings on the agenda topics are a healthy place for members to discuss their opinions on the whole literature issue. This is not ...

SIGN: THE SCRABBLE GAME

JILL: Man, Jack, that sure was a heated agenda topics business meeting this afternoon..

JACK: I know what you mean Jill. I'm just glad it's over and we can play a nice, relaxing game of Scrabble. All right, you're first.

JILL: Okay, let's see. *<putting tiles on the board>* "PAMPHLET" *<counting points>* 20, 40, 90 points.

JACK: Good play. Oh, *<putting tiles on the board>* "UNNEEDED" *<counts points>* 70.

JILL. *<putting tiles on the board>* "HELPFUL" *<counts points>* 80.

JACK: *<putting tiles on the board>* "REDUNDANT" *<counts points>* 97.

JILL: *<putting tiles on the board>* "USEFUL"! 46.

JACK: *<putting tiles on the board>* "ENOUGH"! 24.

JILL: *<angrily putting tiles on the board>* 'J-E-R-K' ! JERK! 30!

JACK: *<angrily putting tiles on the board>* "MORON" 14!

NARRATOR: ALL RIGHT! JACK! JILL! CHILL! STOP BEFORE YOU SPELL AGAIN!

SIGN: APPLAUSE

#5. NARRATOR: The way in which a delegate gets chosen is unique to AA and is called the Third Legacy procedure. All the details of this procedure can be read on pages S20 and S21 of the AA Service Manual, but one feature which is fascinating and quite spiritual is known as "going to the hat". This occurs when no candidate for delegate has received a two-thirds majority of the vote and they put the names in a hat and draw out one name and that person becomes the new delegate. It's sort of like "Survivor" except you don't win a million bucks, you win the opportunity to serve a bunch of drunks. So here's a snippet of what that looks like...

AREA CHAIR: Okay, neither Jack nor Diane has received a two-thirds majority and so we now put the names in the hat. *<looks around>* All right? I give up. Has anyone seen the hat? Helloo, people! Where is the hat? I need the hat! Any hat will do!

(cue "Billie Jean")

(Michael Jackson dances until music stops)

AREA CHAIR: Can I have the hat now?

MICHAEL JACKSON: Hi my name is Michael and I'm an alcoholic and I'm just glad I could help.

SIGN: APPLAUSE

NARRATOR: I have a legal disclaimer I have to read. “ The preceding vignette in no way assumes that District 90, the Sort-of-Restored-to-Sanity Comedy Troupe or anyone in this room believes that Michael Jackson is alcoholic, overweight, or a bad dancer. Please don’t sue us. Thank you. “

#6. NARRATOR: After the Delegate is chosen, she or he is inundated with information. The job that the Delegate faces is a rewarding yet difficult and time-consuming one. It requires commitment, resolve, patience and perseverance. All the meetings and assemblies and paperwork and phone calls and emails can wear on a person. They need to be encouraged from time to time...

DELEGATE ROCKY: I can’t do this anymore. If I read one more report or group conscience, I’ll scream!!!

ADRIAN: Come on, that’s not you talking. You are a great delegate! Look, you can do this. You can persevere. You just need to focus. Focus. The groups believe in you. The area believes in you. I believe in you. I-BELIEVE-IN-YOU!

DELEGATE ROCKY: You’re right, Adrian! I can do it!

(cue Rocky theme)

(delegate pumps the Big Book, 12 x 12, AA Comes of Age, and the large print-Service Manual , shadow boxes, then runs around the room and two follow her until she does victory jumps back at front of room while the other two actors lip sync “Gonna Fly Now)

SIGN: APPLAUSE/ THE END