



**Your on the
Street Reporter**



Uyless Black

**Slim's Wisdoms:
Slim's Civics Lesson**

Slim's Wisdoms (XII) Slim's Civics Lesson

Howdy, Slim here. Me and Slimette got into an argument a couple nights ago. As usual, I won, which is the husband's proper place in his home.

Funny thing: Slimette's always been a bit uppity to me. I told her about this fact and she said she did not mean to be that way. But she did say that she loved me in spite of my being myself. I took that as a fine compliment. At the same time, she said she would appreciate being treated as more than a cook and housekeeper. First of all, I consider my wife more than a cook and housekeeper, but we won't go into that part of our lives.

She also said it would help if I got my GED. Now that she has her GED, she's going to night classes at the local community college. And wouldn't you know? She's starting to lecture me 'bout my needin' to use more facts durin' what she calls our discussions. I call them arguments, as that is more in line with my way of thinkin'.

OK, she didn't put it quite that way. It was somethin' like, "Slim, you have a good mind. Why not use it?"

Hell-fire! What was that woman talking about? I use my mind 110 percent of the time. The rest of the time, I rest my mind so I can argue with...well, just about anything and everything. Good buddy, if that ain't using my mind, what is?

Exercising my mind beyond my usual 110 percent! I told her she should stay home from that socialistic college and keep me company.

Judge for yourself, bubba. Here's her smart-alecky answer, "Slim, you're at the bar practically every evening, anyway. If not, all you want to do is watch *Gun Smoke* reruns."

Which brings me to tell you why I've picked-up my Ever Sharp to write this letter: It's a fact that I ain't home much, 'cept during the day. That's when I'm earning my unemployment check.

But I don't watch *Gun Smoke* all the time, 'cause it ain't on all the time. In between the *Gun Smoke* shows, I watch *Bonanza*. I'm real fond of Hoss.

I keep telling her that I don't need facts when I've got so many opinions I don't know what to do with all of them.

For my buddies down at the bar (Betty Sue's), I get more opinions from them. But I don't use their opinions, good buddy. I take their opinions and turn them 'round and start an argument. It's more manly to disagree. If you keep on saying, 'I agree with your opinion,' next thing you know, they'll start calling you a wimp...or worse, a socialist, maybe even a communist.

Besides, Slimette, in spite of her being semi-educated, she got her facts and opinions mixed-up. Here's how I won another argument:

"Woman, it's a fact that I ain't home much, but you ain't either. But it's not a fact that I watch *Gun Smoke* all the time. As I told you, I watch *Gun Smoke*, *Bonanza* and especially, *The Big Valley*. I'm also real fond of that Barbara Stanwyck woman. Anyway, if them shows ain't on, I watch ESPN."

Slimette's came back with, "Yes, Slim, I am well aware of your TV watching habits."

I came back with, "OK, if you're so familiar with my TV watching habits, how come you said all I watched was *Gun Smoke*?" I had her there!

"I was using *Gun Smoke* as a figure of speech, Slim, as a metaphor."

She did it again. Ever' time I get the advantage durin' an argument, she uses words I don't know about, which puts me at a disadvantage.

I even-out the playing field, though. I say (Usually, I shout, just to emphasize how right I am.), “God damn it, Slimette, talk English!”

That usually shuts-up Slimette, as she’s the quiet type anyway, and puts another win in my argument column. Shoutin’s pretty effective on my wife, but my bar buddies just shout back. Sometimes it gets so loud at the bar that I can’t steal no opinions.

A National Anthem

Yesterday, me and Slimette was watching a TV commercial with the announcer saying ‘bout how patriotic it is to buy stuff made in Democratic America. During the commercial, *The Battle Hymn of the Republic* was being played and the American flag and President Trump’s hair was blowing in the wind in the back-ground. Being a sentimental sort, I sort of teared-up.

I like that song. First, it ain’t written by no foreigner. Second, it’s about how great America is. Third, the Lord goes about kickin’ the ass of America’s enemies. I told Slimette that this song should be our national anthem, “Slimette, there ain’t enough ass-kickin’ in the *Star Spangled Banner*.”

“Slim, our national anthem has, as you say, a lot of ‘ass-kicking.’ It was written during an actual battle. *The Battle Hymn of the Republic* has a war theme to it, but it was written from a hotel room in Washington, DC.”

“Yeah, but the anthem don’t have the Lord tamping out grapes of wrath, or His using a terrible swift sword, or dying to make men free.”

“Are men free, Slim?”

“Damn straight, I am.”

“How about women?”

...“Well, I hear that some of those countries in Africa and the Middle East keep some of their women in...”

“In what, Slim?”

“In security.”

“No, Slim, in slavery.”

Slimette had me on this one. ‘Course, she gets her information from news channels, newspapers, and such. I get mine from Rush and that O’Reilly guy. And O’Reilly knows a lot about women. Leastwise, he seemed to.

Slimette, “Slim, there’s a movement to replace *The Star Spangled Banner* as our national anthem with *America the Beautiful*.”

“What’s wrong with that? *America is beautiful*.”

“Have you heard the words to this song?”

“Not unless they’re sung before a football game.”

“Sometimes they are...and here they are,” as Slimette sang these words to me:



O beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee

And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!

[Slimette sings other verses that have a similar theme.]



Slim pauses...”Not bad, Slimette. Not bad at all. Sort of sentimental, just like me. But it’ll never work.”

“Why not, Slim?”

“The song’s too sissy, not enough blood-shed to juice-up a football crowd. And can you see the Marines marching in a parade to ‘America the Beautiful’? Ha! How in the hell could they keep cadence? But it will be a big hit for them cowards...you know them...”

Slimette, “Pacifists?”

“Yea, them cowardly pacifists.”

There you go, folks. Once again, macho men win over wimpy women, and the man of the house asserts his rightful place on the home throne.

Well, what would you expect in a mental contest between someone who drives a Dodge Ram and the other who drives a Toyota? Tell ya what, driving those Rams takes a whole lot of skill. That’s what gives me my ...eh, the TV thing they talk about...muscle memory! Driving my Ram gives me muscle memory. Helps with my arguments with that Toyota-driving wife of mine.

Hell-fire, anybody can drive one of those Japanese midgets, but it takes some muscle memory to drive a Dodge Ram. That’s one of the reasons I win most of arguments with my wife. That and taking my buddies’ opinions and reversing ‘em. Slimette don’t know whether I’m comin’ or goin.’

Republic or Democracy?

Speaking of arguments, last night, Slimette got back from that socialistic school, and you know what she said? “Slim, in my Civics class tonight, I learned there is a difference between a republic and a democracy!”

I said, “Ain’t so. *The Battle Hymn of the Republic* is about America, and America is a democracy.”

Slimette said, “Most people use the words interchangeably. But they aren’t the same. Look, I copied-down my professor’s definitions.” She showed me her notebook:¹

Slimette’s Notes:

Republic: A form of government in which power is explicitly vested in the people, who in turn exercise their power through elected representatives, who vote on laws on behalf of the people.

Democracy: A system of government by the whole population who exercise their power in a direct way. Control of the government is through the majority of the group’s members, who vote on laws without the intermediaries of elected representatives.

¹ Definitions that follow are courtesy of Google, with alterations by this writer.

“Also Slim, the professor told us...here, look:”

Slimette’s Notes:

Frequently, most politicians and many Americans refer to the United States as a democracy. Others find this aggravating because, unlike in a democracy where citizens vote directly on laws, in the United States, elected representatives cast the votes – and, therefore, the U.S. is a republic.

“Our professor told us: As students in a civics class, we should know the difference.”

Slim, “What do all those underlines mean?”

“I made them myself, just as a reminder about key points. Anyway, what do you think about these facts, Slim?”

Before I answered Slimette’s question, I got to thinking that I voted directly for President Trump and he won. I didn’t give a politician the right to vote for me. Yes-sir-re. I did it directly.

“Slimette, no one was between me and my voting for the President. So, that’s democracy, and that makes America a democracy.”

“Voting on a law is not the same as voting for a candidate. These definitions are about voting on laws and not political candidates Slim, have you ever heard of the Electoral College?”

“What conference is it in?”

“It’s not a school, Slim. It tabulates the votes you and I make for, say, the President. It collects these votes, which determine who becomes the President. So, the Electoral College represents you and me, Slim. ...Our republic.”

“OK. As long as this college makes my vote count...as your professor says, ‘directly.’ That makes for a democracy and a democratic America. My vote counts directly for the President.”

I noticed Slimette being silent for a long time. Nothing new there, as she is silent most of the time while I’m laying-out the facts of life. But her silence was for a very long time. Then, she said, and get this: “Slim, by using the electoral college system, the presidential candidate who wins the election might not have the most votes from the voters.”

I asked Slimette if I had heard her right. She said, “Yes you did. We can talk later about the idea of the Electoral College, but...”

I did my usual interruption of my wife’s nonsense. I’ll clean up my language here as I’m writing to a real large audience: “Bull shit! In America, the person that gets the most votes for being President gets to be the President.”

“Not always, Slim. Let’s go online and see.” Slimette turned on her computer.

“Look Slim, in the 2000 Presidential race, Al Gore got 540,000 more votes than George Bush, but Bush was declared to be the President. And look here: Hillary Clinton beat Donald Trump by about 2.9 million votes, but Mr. Trump sits in the White House.²

“Sum-bitch, where’d your computer get that stuff? I know: that socialist professor and his civics class. I told you that you should be home keeping me company.”

Then I lowered the boom: “How do you know they’re facts? Maybe they’re opinions.” My muscle memory got me going on that one!

Slimette looked at me for awhile, not saying anything. But I could tell she was not a happy camper. Finally, she said, “Slim, you would not know a fact if it was shoved up your ass!”

² <http://www.cnn.com/2016/12/21/politics/donald-trump-hillary-clinton-popular-vote-final-count/>

Now let me pause a second here, hoss. My wife is not the cussin' kind. Won't even say "damn" when she cuts a finger while she's slicing-up the okra for our dinner. Even if I'm man of the house, I know there are limits to a man's manhood. When Slimette really gets steamed, I think of John Bobbitt---you know that guy that got his John cut off by his wife while he was sleeping.

Whew. Talk about a wake-up call. So, even us men gotta exercise some judgment, 'specially if we're heavy sleepers.

I started to respond to Slimette saying *I wouldn't know a fact if was shoved up my ass* by asking "Is that a fact or an opinion?" But I remembered about John Bobbitt, and kept quiet about what I think was an alternative fact; you know, like those alternative facts they talk about on TV.

I put on my thinking hat and said to my wife, "Slimette, that communist brother of yours--the one in California---told us those folks out there vote directly on somethin' or another a lot." Slimette, "That's true, Slim."

"And even on some of the times we vote for a politician to represent us...OK, if we do vote, those ballots also have 'yes' or 'no' choices that allow us to vote without a politician to represent us. ...Say, like voting on making smoking marijuana legal. My buddies at Betty Sue's talk about that a lot."

Slimette, "That's also true, Slim. Those types of votes are called referendums, and any state can place referendums on a ballot."

Slim, "So, America is a republic, but the states that make up America are democracies? That makes no sense to me. Are you sure you want to keep going to college?"

"The states are both, Slim."

"Hm. Can America...you know, the good ol' USA... conduct referendums?"

Slimette got real quiet again, then said, "No, Slim. No method currently exists for our country as a whole to conduct referendums that would be binding to its citizens. Even ratifications to our Constitution must go through Congress."

So, I offered my own Slim-style civics lesson, "According to your smarty-pants teacher, it seems to me that America can't be called a democracy. Democracy-this, democracy-that should be republican-this, republican-that. That shore does bother me, Slimette. All my life, I been told America is a democracy. Now some damn socialist professor tells me that's not true.

"And that commercial we saw where the flag and Donald's hair was shown blowing with the breeze and the announcer was talking about 'Democratic America,' he should have said it was patriotic to buy from a 'Republican America'."

Slimette seemed to be getting a tad frustrated with all my facts. She said, "That would not sit very well with the Democrats, Slim."

I said, "But 'Democratic America' sits well with the Republicans?"

Slimette seemed to be biting her teeth, "It's a figure of speech, Slim."

Right, one of those metaphor things. Anyway, I continued to show why a person that don't have one of those GEDs don't need one.

"Then why do those political parties call themselves Democrats or Republicans? Does that mean a Democrat believes in a democracy, but not a republic? And a Republican believes in a republic, but not a democracy?"

Slimette, "Not necessarily, Slim."

"'Not necessarily.' Is that a fact or an opinion?"

I'd better stay awake tonight.

