



BY ANONYMOUS

How many more hints from higher powers will it take for Vincent “Holler than Thou” Gray to enter the mayor’s race?

First, DC’s esteemed newspaper of record tried flattery. “A Fenty vs. Gray race is what Washington needs,” read a Jan. 12 editorial. Not enough. So the Washington Post conducted a poll for the DC Council chairman. “DC Mayor Fenty’s approval ratings plummet,” read the Jan. 31 A1 headline. Still not enough. Then a force even beyond the Post directed 2 feet of snow to fall in District, crippling the city for days. “Nightmare on L Street (and K, and M...)” read the A1 headline.

What more does Gray want?

The Nose has tired of wondering whether Gray will get into the race; instead we have put our efforts into thinking what Gray would say if he did. So here you are, Dear Reader, the first Fenty vs. Gray debate.

MODERATOR: Let’s begin. Mayor Fenty, can you name the three major bond rating agencies?

FENTY: Nice try. I wrote them on my hand, Sarah Palin-style this time: Moody’s, Standard and Poor’s and Fitch. So there.

MODERATOR: Just checking. For you both: The District reached a historic high of 12.1 percent unemployment at the end of last year, with estimates suggesting numbers reaching nearly 30 percent in Ward 8. What do you plan to do about it?

FENTY: I’ll lower it as fast as humanly possible.

MODERATOR: That’s not an answer.

GRAY: I’m very troubled by our unemployment rate. My understanding is it’s a record for DC, and I’m a native Washingtonian.

FENTY: Me too. But I’m a lot younger.

GRAY: I live east of the Anacostia, granted in Hillcrest, in a house surrounded by a large fence to keep out the riff raff put up by one of the city’s biggest real estate moguls who happens to be a friend of mine, but still I have to drive my BMW across the Anacostia River every day.

I’ve taken my position as council chairman seriously. What are the council’s two main roles? Legislation and oversight. Who did I appoint to have oversight over our city’s unemployment program and the Department of Employment Services? Until recently, Ward 8 Councilmember Marion Barry. He’s been removed from that position now, and in a few months, I hope my answer to this question will greatly improve.

FENTY: Let me check with Papa Smurf Michael Bloomberg on this. I have considered adding a Department of Youth Employment Services to my cabinet, but I already drain almost all DOES funds for summer jobs, so it’s pretty much a done deal already. They need jobs, not their parents. Also, I run in So Others Might Eat’s Turkey Trot every Thanksgiving, so I help the poor.

MODERATOR: Let’s shift gears. How do you assess the city’s snow cleanup?

FENTY: (twisting his head and looking like Gumby) That’s a question that doesn’t make any sense, dammit.

MODERATOR: I’m sorry, Mr. Mayor, everyone wants me to ask you that.

FENTY: Let me explain. I had 28 press conferences on this. The snow has fallen. It’s not going away until the temperatures are warm enough that it can melt. I can only do things as fast as humanly possible. The sun is not hu-

man. Neither am I sometimes.

GRAY: I think the city could have done a much better job. Many of my neighbors, who all live east of the River, felt neglected. And because I felt ignored, too, I decided that I wasn’t going to shovel the public sidewalk in front of my house even though the law says so. I think Channel 13 should be used as a snow information channel. I love the kids, but I don’t think my youth hearings bring in the ratings.

MODERATOR: Since you brought it up, do you think Mayor/Councilmember-for-Life Marion S. Barry Jr. should have been removed from office?

FENTY: I think it’s up for the voters to decide.

MODERATOR: But I’m asking what you think.

FENTY: Generally, I am not paid to think. Like all big city mayors, I have people for that. Due to the budget shortfall, I cut back and only have one, Mayoral Consigliere Peter Nickles. That’s what I mean by efficiencies.

GRAY: I tried to approach this as thoroughly as possible, looking like I was taking action to appease white and black affluent voters but being careful not to say anything to ostracize Barry loyalists. That was tricky.

MODERATOR: The Great Recession has clobbered city finances. At the same time, more DC residents are looking to the District government for help. What should we do to solve our budget crisis?

FENTY: More than three years ago, I took a no-new-taxes pledge. So I have tried to raise every fee possible, because technically, fees are not taxes. At least that what’s my city administrator and budget director tell me.

We are trying to find efficiencies. For my part, I’m thinking of cut-

ting Sinclair Skinner and related frat brothers out of next year’s budget. We believe other efficiencies can be found in human services, as always. Homeless people and young, single mothers don’t vote.

GRAY: Our budget situation is very dire. I’ve gone over the numbers, David Catania-style, minus all the colorful tabs and Post-It notes, and curse words. I do not want to use the city’s rainy day fund even though it is surely raining. Jack Evans sits next to me on the dais, and I occasionally listen to our quasi-Republican on this. In the end, we’ll probably do much like the mayor does but make it sound like we disagree.

MODERATOR: Michelle Rhee. Stay or go?

FENTY: My schools chancellor has alienated allies as fast as humanly possible. Stay.

GRAY: I don’t know how she does it, but that woman makes me look childish and petty. Go.

MODERATOR: Now we’ll take questions from our press corps: Mark Plotkin of WTOP, the obligatory Post reporter and Tom Sherwood of any other local media outlet you guys care about.

FENTY: I’ve said it a million times, Plotkin: I’m for statehood. Got that? All other questions can be answered by my Mayoral Consigliere. I’m late for my training ride.

GRAY: I went to college with Plotkin, and let me tell you, he was this annoying in college, too. But I’m all about unity, and I want members of the tribe in my DC rainbow coalition. I was president of a Jewish fraternity at GW! But I have to run, too. I’m finally doing that home remodeling project that caused a stink a few months ago. ★




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