

Neil Diamond and the attack of the lipstick lizards

By **JOE BOB BRIGGS**
Syndicated Columnist

There was this bet I lost back in 1976, when I was trying to get ownership of this trained attack pig that Wanda Bodine bought off of Jimbo Caruthers after his divorce from Randi Lynnette Caruthers whereby they had to sell off all their farm animals to take care of their sleazeball lawyer Warren Randolph Scroggins. Jimbo ended up with all outstanding beauty-care debts, including a 50-dollar body-waxing job Wanda performed on Randi Lynnette when she was training for the Johnson County Rodeo in barrel-racing. And so Jimbo couldn't come up with the cash, and so Wanda ended up with a 350-pound pig named Pollywog that would ram his snout through anything you pointed at with a bamboo stick, including ex-wives, and so I had to have him, and so that year Wanda and me made this bet on the Super Bowl that, if I won, I would get total eternal possession of Pollywog the trained attack pig. But if she won — which she did — the stakes were even higher.

I agreed to take Wanda Bodine to the Neil Diamond concert ever time he came to Texas for the rest of his or her natural life, whichever one ended first.

In case you hadn't heard, he hadn't died yet. In fact, he rolled into Fort Worth a couple of weeks ago wearin' a white parachute shirt with Liberate sleeves and foo-foo shoulder pads cracklin' his Rosie all over the stage while about 17,000 Lipstick Lizards tanned their rooster necks from the glare off his trick britches. In case you haven't ever seen this, those pants have got more sheen on 'em than

the haircut on a Pentecostal preacher. When he finally gets to "Sweet Caroline," which is the part where I have to recite the Gettysburg Address in my head so I won't throw up on the Toni home permanent in the row in front of me, Wanda Bodine just about rips off her Playtex underwire support bra, runs it up a flagpole, and sends Neil some semaphore signals that say "Please let me into your hotel room so I can dance upside down on your clavichord."

But believe it or not, that's not the worst part. It's not even when he does "I Am I Said," one of the most profound songs in western civilization, thanks to the message of that song, which is "He said he is." And it's not when he does "America." Or even "Song Sung Blue," which he was singing the same way in 1976 and ever year since then. I know what you're thinking, though. You're thinkin', it's gotta be the moment he does "I'm a Believer" and his gold neckchains reflect off the laser light show directly off the giant bald spot on top of his head. Nope. That's a definite highlight, but it's nothing compared to ...

"Forever in Blue Jeans."

Now that most of you have already run screaming out of the room, I'll reveal to the ones that are left that he shouts all the lyrics out in a voice that sounds like a professional sumo wrestler stomping on the larynx of Robin Leach while he begs for more interviews with Elizabeth Taylor. Fortunately, this is always the place where Wanda Bodine passes plumb out.

"Beautiful noise, Neil baby," I tell him as I hoist her hiney into the bed of the pickup. The man's a genius.



Hollywood starlets are cheaper in the "Crime Zone."

Speaking of worldwide plagues that never go away, "Crime Zone" is a decent Roger Corman flick about what happens to a young worker in a 21st-century hibernation factory where they freeze-dry old people for six months to make 'em look healthy again, who gets a little too uppity, loses his job, and makes the Army mad by taking a slave-girl hooker home to his crummy apartment, making love to her without paying for it, causing a scene in a grocery store, robbing a hospital records building so he and his hooker girlfriend can escape to the land of Frodan, beating up his best friend, robbing a bank, machine-gun lasering a few

android cops, making friends with an old Russian guy who knows how to fly helicopters, killing his boss, taking some jewelry off hibernating old people and having a lot of conversations with David Carradine in the rain. Sure, we've all seen this story before, but have we seen it with 1,000 Peruvian extras in shiny silver space suits? I think not.

Two breasts. 24 dead bodies. Two motor vehicle chases. Excellent warehouse special effects. Freeze-dried Miami Beach whale-meat. Gratuitous condom vendor. Gratuitous zit-faced lepers. Kung Fu. Shoplifter Fu. Laser gun Fu. Twisted metal Fu. Drive-in

Academy Award nominations for Michael Shaner, as the maniac best friend that shoots everybody in sight, for saying "Old friends last FOREVER!"; Sheryl Lynn Fenn, as the scrumptious prostitute Helen, for advertising her services with the line "Choose your fantasy"; Peter Nelson, as Bone the rebel, for saying "You don't know HOW bad I want to pull this trigger right now"; David Carradine, as the Big Brother bad guy, for saying "If you don't have criminals, you have to invent them" and "Sorry about your friend — it's only business."

Two stars. Joe Bob says check it out.

Joe Bob's Wisdom on Parade

By **JOE BOB BRIGGS**
Syndicated Columnist

The pygmies don't want to be called pygmies anymore. They have a good point. The men are four-foot-ten and the women are four-four, and they're SICK AND TIRED of these stupid stereotypes spread by ignorant people who think they are short. An incredibly tall spokesman talked about it to a National Geographic film crew, said that pygmy prejudice is rampant, and made an international appeal by staring straight into the cameraman's kneecap and demanding that people stop making pygmy jokes.

I understand his point. I fully sympathize with the needs, hopes and aspirations of people who are ... well, I started to say small ... people who are ... compact and dignified ... no, that's not quite it ... people who are shaped by a loving God into the form He desires for them, a shape that resembles a giant Betsy Wetsy doll.

One of the points they're making is that pygmies are "normalized" if you look at them in THEIR culture, where EVERYBODY is a pygmy. Of course, if we're gonna do that, we need to kick out the National Geographic film crews, also known by the pygmies as Giant Twit-Monsters From the North. One reason we think the pygmies are so short is that English guys in baggy sweaters and Hush Puppies are always standing around them making them feel like cockroach people. STOP TAKING PICTURES of them. That'll help. And if you DO take pictures of them, take some Barbie Doll house furniture with you to make 'em feel at home in front of the camera.

The pygmies, unfortunately, aren't the only people in the world suffering from mindless, ignorant cultural discrimination. Consider these cruel stereotypes:

■ The Irish are actually sober 20 percent of the time, but does anybody ever write about THAT?

■ There are two Norwegians in Minnesota who do NOT wear baggy pants and scratch themselves in public. Try to find THAT story in the national media.

■ The French are actually very nice people. Most of them prefer that you do NOT leave a tip. They would be embarrassed to take your money. In fact, you'll get better service if you do NOT tip them.

■ Italian women remain slender after their sixth child.

■ Okay, yes, it's true that Texans consume more Jack Daniels whiskey than any state in America and more than any foreign country. But what you DON'T know is that we also consume more Bloody Mary's AT BREAKFAST than any other state in America. So it kind of evens out, when you have all the facts.

■ Koreans are excellent drivers. Most freeway accidents involving people named "Kim" are caused by guard rails that break off too easily.

■ Mexicans are perfectly capable of electing politicians who aren't crooks. Look at Tomas Javier Pena, mayor of Zapatano, a village of some 34 people in the northeastern corner of Tamaulipas. The man has never taken a bribe in his life. Do you see HIM on "Sixty Minutes"?

■ People in Colombia hate cocaine. In fact, if a man comes into a restaurant and someone thinks he's about to pay for his meal with DRUG MONEY, no one will take it. If he orders a \$10,000 bottle of wine, they won't even sell it to him. This drug thing is blown all out of proportion. It's just the action of a few meanies that nobody ELSE will have anything to do with.

■ Swedes are not blond anymore. They USED to be blond, but people made fun of them for being blond, and they're sick and tired of it. Most of them are "undark," and they would appreciate it if the international media would adopt that term for Swedish hair color.

■ Germans stopped being stocky in 1957. It was a carryover from the Nazi era, but since that time stockiness has been outlawed in all states except the one that recently elected 11 right-wingers to Parliament. You can tell they're Nazis because they're stocky. In fact, there weren't any Nazis in Germany. There never were. It was one of those stereotypes the world WANTED to believe about them.

■ Nobody in Bangladesh is poor.

■ The Russians hate vodka. And, of course, we could go on and on with this, but let me leave you with just one thought. Think of this the next time you're about to make some mindless cultural or ethnic jokes that's based on nothing more than your own distorted view of the world.

People used to say all Americans could joke about one another without taking it personally. Obviously, this was a cruel stereotype.