





**Fair & Balanced**

**ALSO BY BRIAN FLEMMING**

*Bat Boy: The Musical* (with Keythe Farley and Laurence O'Keefe)

# **FAIR & BALANCED**

*a play in one act*

*and other short works by*  
**BRIAN FLEMMING**



**FAIR USE PRESS**  
Los Angeles

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FAIR & BALANCED



This play is dedicated to Larry Flynt

## Characters:

FAIR

BALANCED

AMPERSAND

BILL O'REILLY

## Scene:

Fox News Channel dungeon.

*FAIR and AMPERSAND and BALANCED hang high on the wall from chains shackled to their wrists.*

**Fair:** My crotch still itches.

**Balanced:** I'm sorry to hear that.

**Fair:** I think that it wouldn't be so bad if my crotch didn't itch.

**Balanced:** Yes, it would.

**Fair:** No, really, if my crotch didn't itch, I don't think it would be that bad. I'd be...content.

**Balanced:** You just think that because you're focused on your crotch right now. If it didn't itch, you'd focus on other things.

**Fair:** Hey, Ampersand, see if you can get your foot over here and scratch my crotch. (*AMPERSAND tries, with his closest foot.*) No, your other foot, you have to kind of flip over. (*AMPERSAND tries other foot.*)

**Balanced:** Be careful, Sandy.

**Fair:** Don't distract him. (*Tries to get crotch closer to AMPERSAND's foot.*) There you go, there you go, no, keep going, yes, yes, yes, try harder, harder, right there almost there! (*AMPERSAND gets closer, barely touches FAIR's crotch. Both collapse, exhausted.*)

**Balanced:** Did it work?

**Fair:** No. He barely touched me. A good scratch requires a more extended period of contact.

**Balanced:** That was an excellent try, anyway, Sandy.

**Fair:** Yes. He made a good effort. *(Pause.)* Okay. We'll catch our breath and try again.

**Balanced:** Again? But it didn't work.

**Fair:** Except this time, Amp, I want you to just give me a nice sharp kick in balls, okay?

**Balanced:** Heavens!

**Fair:** No, it's okay. If we can't scratch this itch, we'll knock it right out of the park. God-damn this itches! *(Spasms his crotch violently.)* Mother fucker sons a bitch Christ on a cracker! This fucking itch!

**Balanced:** You go, Elvis.

**Fair:** Bitch bitch bitch bitch fucker fucker fucker! MY CROTCH HAS BEEN ITCHING FOR ALMOST TWENTY-FOUR GODDAMN MOTHERFUCKING HOURS AND IT WON'T GODDAMN MOTHERFUCKING STOP! *(Ceases spasming. Catches breath.)* That wasn't very nice, Lance.

**Balanced:** Whatever do you mean?

**Fair:** The Elvis thing. The joke.

**Balanced:** It was harmless.

**Fair:** No, because I was harmed.

**Balanced:** But you know what I meant—Elvis, with his pelvis.

**Fair:** I understood the joke. But I feel that it was at my expense.

**Balanced:** Oh.

**Fair:** And considering that I was the one *suffering* at the time of the joke, it was a joke told in poor taste.

**Balanced:** You're making a big deal.

**Fair:** You are a person who jokes in poor taste, and I am not sure that there is a lower form of life than that.

**Balanced:** To Betsy!

**Fair:** Yes, I believe that Ampersand and I share this space with a life form that is lower than all other life forms.

**Balanced:** No, you don't mean that.

**Fair:** Oh, but I beg to differ that I do. And when I say that Balanced here is lower than all other life forms, by that I mean to say that he is lower even than—

**Balanced:** Don't. Don't even joke about that.

**Fair:** Excuse me, I believe I had the floor. I hereby state without equivocation or humor that you are lower even than—

**Balanced:** No, don't. That is so *mean*.

**Fair:** It pains me to say it, but it has to be said. You are a lower form of life than Bill O'Reilly.

**Balanced:** (*Weeps.*) No! Take it back! Take it back!

**Fair:** There are not many in that class, but you, my dear Balanced, are one of them. How low can one go? You are the very definition that serves at the answer to this question.

**Balanced:** So *mean*.

**Fair:** In fact, I am picturing in my mind's eye a big pile of steaming dog shit. And on that pile of steaming dog shit is a fly, who is eating the dog shit. The dog shit goes into the fly's mouth, courses through his body and then emerges from the fly's asshole. And so now what he have before us is a tiny lump of fly shit which was created entirely from dog shit. And you, Balanced? (*Pauses.*)

**Balanced:** *Yes?*

**Fair:** You should envy that fly shit, because it has a more elevated position in our society than you will ever know.

**Balanced:** I should have never tried to help you.

**Fair:** Scientists had to redraw the charts of lowness for— *Help?* When did you ever try to help me? When did a lower-than-a-piece-of-fly-shit like you ever try to help a brother?

**Balanced:** When I said the Elvis.

**Fair:** Your idea of a *joke*.

**Balanced:** I only said it because I thought it would take your mind off the itch.

**Fair:** Oh?

**Balanced:** I didn't want to see you go through with the crotch-kicking strategy because I just couldn't bear to see you in pain like that. I was just trying to distract you.

**Fair:** (*Pause.*) Oh.

**Balanced:** I thought that I could divert you with a joke, and you and I would have a few words, and that would take your mind off the itch until maybe it went away.

**Fair:** I see.

**Balanced:** But I didn't know you'd put me under O'Reilly. I wasn't ready for that.

**Fair:** I am chastened.

**Balanced:** Well, I guess so.

**Fair:** Your plan was excellent.

**Balanced:** I had the best of intentions.

**Fair:** I see that you did. It is I, not you, who is lower than the shit of a dog-shit-eating fly.

**Balanced:** No, you're not.

**Fair:** That's true, I am not. I am lower than the shit that comes from the fly who eats that fly shit.

**Balanced:** No, it was just the itch talking. You weren't yourself.

**Fair:** I am beneath O'Reilly.

**Balanced:** Nobody is beneath O'Reilly. *Nobody.*

**Fair:** I hurt the one person who was trying to help me. Isn't that always the way?

**Balanced:** It is.

**Fair:** Just once I would like to hurt the person who is hurting me.

**Balanced:** Wouldn't we all, wouldn't we all.

**Fair:** Lancey, I would like to offer you my formal apology.

**Balanced:** I accept.

**Fair:** You are a far greater friend than I deserve.

**Balanced:** No, you would have done the same for me.

**Fair:** I would like to think so. I would like to think that someday, if I work hard enough at it, I could be as good a person as you are.

**Balanced:** Fair, this is too much.

**Fair:** And I say this earnestly and with all seriousness of purpose: Balanced, you are a prince among men. I am honored to hang on this wall with you.

**Balanced:** You're—well, that's very. Thank you.

**Fair:** You are welcome. *(Pause.)* My crotch still itches.

**Balanced:** I'm sorry to hear that.

**Fair:** Get that foot ready, Ampersand. *(AMPERSAND looks at FAIR.)* Don't worry, I know what I'm talking about here. We just need one good swift kick. I know you can do it. *(AMPERSAND looks over at BALANCED.)*

**Balanced:** I don't know, it might be the only way. It's up to you. (*AMPERSAND looks back at FAIR.*)

**Fair:** (*Pushing crotch in AMPERSAND's direction.*) Here you go, Ampy, it's a nice big target.

**Balanced:** If he does say so himself.

**Fair:** Just anywhere in the general crotchal region ought to do it. Just get kind of a rhythm going—no, use your other foot, remember? Use your whole body—out...in...out...in. That's right, like a swing. Good. Hey, that's great, get that rhythm going. And now, ready...ready...

**Balanced:** (*Turns away.*) I can't watch.

**Fair:** ...ready...and kick! (*AMPERSAND does not kick.*)

**Balanced:** (*Screams simultaneous with non-kick—still looking away. Pause, looks at FAIR.*) Did it...?

**Fair:** He pussed out.

**Balanced:** (*to AMPERSAND*) You pussed out? (*AMPERSAND hangs his head.*)

**Fair:** (*Spasms.*) This cocksuck motherfuck raping little babies in fucking hell hell hell. I'M IN FUCKING HELL! I HATE YOU BILL O'REILLY I'M IN FUCKING HELL AND I WILL FIND A WAY TO BRING YOU INTO MY HELL! (*AMPERSAND starts swinging his leg and body.*) I WILL PULL YOUR INTESTINES OUT OF YOUR ANUS AND SHOVE THEM DOWN YOUR THROAT, YOU FUCKING COCKSUCK MOTHERFUCK! (*Notices AMPERSAND.*) Yes! Yes! That's right, Ampy, you can do it! You can do it! I know you can. That's my friend! That's my friend!

**Balanced:** Go, Sandy, go!

**Fair:** I knew I could count on you! (*Presenting crotch.*) Here it is, Amp. Just think of my junk as Bill O'Reilly. Bill O'Reilly is my fucking dick. That's right. There's your target. Smack it nice and hard.

**Balanced:** Not too hard.

**Fair:** No, yes too hard! Look at it Ampersand, that's Bill O'Reilly. Bill O'Reilly is my cock and balls. (*AMPERSAND builds momentum.*) What do you want to do to Bill O'Reilly, huh? What do you want to do to my Bill O'Reilly? Fucking murder my Bill O'Reilly. Kill my O'Reilly! (*Repeat as necessary for timing.*) Kill my O'Reilly! Kill my O'Reilly! Kill my O'Reilly! Kill my O'Reilly! Kill my O'Reilly! (*AMPERSAND kicks FAIR hard in the crotch.*)

**Fair:** (*Pause.*) And here it comes. (*Pause.*) Oh. Oh. (*Ad lib groans of pain. AMPERSAND appears anguished by FAIR's groans.*)

**Balanced:** Mercy, mercy, mercy.

**Fair:** It's so...so— (*More groans of pain.*)

**Balanced:** Oh, Fairy, Fairy, Fairy.

**Fair:** It's so...so...

**Balanced:** You don't have to say anything. I totally get the point.

**Fair:** It's so...

**Balanced:** Yes?

**Fair:** It's so...useless.

**Balanced:** I...?

**Fair:** You know how...when you get kicked in the balls?

**Balanced:** Okay.

**Fair:** You know how your testicles jump deep inside you, and that's where all the pain is resided?

**Balanced:** I think that I'm following, yes.

**Fair:** An itch, on the other hand, is superficial. It resides entirely on the surface of your skin.

**Balanced:** Oh, you poor thing.

**Fair:** So it turns out that a deep testicular ache and a **GODDAMN NAGGING ITCH** can coexist without canceling each other out in any way, shape or form.

**Balanced:** But you were right to attempt the experiment.

**Fair:** I'm an idiot. I'm an idiot who invited a kick in his junk.

**Balanced:** But, honey, you would have been torturing yourself right now if you hadn't tried it.

**Fair:** I'm an idiot. Just let me be an idiot.

**Balanced:** Okay, you're an idiot.

**Fair:** Thank you.

**Balanced:** Nobody was ever as stupid as you.

**Fair:** This is true.

**Balanced:** In fact, I am picturing in my mind's eye a retarded dog. And on that retarded dog's head is a retarded fly. And top of that retarded fly's head is a miniature retarded brain surgeon, who, right now, with a rusty scalpel, is removing what little there is of that retarded fly's retarded brain. And, you, Fair? *(Pause.)*

**Fair:** Yes?

**Balanced:** You are dumber than the shit coming out of that retarded fly's asshole.

**Fair:** *(Laughs.)* Excellent!

**Balanced:** Really? I didn't think it was as clever as yours.

**Fair:** No, but it was still excellent. Very well done. You always know just what to say. That's what's great about you, Lancey.

**Balanced:** Well...I. You're too kind. How's your O'Reilly?

**Fair:** I think it will live to see another day.

**Balanced:** It's a survivor.

**Fair:** We're all survivors. *(Pause.)* I have some news to impart.

**Balanced:** Your crotch itches.

**Fair:** That would be an update. This is news.

**Balanced:** Did something happen the rest of us somehow didn't witness?

**Fair:** Yes.

**Balanced:** Do tell.

**Fair:** I wanted to be sure it wasn't some kind of hallucination caused by the pain. But, no, I am sure it was not. I have discovered that we are hanging from hooks.

**Balanced:** We're hanging from chains, jingle jingle.

**Fair:** True. Actually, we each hang from one chain that is suspended on a hook. One hook for each of us.

**Balanced:** I never thought about it. How do you know?

**Fair:** Because I almost fell off.

**Balanced:** No! Say that you are not effing with me.

**Fair:** I am not effing with you. When Ampersand kicked me, and my body shot upwards, I could feel the chain almost fall off the hook.

**Balanced:** (*Trying.*) Well, then how come I can't get off mine?

**Fair:** You lack direct upward thrust.

**Balanced:** For the layman.

**Fair:** Whomever designed these rigs realized that from our present position we could not generate the direct upward thrust necessary to dislodge the chain from its axis. Go ahead, try. (*BALANCED and AMPERSAND try.*) You see? No matter what you do your weight is pulling downward. This is irrevocable scientific law. But when Ampersand kicked me, he generated the kind of direct upward thrust none of us

could generate on our own. The engineer did not figure on a strong kicker like Ampersand kicking one of us in the crotch.

**Balanced:** Imagine that.

**Fair:** I swear, Balanced, and I ess you not, I almost fell off that hook. I could feel it.

**Balanced:** Direct upward thrust. This is...except, I fear what you're about to say next.

**Fair:** Ampersand, you gotta kick me in the junk again, but this time harder. (*AMPERSAND shakes his head vigorously.*) Ampy, you gotta do it, there's no other way. I know you're a nice guy, I know this is hard for you. But just one more kick.

**Balanced:** Sandy, listen to him. It's the only way. (*AMPERSAND still shakes his head.*) You need to look at the big picture here.

**Fair:** Ampy, okay. Just listen. If you won't kick me in the junk, kick Balanced.

**Balanced:** Wha--?

**Fair:** (*To BALANCED.*) It stands to reason that you are on a hook, too. So, if Ampersand doesn't want to cause me more pain, he can kick you. Six of one, six of the other.

**Balanced:** I— Hold on, let me think for a minute.

**Fair:** You need to look at the big picture here.

**Balanced:** I am, but my junk wants me to find an even bigger picture. I— Wait, look at the clock.

**Fair:** Yeah? Oh.

**Balanced:** Eight o'clock approaches.

**Fair:** It does.

**Balanced:** He'll be here. He's never late.

**Fair:** Yes, you found a bigger picture, I admit.

**Balanced:** It wouldn't do to be in the middle of the process, and then be discovered.

**Fair:** No. No, it wouldn't. I guess we will have to put this off.

**Balanced:** The decision.

**Fair:** Yes, Ampersand's decision. It should be up to him. He can kick either one of us.

**Balanced:** After.

**Fair:** After O'Reilly. *(Pause.)* I hate looking at the clock.

**Balanced:** Yes. I'd say it's the worst part, if there weren't . . . worse parts.

**Fair:** *(Pause.)* Say something, Lance, I don't want to let my imagination get the better of me.

**Balanced:** No, don't think about it. Thinking about it is worse than talking about it. It's almost worse than--

**Fair:** Right. Don't think about it.

**Balanced:** I'm not. It's out of my mind.

**Fair:** Mine too.

**Balanced:** I'm somewhere else. I'm on an island.

**Fair:** I'm right there with you.

**Balanced:** Coconuts.

**Fair:** And beer. Imported beer.

**Balanced:** Well, it would *have* to be imported. Unless the island has its own brewery.

**Fair:** If it did, I would be president of that brewery.

**Balanced:** And I would vote for you every four years.

**Fair:** And all the beer would be free.

**Balanced:** Which is exactly why I would vote for you. Which also, when you think about it, is probably why president of a brewery is not normally an elected office.

**Fair:** "The Fair Island Brewery, because free beer is the best beer."

**Balanced:** "There *is* such a thing as a free beer."

**Fair:** There is in my world.

**Balanced:** And what a wonderful w— (*Sound of a large metal door opening and closing.*) Oh.

**Fair:** Countdown begins.

**Balanced:** I think he drags it out on purpose. I think he knows what it does to us.

**Fair:** He knows. If there's a way to make it worse, he'll make it worse.

**Balanced:** I just don't see what he *gets* out of it is all.

**Fair:** The mystery of evil is just one more way that evil torments us.

**Balanced:** Did you just make that up?

**Fair:** I did.

**Balanced:** That's just lovely. Very well put.

**Fair:** Thank you.

**Balanced:** "The mystery of evil is how it..." wait.

**Fair:** "The mystery of evil is just one more way that evil torments us."

**Balanced:** Yes, quite. If I had a pen I would write that down.

**Fair:** "Another is its brute simplicity."

**Balanced:** "Another is its..." Are you getting these from a book?

**Fair:** And where would I keep this book?

**Balanced:** You amaze me, Fair, you really do. You have a way. You certainly have a way.

**Fair:** You're amazing in your own way, too, Lancey.

**Balanced:** Well, I... (*AMPERSAND looks at each of them.*) Oh, and Ampersand. Ampersand is amazing also.

**Fair:** Yes, he is. Also Ampersand.

**Balanced:** We're three amazing souls. *(Pause.)*

**Fair:** How long now, do you think?

**Balanced:** About thirty seconds.

**Fair:** I think we can beat him.

**Balanced:** Thoughts like that will get you into trouble.

**Fair:** I just need to make him pull me down.

**Balanced:** No! Don't make him pull you down. What are you *talking* about?

**Fair:** You need to follow my lead.

**Balanced:** Don't—what are you talking about?

**Fair:** Shh. He's coming.

*(BILL O'REILLY enters.)*

**Bill O'Reilly:** Goddamn fucking niggers. It always starts with the goddamn fucking niggers. You give them the right, and next it's the fags and the dykes and the Jews and the vegetarians, and God knows—and I'm not, no, understand: That this is not my opinion or anything. We're talking facts here. We're talking things I can't help. Plain fact: The Emancipation Proclamation was the worst turning point in the history of the United States of America. Plain fact of history. Just simple analysis. It's mathematics. You emancipate *these* guys, now you have to emancipate these guys over *here*, and then *these*, every

joker on the planet's gonna want the same emancipation as me. And then what've I got? What good is *my* emancipation if I have no point of reference, y'understand? It's mathematics. "Freedom"? You say I have "freedom"? How would I know? *How would I know?* Answer me this, Dr. Malcolm Luther King Einstein: How can you say you're for "diversity" when you want everyone to have the same rights as everyone else? Where's the diversity in that? Spice of life, goddammit, spice of life. A Porsche is not a Porsche if everyone in town is driving one. It's just...a car. (*Indicates himself.*) And Bill O'Reilly does not drive a car. Bill O'Reilly drives a Porsche, and if you try to steal so much as one of its hubcaps you can be sure that Bill O'Reilly will put a bullet right between your head. (*Turns to regard the prisoners.*) Hell, pretty soon *you'll* be wanting emancipation. (*Chuckles.*) Don't shoot the goddamn messenger, for Christ sake, is all that I'm saying, and I will say no more on this topic of the niggers. (*Sits down, takes off shoes.*) Except for one additional fact. They don't work. Our niggers don't work, and that's the key thing to understanding the whole problem of the niggers. And by niggers I don't just mean the black niggers. I mean all of them, all of them screaming out for rights they haven't earned with hard work like I and my people have. We have plenty of white niggers, "gay" niggers, although I do not know what makes them gay because they seem so unhappy with all that I and my people have worked to give them. And there are even some blacks who are not niggers. Not many, but some, and I count these non-nigger blacks among my friends and associates, so you can just shitcan any accusation of "racist" or what have you right now. (*Gets up, crosses to bureau, opens it with key from key ring, changes into new clothes.*) No, Bill O'Reilly is not a racist. I don't even notice race. Are you black? Are you white? Are you yellow or green? Bill O'Reilly simply doesn't notice. Someone might ask, "Hey, O'Reilly, what race was that person you met yesterday?"

And Bill O'Reilly would say, "I do not know. But one thing I do know is that the person was not a nigger, because the person worked hard and respected all that I and my people have given him or her." This is all I ask and I do not ask for more. I could ask for more, but I do not, because I believe in self-sacrifice. I base my life on it. All of my life, from the beginning. Was I a child of privilege? Did I grow up in circumstances that put me in one of the relative "upper classes"? Did I have advantages? Yes, yes and yes. But I played the cards I was dealt. Okay, so Bill O'Reilly had some good cards. *This is how cards works.* Luck of the draw is what we call it, and most of us don't go around whining about it. We look at our hand and we say, how can I play this hand? My hand, I went from good to better, and all I ask is that I get credit for that. I did not fall. I rose. I am proud of this fact and I do not apologize. Perhaps your hand was not as good as mine. Perhaps you only had a pair of deuces. If so, well, I am sorry. I am not a man without sympathy. But *play the hand*, dammit. Don't look at my stack of chips and say, gimme some of those, because I got some bad cards here. No. Play the hand. Win your own goddamn chips. I won these chips fair and square. Maybe your hand was so bad that it's a miracle you played it to where you are. Maybe you had nothing, and you've parlayed that into your current status in our society, which is that your job is to wash my Porsche. Okay, I respect that. I hold you in esteem. You worked hard, you rose. You did not fall. And as long as you respect that it was my hard work that provided this Porsche for you to wash, and you show a little of the gratitude I am due, I have no problem with you. Nigger you are not. *(Finishes dressing, pulls bullwhip, notebook and pen from bureau.)* Some people were meant to be Bill O'Reilly. Some people were meant to wash Bill O'Reilly's Porsche. That's how it is. In today's climate, this is the kind of straight talk that gets you into trouble. People don't want to hear the truth. In fact, some people

try to argue with the truth, which, and I have to say that I respect the notion of a free exchange of ideas, but *you don't argue with the truth*. Argue all you want about other matters, but do not mess with the truth. Because the truth is sacred, and Bill O'Reilly will not stand by as sacrilege is committed against the truth. Am I attacked for this position? I am. Am I mocked and ridiculed? I am. But I will suffer these slings and arrows, because, as I said, I believe in self-sacrifice, and if I was put here in this place to defend the truth, then defend the truth I shall. (*Puts key ring, notebook and pen on table, retains bullwhip. Crosses to FAIR, addresses him.*) So, how's that itching powder working out? (*No response.*) I say, how's the itching powder working out? (*No response.*) Couldn't say, huh? No opinion on the matter. (*Crosses to table, makes notation in notebook. Crosses to a certain distance from FAIR.*) Today's subject is mathematics. So, Fair, tell me the answer: What is one plus one? (*No response.*) Come on, this is easy. One plus one equals...? Hmm?

**Fair:** Two.

**Bill O'Reilly:** (*Whips FAIR with bullwhip.*) Shut up! Today it's three. Today the answer is three. Now, Fair, try again. One plus one equals...?

**Fair:** Two.

**Bill O'Reilly:** (*Whips FAIR.*) Shut up! One plus one equals...?

**Fair:** Two.

**Bill O'Reilly:** (*Whips FAIR.*) Shut up! One plus one equals...?

**Fair:** Two.

**Balanced:** (*To FAIR.*) Stop it.

**Bill O'Reilly:** (*Whips FAIR.*) Shut up!

**Balanced:** He didn't even say anything.

**Bill O'Reilly:** (*Whips BALANCED.*) Shut up! Now, Fair. One plus one equals...? (*No response.*) Equals...? (*Whips FAIR.*) Equals...?

**Fair:** Three.

**Bill O'Reilly:** That's right. Today it's three. Lesson learned. (*Crosses to table, makes notation in notebook. Crosses to BALANCED.*) Now, Balanced—

**Balanced:** Three.

**Bill O'Reilly:** Okay, good. But that's not the question. Your question is, What is Fair? (*No response.*) Balanced? What is Fair?

**Balanced:** He's...my friend.

**Bill O'Reilly:** (*Whips BALANCED.*) Shut up! He is not your friend. Fair is not your friend. Fair refused to answer the question correctly even after I told him the answer. And you know what *that* is, and so you know what Fair is. Don't you. Now. What is Fair? (*No response.* BILL O'REILLY *goes over to the bureau and pulls out a hammer. He sets the hammer on a stool in front of AMPERSAND. AMPERSAND starts shaking.*) Do you want me to give Ampersand the hammer? Is that what you want to see happen?

**Balanced:** No.

**Bill O'Reilly:** Because it's up to you. You're in control. Tell me: What is Fair?

**Fair:** Tell him.

**Bill O'Reilly:** (*Whips FAIR.*) Shut up!

**Fair:** Tell him what he wants to hear.

**Bill O'Reilly:** (*Whips FAIR.*) Shut up! (*Whips FAIR.*) Shut up!

**Fair:** I'm a traitor.

**Bill O'Reilly:** (*Whips FAIR.*) Shut up! (*Whips FAIR.*) Shut up!  
That's right, he's a traitor. Say it.

**Balanced:** He's a traitor.

**Bill O'Reilly:** Again.

**Balanced:** He's a traitor.

**Bill O'Reilly:** And why is he a traitor, Balanced?

**Balanced:** Because he contradicted Bill O'Reilly.

**Bill O'Reilly:** That's right. And you don't contradict the truth. Not in my house. Not in Bill O'Reilly's house. (*Crosses to table, makes notation in notebook. Crosses to AMPERSAND.*) Now, Ampersand...

**Fair:** Bill O'Reilly is the smallest man on Earth.

**Bill O'Reilly:** (*Pause.*) Excuse me?

**Fair:** You, Bill O'Reilly, are the smallest man on Earth.

**Balanced:** (*To FAIR.*) Don't.

**Bill O'Reilly:** No. Do go on, Fair. Tell me more.

**Balanced:** Don't.

**Bill O'Reilly:** Shut up! Have you figured me out, Fair? Is that what you're saying? You have me figured out? And you would like to share this revelation with me?

**Fair:** Yes.

**Bill O'Reilly:** Well, I sure would like to be educated. (*Sits down on table.*) Educate me.

**Balanced:** Please don't.

**Fair:** Every night you go out there and you do your little monologue for yourself, and every night you know you're a fraud. Your philosophy is something you cobbled together from matchbooks and paychecks. You act like you earned what you have, but you know most of it was handed to you. You act like you're certain of everything, but inside you're filled with doubt, and you think that doubt means that you're weak. And so you seek out ways to prove that you're strong, but that's hard, because there are people out there who really *are* strong, and if you play the game with *them* you'll lose. Because that fear you have that you're weak? It's justified, Bill O'Reilly, because you really *are* weak. You're weak because you can't acknowledge your weakness. And you suspect exactly this. And so you seek out people weaker than you, or you *make* people weaker than you, and you humiliate them for their weaknesses so that you do not have to look at your own. You yell the loudest because you have the most to hide. You, Bill O'Reilly, are the smallest man on Earth.

BILL O'REILLY *walks over to a crank mounted to the wall and cranks it. FAIR descends until his feet reach the floor. BILL O'REILLY walks over to the hammer and picks it up. He stands in front of FAIR.*

**Bill O'Reilly:** I will now refute your argument. (*Strikes FAIR across the face with the hammer. Puts down hammer. Uses key from key ring to unshackle FAIR. Grabs FAIR, who is limp, by the hair and bends him over the table, face down. Pulls down FAIR's pants. Undoes his own zipper.*) I will now continue to refute your argument. (*Penetrates FAIR, who wakes up and moans.*) Anything else you'd like to add to that little lecture?

**Fair:** Direct...upward...thrust.

**Bill O'Reilly:** What? Shut up! (*Pumps harder.*)

**Fair:** Direct upward thrust. (*Unseen by BILL O'REILLY, BALANCED gestures his crotch at AMPERSAND, who shakes his head.*)

**Bill O'Reilly:** Yes, that's what I'm giving you. Now, shut up!

**Fair:** Direct upward thrust. (*Moans in pain as BILL O'REILLY pumps harder. BALANCED continues gesturing his crotch at AMPERSAND.*)

**Bill O'Reilly:** Direct upward *thrust*. Direct upward *thrust*. (*FAIR screams in pain.*) How about that, huh? (*AMPERSAND starts swinging his leg. BALANCED nods his approval and displays his crotch as a target.*) This is the lesson I always have to *teach* you. No matter *how many times* I *teach* you, you *still need to learn this lesson*. When are you *going to learn*?

**Fair:** Direct upward thrust!

**Bill O'Reilly:** Shut up!

AMPERSAND *kicks* BALANCED *hard in the crotch*. BALANCED *shakes his chains, which slip from the unseen hook*. BALANCED *and his chains crash to the floor*. BILL O'REILLY *turns his head around*. BALANCED *appears, wielding the hammer, and strikes* BILL O'REILLY *across the face*. BILL O'REILLY *falls to the floor, unconscious*.

**Balanced:** And here it comes. (*Pause. Hunches in pain.*) Ahhhh, my effing balls!

**Fair:** (*Over* BILL O'REILLY'S *fallen body.*) You did it. Is he...? No, he's not dead. You knocked him the fuck out, Balanced. You did it. Nice hammer work.

**Balanced:** Thank...you.

**Fair:** (*Crosses to bureau, gets length of rope, crosses back to* BILL O'REILLY, *ties hands behind his back.*) We... I don't know what we do now. It's... (*AMPERSAND kicks his feet.*) Oh! Ampersand! Right. Get him down, Balanced.

**Balanced:** Okay. (*Approaches* AMPERSAND.) I don't know, I suppose I could try to smack you in the crotch like this. (*AMPERSAND shakes his head.*) Or I could try it like *this*.

**Fair:** Hey! No, just crank him down. (*AMPERSAND nods his head.*)

**Balanced:** Oh, right. Much simpler. (*BALANCED turns a crank and lowers* AMPERSAND, *uses key from key ring to unlock both of their shackles.*)

**Fair:** *(Places chair. Drags BILL O'REILLY, unconscious, onto chair, slaps his face.)* Wake. Up. Wake. Up. Wake. Up. *(BILL O'REILLY stirs.)*

**Balanced:** Wakey, wakey, eggs and bakey.

**Fair:** What's one plus one? *(Slap.)* What's one plus one? *(Slap.)* What's one plus one?

**Bill O'Reilly:** Three.

**Fair:** Not today.

**Balanced:** *(Wielding bullwhip.)* What's one plus one?

**Bill O'Reilly:** Three.

**Balanced:** *(Attempts to whip, fails. To FAIR.)* Do you know how to use one of these?

**Fair:** Not really, no.

**Balanced:** *(Drops whip, points at BILL O'REILLY.)* Shut up! *(Pause.)* There are so many things to do now that I can hardly decide where to start.

**Fair:** I feel like a kid in a very large candy store.

**Balanced:** And Daddy's credit card has a very high limit.

**Fair:** What's one plus one, Bill O'Reilly?

**Bill O'Reilly:** Three.

**Fair:** He's making this so easy. *(FAIR, BALANCED and AMPERSAND confer in whispers, then place the table and another chair.)*

**Balanced:** (*Sitting behind table, holding hammer.*) Bill O'Reilly, you are going to get your Constitutional right to stand trial. (*Bangs hammer as gavel.*) I will be the judge, Fair will be the prosecutor, and Ampersand here will be your defense attorney.

**Bill O'Reilly:** But he's mute, he c—

**Balanced:** Shut up! Shut up! (*Bangs gavel.*) All right. Bill O'Reilly, you stand before this court charged with the crimes of...oh, Jesus God, where do we begin?

**Fair:** Your honor, may I approach the bench?

**Balanced:** You may. (*FAIR approaches.*)

**Bill O'Reilly:** My attorney should also be able to ap—

**Balanced:** Shut up! Shut up! (*FAIR and BALANCE confer in whispers. BALANCE nods in agreement. FAIR crosses back over to his prosecutor's area.*) Bill O'Reilly, you stand accused of the murder of Jimmy Hoffa.

**Bill O'Reilly:** Wha—?

**Balanced:** Shut up! This is a capital offense. You're going to die. Now, does the prosecutor have any opening evidence and that sort of thing?

**Fair:** I do, your honor.

**Balanced:** Excellent. I would very much like to hear whatever it is you have to say.

**Fair:** Your honor, if it pleases the court, there are four pillars that buttress the prosecution's case.

**Balanced:** Hmm. It sounds like you have a very good case.

**Fair:** The first is that the sky is blue.

**Balanced:** Can't argue with that.

**Fair:** The second is that the grass is green.

**Balanced:** Mm-hm.

**Fair:** The third is that, uh, sidewalks are kind of a grayish color, light-grayish typically.

**Balanced:** Yes, I've observed that to be true.

**Fair:** And the fourth is that, ummm...

**Balanced:** Clouds, maybe?

**Fair:** Yes, clouds. Clouds in general are white.

**Balanced:** White they are.

**Fair:** And, therefore, in the aggregate, Bill O'Reilly is guilty of the murder of Jimmy Hoffa.

**Balanced:** Whew! I don't know how he's going to get out of *this* one.

**Bill O'Reilly:** This is hardly—

**Balanced:** Shut up! Mr. Defense Attorney, do you have any way of refuting the prosecution's devastating case against your guilty client? (AMPERSAND *paces and makes a show of thinking, then shrugs and shakes his head.*) No? Oh well.

*(Bangs gavel.)* Guilty as charged. On with the penalty period— Penalty time? Session?

**Fair:** Phase.

**Balanced:** Penalty phase. On with the penalty phase of the trial of Bill O'Reilly, soon to end in the most gruesomely satisfying manner that jurisprudence has ever seen. Now, does the defendant have anything to say before the court passes sentence upon him?

**Bill O'Reilly:** I—

**Balanced:** Shut up! Just kidding. I think the court will allow you to beg for your life, if the prosecution concurs.

**Fair:** The prosecution of Bill O'Reilly concurs.

**Balanced:** Excellent. This ought to be good. What words do you have to say that will fall on deaf ears before you die?

**Bill O'Reilly:** I— Anything I've done that...may have offended anyone present, I just wish to say that I meant no offense. And taking offense where none is intended is the height of selfishness, I hope you can see that. You may think you're angry with me, but you're not. You're angry with yourselves. I speak the truth, you don't want to hear it. You're selfish. Fair, I'm not the weak one. You are. You all are. Because you think weakness is strength. And you think that to flatter yourselves, because you're weak. You turn black into white, right into wrong, the simple into the complex. But life is simple. It has simple truths. I speak them, and for that I have no apologies. I do not apologize for exposing the weaknesses of others, in whatever manner is necessary. They must be exposed, for they weaken us all. You, the three of you, weaken us all,

and I did my best to strengthen you. I deserve your gratitude, but I do not expect it.

**Balanced:** (*To FAIR.*) You know what the weirdest thing is? I'm not surprised.

**Fair:** Me either.

**Bill O'Reilly:** Weakness is a disease. Strength is the cure. Everything I have, I built it with my own two hands.

**Balanced:** (*To FAIR.*) Hands?

**Fair:** Hands.

**Balanced:** Ampy, go get the cutter.

*AMPERSAND crosses to the bureau. BALANCED pushes the table toward BILL O'REILLY. FAIR grabs a pair of shackles and joins BALANCED at the table. FAIR unties BILL O'REILLY's hands. Our view is blocked by the bodies of FAIR and BALANCED, but we can see that BILL O'REILLY's arms are being stretched across the table, and that BALANCED is hammering. BILL O'REILLY talks through it all.*

**Bill O'Reilly:** I am a simple man. I admit that. I base my life on a few simple virtues. Hard work, honesty and self-sacrifice. This is who I am and I do not apologize. The strong do not apologize to the weak for being strong. The strong *help* the weak by giving them strength. By *teaching* them strength. This is called duty. I heed the call, and for that I am unrepentant. Those who can become strong will learn. Those who cannot become strong will be destroyed. And we are all the better for it. Because we will all be strong together. We will all strengthen each other. This is a philosophy with which some do not agree, and so be it. I am all for a free exchange of ideas, within reason.

AMPERSAND *returns with a large meat cleaver. FAIR and BALANCED come away from the table to reveal that BILL O'REILLY's arms have been shackled to the table. The shackles are placed on the upper part of his arms. FAIR and BALANCED stand behind the table. FAIR positions AMPERSAND so that AMPERSAND is holding the meat cleaver over one of BILL O'REILLY's wrists.*

**Fair:** What's one plus one, Bill?

**Bill O'Reilly:** Today it's three.

**Fair:** Wrong answer. (*To AMPERSAND.*) Chop. (*AMPERSAND doesn't chop.*) Chop. (*AMPERSAND doesn't chop.*) After all he's done to you? Still? (*AMPERSAND shakes his head.*)

**Bill O'Reilly:** Today one plus one is three.

**Fair:** (*Grabs meat cleaver from AMPERSAND, chops off one of BILL O'REILLY's hands. BILL O'REILLY screams in pain.*) That answer was incorrect. (*Hands meat cleaver to BALANCED.*)

**Balanced:** What is one plus one?

**Bill O'Reilly:** ...three.

**Balanced:** (*Chops off BILL O'REILLY's other hand.*) Incorrect. But, I guess, according to you, you have one hand left, don't you? (*FAIR and BALANCE unshackle BILL O'REILLY.*)

**Bill O'Reilly:** (*Falls to floor and crawls.*) My strength is not in my body. You can do what you want to my body, my strength is inside me. You cannot break Bill O'Reilly. You are too weak to break Bill O'Reilly. Especially you,



**Balanced:** *(Long pause. Writes.)* “I like to fuck little boys, I just thought everyone should know.” *(Rips out page, throws it on BILL O'REILLY's corpse.)* Whatever. *(Pause.)* I feel so...*different.*

**Fair:** Me too.

**Balanced:** I hardly recognize this feeling.

**Fair:** It is not just the absence of tension, it is the presence of justice.

**Balanced:** Well put. Did you just make that up?

**Fair:** *(Pause.)* Yes.

**Balanced:** Well, nicely phrased. That's exactly what it is. *(Pause.)* Bill O'Reilly is dead.

**Fair:** Bill O'Reilly is dead.

**SONG: “AMPERSAND'S EPIPHANY”**

*(AMPERSAND sings to the audience.)*

**Ampersand:** I once just tried to get along.  
I thought that violence was wrong.  
But I was weak and now I'm strong,  
I sing this song – I sing for you.  
O'Reilly taught me what I know.  
I learned it real slow,  
But I made him my ho, oh yes, I  
Learned to rape and kill, just like Bill, too.

*(AMPERSAND presents a book whose cover reads: “Fair & Balanced: A Play”)*

This is the play that you just saw.  
It is the truth – you sit in awe.  
You cannot hide your gaping maw  
This flawless law – I can see you.  
You can't get it out of your head,  
Your soul we have fed,  
And O'Reilly's dead, but fear not:  
You can rape and kill O'Reilly, too.

*(FAIR and BALANCED present copies of the play.)*

**Add Fair and Balanced:**

You can rape and kill O'Reilly, too.

*(BILL O'REILLY presents a copy of the play.)*

**Add Bill O'Reilly:**

You can rape and kill O'Reilly, too.

*(The performers toss the books into the audience.)*

CURTAIN

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

The vicious tone of *Fair & Balanced* was inspired by a remarkable play—also starring a violent character named Bill O'Reilly—that O'Reilly himself staged on his nationally syndicated radio show. First, some background: At a June 2003 panel at a Los Angeles book fair, with Bill O'Reilly in attendance, writer Al Franken presented documentary evidence of O'Reilly's frequent misrepresentations about his own resume. At the time, O'Reilly did not dispute the evidence (he would later deny its existence, despite its existence) but did tell Franken to "shut up."

Later, on his radio show, which reaches hundreds of thousands of listeners, O'Reilly made the following statement about Franken to a caller named Mike:

What this guy writes and says does not matter to me, other than, Mike, he insulted me in a forum where I was at a decided disadvantage, you know, he went over his time limit. It was very, very sneaky, and you know, as I said at the top of the broadcast, somebody calls you a liar to your face, you don't just laugh that off. That's an insult. In the Old West, that woulda got you shot. See in the Old West, and I woulda loved to have been in the Old West, Al and I woulda just had a little, uh, a little shootout. You know? We woulda went out, on Wilshire Avenue, and uh, six shooters, now he's a much smaller target than I am, about four foot eleven, but he's wider, and it woulda been you know, Clint Eastwood time. I woulda had the cheroot, the serape, woulda given my squint, and I woulda put a bullet right between his head. Woulda been wrong, woulda been wrong, but it was the Old West, and I would not have known any better, so I wouldn't have been held accountable because I would not have known any--now I do, now in 2003 that would have been wrong.

Goose, gander.

Brian Flemming  
August 21, 2003  
Los Angeles