

Senator Richard Growling

A short story about a Canadian senator with a truly monstrous mandate.

“He’s perfect,” says Richard.

“Yes, very cute,” says the nurse. “There’s just one more thing. In two weeks you’ll need to appear at the Court of Unhuman Atrocities for a hearing. Here’s a pamphlet.” She reaches into the drawer and produces a poorly-designed brochure. “We didn’t have any money for colour printing, so it’s kind of hard to read. I told them not to use light text on a dark background, but what do I know?”

Richard takes the tri-fold and brings it up to his face for a whiff.

“Sorry about that, I keep forgetting to bag the pheasants. When they die they leak all over the place.”

“I’m used to the smell,” says Richard, sobbing. “I... take comfort in it.”

“Good, that’s important, so the gist of the pamphlet is that if little...”

“Richard,” says Richard. “My son’s name is Richard. After the great Richard Wagner.”

“If Richard passes the hearing and is deemed an acceptable risk to society, you are free to take him home.”

“And if not?”

“He will be disposed of by a garden tool.”

“Disposed of?” says Richard.

“Disposed of. Through the brain swiftly. Standard procedure.”

“What? How is that justice?”

“The specific tool of disposal will be chosen by the jury, by simple majority.”

“That’s only fair,” says the doctor.

“That’s anything but fair,” says Richard.

“Let’s pray that he passes then,” says the nurse.

“We’ll make sure of it. He’ll be ready.”