

Are You Not Entertained?: The river wasn't the only thing on fire when Who He and Elorza squared off

Oooh, you bitch!

The British would call it, with a dismissive sneer and a smile, "handbags at 10 paces."

That about sums up the much-inflated confrontation between Providence Mayor Jorge Elorza and Governor Dan "Who He?" McKee at a recent press conference for the illustrious WaterFire. A lot of heated blather, especially from the diminutive Elorza, who we would say acted like his hair was on fire, save for the fact he has little to burn up top. To Phillippe and Jorge, the best part of the videotaped spat was the intervention of one of McKee's bodyguards, who looked amazingly like Steven Schirripa, best known for his role in "The Sopranos" as Uncle Junior's caretaker, Bobby "Bacala." Now if "Who He?" could find a way to get Paulie Walnuts on his security team, he'd have our votes forever.

The cause of the dispute was the Providence teachers union contract, although some viewed it as a pre-planned PR stunt to show the *diminuto* Jorge as a tough guy who was standing up for his community. Maybe, maybe not. Just as likely was that Hizzoner wanted to kick off what will undoubtedly be a primary race for the Democratic candidacy for governor in 2022 in which Elorza and McKee will face off. (And P. and J. hope both will get their butts kicked by current Secretary of State Nellie Gorbea, who has already announced her official candidacy for that slot.)

So calm down, boys, although a shrieking, arms-flapping, wincing and backpedaling slapfest among politicians just can't be beat for entertainment value.

Jackie, Jackie

Phillippe and Jorge are longtime fans of Borscht Belt comedians. (For you youngsters, imagine a landlocked cruise ship full of Jewish passengers planted in the Catskills.) So we were saddened to learn of the recent passing of Borscht Belt legend (and former rabbi) Jackie Mason. Mason's self-deprecating humor and stylized Yiddish accent were a big hit in the Catskills before he went on to New York City where he had a chequered, but always humorous, career in stage and TV.

One of his most hilarious bits was about his inferiority complex. A great example was the shtick that went, "I was so self-conscious that when I went to a football game and the players went into a huddle, I thought they were talking about me."

Rhode Block

Many Vo Dislunders P. and J. have spoken with in the past few years have said they no longer travel to Block Island in the summer because it is simply overrun by tourists. And with locals' well-known disdain for outsiders, this isn't a huge surprise.

But you ain't seen nuthin' yet.

As this column goes to press, the town council of New Shoreham, which is the official name of The Block, will decide whether to make indoor mask-wearing at public establishments mandatory. As we have all seen since masks became the world's most controversial accessory, this is a ticking time bomb for Block Island. Enforcing such a law on opinionated tourists from afar is a guarantee of multiple confrontations between merchants and the great unwashed, many of whom can't pronounce, never mind spell, the word "couth." (And as far as enunciation, just imagine Joe Pesci's version of "youths" in "My Cousin Vinny," which comes out "'utes." "Hey, get some coot, wouldjuz?")

The alternative that New Shoreham's town fathers and mothers are considering is that wearing of masks becomes a "request." Good luck with that, in a state where the most common polite request made of others is "Go fuck yourself."