

Denny Hastert Grips My Balls

I was stopped at the entrance to the Rayburn House Office Building by the Capitol Police because of the weapon I sometimes carry. After hiding my Mace dispenser behind some bushes, I reentered the building and proceeded to Denny's third-floor office. As it was the week of Thanksgiving, I didn't see many people in the halls and stairwells. A voluptuous blonde, wearing a tight-fitting sweater and a Chicago Bears scarf, sat at the reception desk in Denny's office.

"Go in. He's expecting you," instructed the corn-fed beauty who still hadn't really taken notice of me.

"Thank you, darling," I offered with a smile and a stare. No response.

(I'm sorry, dear reader, for fixating so much on one person. But please understand, Denny Hastert was a very important man for a very long time, and he and I were friends. Both as a pundit and as a consultant, knowing Denny Hastert has served me well. I am proud of the relationship we share. More important, if you would just bear with me, you will see that this story leads to the next which leads to the next which, in turn, provides the clues that answer the mystery of who set out to screw me and why.)

I opened the door to Denny's private office. The lights were off. A voice called out, "Turn on the light." I recognized the voice as Denny's but it sounded heavier than I remembered, almost muffled, as if he'd been crying. It took me a second to find the light switch. Not before turning on a fan, an electric bull . . . "The third one. Next to the door. You idiot."

I found the switch, flicked it on. The room was empty in some parts, cluttered with boxes in others, as if someone had been packing, going through things. Denny sat in an imposing brown-leather chair behind a huge mahogany desk. His face was puffy, his eyes red. "Have a seat." I moved a woman's wig from a chair and sat. Denny chowed down the last of his pizza, which was on

his desk next to a soda can and a half-eaten bushel of broccoli. Finished with this round of food, Denny stood, guiding his baboon-like frame toward me. I rose from my chair. "Let me give you a hug," gushed Denny opening his arms wide.

I wasn't going to fall for that trick again. The last time Denny offered me a hug, I ended up in a reverse crossface. So this time I acted first. I reached for his elbow, implemented a backdoor whizzer until I was able to secure him in a pinch headlock. Denny's face turned beet red. I couldn't tell if he was angry or if there was simply no oxygen getting to his face.

"Good one," staggered Denny. "I see the student has outmaneuvered the teacher. Good one." And then came the low blow, the swisher. Next thing I knew I was in a tabletop stance with all of Denny's body weight applied against my chest. "Ha, ha!" barked Denny. "I still got it. Join me for a sauna?"

"As soon as you let go of my balls." We laughed again. The ice had been broken. I was relieved. His massive, moisturizer-soft hand was still gripping my testicles.

The Secret Sauna

Denny had something important to tell me, and since he was paranoid about recording devices, he insisted that we convene in the personal sauna hidden behind his office. It was common knowledge that Denny had spent a lot of time in Turkey and was a *hamam* enthusiast.

After disrobing in Denny's private bathroom, I opened the door to his makeshift sauna. Denny was already in there sprinkling water on the coals. I was naked. Denny wore a towel. There must have been a misunderstanding.

"Lie down," commanded Denny. Denny removed the towel from his waist and handed it to me. "Use this," I spread his towel on the deck and lay down. "No. Not that way. On your stomach." I turned over.

“You’re going to be in Annapolis next week for the big Middle East peace conference, right?” inquired Denny as he dipped a steel scrub into soapy water.

“I wasn’t planning on it.”

“Of course you’ll be there. You’re Giuliani’s guy for the Hebes.”

“Why? What’s going on?”

“I don’t know how much more of this I can take, Marty. I made it through twenty years, and now with only twelve months to go, they’re tightening the screws.”

“Who? Who’s tightening the screws?”

“The fucking Turks. Who do you think? You didn’t see the *Vanity Fair* article?” I had, in fact, seen the article. Something about an FBI whistle-blower swearing up and down that she heard Turkish officials on a wiretap boasting about giving Denny tens of thousands of dollars in bribes.

One name, however, apparently stood out—a man the Turkish callers often referred to by the nickname “Denny boy” . . .

Edmonds reportedly added that the recordings also contained repeated references to Hastert’s flip-flop, in the fall of 2000, over an issue which remains of intense concern to the Turkish government—the continuing campaign to have Congress designate the killings of Armenians in Turkey between 1915 and 1923 a genocide.¹

“I wouldn’t worry about it,” I counseled Denny. “Nobody believes *Vanity Fair* anyhow.”

“I’m not worried about *Vanity Fair*, you simpleton. I’m worried about the Turks. Now they want me to introduce legislation supporting Macedonia’s inclusion in NATO, for no other reason than to piss off the Greeks. And I’m not even Speaker anymore. But they don’t seem to get that. Enough is enough. I will not be blackmailed. Who am I kidding? I’m ruined.”

Denny, who was now scrubbing my buttocks and feet, abruptly stopped. He began to pace. I sat up. It must have been two hun-

dred degrees in there. I rubbed my eye. It was all of a sudden really itchy. I panicked that maybe I had caught something from Denny's towel.

"If only Ali knew, he would make them stop. I know he would." Was he talking about Ali Babacan, the foreign minister of Turkey? Denny continued. "Ali and I share a bond. We oil wrestled at sunset on the outskirts of Kirkpinar in front of two thousand villagers and their livestock. On my dear departed mother, it was one of the most moving experiences of my life. I must get to Ali before it's too late. He's going to be in Annapolis for the conference. I need you to be my messenger, to deliver something to him."

"What do you mean, deliver?"

"Stop being such a *hamam oglani*. I'll owe you."

So now I needed to go to Annapolis. I was not looking forward to it. I had long since tired of the Arab-Israeli conflict. And last time I stayed in a motel in Annapolis, I caught bedbugs. But who was I to turn down a former Speaker of the House?

Unclogging the Pipes

I called my good friend and fellow neocon Daniel Pipes (director of his own think tank, the Middle East Forum) to see if I could hitch a ride with him. Mom's car was in the shop and anyhow I didn't want to deal with parking once I got up there. Pipes said that he didn't have any space, that he needed room for his cats. He was bringing his cats to Annapolis? What a weirdo. Daniel suggested that I instead call Randy Scheunemann.

"I just spoke to him," he explained. "I don't think there's anyone driving with him."

"Do you have his number?" Now mind you, Randy and I go back. We served on the Committee for the Liberation of Iraq (CLI) together. But I didn't have his current info.

"Well if you don't have his number, maybe I shouldn't give it to you. And anyway, he's a McCain guy. There might be friction."