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Thank you for creating a paper that is everything women in Portland want and need! I have been utterly impressed with the integrity of the content, the guts you have as an editor and the practical approach to living a life that is authentic.

- Kelly A.

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A Woman's Irk is Never Done: System's Down

by Kimberly Gadette

The new man takes a quick look at your system and shakes his head as a sneer briefly crosses his face. He pokes around the wiring, saying "I don't know what that last guy was thinking, but he sure messed things up."

I protest. "But everyone thought he did a pretty good job running things. Professional, intelligent, sure there were a few problems, but aren't there always?"

"Let's talk turkey. He didn't know what he was doing. Sorry to say this ... but he was an idiot."

"But I thought—"

"You thought!" He snorts. "Trust me. The guy before me, and all the guys before him ... idiots. Morons."

It sounds like I'm talking about a computer system, doesn't it? It seems that every computer whiz from the biblical days of Job (an ancestor of Steven Jobs?) up through and including today always, always trashes the guy that came before him. It must be part of the I.T. job description.

But just to mess up your own binary code, let's say for argument's sake that our man in the White House is the Number One System Administrator Of The Free World. Let's call him the "BIG I.T."

And it seems that ever since the BIG IT from that new company in Texas has been on the job, everything is open to his scrutiny. And destruction. The environment, our relationship with the rest of the world, healthcare, women's rights ... I'm losing my cookies just thinking about it. Systematic changes always cost big bucks, but he's not worried. It certainly isn't going to hurt his cache. He assures you that in the end, he'll have the system running beautifully. Like it never did before. At least he's got that last part right.

He jaws on and on, his drawl getting thicker with every syllable. "I mean, look at that num-nuts who enacted that stupid law to conserve forest land in the amount of 58.5 million acres. And whoa, what about his lamebrain predecessor in the early part of the century? You know, the one who first set aside 150 million acres in the U.S., and then if that wasn't bad enough, another 85 million in Alaska in 1906? Clueless Clinton and Roose-a-dolt? What were Dumb and Dumber thinking?"

First things first, the BIG IT recommends that we back up the system properly. Well, not exactly. More than just a back up, he's planning on hopping into a big ol' truck, throwing it in reverse and rolling over the whole nine yards. Well, not exactly nine yards, either. More like two hundred and twenty nine years. It seems that he's bent on going all the way back to the mainframe, as well as to the mainframers, of 1776.

I try using logic. "Why throw the whole family tree out with the Apple?"

He pays no attention, concentrating on the work at hand. After painstakingly twisting the knobs of his highly technical Etch-A-Sketch, he finally unveils his new network configuration plans.

I rub my eyes in disbelief. I battle a queasy feeling in the pit of my own CPU.

He proposes the eradication of that glitchy Roe v. Wade. He intends to uninstall the bugged work of that Tricky Dick, with his Endangered Species Act, Clean Air and Clean Water Act. Ditto on the New Deal (another Roose-a-dolt), with particular attention to that lamebrained Social Security, National Labor Relations Board and the rest of that pro-worker claptrap, rife with so many errors that it's been crashing the system ever since.

I appeal to his conscience. "Surely you can't mean deleting all the upgrades we've added? Civil rights, workers' unions, women's suffrage?"

"Bingo, little darlin'." He chuckles as he produces a small black toolbox with assorted wrenches. "And once I start throwing these into the system, I'm gonna finally set things straight."

Dizzy and helpless, I watch as he reprograms history as I know it. Motherboard of God, there go the anti-trust laws. The Emancipation Proclamation. He laughs as he scrolls through the Gettysburg Address. "Forest score and seven years ago, my foot. What is it with those tree huggers?" He's working faster, erasing, repealing, rolling back. The Bill of Rights, the Constitution, oh God, it's 1776 and he's got his hands on the Declaration of Independence. Sparks fly and everything goes black.

I wake up to see a flag flapping above my head. I look up at the colors and heave a sigh of relief—they're still red, white and blue. But wait: I only see a few fat stripes. Where are the stars? Someone named George is still in charge, but what's with that funny white wig?

By Jove, is that Windsor Castle in the distance? And are those the bells of Westminster Abbey ringing out the hour? My word, I think it's time for afternoon tea.

Rule, Britannia ... God save the King ... and so forth and so on.