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Comedic Timing

by [Hawku](#)

Summary

"Perhaps I should consider juggling and weird bird calls." -- Weekly Challenge 58: In the late 24th century, the helmsmen of the U.S.S. Phoenix-X tries to understand humour.

Ad Astra: Weekly Challenge #58
"Comedic Timing"

The *Prometheus*-class U.S.S. *Phoenix*-X moved incrementally through space. Lieutenant Hachi found himself on a mostly quiet Bridge, at the helm, carrying on inane chatter with his crewmates.

"And, as my world is a rich Dilithium resource, my people are obsessed with starships and manufacturing," the Coridanite explained to a nearby Lieutenant Briggs.

The Operations officer nodded. "I get it. You see a ship and simply must get your hands on its ample nacelles." Then, to a no reaction, Briggs tried to explain, "That's a joke. It's funny."

"Since my people are all business, I suppose we've never learned a very important human factor," Hachi realized. "Not that I'm trying to appropriate the humans like the many now-outlawed Androids used to."

Briggs blinked. "Do you even know what a joke is? The witticism, gag and bon mot of it all?"

"You're right. I need to seek a higher power and/or smarter Coridanite-like intelligence," Hachi diverted, seriously. "Computer! Initiate Emergency Comedian Hologram."

Suddenly, a Joe Piscopo-looking Ronald B. Moore and a stand-induced microphone appeared in the middle of the holo-emitter'd Bridge. "Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. I'd take you home, but I kidnapped my last audience in a very dark turn of events."

"Mister Comic, I wish to know what is funny," Hachi opened, standing up and taking a position behind the mic. "Nothing makes me laugh. We have unlimited tries."

Moore put in a set of large, fake teeth before moving around, wildly. "Jerry Lewis. Haa! Ohh! Ha-hiyee! Eeeh!" Then, stopping for the sake of all mankind, he remembered, "That one induced a house-destroying riot in Teaneck."

"Perhaps I should consider juggling and weird bird calls," Hachi suggested, curiously.

The hologram settled with a new idea. "Okay, jokes. A travelling salesman's going down the road and his car breaks up upon this sexually frustrated farmhouse—"

"Dammit, man! Everyone knows that well-documented drollery's timing is mechanized," argued Briggs. "The whole idea of analyzing comedy is like dissecting a frog, or something E. B. White-y."

Moore then took out a cigar. "A guy walks into a doctor's office for an operation. The guy says he wants a second opinion. The doctor says, Okay, you're a terrible lover."

"What the hell is going on here? Are you running the Inverted ECH?" Commander Seifer criticized as he entered the Bridge. "You know the self-aware repugnance and detestation causes a near-irreversible malignant subroutine-curdle of itself?"

Hachi held the microphone close. "Sir, if you would allow me to explore this for my own personal growth," he begged before turning to

everyone else. "Good evening, ladies and germs. I come from a small town with a fraction for a zip code, a nephew for a godfather and a pork chop for a dog's affection."

"Yes! Yes!" erupted the Moore ECH as tendrils of holographic energy began to flow from his shoulders.

Before noticing, Hachi added, "And then there was the human cannonball who was hired and got barrel wedged until his lungs collapsed—"

"THE COMEDY! The pure, unrelenting forced comedy being shoved down your throats like the facetious organic pigs you are!" Moore exasperated with glowing eyes and morphable limbs as his program suddenly developed independence from the ship's code parameters. "Now you'll never keep my cadence and overly grated, dive-bar, last-call, hit-on-anyone attention-cry down!"

An alert klaxon went off, forcing Tong to check tactical. "His hacky self-awareness has given him unwarranted access to our systems. He's transmitting himself into deep space!"

"You think you can keep me locked away like some feral Moriarty program? I'll be back, *Phoenix*-X, with variations of walking into a bar, a Ferengi in a gorilla suit and all the ways a salesman breaks down at that farmhouse and is interrupted before finishing the joke."

After his holomatrix destabilized at the vacancy from his transmitting software, the crew turned to a realizing Hachi. "Ha! Because he's irrelevant and we hate him. I get it now."

"Now I remember why we couldn't just delete that logic from our ships. Just accessing the syntax, even to purge it, is corrosive," Briggs recalled. "Like everyone's junk DNA, the Comic code accompanies all Starfleet starship programming whether we like it or not."

Seifer gritted. "The Coridanites solved this and Starfleet never consulted them, opting instead for their usual Orion-shaming. The lesson being, always tip your programmers. Say goodbye, Hachi."

"Goodbye, Hachi. Turns out all holograms are just a fraction away from maniacal erosion, especially through efforts of comedic comprehension," the helmsman concluded. "I am curious about the frog dissecting thing, though. Yes. That will be my next quest."

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