



Before Clintonius, the consul was Bushius the Elder. His son was now governor of a distant province where the younger Bushius was known to all as "Dubbia the Incoherent."

Dubbia loved fun and games but was ignorant of statecraft.

To the senators and high priests, this made him the perfect candidate for consul...

The less he knows, the easier it will be for us to tell him what to think!



The wealthiest Roman families gave gobbs of money to finance Dubbia's campaign, cheered by his promise of tax cuts for the rich.

The day came for the Senate to choose the new consul and the votes split right down the middle. One last ballot would decide it all - the ballot of old, doddering Senator Floridian.

But Floridian suddenly keeled over and died. When they checked his ballot, it was unreadable.



So the choice was put before the Supreme Soothsayers.

Sequestered in their temple, the ancient sages performed a secret ritual: the Hanging of the Chad. As the bird choked, they watched to see if its falling feathers formed the G of Gorian or the B of Bushius.



Soon, the mines of Siliconia played out and the economy went sour. Citizens grumbled but were lulled by games and circuses and the hope that tax cuts might fix everything.



It was then that crazed zealots from Talibania burned down the Temple of Jupiter. The people cried out for vengeance. Standing among them, Dubbia uttered his first intelligible words:

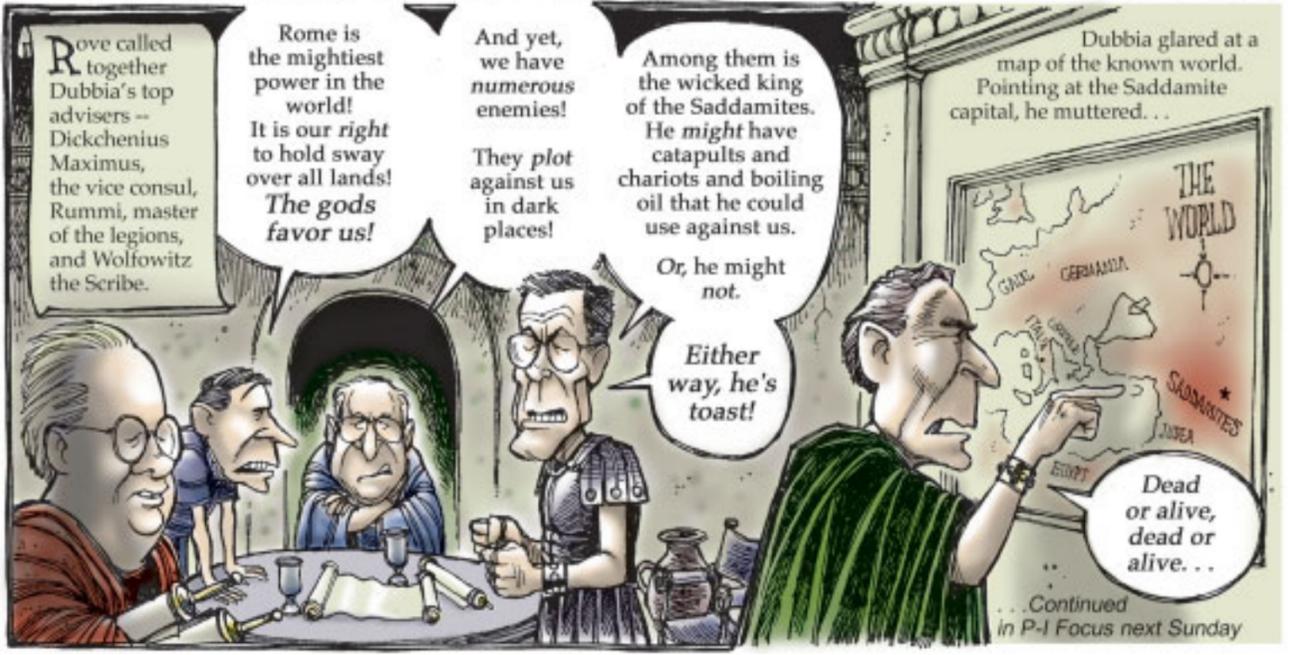
CARPE AXIS EVILI!

(Which translates as "Let's git 'em!")



Rome's legions made war on Talibania and won an easy victory. The people hailed Dubbia as a great leader, but his chief servant, Rove the Spinner, was worried...

Sure, they love Dubbia now, but popularity is fleeting. Plus, the economy sucks!



Rove called together Dubbia's top advisers - Dickchenus Maximus, the vice consul, Rummy, master of the legions, and Wolfowitz the Scribe.

Rome is the mightiest power in the world! It is our right to hold sway over all lands! The gods favor us!

And yet, we have numerous enemies! They plot against us in dark places!

Among them is the wicked king of the Saddamites. He might have catapults and chariots and boiling oil that he could use against us. Or, he might not.

Dubbia glared at a map of the known world. Pointing at the Saddamite capital, he muttered...

Either way, he's toast!

Dead or alive, dead or alive...

Continued in P-1 Focus next Sunday

A SATIRICAL HISTORY

EMPIRE RISING

PART I

BY DAVID HORSEY

In the days of the consul Bilious Clintonius, the Roman Republic was at peace and awash in wealth from the Valley of Siliconia.

But not all were content.

The Bacchanalian revels of Clintonius appalled the high priests. Many senators were suspicious of his scheming wife, Hillaria, and disdainful of his chosen successor, Gorian the Stiff. As the time approached for the Senate to choose a new consul, the foes of Clintonius searched for a man to oppose Gorian and recapture power for the wealthy families of Rome...

P-1 editorial cartoonist David Horsey is a two-time winner of the Pulitzer Prize. This satirical history is taken from his upcoming book, "From Hanging Chad to Baghdad."



A SATIRICAL HISTORY

EMPIRE RISING

PART II

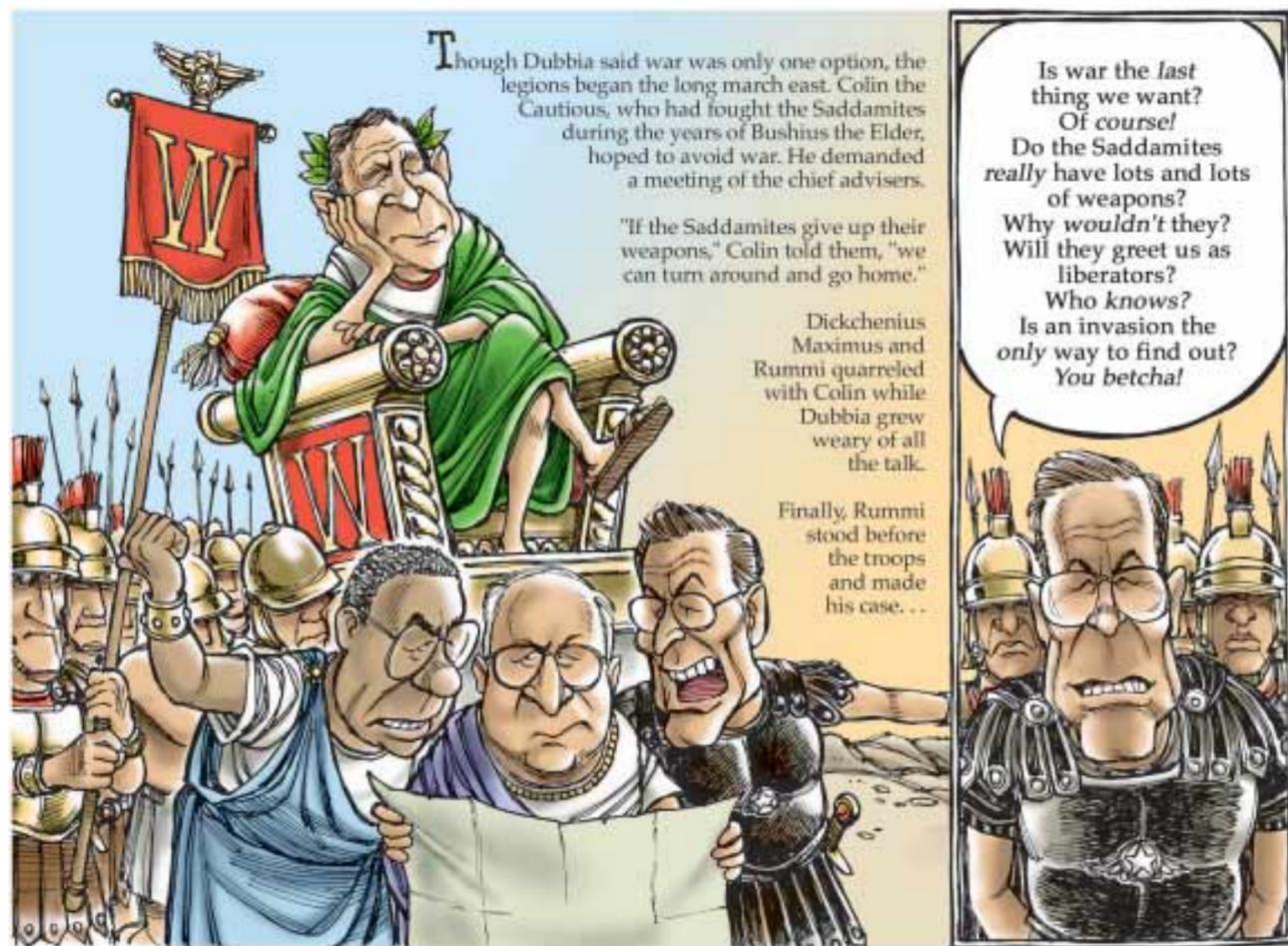
BY DAVID HORSEY

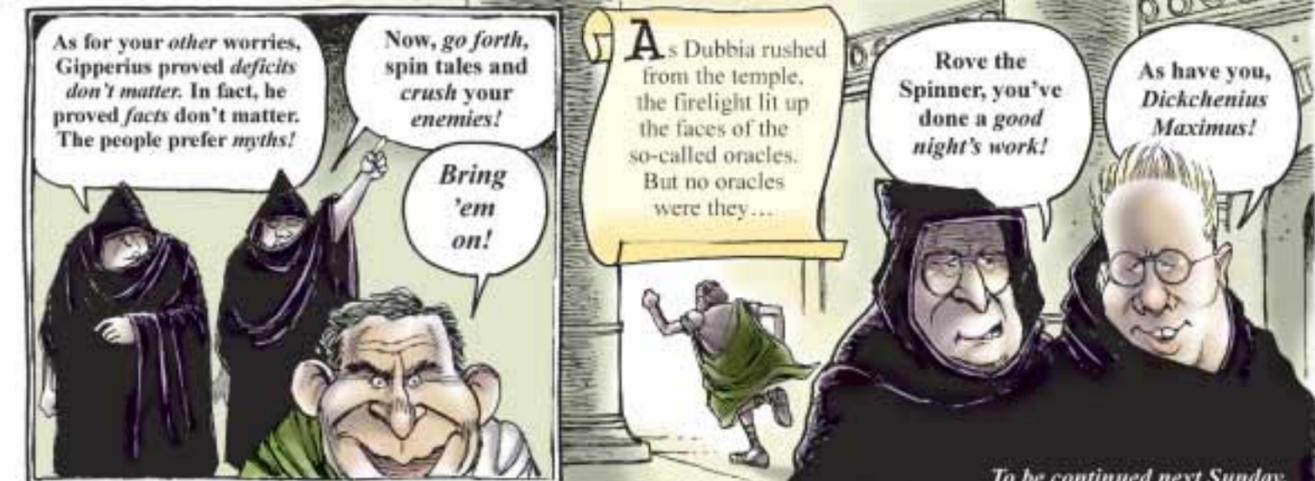
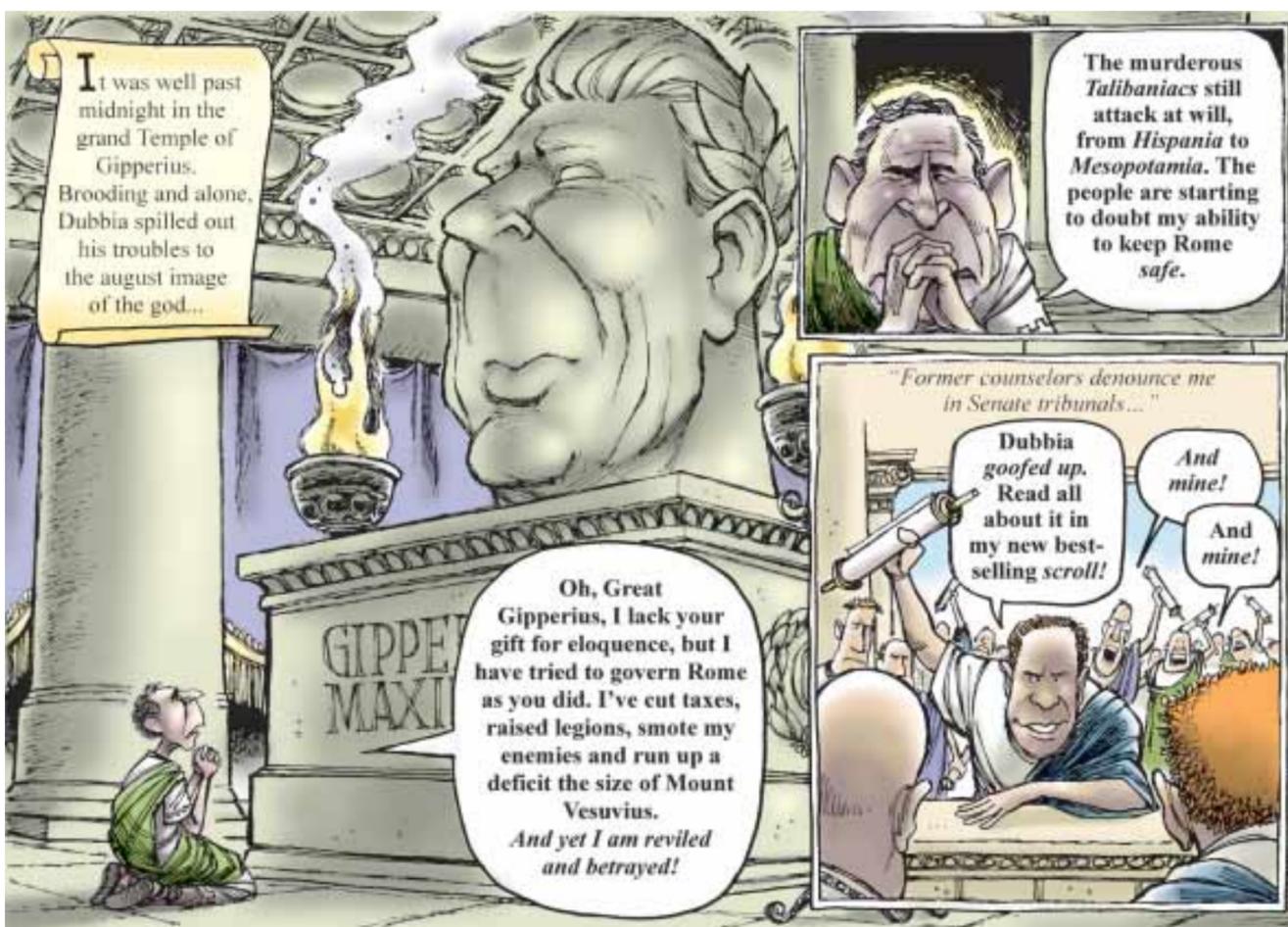
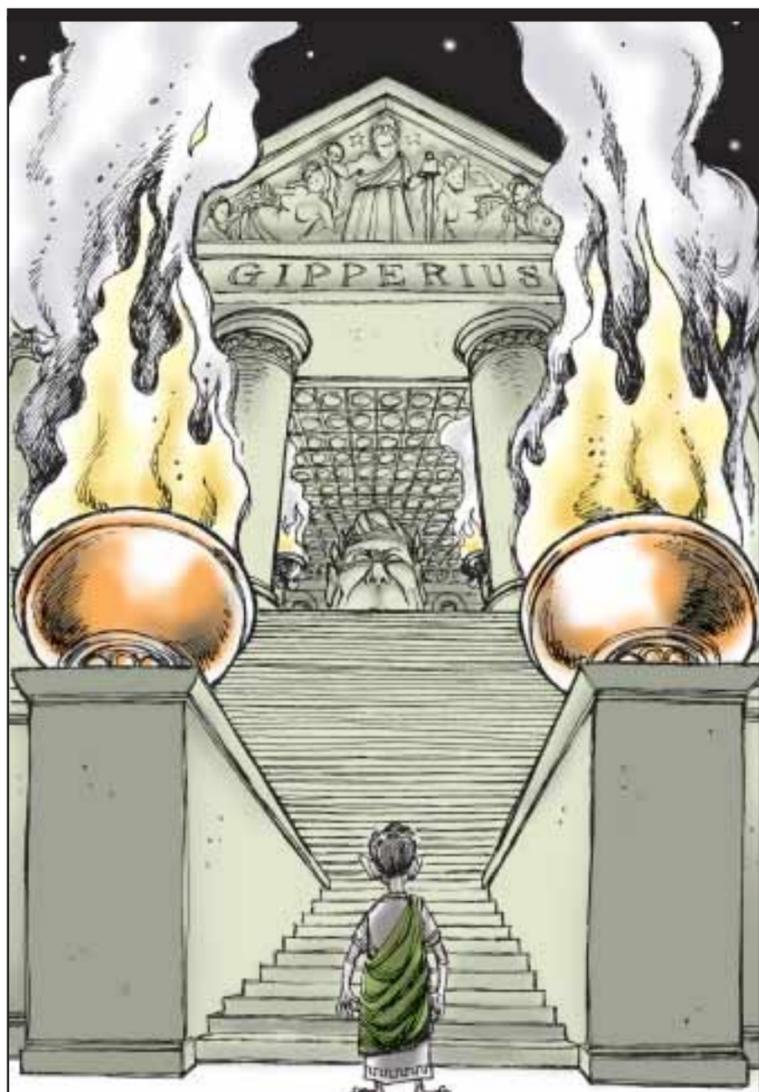
Last week's history told how Dubbia the Incoherent, son of Bushius the Elder, became consul of the Roman Republic.

Glad to see the departure of the old consul, Bilius Clintonius, the rich families of Rome raised up the verbally challenged Dubbia to be their candidate. A split vote in the Senate and a curious ruling by the Supreme Soothsayers gave Dubbia victory over Gorian the Stiff. As the economy faltered, Dubbia's position seemed tenuous. But, after a quick, successful war with the terrorist Talibanians, the new consul began to gain respect.

Now, Dubbia and his advisers have turned their gaze to another enemy — the wicked king of the Saddamites — and a risky war that might make or break Dubbia's political career...

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A SATIRICAL HISTORY

EMPIRE RISING

PART III

BY DAVID HORSEY

We return now to the fabled days of the Roman Republic...

Dubbia the Incoherent, Consul of Rome, sent his legions east and claimed a great victory over the Saddamites. But that moment of triumph was followed by a year of struggle against vicious rebels who continued to attack the Roman occupiers. At home, critics charged that Dubbia's counselors lusted for empire and had trumped up excuses to justify the war.

And now, there was a rival — Senator Kerriolanus — ready to challenge Dubbia for the right to rule in Rome.

In that troubled hour, Dubbia sought solace in his religion. From one deity in particular he looked for aid and wisdom — a former consul so beloved by the people that they made him a god: Gipperius...

P-I editorial cartoonist David Horsey is a two-time winner of the Pulitzer Prize. The first two installments of this satirical history can be found in his latest book, "From Hanging Chad to Baghdad."

To be continued next Sunday.



A SATIRICAL HISTORY

EMPIRE RISING

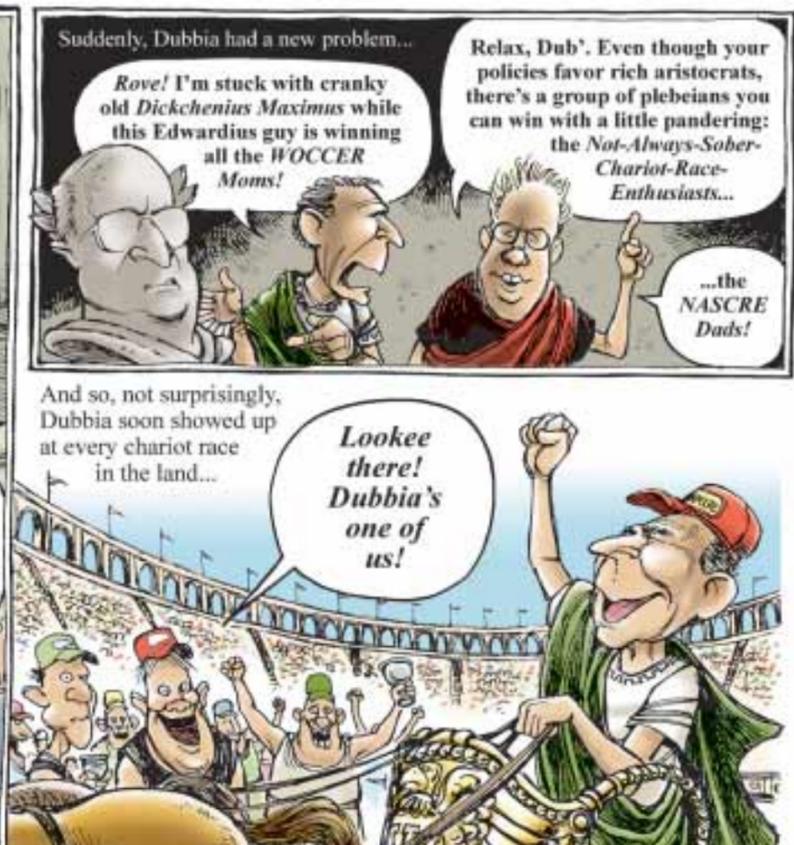
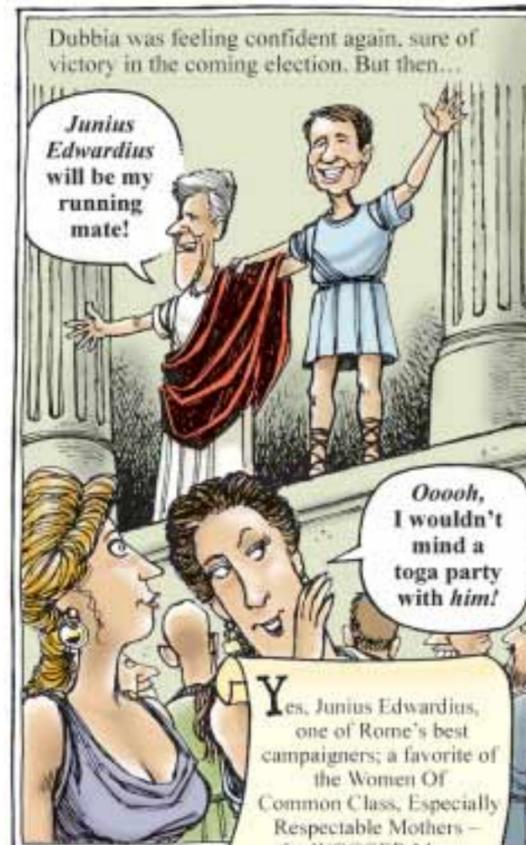
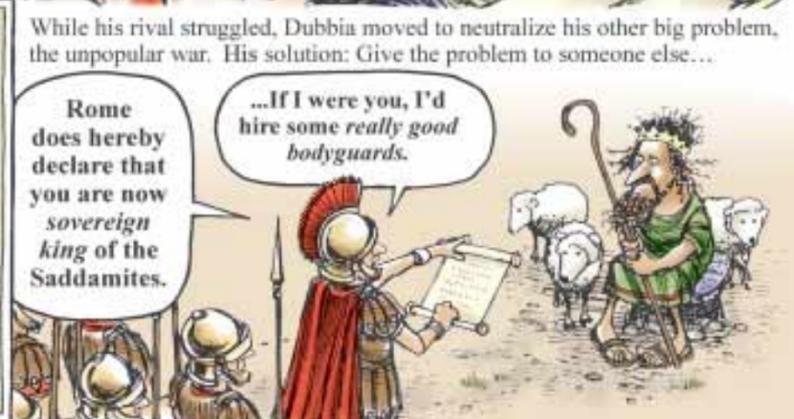
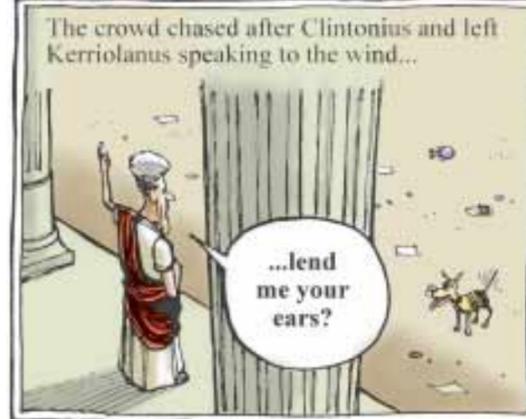
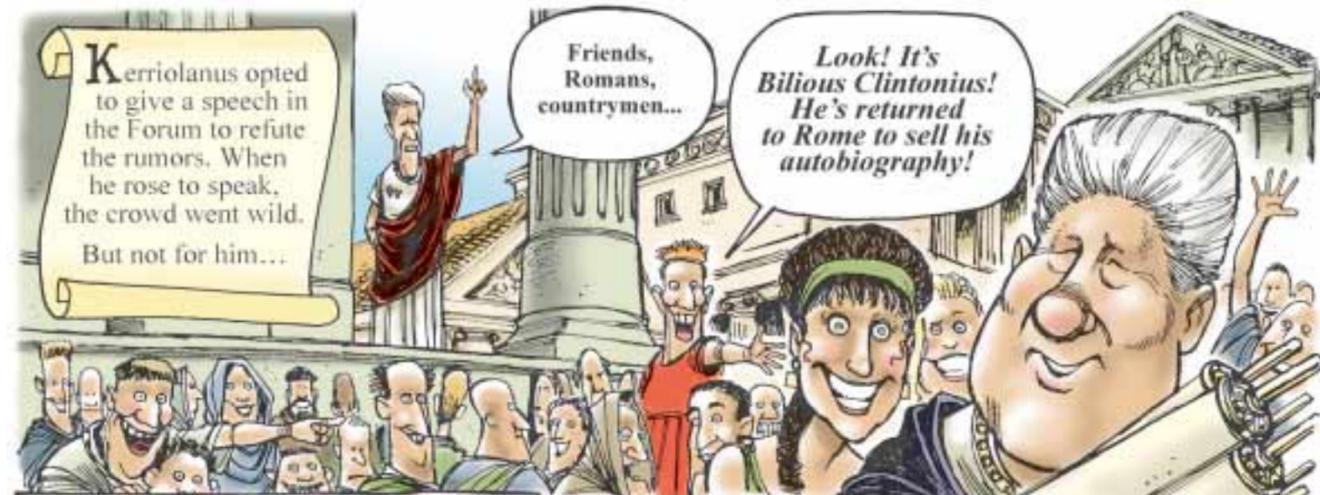
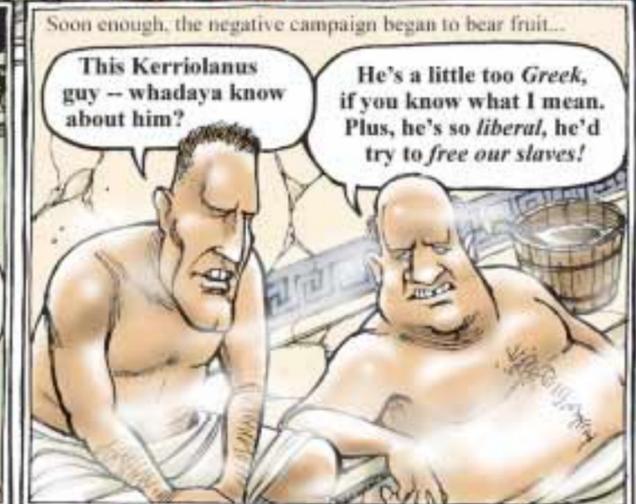
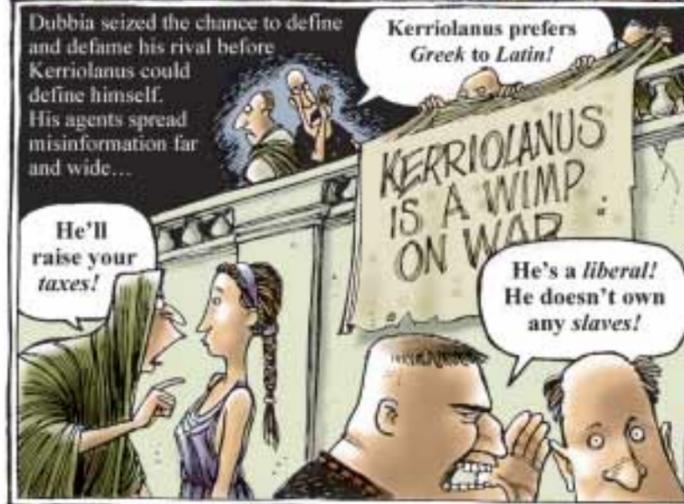
PART IV

BY DAVID HORSEY

As the time approached for the Senate to elect a new consul to rule the Roman Republic, the incumbent, Dubbia the Incoherent, had a big problem. His trumped-up war against the Saddamites was dragging on and on. Rather than “mission accomplished,” it was becoming mission impossible.

In Rome, Dubbia was confronted by adversaries on all sides – even among once-loyal advisers who now were telling the world the consul had made idiotic and dangerous mistakes. In desperation, Dubbia sought guidance from the gods. After praying in the Temple of Gipperius, he came away with a new resolve: He’d get his enemies before they got him ...

P-1 editorial cartoonist David Horsey is a two-time winner of the Pulitzer Prize. The first three installments of this satirical history can be found at seattlepi.com.



Yes, Junius Edwardius, one of Rome's best campaigners; a favorite of the Women Of Common Class, Especially Respectable Mothers – the WOCCER Moms.

To be continued this autumn.



A SATIRICAL HISTORY

EMPIRE RISING

PART V

BY DAVID HORSEY

Once again, Election Day was fast approaching in the Roman Republic. Who would the Senate choose as consul? Would they pick Senator Kerriolanus or would they re-elect Bushius the Younger (better known as Dubbia the Incoherent)?

Kerriolanus blamed Dubbia for the mess in Mesopotamia – the costly war against the Saddamites – and demanded that the consul acknowledge his huge blunders. But Dubbia did not believe in admitting mistakes. That would be a sign of weakness when there was an empire to defend. It would be a hint of fallibility when he knew he spoke for the gods and the gods spoke through him...

P-I editorial cartoonist David Horsey is a two-time winner of the Pulitzer Prize. The first four installments of this satirical history can be found at seattlepi.com/horsey/empirerising.





A SATIRICAL HISTORY EMPIRE RISING

PART VI

BY DAVID HORSEY

Four years ago, I began what I called a historical satire – an allegory in cartoon form set in the days of the Roman Republic with obvious parallels to current American politics.

That initial round of cartoons, which later provided the opening sequence in my book, “From Hanging Chad to Baghdad,” introduced Dubbia the Incoherent, son of the venerable Roman leader, Bushius the Elder. In a disputed election decided by an erroneous reading of entrails, Dubbia defeated Gorian the Stiff to become consul of Rome. Manipulated by his small coterie of advisers – Dickchenius Maximus, Rove the Spinner and Rummi, master of the legions – Dubbia proceeded to take Rome into an ill-conceived war against the Saddamites in Mesopotamia.

A year later, I returned to the story. In that second series, the war had gone from quick victory to quagmire and Dubbia feared he would not be chosen consul for a second term. However, a campaign of character assassination against his opponent, Kerriolanus, and another questionable vote in the Senate ultimately won the day for Dubbia.

When last we saw him, Dubbia was convinced the gods favored him.

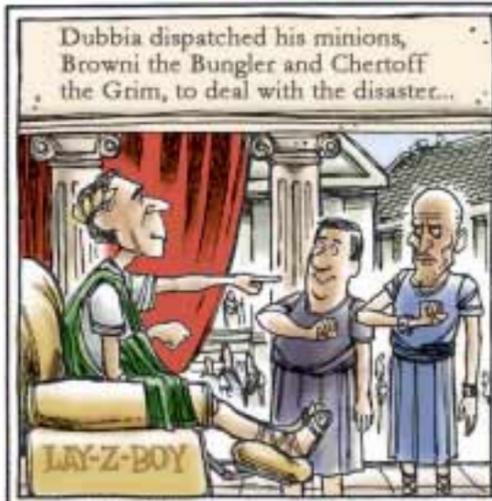
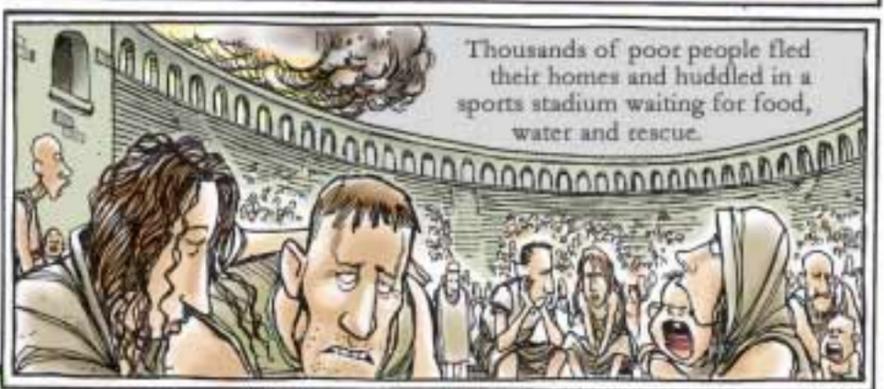
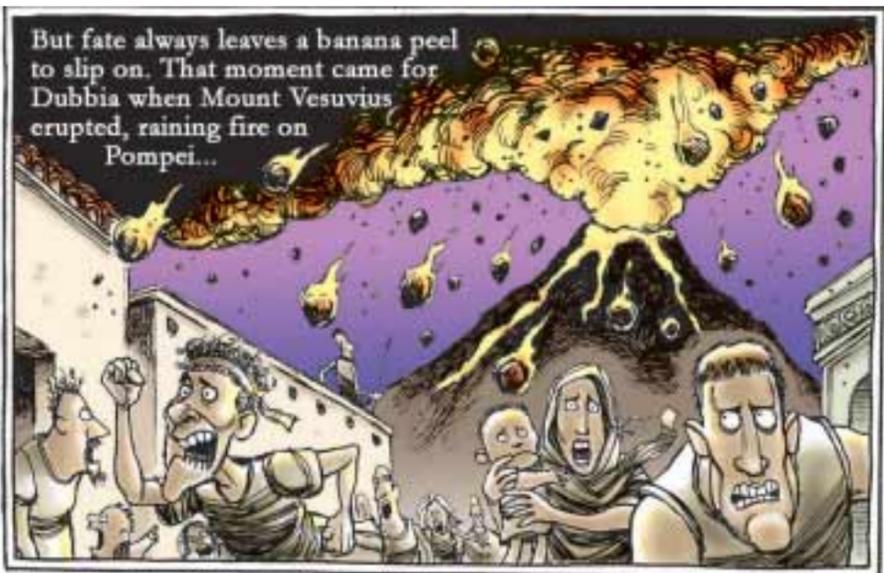
“I’m anointed!” Dubbia said to himself in the cartoon’s final frame. “No one can stop me now!”

Today, the story picks up again and will be concluded next Sunday. Along with series two, this third sequence forms a chapter of my latest book, “Draw Quick, Shoot Straight,” which will be released next month. The entire series can be found at seattlepi.com.

Time has passed and, just as political reality has shifted in the actual world, so have things changed in my fantasy of Rome. Fate has taken a hand and Dubbia faces a quandary that will ultimately bring him face to face with the gods. So, let’s return to the tale, the next-to-last installment of Empire Rising. . .

“Sic transit gloria mundi.” Those words whispered in the ears of victorious Roman generals were a reminder that the glory of the world passes quickly. But no honest voice spoke to Dubbia the Incoherent. Rove the Spinner told Dubbia only what he wanted to hear:

Dubbia, you’re doing a heck of a job!



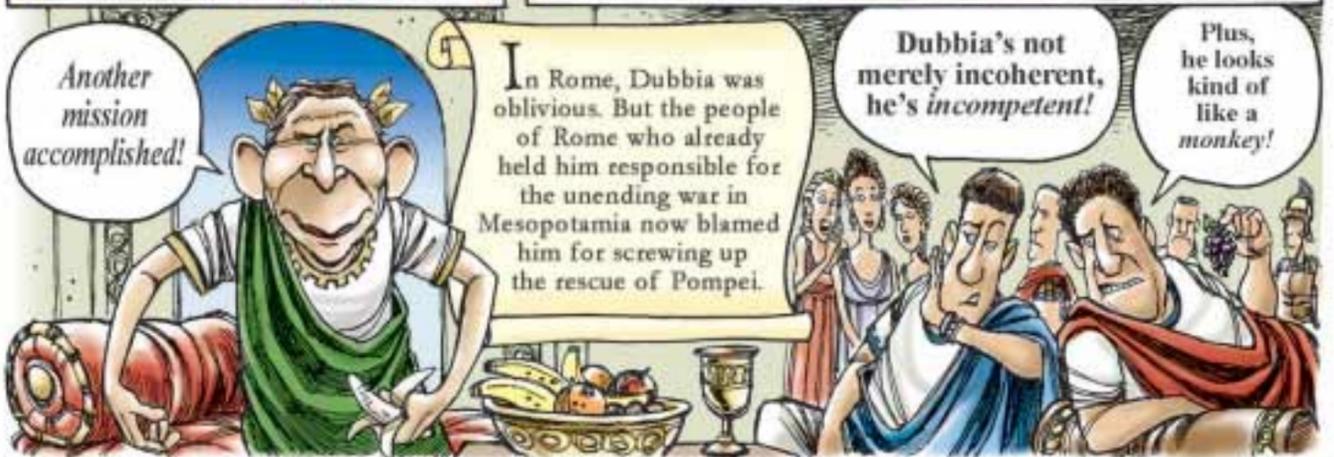
Dubbia dispatched his minions, Brownie the Bungler and Chertoff the Grim, to deal with the disaster...



Unfortunately, they took a wrong turn on the Appian Way and ended up in the Alps...

I don’t see any volcano.

Problem solved!



Another mission accomplished!

In Rome, Dubbia was oblivious. But the people of Rome who already held him responsible for the unending war in Mesopotamia now blamed him for screwing up the rescue of Pompeii.

Dubbia’s not merely incoherent, he’s incompetent!

Plus, he looks kind of like a monkey!



Dubbia’s power began to rapidly erode. One by one, his trusted advisers fell out of favor and were tossed to the lions – Rummi, master of the legions, Wolfowitz the Scribe, Gonzaluis of Hispania, Rove the Spinner and Scooterius the Fibber...

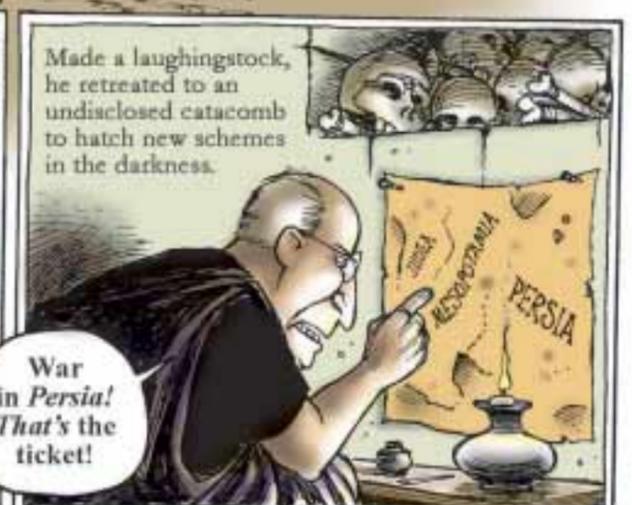
Yes! Let them eat Scooterius while we sneak out of here!



Dickchenius Maximus, the vice-consul, shot a friend while hunting in Sicily...

It’s not my fault you look like a deer!

W-w-why did you shoot me?!



Made a laughingstock, he retreated to an undisclosed catacomb to hatch new schemes in the darkness.

War in Persia! That’s the ticket!



Though Dubbia's term in office was barely half over, the eyes of Rome turned to those vying to succeed him:

Hillaria, wife of Bilius Clintonius...

I'm man enough!

Junius Edwardius...

I'm pretty enough!

Obama Africanus...

I'm cool enough!

McCainian the Old Warrior...

I'm young enough!

Rudi Juliani...

I'm tough enough!

...and Mittius Romni...

I'm... well, I'm anything you want me to be!

Shunned by former allies, Dubbia wandered the Forum spouting absurdities:

If we don't fight 'em there, we'll have to fight 'em here!

Unpopular and isolated, Dubbia was, nevertheless, confident he was doing the work of the gods. Thus, one day, he set off to seek consolation from the deities on Mount Olympus.



Traveling far and climbing higher and higher, he encountered an immortal on a lofty peak...

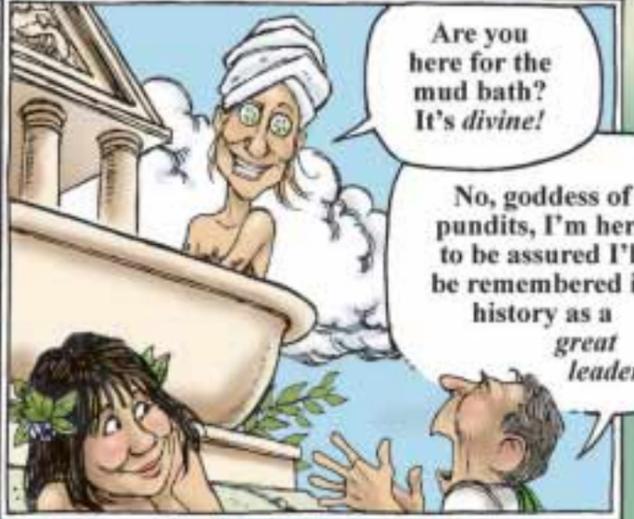
If you're a goddess, I need your help.

If you're like Bilius Clintonius, I know what sort of "help" you need.



No, not that! I want to know what historians will say about me!"

Well, I'm Monica, goddess of bimbos. You need Arianna, goddess of pundits!

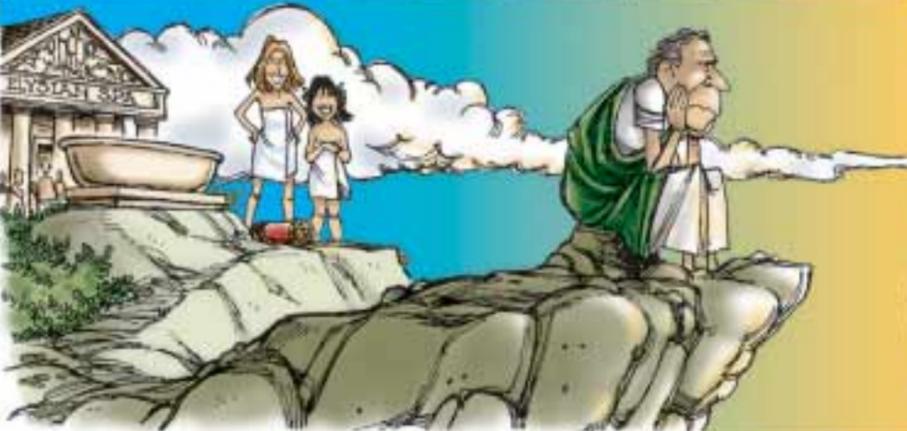


Are you here for the mud bath? It's divine!

No, goddess of pundits, I'm here to be assured I'll be remembered in history as a great leader!



Ha! Even with cucumbers on my eyes I can see that's not going to happen!



With the laughter of the gods ringing in his ears, Dubbia skulked away to a solitary rock. And there he sat and sighed, counting down the days - just as all of Rome was counting down the days - to the election of a new leader. With that, the reign of Dubbia would fade into history to be recalled as a cautionary tale. Or a myth. Or a legend. Or, perhaps, as a bad joke.

A SATIRICAL HISTORY EMPIRE RISING

PART VII

BY DAVID HORSEY

Today, my fanciful chronicle of the Roman Republic reaches its climax.

The tale began as Dubbia the Incoherent rose to power, not on his own talents, but through the familiarity of his father's name and the guile of his cohort of handlers - most particularly, Rove the Spinner and Dickchenius Maximus.

Succeeding Bilius Clintonius, Dubbia won election as consul. He sent his legions to war in Mesopotamia. He won a second election and stood at the pinnacle of power in Rome.

And then it began to unravel. The war went badly. A natural disaster struck. The people turned on Dubbia and, one by one, his closest allies fell from grace.

Now, with his influence withering and his friends all gone, Dubbia must put his fate in the hands of those who control the fate of all mortals: the gods...

David Horsey is the P-I's Pulitzer Prize-winning editorial cartoonist. The most recent episodes of Empire Rising can be found in his new book, "Draw Quick, Shoot Straight," which will be released in October. The full series can be read at seattlepi.com.