

RED MEAT

moldering molecules of mirth

from the secret files of
Max Cannon

Y'know, this has been relaxing and all, but I'll tell you...I could use a whole week off.



No kidding. Me, too. But I guess we'll just have to settle for this three-day weekend.

By the way...what holiday is this, anyway? I can never seem to keep track of them all.



You're joking, right...?

No. Not really.

Hell, I have no idea, either. I'm just going to proclaim it, "National Talk Like A Robot Day." = Do-you-con-cur, Milk-man-Dan? =



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iASK A MEXICAN!

BY GUSTAVO ARELLANO

Dear Mexican: Why don't Mexicans have enough gratitude for America to learn to speak English? Are they too stupid? Too lazy? What—they can't learn two or three words a day? Is this asking too much? – Took Four Years of Spanish in High School

Dear Gabacho: The United States government shares your concerns, Took Four Years. Its Dillingham Commission released a 42-volume study on the waves of immigrants that concluded, "The new immigration as a class is far less intelligent than the old. . . . Generally speaking they are actuated in coming by different ideals, for the old immigration came to be a part of



the country, while the new, in a large measure, comes with the intention of profiting, in a pecuniary way, by the superior advantages of the new world and then returning to the old country." The Dillingham report went on to fault the new immigrants for their lack of assimilation and English skills, constantly contrasting them with earlier generations of immigrants, and urged clampdowns on immigration. Sound familiar? That's because the Dillingham report appeared in 1911, and the inassimilable masses at the time were eastern and northern Europeans. The Dillingham

Commission proves that the time-honored conservative anecdote that earlier generations of immigrants walked off the boats, chopped down their multi-syllabic surnames and learned English immediately is bull-pinche-shit. American racism is a carousel—and here we are again.

As an Asian person, would I be considered a gabacho? Or do I fall into the yellow bucket labeled chinito, even though I'm not Chinese? – OC Asian

Dear Chino: Like Americans assume all Latinos are Mexican, Mexicans think all Asians are chinos (Chinese). When I used to go out with a Vietnamese woman, my aunts would speak highly of mi chinita bonita—my cute little Chinese ruca. When I'd point out she was actually Vietnamese, mis tías would think about it for a bit and respond, "¡Que chinita bonita!" But just because a Mexican calls you a chino doesn't necessarily mean we think you're Chinese, OC Asian. "Chino," like so many of our swear words, has multiple negative meanings. In the colonial days, a chino was the offspring of a half-Indian/half-black person and a full-blooded Indian. This association with race also transformed chino into a synonym for "servant" and "curly." The term "barrio chino" (Chinatown) also became a euphemism for a town's red-light district. And a popular schoolyard refrain that all Mexican kiddies eventually chant at their Asian classmates is "Chino, chino, japonés: Come caca y no me des" ("Chinese, Chinese, Japanese: Eat shit and don't give me any").

So why the Mexican chino-hate? After all, Chinese were the Mexicans of the world before there even was a Mexico, migrating to Latin America a couple of decades after the fall of Tenochtitlán. And our most famous native dress—the billowy, colorful costume worn by baile folklórico dancers known as a china poblana—was supposedly first worn by a 17th-century Mexican-Chinese woman. Bigotry is bigotry, though; and since Mexico's Asian population is still small and overwhelmingly Chinese, we lump Asians into the chino category. Makes the racism easier, you know?

Got a spicy question about Mexicans? Ask the Mexican at themexican@askmexican.net. And those of you who do submit questions: Include a hilarious pseudonym, por favor, or we'll make one up for you!

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