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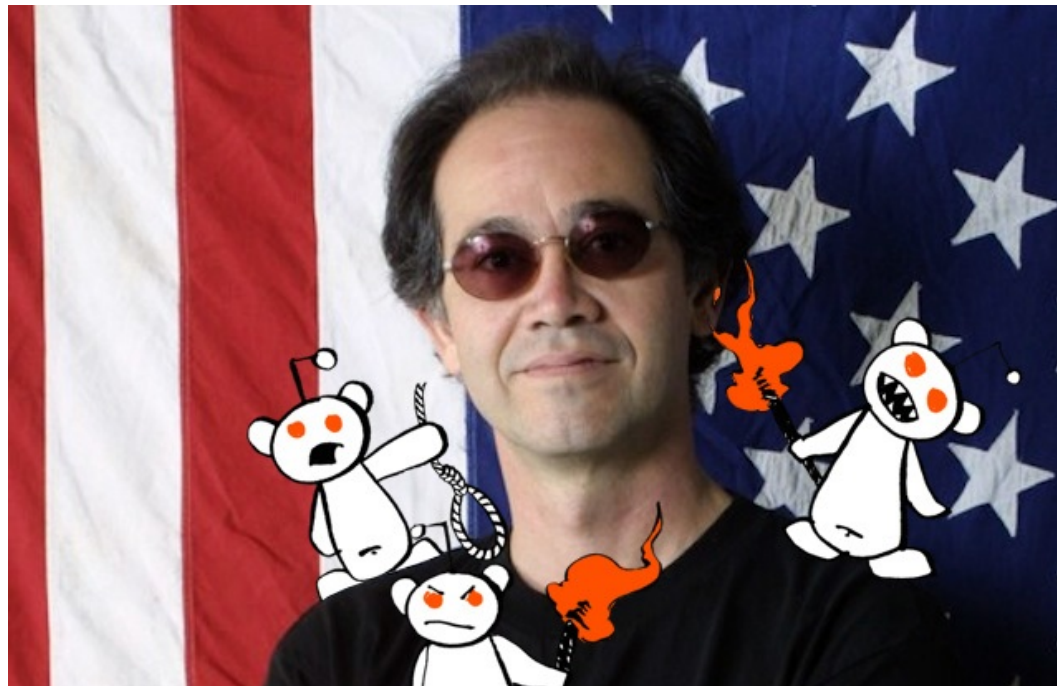
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The Internet's most hated man

Ars goes one-on-one with FunnyJunk's lawyer, Charles Carreon.

by Cyrus Farivar - June 21 2012, 10:30pm CEST

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Charles Carreon, self-described "counsel to the good and the good-looking."

Photo courtesy Charles Carreon, drawings by Aurich Lawson

"Sometimes I have a 22-hour day. I try to get at least two hours of sleep," Charles Carreon told Ars on Wednesday. The FunnyJunk lawyer was driving at the time, calling from a hands-free device. "I work hard. I work real hard. Sometimes I drink more Starbucks than usual."

He needs the caffeine to keep up with the Internet, after all. Communities at reddit, The Oatmeal, and elsewhere have made Carreon into their villain of the week. Problems began after Carreon sent a letter to Matthew Inman, creator of the webcomic The Oatmeal, accusing him of defaming a user-generated comedy site called FunnyJunk last year. Carreon requested a \$20,000 check; Inman responded with a crude picture of a mom seducing a Kodiak bear. Carreon didn't find it funny.

"There are some things that you accept with grace," Carreon said. "But I do not accept that my mother engaged in bestiality and I do not accept that FunnyJunk slept with its mother, as it does not have a mother."

Inman next launched an online fundraiser to collect the \$20,000 so that he could photograph the cash and send the picture to Carreon—while the money itself went to charity. People loved it.

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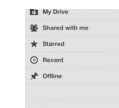
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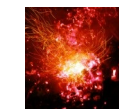
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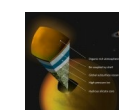
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Inman has already racked up \$200,000 in donations, more than ten times the requested amount. In response, Carreon filed suit against just about everyone: Inman, fundraising site Indiegogo, the National Wildlife Federation, the American Cancer Society, someone who had impersonated him on Twitter, and the Internet vigilantes who had signed his e-mail address up with porn sites. When the Twitter impersonator copped to his crime in an Ars comment thread, Carreon announced he would [subpoena Ars](#). Twitter too, just for good measure.

None of this was even done in his capacity as FunnyJunk's US attorney, either; Carreon was putting his personal resources into the fight and had filed the lawsuit in his own name.



Carreon is something of a character. He already has a storied legal history, which involves the battle over the domain name [sex.com](#). He has a [penchant for The Ramones](#). And he has *strong* political opinions.

In court filings and on Twitter, Carreon makes much of the fact that he engages in "tempered speech," even on hot-button topics. He doesn't resort to name-calling like "dumbass." Instead, he writes, [sings](#), and publishes amazingly offensive songs about "[President Evil](#)" (Bush), and requests to [waterboard Fed Chairman Ben Bernanke](#).

"I am not a politician," he says sternly when asked about the apparent discrepancy. "I have not deceived anyone. I am not able to stand armies. It is entirely distinct. The grounds for engaging in savage satire of people who are murderers [is a] completely different situation. That's like comparing touch football with warfare."

So—Charles Carreon, man of complex opinions with a real history in Internet law. But even with his background, Carreon never expected the reaction his letter would generate. Since the FunnyJunk/Oatmeal saga began, Carreon says he has been targeted with all kinds of Anonymous-style pranks, including the delivery of massive numbers of pizzas, sign-ups to pornographic websites, and hateful voice messages and e-mails.

And he lays the persecution all at the feet of one person: Matthew Inman.

Incitement

Carreon's suit alleges that Inman "incited" his followers to harass Carreon across multiple media, including Twitter. In comments on Ars, user "Modelista" said that [he was behind the fake Carreon](#)

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Twitter account. But when we asked Modelista, he denied any sort of interaction with Inman.

“No, I haven’t had the pleasure of communicating with him in any way, before or after the Twitter account,” Modelista wrote from an encrypted Hushmail e-mail account on Wednesday. None of Inman’s public statements include any call to harass Carreon, on Twitter or anywhere else.

But Carreon argues that, because Inman responded to the fake @charles_carreon account on Twitter, he’s liable for incitement. “Inman took advantage of the false tweet for his own purposes and very promptly, which raises the connection to something well above the level of coincidence, into the realm of allegeable fact,” he told Ars.

Further, because Carreon’s own name is a trademark, he has alleged trademark infringement from the fake Twitter account.

“Whenever one loses control of a trademark, they are in danger of their image,” Carreon said. “It’s one thing to say, ‘He’s a jerk because he issues a legal demand to someone like Oatmeal—like Mr. Inman.’ People want to say that’s a scumbag thing to do. That comes with the territory.”

But what crosses the line is when someone else starts making statements using words like “idiot” or “dumbass,” he says, which were used on the fake account.

“All of that is damage. I have better things to do than to be contradicting Twitter when that person vocally does so again. It’s not like they’re making parody comments. There’s nothing parodic about it. They’re making statements attributable to me. That’s damage. That’s trademark damage. That’s all there is to it.”

**"I'm not seeking
any damages for
the insults to my
mother."**

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Cyrus Farivar / Cyrus is the Senior Business Editor at Ars Technica, and is also a radio producer and author. His book, The Internet of Elsewhere, was published in April 2011.

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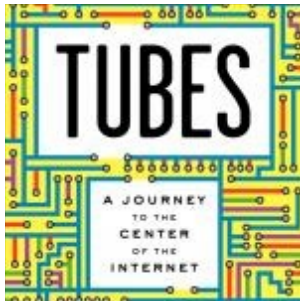
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