

Challenges Of Mental Illness: Tell me who's crazy... the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services!

### Description

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Black Comedy from our elected officials.

How about that **Alaska Department of Health and Social Services!** Long known as the most dysfunctional department in state government, DH\$\$ takes the largest part of the state budget, is run by social workers *who want to help you*, but often cannot balance their own checking accounts. I saw how screwed up this department is first-hand as a business agent for the **Alaska State Employees Association, AFSCME Local 52**, over 4-1/2 years in Juneau while my late wife, **Cathy Liston**, worked as a bank manager.

Now that **Gov. Michael Dunleavy** has managed to split the DH\$\$ baby, what more can we give it to do? His advisors must have told him the next great thing for DH\$\$ to tackle is **Mental Illness**. The pandemic is over and a department always in crisis needs new opportunity for it's workers *who want to help you*. This is a growth industry in Alaska and the **Alaska Mental Health Trust** has a big pot of money.

*Wish I could have told my friend, Mike, that crazy is in the eye of the beholder. I would have reminded Dear Teacher Governor that we are all born into this life with no idea of what is crazy or normal. We are TAUGHT what is normal by our family and the institutions meant to nurture us, while we learn crazy through our observations and experiences.*

**Crazy is 50 school districts producing the lowest academic outcomes in the United States over 40 years for an amount by which we should have been able to hire the BEST TEACHERS IN THE WORLD. That's bat-shit crazy.**

A more productive way to get our heads around crazy might be what has been called **Black Comedy**.  
[1]

### **Crazy is as Crazy Does**

The **Alaska Legislature** has recently delved into Black Comedy with legislation proposed by Gov. Dunleavy to help identify and incarcerate those among us deemed suffering from mental illness by *people who want to help you*. Based on a tattle tale they will be able to arrest you without a court order and put you into new facilities that aren't jails like they put criminals in—more like drunk tanks with lots more *people who want to help you*. This incarceration will be for our own good determined by workers I happen to know first-hand belong to perhaps the craziest of all 11 Alaska public sector state unions.[2]

This scenario is reminiscent of the 1941 classic play and movie *Arsenic and Old Lace*, starring **Cary Grant**. He plays **Mortimer Brewster**, a drama critic who must deal with his crazy murderous family with local police assistance in Brooklyn, New York. His two spinster aunts, **Abby and Martha Brewster** have taken to murdering lonely old men by poisoning them with home-made elderberry wine *laced with arsenic, strychnine, and just a pinch of cyanide*. The story line is delicious, the gags hilarious, as we learn 11 bodies have been buried in the cellar while another is waiting in the window box.

**For our Alaska Legislature, all the bodies are buried in Juneau. Next election we will be expected to send these killers of our economy—who defy state law regarding the Permanent Fund Dividend—back to form coalitions to pass legislation containing poison pills diminishing regular Alaskans in favor of \$pecial interest\$.**

In *Arsenic and Old Lace* the character most resembling Gov. Dunleavy is Mortimer's brother, who psychotically believes he is President **Theodore Roosevelt**. He periodically bellows CHARGE! and throws one fist forward in an assault up the staircase, immolating his hero's charge up San Juan Hill, during the **Spanish-American War**. Everybody humors Teddy, saluting him and telling him frequently how much ALL the other people also love him.

Frankly however, I am personally disappointed that lovable Gov. Dunleavy doesn't know that as Alaskans we **celebrate crazy**:

*We were all down at Margie's bar*

*Telling stories if we had one*

*Someone fired the old jukebox up*

*The song sure was a sad one*

*A teardrop rolled down Bubba's nose*

*From the pain the song was inflicting*

*And all at once he jumped to his feet*

*Just like somebody kicked him*

*Bubba shot the juke box last night*

*Said it played a sad song it made him cry*

*Went to his truck and got a forty five*

*Bubba shot the juke box last night*

Alaska has been facing a mental illness crisis for a long time. I submit its primary cause is something euphemistically referred to as "Recreational Drugs." When Alaskans were being killed by the dozens annually from drinking and driving the numbers were reduced by legal/economic consequences for driving drunk. But with this new law we will have DH\$\$ people *who want to help you* empowered to arrest and detain without due process under the 5<sup>th</sup> Amendment.

**No more Joe Voglers!**[3]

With this law our elected officials convening in **North Seattle** have renamed recurring stupid behavior **Mental Illness**. They think all Alaskans should pay instead of the people with the affliction. Gov. Teddy's proposal—passed by both houses of the **Alaska Legislature**—will weaponize social workers by calling them **Health Officers** with full authority to take citizens into custody against their will, absent a judge, emergency court order, or representation if any such person is deemed to be "suffering from mental illness and likely to cause serious harm to yourself or others." [4]

**And, of course, this is going to be expensive, folks.[5][6]**

*Bubba ain't never been accused of being mentality stable*

*So we did not draw an easy breath*

*Until he laid that colt on the table*

*He hung his head till the cops showed up*

*They dragged him right out of Margie's*

*Told him "Don't play dumb with us, son"*

*"Know damn well what the charge is."*

*Bubba shot the juke box last night*

*Said it played a sad song it made him cry*

*Went to his truck and got a forty five*

*Bubba shot the juke box last night*

**My Own Difficult Mental Health Crisis**



Cathy and I took a tour of the Capitol before heading back to Anchorage.

In July, 2017 the Oncologist said my wife of 29 years had Stage IV Lung Cancer and likely had 8-12 months to live. Our life immediately changed but we agreed we would not let the cancer stop us from active living. Having just retired from teaching, I took a session job in the **30<sup>th</sup> Alaska Legislature** and we drove in January to the place we had first met, and married, and lived until returning to Anchorage in 2003, where in December Cathy had experienced the heart attack that made me her caregiver those

last 15 years in Anchorage.



Rest stop above Haines Junction.

In Juneau, Cat was diagnosed in February 2018 with brain cancer. The lung cancer had metastasized. She received radiation treatment that further changed her mental capacity. We had one last glorious trip home to Anchorage after session before everything fell apart.

**Cat's daughter from a previous marriage had been fired from *Kettering Hospital* in Ohio and lost her RN certification for stealing drugs from patients. Cathy had previously told me she had stolen her own mother's drugs. Everything now became a day-by-day crisis. The vultures were circling and occasionally landing to see if I was still fighting.**

***On the good side, our neighbors and church family started a meal delivery that I had to stop because we received so much from so many wonderful people. I appreciated that so much because real Alaskans take care of each other.***

I struggled to maintain my wife in comfort in our home while her drug addicted daughter began a campaign from Ohio, calling the **Anchorage Police Department** for *welfare checks* on her. On one occasion as I brought two police officers to our bedroom Cathy said she didn't want to see anybody. They entered anyway and found her resting comfortably with the 25 proscribed medications (including fentanyl) all in order. They commented afterward that our mountainside home was a wonderful location for her to be.

**In an extended soap opera of crisis and betrayal of my prerogatives as husband/caregiver of Cathy, I suffered most from the people who professed to NOT have mental illness. It has tested my own sanity and I believe I have made it this far only by God's grace alone.**





I was on the phone with a “crisis navigator” when my wife was facing a mental health crisis. The **State of Alaska** failed us.

For example: At one point Cathy determined she was going to walk the five miles to Walmart in her stocking feet carrying two bags of cleaning supplies. It was a nice summer day, I followed her in the truck urging her to get in, and finally was able to intercept her with the help of kind neighbors. Her doctor advised me to seek a court order requiring 24-hour evaluation at **Alaska Psychiatric Institute**, which I got after further evaluation. The police were supposed to pick her up then and take her there, but instead before it could happen her daughter showed up with APD escort at 1 am and took her away July 17, 2018.

**That was the last time I saw Cathy. She was taken in defiance of a court order by someone residing thousands of miles away with true Mental Illness. When I tried to get my wife returned to her home in Alaska the court refused my request even though I had her Power of Attorney.**

*Well, the sheriff arrived with his bathrobe on*

*The confrontation was a tense one*

*Shook his head said, “Bubba Boy,”*

*“You was always a dense one.”*

*Reckless discharge of a gun*

*That's what the officers are claiming*

*Bubba hollered, "Reckless! Hell!"*

*"I shot just where I was aiming."*

*Bubba shot the juke box last night*

*Said it played a sad song it made him cry*

*Went to his truck and got a forty five*

*Bubba shot the juke box, stopped it with one shot*

**Cathy died February 24, 2019 and my crisis was just beginning. As a sober and productive senior I was vulnerable but I didn't need any glorified social workers *who want to help you*, checking on me, asking about my guns, or even whether I might be experiencing exploitation from other people who also happen to also personally know Gov. Dunleavy.**

I had enough to deal with.

As an independent and sober Alaskan of 60 years, no spinsters are going to kill me with wine but I have learned some hard lessons of my vulnerabilities even before Cat's passing. Dunleavy's new law is largely for people who want to increase the state budget with a new boondoggle to serve people who make bad choices at the expense of those of us who have mostly made good choices. Perhaps they will round up the homeless people under this law and give them more than the equivalent of their PFD in state services.

**That's a lot easier than tackling the crisis of government schools or drugs flowing freely into our state. And, when it comes to those who don't ask the government for a damn thing except our full PFD, we have learned to NOT trust elected officials, the courts, or state employees—who are supposed to serve Alaskans—to give a damn about anybody but themselves.**

*Bubba shot the jukebox last night*

*Well he could not tell right from wrong*

*Through the teardrops in his eyes*

*Beyond a shadow of a doubt*

*It was justifiable homicide*

*Bubba shot the juke box, stopped it with one shot*

*Bubba shot the jukebox last night[7]*

**You shot yourself in the foot with this one, governor.**

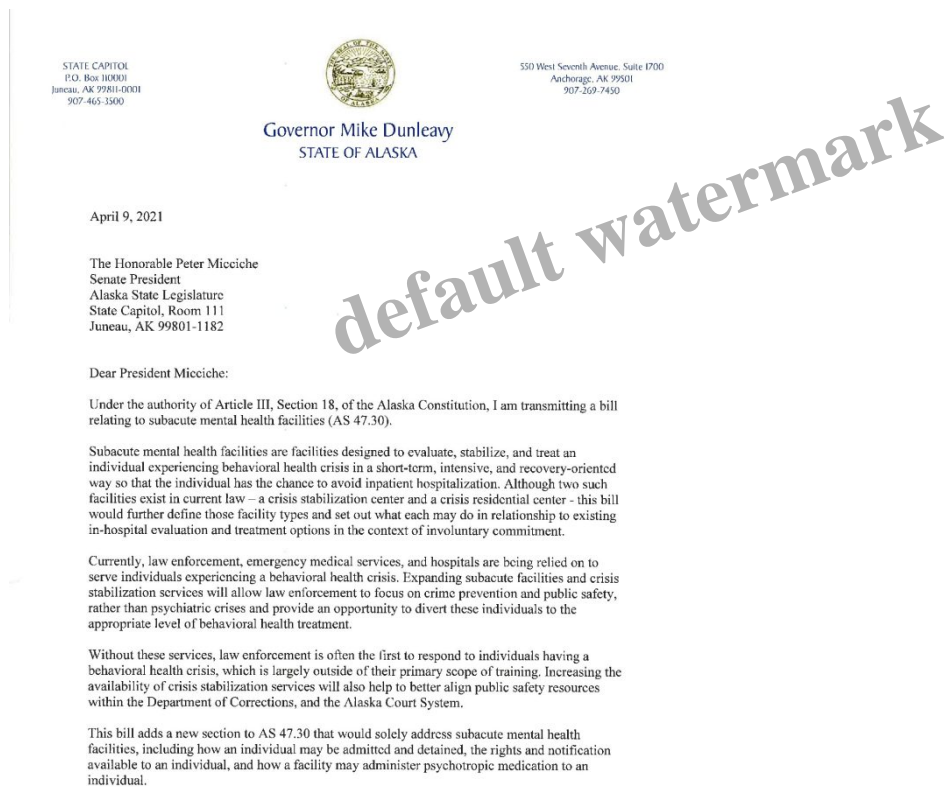
## References:

[1] Wikipedia: Black Comedy

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black\\_comedy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_comedy)

**Black comedy**, also known as **black humor**, **dark humor**, **dark comedy**, **morbid humor**, or **gallows humor**, is a style of [comedy](#) that makes light of subject matter that is generally considered taboo, particularly subjects that are normally considered serious or painful to discuss. Writers and comedians often use it as a tool for exploring vulgar issues by provoking discomfort, serious thought, and amusement for their audience. Thus, in [fiction](#), for example, the term *black comedy* can also refer to a genre in which dark humor is a core component. Popular themes of the genre include [death](#), [crime](#), [poverty](#), [suicide](#), [war](#), [violence](#), [terrorism](#), [discrimination](#), [disease](#), [racism](#), [sexism](#), and [human sexuality](#).

[2] Gov. Dunleavy's Transmittal Letter for SB 124





The Honorable Peter Micciche  
April 9, 2021  
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Specifically, this bill allows for admission to, and a stabilization hold, of an individual at a crisis stabilization center for up to 23 hours and 59 minutes. It also requires that a mental health professional examine an individual within three hours of the individual's arrival at the center. If the professional person in charge has a probable cause belief that a detained individual's crisis will be resolved during admission to a crisis residential center, a mental health professional would have to apply to the court for permission for the crisis residential center to detain the individual for a period of up to 120 hours. The stay at the facility would be for evaluation, stabilization, and treatment.

If the professional person in charge at a crisis residential center has a probable cause belief that an individual's behavioral health crisis requires hospitalization for evaluation, a mental health professional would be required to apply to the court for an order authorizing hospitalization for evaluation. In this way, the bill would lay out the role of each subacute mental health facility and the terms by which an individual receives progressive care.

To achieve the benefit of using subacute mental health facilities as a diversion to hospitalization, this bill refines AS 47.30.705(c) by requiring a peace officer to take an individual to a crisis stabilization center if one exists in the service area served by the peace officer, even if an evaluation facility is available. "Service area" helps define the reach of this section now that emergency medical technicians, paramedics, and firefighters are added to the definition of "peace officer" in Section 12.

This bill would make subacute mental health facilities a new type of licensed facility, and it directs the Department of Health and Social Services to adopt regulations to implement the provisions of this bill and existing statutes in AS 47.30.700 - 47.30.915.

I urge your prompt and favorable action on this measure.

Sincerely,



Mike Dunleavy  
Governor

Enclosure

[3] Joe Voegler, Founder of the **Alaska Independence Party**

<http://www.alaskaweb.org/obits/voglerj.html>

House Bill Could be Weaponized against healthy Alaskans, **Robyn Rene' Bjork, Alaska Watchman**, 05/13/22

[OPINION: House bill could be weaponized against mentally healthy Alaskans](#)

<https://alaskawatchman.com/2022/05/11/house-bill-could-be-weaponized-against-helathy-alaskans/>

[5] SB 124 "An Act relating to admission to and detention at a subacute mental health facility; establishing a definition for 'subacute mental health facility'; establishing a definition for 'crisis residential center'; relating to the definitions for 'crisis stabilization center'; relating to the administration of psychotropic medication in a crisis situation; relating to licensed facilities; and providing for an effective date."

[https://www.akleg.gov/basis/Bill/Detail/32?Root=sb+124#tab5\\_4](https://www.akleg.gov/basis/Bill/Detail/32?Root=sb+124#tab5_4)

[6] Identified Costs Fiscal Notes:

[1] Health & Social Services (04/12/21)

<http://www.akleg.gov/PDF/32/F/SB0124-1-3-041221-DHS-Y.PDF>

[2] Health & Social Services (04/12/21)

<http://www.akleg.gov/PDF/32/F/SB0124-2-3-041221-DHS-Y.PDF>

[3] Public Safety (04/12/21)

<http://www.akleg.gov/PDF/32/F/SB0124-3-2-041221-DPS-N.PDF>

[4] Health & Social Services Fiscal Note (04/15/22)

<http://www.akleg.gov/PDF/32/F/SB0124-4-4-041522-DHS-Y.PDF>

[5] Health & Social Services Fiscal Note (04/15/22)

<http://www.akleg.gov/PDF/32/F/SB0124-5-3-041522-DHS-Y.PDF>

[6] Alaska Public Safety Fiscal Note (04/15/22)

<http://www.akleg.gov/PDF/32/F/SB0124-6-2-041522-DPS-N.PDF>

[7] Alaska Judiciary Fiscal Note (04/15/22)

<http://www.akleg.gov/PDF/32/F/SB0124-7-2-041522-AJS-Y.PDF>

[8] Alaska Department of Administration Fiscal Note (05/11/22)

<http://www.akleg.gov/PDF/32/F/SB0124-8-2-051122-ADM-Y.PDF>

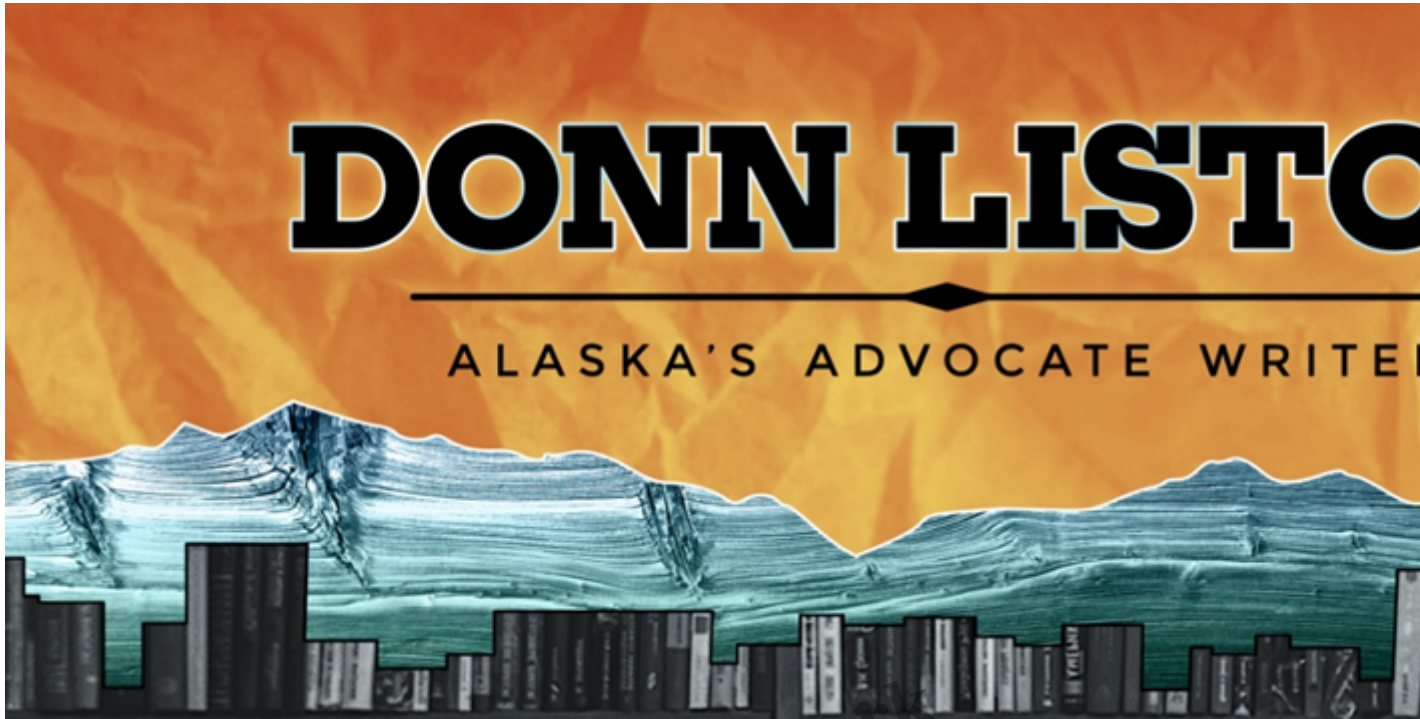
[9] Alaska Judiciary Fiscal note

<http://www.akleg.gov/PDF/32/F/SB0124-9-2-051122-AJS-Y.PDF>

[10] Health & Social Services Fiscal Note (05/11/22)

<http://www.akleg.gov/PDF/32/F/SB0124-10-4-051122-DHS-Y.PDF>

[7] "Bubba Shot the Jukebox" is a song written by Dennis Linde, and recorded by American country music singer Mark Chesnutt.



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