

CHAPTER 5 - How Can You Be Two Places At Once When You're Not Anywhere At All?

LAW 602 - AN INTRODUCTION TO BEN HOPKINS (3)I

(Modern Methodology)

An introduction to some fundamental concepts, principles, and techniques of the scientific method, Aristotlean logic, the Lasswell-McDougal jurisprudence, elementary calculus, hypothesis formation, probability, measurement, statistics, computers, "tu-tu", cybernetics, language, Zen Buddhism, TM, and mind power. Considerable attention will be given to the practical difficulties and epistemological quandries of communicating to law students residing on an island, who must be, by definition, insular. Topics here will include the nature of legal "rules", encouraging the effective participation of students in class, and learning to live in a world so dominated by multinational corporations that the loud playing of drums is the only effective way to jam their tapping of our thought processes. Class materials will be 12 pounds of xeroxed material graciously donated by the taxpayers of Hawaii. The instructor will begin each class with a smile and the knowledge that he is at least one assignment ahead. Grades will be determined by final examination over a four day period, two less than it takes to create the world.

Sure, it sounds like a cop-out, but unless you were there every day, there's never any way you will ever know what "Modern Methodology" was like, or for that matter, how an entire law school class got off on the "wrong" foot. We were eager and trusting, so even if the class didn't look like the one in "Paper Chase", it did have the blessing of the Law School, so it must have been all right. Protected by the professional courtesy of the other faculty members and academic freedom, Ben Hopkins was quite free to work out his theories of science and the law, attempt to communicate, and teach himself integral calculus during our class periods.

Surprisingly, there were very few formal complaints about the class during the semester, but there was at least a shared feeling that all wasn't quite right. So day after day most of us went and sat in the class, occasionally even reading the material before, but what was to be made of all of it? Aside from a brief explanation of why "Polynesian paralysis" was really the root of all our (students) problems, the classes were extremely slow moving; considering that Barbara and Shirley were always willing to discourse with Ben about the number of pins on the head of an angel for hours on end, it is a wonder that we ever got out of that slow-moving time machine at all. But the best was yet to come. Since few of us had probably read as much as one-tenth of the material, it was thought the Wednesday 3 pm - Saturday noon take-home exam would give ample time to organize the "20 short questions and three essay questions". Little did we know of the deviousness of Ben's mind. 25 or so typed pages later we bitterly staggered in with our answers. The result? In Ben's opinion, one student showed "present ability to do superior work", a few more had "potential", while the bulk of our class could only muster a "few signs of a potential for superior work". Not enough mind control, eh Ben?