

BUFFALO HANGS ITS HEAD IN SHAME AS L'IL LUKE LAUGHS AT SLAVES AND DEAD WORKERS

Susie linked to this clip.

And while she's right to point to all the evidence that L'il Luke Russert is an ignorant toad about how many jobs Obama's trade deals will send overseas, I'm more amazed by his arrogant response to being asked about slave and dead labor.

Here's my take on the exchange, starting from where Dylan Ratigan first interrupts L'il Luke to call him on the claim trade deals will create jobs.

L'il Luke [reciting a script]: A few things where they could find common ground are free trade agreements that are pending with South Korea and Colombia and Panama. It's unclear whether or not [overtalk]

Ratigan: Hold on, hold on.

[Luke adopts self-satisfied smile]

Ratigan: Are you referencing those free trade deals?

L'il Luke: I am referencing the free trade deals.

Ratigan: I mean, come on now Luke, let's talk about that for a second.

[Luke bites his lips]

That Panama deal's nothing but a bank secrecy haven—

[Luke bursts out laughing]

That's basically what that Panama deal is.

[Luke finally manages to look serious]

The South Korean deal is a way to hire North Korean slaves to make South Korean products so that we can refund the North Korean government—

[Luke has lost it again, openly laughing]

—After giving them sanctions, I call that the “let’s give them a nuke anyway plan,”

[Luke looking down, trying to compose himself, looks up again, biting his lips]

You know, what are we talking about?
[Relents]

I’m giving you a hard time.

L’il Luke: No, I know you are. [Laughs]
You threw me off my game there a little bit.

Ratigan: Tell me the truth, Luke.

L’il Luke: Aw look, —

Ratigan: When they discuss the South Korean trade agreement around Congress, do they refer to it as “hey let’s give North Korea a nucl- anyway plan?”

L’il Luke [finally adopting his serious pundit face]: No they do not.

Ratigan: They don’t?

L’il Luke: They say it’s a job creator.

Ratigan: For who? For North Korean slaves?

L’il Luke: For the United States, no, they say for the United States. They say it’s a job creator, can immediately

[create] thousands and thousands of jobs.

[finally finding comfort in the Village script again, but trying to move on]

You also heard today from President Obama—

Ratigan: How?

L'il Luke [completely sheepish look]:
The [??] of free trade, you take the tariffs away, people, you know, build things here,

Ratigan: No, no no. But the tariffs are away, and if I'm exploiting the ability to access a rigged Chinese currency system and North Korean slave labor,

[L'il Luke furrows his brow slightly, affects to look concerned, bites his lips again, shifts his head]

Seems interesting.

L'il Luke: It does.

Ratigan: My Colombian, the Colombian deal's my favorite. That's a big job creator.

[L'il Luke looks worried. He hasn't studied for this test.]

Whaddya say we do a deal with the only country in the world that openly murders all labor organizers—

[L'il Luke has just decided he's not having fun anymore; juts out chin, peeved now that Dylan is making him play this game]

—to ensure that they will never ask for a raise ever.

L'il Luke [apparently grasping on something he read in college or heard at a cocktail wienie fest]: Well, Colombia, though, in all fairness, Colombia has

had massive strides in improvement in terms of their security. I mean, you're bringing up something that George Miller—

Ratigan: But I'm saying the murder rate of union organizers on a per capita—

[Juts out chin, affects his serious look]

L'il Luke: Well, that's why there's Democratic opposition in the House for it right now and they have to figure out that, you know, technicality there.

"That, you know, technicality." That Democrats think maybe it's a bad idea to open into unfettered competition with a country that kills labor organizers. But that slave labor in Korea, that cheap labor in China? That—that sounds interesting.

L'il Luke is only where he is because Daddy combined his down to earth Buffalo roots with actual knowledge and—in the years before his death—access, access, access.

But it's L'il Luke's smugness that makes me want to vomit. Ratigan is trying to talk about how working people die over this shit. And Luke, shaken for the moment off his tight Village script, not only doesn't have the knowledge to engage with Ratigan, but doesn't even have the respect for the subject to avoid laughing openly.

What do you think of your kid, now, Timmeh Russert? Laughing at the idea of slaves and dead workers?