

FANTASY COURT

SYLLABUS

STEPHEN v. WIFE

Original petition for declaratory relief to settle a domestic dispute

No. 26-1543-4. Heard and decided October 21, 2026

The Ringer Fantasy Football Show, “‘MNF’ Reactions, Power Ranking What’s Aged the Best This NFL Season, a Robust Fantasy Court, and a LOT of Gold Bond,” at

1:21:49–1:25:39

Petitioner Stephen’s wife’s friend suffered an accident in an elevator: anticipating a fart, she instead produced what Petitioner describes as a “liquidy turd” that ran down her leg to her ankle. She was wearing a dress at the time. Petitioner’s wife and her friend classified the event as a shart. Petitioner dissents, contending that the friend pooped her pants (or, more precisely, her dress). Petitioner’s wife argues that the accidental nature of the discharge renders it a shart; Petitioner rebuts that no one has ever pooped their pants on purpose. When asked to quantify the volume, Petitioner’s wife formed her hands into the size of a home-griddled pancake. Petitioner, citing the Court’s prior discussion of the fart-or-shart question on the Sunday night show, seeks a definitive ruling to resolve the resulting household division.

Held: A shart requires both a good-faith expectation of a fart and a discharge small enough to stay where it landed. A pancake-sized liquid discharge that reaches the ankle is pooping one’s pants, whatever the wearer expected.

Proceeding by elimination, we sorted involuntary discharges into three categories: the dam break, where the actor knew what was coming and lost to distance; the exertion case, where an athlete’s body simply gives way; and the shart, where the actor commits to a fart and is betrayed. Only the last is a shart, and it has two elements: (1) a good-faith belief that a fart was forthcoming, and (2) a discharge small enough to remain contained. Because every category is an accident, the accidental character of the discharge cannot be the test, and because a discharge

Syllabus

that travels the length of a leg is not a fart with a passenger but a bowel movement with a misleading opening act, the second element fails here even though the first is satisfied.

CHIEF JUSTICE HEIFETZ delivered the opinion of the Court, in which JUSTICE KELLY joined. JUSTICE HORLBECK filed a dissenting opinion.

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CHIEF JUSTICE HEIFETZ delivered the opinion of the Court, in which JUSTICE KELLY joined. JUSTICE HORLBECK filed a dissenting opinion.

Petitioner Stephen’s wife has a friend. The friend was riding in an elevator when, anticipating a fart, she released instead what Petitioner describes as a “liquidy turd” that ran down her leg to her ankle. She was wearing a dress. Petitioner’s wife and the friend call the event a shart. Petitioner says the friend pooped her pants, or, as JUSTICE KELLY observed at argument, her dress. Petitioner’s wife argues that the accidental character of the discharge makes it a shart. Petitioner replies that no one has ever pooped their pants on purpose. Asked to quantify the volume, Petitioner’s wife formed her hands into the shape of a pancake one would griddle at home. Petitioner, noting that this Court touched on the fart-or-shart question on the Sunday night show, asks us to settle the resulting division in his home.

We hold that a shart has two elements, and that the elevator incident satisfies only one. The friend expected a fart, which is necessary. But a discharge the size of a home-griddled pancake that travels the length of a leg is not a shart under any definition this Court is prepared to publish. She pooped her pants. We regret to inform Petitioner’s wife that her husband is right.

I

Nothing in this case involves a roster, a trade, a commissioner, or a football. We took it anyway, because it is, in the Chief Justice’s estima-

tion, among the most important cases this Court has ever heard, and because no other tribunal will. Last week we recognized Fan Court, “the ancillary jurisdiction this tribunal exercises over disputes about rooting rather than rostering.” *Adam v. Los Angeles Chargers*, 26-1539-2 (2026). Today we recognize its sibling docket, Stupid Court, which hears domestic disputes that concern neither rooting nor rostering but that a married couple has nonetheless agreed to submit to us rather than continue to have at dinner. The limits we observed in *Blake v. Wife*, 20-1354-1 (2020), where we declined to pass on “norms of spousal discourse” as “beyond our jurisdiction,” still hold. We do not say who was right to bring this up. We say only what happened in the elevator.

II

Neither party offers a workable definition, so we proceed by elimination. Excrement leaves the body unbidden in three recognizable ways.

The first is the dam break. The actor knows exactly what is coming and has for some time. He is simply too far from home, and at some point, as JUSTICE HORLBECK put it at argument, “the dam broke.” That is pooping your pants. The actor did not misjudge the nature of the event; he misjudged the distance.

The second is the exertion case. Lamar Jackson once left a game with what he called a cramp and what everyone watching understood to be something else. Paul Pierce was wheeled out of an NBA Finals game under circumstances he has since described with candor. Neither man was trying to fart. Each was in the middle of something athletic and hard, and his body gave way. That, too, is pooping your pants. Exertion is not expectation, and an athlete whose body fails him mid-effort has not sharted, however briefly, because at no point did he believe he was doing anything else.

What remains is the shart. The actor intends a fart, commits to a fart, and is betrayed. The first element of a shart, then, is a good-faith belief that a fart was forthcoming. On this point Petitioner’s wife is partly right: accident is part of the definition. But Petitioner’s rebuttal is also right, and it is fatal to her position. No one has ever pooped their

pants on purpose. Every category above is an accident, so the accidental character of a discharge cannot distinguish a shart from anything. What distinguishes a shart is not that the discharge was unintended but what was intended instead. A shart is a fart that went wrong. It is defined by its mens rea.

But mens rea alone is not enough, and here we part from Petitioner's wife entirely. JUSTICE KELLY observed at argument, and the full Court agreed, that volume matters. It matters because a shart is a fart with a passenger. The wearer's first problem is secrecy, not cleanup. A discharge that must be measured with both hands and that has left the garment and begun a journey has stopped being a fart with a passenger and become a bowel movement with a misleading opening act. The second element of a shart is therefore containment: the discharge must be small enough to stay where it landed. Once it travels, it is a poop, whatever the wearer was expecting when it began.

We adopt containment rather than a figure in ounces for the reason this Court has given before. Faced with the question of how short a hospital visit must be before it stops excusing a lineup, we said that "We decline to establish bright-line rules for every conceivable medical scenario." *Justice v. League*, 25-0702-1 (2025). Nobody weighs these things. But everybody knows whether it moved, and the only witness who matters, the person wearing the result, can apply the test without instruments.

III

The first element is met. The friend expected a fart, and the record contains no suggestion that she had been holding anything in or racing anywhere. This was not a dam break. The second element is not met, and it is not close. A pancake griddled at home runs four to six inches across. The discharge was liquid. It ran to the ankle. A dress offers no containment at all; it is the garment least equipped to hold a shart in place and the most likely to let a poop announce itself. The only measurement in the record was supplied by Petitioner's wife herself, with her hands, and it is a measurement of a poop. Petitioner's wife may fairly observe that her friend never meant to do it. That is why it was an accident. It is not why it was a shart.

Two loose ends. First, JUSTICE KELLY’s point that the friend was not wearing pants, and therefore could not have pooped them. The phrase “pooped her pants” is a term of art. It describes a category of event, not an inventory of clothing, in the way that a benched player does not sit on anything. The friend pooped her dress, which is the same offense in a different jurisdiction. Second, both of our colleagues suggested at argument that the friend should not have been farting in an elevator at all; as JUSTICE KELLY put it, “You never know who’s gonna get in.” The Chief Justice is hesitant to join that criticism. Men are permitted, more or less, to get away with farting in public. Women are not permitted to fart in public at all, and a Court that had never thought about this before today should not begin by scolding the one person in the record who was not asked to appear. Whether the friend was negligent to attempt a fart bears on who is responsible for the elevator, not on what happened in it.

* * *

A shart requires a fart in the mind and a fart’s worth of consequence in the garment. The elevator incident had the first and not the second. Petitioner’s wife and her friend are mistaken; Petitioner is correct; the household may reunite. We express no view on whether being right about this was worth it.

It is so ordered.

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JUSTICE HORLBECK, dissenting.

I would like the record to reflect that I had never thought about this question until the moment it was argued. Having now thought about it, I would decide it the other way.

The Court’s test is volumetric. Mine is temporal. A shart is one explosive instant: you think it is a fart, it happens once, and it is over before you have finished being wrong about it. Pooping your pants is a different event with a different history. You really had to go. You could not make it home. You held on, and then the dam broke. The difference between the two is not how much came out. It is whether the actor was holding something back and lost, or was holding nothing back and was surprised. On this record the friend was surprised. She expected a fart; it happened once; she was not racing anywhere. That is a shart. It is, I will concede, a large one. It may be the largest this Court will ever see. But a large shart is a shart, in the way that a long field goal is a field goal, and the Court’s decision to reclassify it because of where it ended up substitutes a result for a definition.

The containment element also invites exactly the line-drawing I warned against when this Court was asked to carve injury exceptions out of a shotgun rule. There I asked, of an injured player, “Third play clearly qualifies—but what about the tenth play?” *Chris v. League*, 25-0705-1 (2025). Today’s version is worse. Mid-thigh? The knee? The sock? The Court says the wearer will know whether it moved, but that is not a test; it is an admission that the Court knows one when it sees one. See *Jacobellis v. Ohio*, 378 U.S. 184 (1964) (Stewart, J., concurring). I would

not put the Court's name on it. The only measurement in the record is a hand gesture, and if only we had a photo of that, I am not confident the majority would be as sure as it sounds.

Finally, I would reach the question the Court sets aside. The friend should not have been farting in an elevator. Nobody should. It does not matter who you are; the ride is short, you do not know who is getting on, and you hold it. The Chief Justice is right that the social rules differ by gender, and I take no position on what women are up to. But the lesson of this case is not a definition. It is that the whole thing was avoidable, and the Court, having told Petitioner's wife that she is wrong about a word, might have spent a sentence telling her friend that she was wrong about the elevator.