

## MASTERS OF THE OBVIOUS

*"Our learned friend's nerves are somewhat out of order"  
[CREE]*

*We've all had an experience with a friend or colleague who states the obvious as if they discovered fire.*

*In college, when someone displayed this kind of ridiculousness, we'd mockingly fire up everyone's favorite game show, "Masters of the Obvious," and introduce them to the crowd.*

*In recent years, Captain Obvious has become a part of our collective consciousness, in his role as mascot for Hotels.com.*

*Attired in a fake naval-military outfit, he points out the commonsensical things associated with using their service.*

*In "The Boscombe Valley Mystery," Sherlock Holmes warns Watson: "There is nothing more deception than an obvious fact."*

*But does this fly in the face of Holmes's stating the so-called 'obvious' in other circumstances?*

*For example, in "The Red-Headed League," Sherlock Holmes draws up these conclusions after looking at Jabez Wilson:*

*"Beyond the obvious facts he has at some time done manual labour, he takes snuff, that he is a Freemason, that he has been in China, and that he has done a considerable amount of writing lately, I can deduce nothing else."*

## **MASTERS OF THE OBVIOUS**

### **"Our learned friend's nerves are somewhat out of order" [CREE] (continued)**

*Manual labor would seem obvious at first glance; but we need to look beyond the obvious, as Holmes counsels.*

*Was it that Wilson's enlarged hand had other causes: an injury, or perhaps a birth defect?*

*Another example comes from "The Blue Carbuncle," when Holmes was examining Henry Baker's hat:*

*"That the man was highly intellectual is of course obvious upon the face of it...it is a question of cubic capacity."*

*The size of the cranium and intelligence are very weakly associated, if at all.*

*It would be obvious to assume Mr. Baker was intelligent, but should we trust that?*

*What about a potential birth or growth defect that may have afflicted Henry Baker?*

*And when John Hector McFarlane made his dramatic entrance to 221B Baker Street in "The Norwood Builder," Holmes observed:*

*"...beyond the obvious facts that you are a bachelor, a solicitor, a Freemason, and an asthmatic, I know nothing whatever about you."*

*Very similar to the situation above in "The Red-Headed League," don't you think?*

*And yet, we can find a fault in Holmes's very first observation.*

## ***MASTERS OF THE OBVIOUS***

***"Our learned friend's nerves are somewhat out of order"  
[CREE] (continued)***

*Disheveled clothing may obviously point to bachelorhood, but Holmes tells us not to trust the obvious.*

*Mr. McFarlane had just come from an overnight at Anerley Arms (not at home) and rushed to Baker Street, which could have happened whether he was married or single.*

*So, should we trust the obvious in the Canon?*

*Clearly not when Holmes is explaining himself.*

*Isn't that obvious?*

*Perhaps Holmes developed his distaste for it in his earlier years at Baker Street Elementary...*

**GUESS WHAT I LEARNED TODAY ?**

**WHO KNOWS...**

**WHO CARES...**



**I FOUND OUT THAT MY BIRTHDAY IS  
ACTUALLY ON THE SAME DAY THAT I WAS  
BORN... WHAT ARE THE ODDS OF THAT ?**



*APPROXIMATELY 1 IN 365, OR SO...*

*OH GOOD GRIEF...*



**DO YOU EVER THINK BEFORE YOU SPEAK ?**

**NAH... I WANT TO BE  
AS SURPRISED AS YOU  
ARE BY WHAT I SAY...**

