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No need to watch 'Daily Show'; UA prof tells it all here

By Tom Beal

We prepared University of Arizona law professor Robert Glennon for his Thursday appearance on "The Daily Show With Jon Stewart" by asking the kinds of tough questions that comedian Stewart might pose about Glennon's new book, "Unquenchable: America's Water Crisis and What to Do About It."

Any schoolchild knows two-thirds of the Earth is covered with water. What exactly is your problem?

It's true the Earth is mostly water, but only 1 percent is potable. The bottom line, for many places in the United States, is that water is not where we want it, when we want it and in the form we need it.

People don't believe scientists about global warming. Why would they believe a lawyer?

There is no reason to believe a lawyer. If people are just willfully tuning out scientific information, there is nothing anyone can do about it. What I've done in the book is document the nature of the crisis, evaluate it and offer a new way forward.

When we need fresh water, can't we just pray for it?

You're referring to Gov. Sonny Perdue of Georgia when Atlanta was in a very serious drought (in 2007).

What the governor did was not impose Draconian restrictions but to call for a prayer vigil. Not being a man to take chances, he didn't schedule the vigil until the weather forecast called for rain.

You live in Tucson. What the hell do you know about water?

I grew up in Massachusetts, and what I know is that there is a river in my home state that has gone dry in five of the last eight years from groundwater pumping. Salt water is intruding in every coastal area of the United States. Tucson is really the cutting edge in coming to terms with the shortage problem.

You seem to pick on Las Vegas. Did you lose a lot of money there or something?

I've never lost a lot of money in Las Vegas. I've always been bemused by it.

At the end of the day, you have to scratch your head and say: Here's a metro area of 1.8 million people. It's running out of water and building this new city center for another 50,000 to 70,000 people.

We need to link land-use decisions with available water supply.

Are you ready for your Thursday appearance on "The Daily Show"?

No. I'm asking everyone I know, whether they're religious or not, to say a prayer for me. He (Stewart) can be nasty if he wants to be. His studio guests he seems to be pretty nice with. That said, he doesn't suffer fools, and he asks an opening question that you don't know where it's going to come from.

DID YOU KNOW?

Robert Glennon's previous book, "Water Follies," was about the impact of groundwater pumping on the environment.

Read more about Glennon and his book at rglennon.com

Glennon, a law professor at the University of Arizona and a faculty member of the UA's Institute for Environment and Society, will appear on "The Daily Show With Jon Stewart" Thursday at 11 p.m. on Comedy Central. It rebroadcasts Friday at 8 p.m.

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