

# Feature Article

## More Human than Human

A field guide for testing if the San Francisco mayoral candidates are human or not.

By Eric Gutoski



### MORE HUMAN THAN HUMAN

A FIELD GUIDE FOR TESTING IF THE SAN FRANCISCO MAYORAL CANDIDATES ARE HUMAN OR NOT. BY JOHN HOLDEN

**replicant (repí-li-kant) n.**  
1. A genetically engineered creature composed entirely of organic substance designed to look and act human.  
2. An android.

**SUBJECT 1: ANGELA ALIOTO**  
The Mayor Republican does it. He's not a Republican, but he's not a Democrat either. He's a...  
It's your birthday, because...  
What do you do?  
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**SUBJECT 2: SUSAN LEE**  
The Mayor Democrat does it. He's not a Democrat, but he's not a Republican either. He's a...  
It's your birthday, because...  
What do you do?

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With Willie Brown finally leaving his gold (plated), diamond-encrusted throne, there has been no shortage of hats thrown into the mayoral ring. San Francisco politics are now a microcosm of California's own, greater gubernatorial challenges. Rather than confuse you with endorsements, position papers and other outmoded means of political influence, we've decided to get to the bottom of the only question that matters: Is a particular candidate human or an insidious replicant, possessed of physical strength and computational abilities far exceeding our own, but lacking empathy and possibly even bent on our destruction as a species?

The only reliable method that we know of for sniffing out replicants is the Voight-Kampff Test, created by Phillip K. Dick in his book, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* and later used by Harrison Ford's character, Deckard, in the film *Blade Runner*. The test uses a series of questions to evoke an emotional response which androids are incapable of having. By the candidates' responses to this line of questioning, we feel we can say with some certainty whether or not they're replicants. However, we're stopping short of recommending that you vote for them or not. After all, though a replicant mayor may be more likely to gouge a supervisor's eyes out with their thumbs, they have another quality that could be great in an elected official: a four year life span.

## SUBJECT 1: ANGELA ALIOTO

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**The Wave: Reaction time is a factor in this, so please pay attention. Now, answer as quickly as you can.**

**Itís your birthday. Someone gives you a calfskin wallet. How do you react?**

Angela Alioto: Iíd accept it.

**TW: Youíve got a little boy. He shows you his butterfly collection plus the killing jar. What do you do?**

AA: Iíd look at it. What do you mean what would I do? As opposed to saying dhow horrible?  
E I would tell him how beautiful it is.

**TW: Youíre watching television. Suddenly you realize thereís a wasp crawling on your arm.**

AA: Iíd knock it off. Itís something Iím used to doing in politics [Laughs].

**TW: Youíre in a desert walking along in the sand when all of the sudden you look down, and you see a tortoise, Angela, itís crawling toward you. You reach down, you flip the tortoise over on its back, Angela. The tortoise lays on its back, its belly baking in the hot sun, beating its legs trying to turn itself over, but it canít, not without your help. But youíre not helping. Why is that, Angela?**

AA: That would never happen. I wouldnít turn it over in the first place, and the thing with it being in pain is out of the question. Let me ask you, John, how does this fit in to the bigger picture when you ask me about the dying tortoise and the dead butterflies?

**TW: Theyíre just questions, Angela. In answer to your query, theyíre written down for me. Itís a test, designed to provoke an emotional response. Shall we continue? Describe in single words, only the good things that come into your mind. About your mother.**

AA: My mother? Sheís beautiful. Sheís an artist. Sheís a renaissance artist.

**CONCLUSION:** Her defensiveness over her lack of empathy for the butterfly is telling, as is the comparison of a political rival to a wasp that should be knocked off. I think we can safely say that Angela Alioto is indeed a replicant, albeit one that dlovesE the implanted memory of her mother. Keep an eye on her.

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## SUBJECT 2: SUSAN LEAL

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**The Wave: Itís your birthday. Someone gives you a calfskin wallet. How do you react?**

Susan Leal: Disappointed.

**TW: Youíve got a little boy. He shows you his butterfly collection plus the killing jar. What do you do?**

SL: Iíd be fascinated.

**TW: Youíre watching television. Suddenly you realize**

**thereís a wasp crawling on your arm.**

SL: Iíd kill it.

**TW: Youíre in a desert walking along in the sand when all of the sudden you look down, and you see a tortoise, Susan, itís crawling toward you. You reach down, you flip the tortoise over on its back, Susan. The tortoise lays on its back, its belly baking in the hot sun, beating its legs trying to turn itself over, but it canít, not without your help. But youíre not helping. Why is that, Susan?**

SL: I donít know, I mustíve lost my mind.

**TW: Describe in single words, only the good things that come into your mind. About your mother.**

SL: Honest. Supportive. Liberal. Interesting.

CONCLUSION: The dissociation Susan expressed in response to the tortoise question confirms what we already knew: Susan Leal is a replicant. However, by evaluating her response to the wasp question (word for word as Rachel È totally a replicant È answered it in Blade Runner), we can tell that sheís at least a Nexus 7. If you vote for Susan, you will be electing a replicant, but one of the most highly advanced models available.



### **SUBJECT 3: MATT GONZALEZ**

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**The Wave: Reaction time is a factor in this, so please pay attention. Now, answer as quickly as you can.**

**Itís your birthday. Someone gives you a calfskin wallet. How do you react?**

Matt Gonzalez: Iím sorry, what kind of wallet?

**TW: Calfskin.**

MG: Calfskin, I donít even know what that is.

**TW: Do you know what a cow is, Matt?**

MG: Yeah.

**TW: Baby cow.**

MG: Um, I have no idea how I would react.

**TW: Youíve got a little boy. He shows you his butterfly collection plus the killing jar. What do you do?**

MG: These are great questions. Iím not sure if theyíre ideal for 9:00. We were up pretty late at the office. I can only associate to things that Iíve seen or done in my own life.

**TW: Youíre watching television. Suddenly you realize thereís a wasp crawling on your arm.**

MG: I guess I would probably just knock it off.

**TW: Youíre in a desert walking along in the sand when all of the sudden you look down, and you see a tortoise, Matt, itís crawling toward you. You reach down, you flip the**

**tortoise over on its back, Matt. The tortoise lays on its back, its belly baking in the hot sun, beating its legs trying to turn itself over, but it can't, not without your help. But you're not helping. Why is that, Matt?**

MG: Well I don't think I would have knocked it over in the first place and I don't get any amusement out of making tortoises suffer, so I don't think that would be me. You must have confused me for one of my opponents.

**TW: Shall we continue? Describe in single words, only the good things that come into your mind. About your mother.**

MG: Just a positive person, no negative energy at all. Next time could we do this later in the day?

CONCLUSION: Androids do not dream of electric sheep because they don't sleep, unlike Matt Gonzalez who was up late d'workingE at the office. His obvious grogginess leads us to the conclusion that he is indeed a human, but one with an ill-formed sleep schedule. Were he a replicant he would have already gouged out six eyeballs, broken in to the genetic design lab and made a trip to the juice bar by this time of the day.



#### **SUBJECT 4: TOM AMMIANO**

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**The Wave: Reaction time is a factor in this, so please pay attention. Now, answer as quickly as you can.**

**It's your birthday. Someone gives you a calfskin wallet. How do you react?**

Tom Ammiano: I'd look for money.

**TW: You've got a little boy. He shows you his butterfly collection plus the killing jar. What do you do?**

TA: I'd think this was Blade Runner. That's my reaction.

**TW: You're watching television. Suddenly you realize there's a wasp crawling on your arm.**

TA: Call 911.

**TW: You're in a desert walking along in the sand when all of the sudden you look down, and you see a tortoise, Tom, it's crawling toward you. You reach down, you flip the tortoise over on its back, Tom. The tortoise lays on its back, its belly baking in the hot sun, beating its legs trying to turn itself over, but it can't, not without your help. But you're not helping. Why is that, Tom?**

TA: That's interesting. I don't know. I'm a republican?

**TW: Describe in single words, only the good things that come into your mind. About your mother.**

TA: Tenderness. Yelling.

CONCLUSION: The self-awareness required to recognize that you're being administered a Voight-Kampff Test automatically eliminates the possibility of you being a replicant. Good work, Tom! You're human! Now watch your back.



**SUBJECT 5: TONY RIBERA**

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**The Wave: Reaction time is a factor in this, so please pay attention. Now, answer as quickly as you can.**

**It's your birthday. Someone gives you a calfskin wallet. How do you react?**

Tony Ribera: Good. I'd be happy.

**TW: You've got a little boy. He shows you his butterfly collection plus the killing jar. What do you do?**

TR: I'd ask him to explain it to me.

**TW: You're watching television. Suddenly you realize there's a wasp crawling on your arm.**

TR: Slap it.

**TW: You're in a desert walking along in the sand when all of the sudden you look down, and you see a tortoise, Tony, it's crawling toward you. You reach down, you flip the tortoise over on its back, Tony. The tortoise lays on its back, its belly baking in the hot sun, beating its legs trying to turn itself over, but it can't, not without your help. But you're not helping. Why is that, Tony?**

TR: Well, I think I would help. I like tortoises. As a former athlete I've always been very slow, and I feel I can relate to them.

**TW: Describe in single words, only the good things that come into your mind. About your mother.**

TR: Happy. Cheerful. Optimistic. Pretty. Fun.

**CONCLUSIONS:** Inconclusive. While generally empathetic, there is a homey quality to Tony's answers that are almost too good to be true. As if they were programmed. Fifty-fifty he's a skin job.

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**SUBJECT 6: GAVIN NEWSOM**

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**The Wave: Reaction time is a factor in this, so please pay attention. Now, answer as quickly as you can.**

**It's your birthday. Someone gives you a calfskin wallet. How do you react?**

Gavin Newsom: I don't have anything to put in it. I would thank them and move on.

**TW: You've got a little boy. He shows you his butterfly collection plus the killing jar. What do you do?**

GN: I would tell him to "You know what? I wouldn't know how to respond. How is that for an

answer? Is this a psychological test? I'm worried

**TW: They're just questions, Gavin. In answer to your query, they're written down for me. It's a test, designed to provoke an emotional response.**

GN: Oh, I got you.

**TW: Shall we continue?**

GN: Sure.

**TW: You're watching television. Suddenly you realize there's a wasp crawling on your arm. How would you react?**

GN: I would quietly sit and wait for the wasp to move to the next victim.

**TW: You're in a desert walking along in the sand when all of the sudden you look down, and you see a tortoise, Gavin, it's crawling toward you. You reach down, you flip the tortoise over on its back, Gavin. The tortoise lays on its back, its belly baking in the hot sun, beating its legs trying to turn itself over, but it can't, not without your help. But you're not helping. Why is that, Gavin?**

GN: [Immediately] Not a chance. I would never flip the tortoise over in the first place.

**TW: Describe in single words, only the good things that come into your mind. About your mother.**

GN: Ethics. Commitment. Sacrifice.

CONCLUSION: Almost too close to call. Almost. Newsom displays a defensiveness when his empathy is questioned. He's aware that he's being probed for emotional responses, and even expresses concern about this. However, this concern is alleviated a little too easily by our crafty V-K interviewer. Newsom is definitely a replicant. Probably a Nexus 5.