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QUOTE FOR THE DAY

“To Dream the impossible dream, to fight the unbeatable foe...” from Man of La Mancha, lead in line.

EVERY PROSECUTORS THEME SONG

Indeed, the prospect of throwing former president Trump behind bars is the dream of numerous prosecutors. Let’s jail him over paying hush money to hide the Stormy Daniels sex case, or the lady in New York who claims he raped her many years ago and then defamed her. Oh, and then there is the hope that criminal behavior can be proven with regard to Mr. Trump’s tax returns, while some DA is running around in Georgia trying to prove he criminally violated election laws.

All of the foregoing is, however, chump change compared to the allegation that Mr. Trump was

criminally involved in the January 6, 2020 attack on the Capitol. In June, 2022, an ABC/ipsos survey found that 58% of respondents believed the former president should be charged with a crime for his role in that attack. Whether you like or dislike Mr. Trump, here is your scribe's reality check.

MANY OF YOU

Are aware of the steps necessary to bring a defendant before the bar of justice, but for those needing an update – a prosecutor/ DA assembles a Grand Jury and attempts to get the members to vote a “True Bill”, that is, to indict an individual and bring him/her to trial in front of a criminal jury.

There's an old expression, “A good prosecutor could indict a ham sandwich.” Why is that? – well, because there is no presentation by the defense in front of a Grand Jury, plus the DA gets to select the jury without objection from the lawyers of the individual who the DA is trying to indict. This is tantamount to scoring a touchdown with only one team on the field. It

is rather unusual for a DA not to be able to convince a Grand Jury to indict. As a result, it appears highly likely that Mr. Trump may face more than one criminal indictment. Now comes the time when the rubber meets the road. In picking the jury for a criminal trial, both the prosecution and defense get to challenge and dismiss a good number of potential jurors for whatever reason. The prosecutor obviously wants jurors he believes will vote to convict or, at best, are neutral; the defense, just the opposite.

There are still a large percentage of Americans who don't believe the events of January 6th warrant a criminal proceeding against Mr. Trump and I predict it will be virtually impossible to select a jury that will unanimously vote to convict Mr. Trump. The trial itself would only further divide the country and a hung jury would be a major career set back for any DA. Yes, I would say it's an "impossible dream" and an, "unbeatable foe."

I'M JUST WILD ABOUT HARRY –"NOT"

Conservative, Bret Stephens, and Liberal, Gail Collins, are on the same page on this one. Regarding Prince Harry, Bret says, “A nauseating character. He seems to think it’s OK to denounce invasions of his privacy while he invades the privacy of his whole family for the purpose of making a buck. Or, that it’s fair to whine about the chilly reception he got from them at his grandparents’ funerals, after he’d spent the better part of a year airing the palace’s dirty laundry. Or, that he can sell himself as a man hard-done- by from his stunning digs in Montecito. He achieves the impossible of making me feel sorry for his father. And he embodies the worst characteristics of his former and home countries: the unmerited entitlement of a secondary British Royal and the self-pitying exhibitionism of a grifting California arriviste.”

In approbation Gail says, “Smash!”

That encourages Bret to conclude, “Of course, what’s really disturbing is that people- and that includes me- pay attention. Harry and his wife are basically two trivial people who hold a

mirror to the triviality of the societies they inhabit.” What say you, dear readers?

CLIMATE STUFF

A variety of interesting stories over the past month. As reported in the NY Times in early January, “The weakened ozone layer, which is vital to protecting life on Earth, is on track to be restored to full strength within decades- the latest success of a global effort by nations to stop using chemicals that had been destroying the critical layer in the upper atmosphere.”

I, for one, do believe humans have been doing bad things to the climate, but I also believe we are at a point in one of those 10,000 year cycles where natural warming is also occurring- something the climate advocates do not want to talk about. So now we learn (ref. NYT, 12/8/ front page) that two million years ago, a region just 600 miles from the North Pole was, “once covered by a forest of poplar and birch trees and inhabited by mastodons.” Global warming? Oops!

But, to bring us back to how we are not helping, did you know that, “Plastics, through their life cycle, which are manufactured from fossil fuels, release air pollutants, harm human health and kill marine life. In 2015, they were responsible for 4.5% of global greenhouse gas emissions, one recent study found, more than all the world’s planes combined.”

And then we learn, the impact of food waste on the planet. “In the United States, food waste is responsible for twice as many greenhouse gas emissions as commercial aviation.” Put that in your pipe and smoke it. Maybe we should cut Climate Czar, John Kerry, a little slack and let him continue to travel in his private jet.

COOK ISLANDS, WHAT? WHERE?

Turns out the Cook Islands are halfway between Hawaii and New Zealand and have a population of 18,000, just slightly larger than Bemidji, Minnesota. New Zealand has always administered the Cook Islands, as Denmark has with Greenland, and citizens of the islands have had New Zealand citizenship.

Now president Biden is all excited about the possibility of the Cook Islands becoming a free standing country- why? – apparently concern about China’s growing incursions in that part of the world. So, the islanders want to join the U.N. and the IMF, to what end?- who knows. So, here you’ll have to humor your scribe in a little sophomoric aside. The first thing is that the Islanders would have to give up their New Zealand citizenship (true). And, then, being a free- standing country, would have to open embassies and consulates in at least the world’s top twenty countries. In short order everyone would be working for the Island government and 9,000 of the 18,000 would be posted abroad. Now, what to call the citizens of the new country? How about, Cookies? Rugby is very big in that part of the world, so how about renaming the big national team the Oreo Cookies? Just a thought, but this whole idea is as silly as your scribe’s commentary.

CRYPTO, BLOCKCHAIN AND BLOCKHEADS

Enter Mr. Sam Bankman-Fried, actually maybe he’s not the blockhead – he is, in fact a master swindler (from what I read) soon to be

wearing # 39607 in Federal prison. The blockheads are the people who listened to Matt Damon infamously urging the gullible with phrases like, "Fortune favors the Brave." That was good enough for Tom Brady and Gisele Bundchen to jump on the promotional band wagon and, in the wake of the FTX fiasco, lose \$45 million and \$25 million respectively. All of those cocksure folks are now being sued by other investors over their crypto promotional efforts. I have heard that it is estimated that close to fifty percent of crypto investors don't have a clue what blockchain is all about. Your scribe doesn't either, but that's why I'm not an investor. These uninformed folks, blockheads perhaps, have just been making a failed asset play hoping for a quick payday.

The financial writer, Paul Krugman, points out that, "Growing evidence suggests digital ledgers are worth absolutely nothing." As a long time skeptic he and others of that persuasion, "were told that we just didn't get it." Krugman notes that the Australian stock exchange was planning to use a blockchain platform. That is out the window at a cost of

\$168 million. Maersk is unwinding its own abortive efforts to use a blockchain to manage supply chains.

Amazon chose not to implement a blockchain of its own. “It couldn’t get a straight answer to the question, ‘What useful things does it do?’”

Krugman concludes, “No doubt I’ll hear from many people still insisting that I don’t get it. But it looks as if there never was an IT to get.”

Not content to just go after the inherent problems with crypto currencies, the business section of the NY Times makes much to do about Bankman-Fried’s style. Referring to his unkempt manner and general slovenliness we read, “It’s a uniform that telegraphs to the watching world somebody who doesn’t have the time to worry about what they are wearing because they are so out there and potentially revolutionary.” As the article continues, “Mr. Bankman-Fried has however cast the whole look in a different light. His sloppy dress seems less a reflection of a higher calling or of a decision to devote his own finances to, ‘effective altruism’, than a red flag about a

sloppy approach to other people's money. A clue that someone who doesn't care about showering or style is maybe someone who doesn't care about audits and the co-mingling of funds."

The Sage of Omaha, Warren Buffet, said of crypto, "I wouldn't purchase all the bitcoin in the world for \$25. JP Morgan CEO, Jamie Dimon likened bitcoin to pet rocks, saying, "Why do we allow this stuff to take place?"

So, when this is all over wouldn't it be interesting for messers Buffet and Dimon to have a jail house interview with federal prisoner #39607 who would greet them in his pressed orange jumpsuit, freshly shaved and mandated haircut, and cogently explain why they just don't get it.

AMERICA, WHERE ARE WE GOING?

A second high school in Virginia is scrapping individual merit awards, "to protect the feelings of non-recipients", in pursuit of "equity". No more Spanish prize, English Lit. medal and no valedictorian. Wow, when I went

to school, along with 90% of the class, I never got any citations. As I remember it, none of us in the 90% club could have cared less. It's rumored these schools will still permit an MVP for basketball.

WHY THE STUDY OF LATIN HAS TO RETURN

The USC School of Social Work has made the unsettling discovery that the use of the word, "field" in their curriculum may have racist connotations. Say what? Well, the logic goes that back in the days of slavery, people worked in fields.

USC makes the mental leap that asking someone his field of study may evoke memories from that awful time in our history. Well, it didn't take the inclusion and diversity committee long to solve this dilemma. Henceforth the word "field" is to be replaced by "practicum". But isn't your practicum something they remove when your stomach hurts? (smile). Anyway, I'm running late, have to get over to the soccer practicum.

Your faithful scribe, PB

