

## Trump trumping Mueller; Mueller trumping him back

by Julian Sereno

President Trump's long-time lawyer/fixer, Michael Cohen, has "flipped", pled guilty, and spilled the beans on his former patron. He has tapes proving Trump authorized hush money payments to two former mistresses. Porn star Stormy Daniels got \$130,000 in 2016 after a one-night stand in July 2006. Playboy Playmate Karen McDougal got a \$150,000; in her case the payment came from from the National Enquirer for exclusive rights to her story, which they killed. David Pecker, Chairman of American Media, owner of the Enquirer and then-loyal Trump crony, also flipped. McDougal's account is of a 10 month 2006 affair with Trump, simultaneous with Stormy.

It all happened right after Melania gave birth to Barron. New fathers certainly are busy, and always have their hands full.

Special prosecutor Robert Mueller, in possession of recorded evidence and witness

testimony of Trump authorizing election-time payoffs to these former lovers, is rumored to be preparing charges of campaign finance violations against him.

If he does, he'll lose. And so will anybody else who tries to make that case.

It all already happened, eight years ago, right here in North Carolina with our very own John Edwards. Edwards, of course, got into trouble as a harried new dad, running for President, caring for a wife with terminal cancer, and keeping his girlfriend and their new-born daughter hidden. He was eventually outed by the National Enquirer. Small world.

Edwards paid for their sequestration with a million-dollar campaign gift from Bunny Scaife. He was charged with six felony counts of violations of federal campaign law. The jury deliberated nine days before acquitting him on one count and deadlocking on the remaining five. The government decided not to retry

the case.

The U.S. Attorney in Raleigh who brought the charges defended the prosecution. George Holding insisted the money Edwards backers paid to hide the candidate's mistress during the 2008 presidential campaign called out for action by prosecutors. "Political corruption cases are the most difficult cases," Holding told POLITICO at the time of the jury's decision. "If we had not taken on these cases, not taken on this case, it would have been a dereliction of duty."

George Holding, of course, is a Republican since elected to Congress and running for re-election this year. An avid supporter of Trump, I wonder if his sentiments about that particular crime have changed.

I find it a matter common sense that there is no more urgent need for a political campaign than to suppress news of scandalous conduct by the candidate. Politicians paying off

paramours seems like a legitimate campaign expense to me.

Trump does face an existential threat from the courts. If he sits down for an interview with Robert Mueller, or testifies under oath, he will break the law. That's because he will lie. That's just who he is. He has lied 4,229 times during his presidency as of August 1, according to Glenn Kessler and the Washington Post, who has been tracking him.

Lying to the FBI is a felony, as is lying while giving sworn testimony. It's called perjury. If testifies, he'll lie. He can't help himself.

If Democrats win back congress, they would impeach him. If Republicans win, he'll break the law with impunity and never face consequences. That includes murdering someone on Fifth Avenue.

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## Inconvenient Truths

by Don Lein

If the Garden of Eden existed, it undoubtedly was a slum, opines Jonah Goldberg in his latest book, "Suicide of the West." It is his way of illustrating that, except for the last couple of centuries, the millennia of human existence have been marked by abject poverty, hunger, violence, tribal hatred and an early death. As economist Todd G. Buchholz puts it, "For most of man's life on earth, he has lived no better on two legs than he did on four." For most of history the average income was about \$1 - 3 dollars per day. Goldberg has charted the International GDP, which starts at 1AD, remains flat for about 19 centuries and then abruptly rises. Goldberg calls the events that caused this abrupt change - "the miracle"

One of the truths is that nearly all of human progress has taken place in the last 300 years - and for many billions of non-westerners lifted out of poverty by capitalism, it has happened in the last 30 years. Around the year 1700 in a corner of Europe humanity stumbled onto a new way of organizing society and thinking about the world. Goldberg calls it the Lockean Revolution, a "miracle" - holding that the individual was sovereign; our rights come from God, not government; the fruits of our labors belong to us and we are all are created equal. However, Hayek noted that each individual sees the world through the tribal and personal lens and it was when the individual could hold these tendencies in check that allowed the miracle to occur. Goldberg fears that natural rights/limited government and capitalism are under attack in today's society and with their demise we will effectively commit societal suicide. Let's look at a couple of the left's favorite tropes that are leading us down this primrose path to intellectual and financial poverty - diversity which is a direct appeal to our primal instincts and socialism which looks great on paper, but, alas, has never worked in real life!!

### DIVERSITY

Ironically one of prime promulgators of the value of diversity are our elite institutions of higher learning, they "speak with one voice to emphasize the profound importance of a diverse student body". However, their embrace of diversity only covers race and ethnic origin, but stops short of intellectual or political diversity. New York Mayor Bill de Blasio is unhappy with the city's elite high schools ethnic mix. It seems that 62 percent of students attending the city's specialized/elite high schools are Asian Americans and they make up only 12.7 percent of total student population, whereas blacks and Hispanics represent two thirds of all public school students with only 10 percent of those attending the specialized/elite high schools. Are the admissions criteria/tests meritocratic or discriminatory?? When one considers how Asian Americans have been treated throughout American history, one would have to lean toward meritocratic.

At another level in the case of Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard, a large cohort of Asian American students are challenging Harvard's admission policies on the grounds that they discriminate against them. For the Fall 2018 class 16 percent were African American and nearly 23 percent were Asian-American. In a 2013 internal study, Harvard found that absent special rules the incoming class would contain 43 percent Asian Americans. In 2005 a Princeton study it showed that Asian Americans needed to score 450 (out of 1600) points higher on the SAT than African Americans to have an equal chance of being admitted to any of the elite institutions. The over-representation of African Americans (16 percent admitted vs 12.1 percent total population) in admissions at Harvard rests solely on "personal ratings", such as "likability, kindness, courage", etc. Harvard is scrambling to justify its position in the lawsuit.

### SOCIALISM VS CAPITALISM

Margaret Thatcher's quip about socialism being a wonderful

economic system to employ until you run out of "other people's money" is still on point. The World Bank published a study entitled "Puzzles on Economic Growth". It compared the countries of Chile and Venezuela, which are of similar size, had comparable economies in the 1980s and they share similar histories. In Chile their flirtation with socialist control of the market lasted only three years, whereas Venezuela continued them for decades. The result was that while in 1980 Venezuela's per capita GDP was twice as high as Chile's, in 2016 the reverse was true and Chile had leapfrogged Venezuela such that its average GDP was now twice Venezuela's. Thus, the state-owned enterprises did not keep up with private ownership and the state restrictions on the economy employed by Venezuela's socialist model proved counter-productive.

Scandinavia is a frequently cited example of a "successful welfare state", however a recently published book by Dr. Nima Sanandaji, "Scandinavian Unexceptionalism: Culture, Markets and the Failure of Third-Way Socialism" disputes that characterization. He traces the "golden age of Sweden" from 1870-1970, which he attributes to a distinct Scandinavian culture characterized by "high levels of trust, a strong work ethic and social cohesion" such that the destructive incentives of the welfare state took a long time to overcome. Sanandaji's book traces the growth of the outstanding economy, until it was eroded by decades of destructive welfare state incentives. This resulted in the welfare state being crushed under its own financial burden—as Margaret Thatcher would have predicted. Vast free-market reforms were enacted, which are now contributing to more economic growth and prosperity. All in all, he states that "Scandinavia is entirely unexceptional." They learned from their flirtation with socialism—will the U.S. learn from that example??

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## Don't Like Him, Never Liked Him, Dislike Some Things About Him, Like Some Things About Him

by Bob Katrin

I guess no ones captured America's imagination, at least lately, like Trump has. I said I guess. Trump's a New Yorker, I was once a New Yorker, but can't afford to live there any more. I also guess you could say that there's no place like New York City and there's no one else like Donald Trump. There's also no one else like you or me. And what mix or mixture of time and space, or Space-Time, as Einstein likes to call, it produced you, Donald Trump, and me.

Remember the Declaration of Independence said, "All men are created equal," however that's where it ends and reality begins. What you become is largely formulated from unknown quantities; the mystical part of the formula is what interests me the most. Although most of us think about forebears, environment, and such, as the main components, I think it's more complicated and mysterious than that. So there's no point in looking at Trump from any point other than the unknown. "Only The Shadow Knows" was the radio program I listened to when I was a kid.

Most politicians become politicians over a course of time. Trump sprang, not from an egg, but from an Easter egg, and I don't mean like Jesus who invented Easter. No, you could say that he invented himself. You also might say that he's an American "first," like Thomas Edison, Alexander Graham Bell etc.

He's also our first showman president probably bitten by

the bug on The Apprentice where he got his start and obviously likes the limelight, and it must be admitted that things like orange hair, on office building with his name on it, a knockout of a wife, daughter, and some other kids, gets your attention.

He's all about attention. Some people have said he's a narcissist, who doesn't have some of that in them? And so what if he's not educated. Obama was but he was boring and careful, the mantle of African-Americanism was a heavy weight to carry and he did his best and some people say they miss him but try imagining yourself missing Trump. It's not out of the realm of possibility.

Buffoon, certainly, but there's some panache in the way he pulls it off. Why he's the reason for some of the best humor; jokes, I'd love some "knock, knock jokes," Saturday Night Live skits, etc. He's the nation's and the world's current head-scratcher. And if you say he's wasting our time just think about what you'd be doing if you didn't have him to kick around.

He's nonplussed the Republican Party, they love it, and there's not much they have to do but ride his coattails. Imagine Bernie Sanders doing that for the Dem's? No way, he's way too serious and he can't tell a joke. Trump is a joke and that is the secret sauce that put him in office and now he's riding his surfboard as President.

Does he make mistakes? Of course he does. Its part of his charm gets him attention, and I love the way it frustrates the serious leaders and politicians of the world. They don't know

whether to \_\_\_\_ or go blind; and he loves it.

Talk to Putin, why not, no big deal he probably can't make any more sense of him than we can. He says this; he says that, and then takes it back! When has America or the rest of the world seen anyone like him? FDR? Sure, maybe, he would do anything, even get us in a war with Germany and Japan at the same time, and was, if anything, all about the public's ratings of him. And sure we've had Groucho Marx, Woody Allen, Pen & Teller, Big Bird, and Mr. Rogers but hasn't Trump upstaged them all?

Has he done any harm? Yes and No. He usually changes his mind before anything bad really happens. Whatever bad stuff he's putting in the pipeline is because he's a feckless Business man, we have millions of those, bent on building everything up like the million little piggies they are. Their diet is money, making money, and in the process they will destroy the world. But if it weren't them it would be something else. So you could blame them for their stupidity, but what's a million years of earths' longevity more or less. When it's got to go it'll go.

Mean while is it possible to just enjoy the show realizing that power in some one else's hands maybe could, would, should, make a difference?

But would it be as entertaining?

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