



TRUMP'S BOXES

Well, not exactly *his* boxes; that's the crux of the issue: that the FBI and DoJ claim their contents - particularly the secret bits - belong to the nation's federal government, and not any one person, not even an ex-president, can claim them.

In any other universe it would look hilarious! Cardboard boxes stacked high in ornate bathrooms: spaces designed with *50 Cent* bling, to placate the needs of foreign dignitaries. One wonders if Vladimir or MBS might have to squeeze between boxes while sitting on the loo; even the high and mighty need to perform that ritual. And when they do it at Mar-El-Lago, at least they'd have some way to pass the time with something to read.

In our current, and at times very confused world, it's become the norm for former presidents to flout the law ... then boast about it afterwards! In the USA, the secret documents saga also highlights the absurdity of parts of the American constitution: Trump being indicted at federal level, could serve a jail term, yet he can still become the next president ... even, if necessary, ruling his administration from the cell! In truth, that makes very little sense.

Another similarly ludicrous and very questionable anomaly, is the case of the National Rifle Association (NRA) – the major gun lobby, in the face of never-

ending mass shootings – which bases its main argument on the *Right to Carry Arms*, enshrined way back in times when white invaders were persecuting native Indians. Guns against arrows was okay back then.

But back to our attention-seeking Mr. Trump. Has self-adulation gone too far this time ... even for him to control? Or will it simply galvanise his adoring constituency towards more support, based around the false rhetoric of partisanship and persecution. Why would this man, after completing his term, transfer thousands of documents, in dozens of boxes, from the Oval Office to his home in Florida. It doesn't make sense. However, much of what Mr Trump has done, or is doing, doesn't make much sense either.

But perhaps in this case it does. Knowing the Trumpian modus operandi, the key factor is '*completion of his term*'; for as we all know from incessant repetition of the fact (or non-fact, as it were), he refused to agree with his electoral defeat. Thus, retaining the documents is simply an extension of that agenda. We are dealing with the mentality of a seven-year-old: you throw me out of the house, so I'm taking the toys to my Wendy-tent in the back garden!

It's extremely doubtful there was any pre-meditated ideas of divulging nuclear secrets to Vladimir or Xi, - not even Trump could be that stupid - but of course the possibility is there for something similar to happen accidentally, and perhaps with agents who represent the top dogs. This federal case against Trump, relative to his many other crimes at state level, is really getting very serious, and way beyond anything the man has had to face to date. There is also no precedent to fall back on. Richard Nixon was in jeopardy of jail after Watergate, but he would not have run for re-election, and was in the end, pardoned by Gerald Ford, his successor

So, in the face of bathroom disclosures, is it still feasible for the Republican Party to maintain their support for such a tainted individual. After all, the guy has numerous cases ongoing at state level, which to any clear-thinking person, would also seem to undermine his aspirations for re-election in 2024 (failure to pay taxes; hush money to prostitutes, etc.). The answer most likely is that the GOP will support Trump, until a better option to beat the Democrats comes to the fore; their survival is the key factor, nothing to do with ethics or high-minded morals. This in turn depends on his opponents in

the primaries getting serious about their own election, and refusing to back Trump in his. While most of the growing band of also-rans continue to tow the line in supporting the former president, they will remain way behind, in his wake. It will take someone with guts to emerge in his or her own right and command the primaries. Once De Santis or someone else gains a point lead in the poles, Trump will be consigned to the history bin.

The other intriguing element of the looming (though in real terms, still quite distant US election) is the corresponding weaknesses in the Democrat ranks ... and the US political scene as a whole. For it's quite possible that in 2024, we will witness the spectacle of an 82-year-old white male incumbent, who stumbles over his sentences, and sandbags on the stage, up against another elderly white male, who has been impeached twice, and is now tainted by indictment at both state and federal levels. One begins to wonder, why, in a highly developed country with more than three hundred million inhabitants, this is the case? Could it be an incurable obsession with elderly white males? Or perhaps the inability of youth to come to the fore? Maybe on either side, it boils down to an unwillingness to move too much towards a world of chance. Let's stick with what's safe to get us through this one at least.

It seems a million years away now, but in 2008 the Democrats went for chance, against an older and more experienced Republican nominee. And in doing so, the US elected a younger mixed-race president, who could think and speak coherently, with a fair degree of truth and trust in his words. Where are the Barrack Obama's of today; and for that matter, the John McCains. In that 2008 election, McCain could have also made an excellent president, but Obama won the day. Then, we had a surfeit of potentially great presidents; Fifteen years later, we have the opposite!

Within the picture frame which extends beyond the bounds of North America, it also seems we are plagued by white misogynistic males, often of pensionable age, and usually apt to bend the truth beyond recognition. So is the Me-Too generation a falsehood? Harvey Weinstein and Bill Cosby were banished; Rolf Harris and Jimmy Saville too; yet in some cases we seem to have ended up with similarly dubious characters as the elected heads of our democracies, or autocracies; depending on your place of residence; for it seems that in today's world, either state of governance can exhibit unsettling

similarities in terms of leadership. Democracies are no longer immune from narcissistic front-runners.

Which brings me quite neatly back to the boxes in the bathroom scenario. Trump can be soundly ridiculed for his conduct, as can Johnson in the UK for his booze party exploits at No.10 and Chequers, during the Covid lockdowns. But in truth the ridicule deserves to be turned back on the relevant electorates; for it's the voters at large who elect these people that talk gibberish and distort the facts. It's hard to fathom how any clear-thinking individual can be taken in by the falsehoods of either of these two bushy-haired, bad-dressers. But then again, I was once enamoured by Rolf's art, and would laugh hysterically at Bill's exploits. Most of us can be fooled on some occasions, but it seems as though the tide is turning; a blatantly fabricated rhetoric cannot last forever.
