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QUOTE FOR THE DAY

“We live in the postmodern world where everything is possible and almost nothing is certain.” Victor Vaclav, author

MIDTERMS LESS THAN SIX MONTHS AWAY

And what baggage, or, as the New York Post tells it, what a train wreck the Biden administration has steered us into. Immigration, rampant crime, Afghanistan exit, Covid, baby formula shortages and every dimension of inflation (gasoline prices, food, clothing, etc) which Biden unconvincingly says is, “Putin’s fault”.

Combined with the fact that more than 50% of adults have investments in the stock market (whether directly or through retirement plans) they are watching the value of their nest

eggs in free fall in tandem with the president's drop in popularity.

Consider some numbers: The May Associated Press poll reflects that 66% of Americans think the country is headed in the wrong direction. A real head turner is that only 33% of Democrats think the country is going in the right direction.

Hispanics, who represent 12.5% of the electorate and who voted 2-1 for Biden in 2020 now disapprove of his performance at the 60% level with only 26% approving.

So, it's all over, right? Midterms are going to be a blood bath in the congress, with a likely turnover in the senate as well. Who can doubt that? Not so fast my friends. I refer you back to Mr. Vaclav's quote.

DON'T SHOOT THE MESSENGER

Your scribe is reporting that which is in the public domain, distinct from his own opinions. Former president Trump got exactly what he wanted, three conservative new justices on the

Supreme Court and a 6-3 conservative leaning majority. Here an old adage is appropriate, "Be careful what you wish for." Mr. Trump got what he wanted and along with it the leaked Justice Alito memo that strongly implies the Supreme Court is likely to overturn Roe v Wade. What a nation-wide firestorm that has created!!

The world of politics has been turned on its head. A Mamouth University poll has just come out identifying the most important issues in the upcoming midterm elections. They are: The economy, 26%; abortion, 25%; Health care, 16%; immigration, 14%; gun control, 9% and taxes, 8%.

The abortion issue is beyond huge, and it can safely be predicted that many will choose to overlook all of the perceived failures of the administration and the Democratic party in favor of supporting candidates (read, Democrats) more likely to support abortion rights. Thank Mr. Vaclav for his cautionary words.

For all of that, however, Akhil Reed Amar is a professor of constitutional law at Yale and a pro-choice Democrat who, along with “many experts across the ideological spectrum, believe that the Supreme Court decision in Roe v. Wade lacks solid grounding in the Constitution itself.”

OK, the Constitution may not be the right locus for giving support to the pro-choice people, but a brand new Pew Research poll reflects that 61% of the country say abortion should be legal in all or most cases, with 37% saying it should be illegal in all or most cases.

Short of every state becoming the arbiter of abortion within its boundaries, only a law passed by the congress and senate could legalize abortion on a national basis. The Democrats push for that and the Republicans resist it. If you are a pollster or statistician, do the math. What seemed to be a sure thing with the midterms a month ago is no longer a certainty by any means.

ROME, WE'VE GOT A PROBLEM

Or, more precisely, Pope Francis has a problem. Nancy Pelosi declares herself a devout Catholic, but is an avid pro-choice advocate. According to Annie Karni of the NY Times, Salvatore Cordileone, Archbishop of San Francisco says Pelosi would not be permitted to receive communion in his archdiocese, “because of her support for abortion” As Ms. Karni notes, “The Catholic church explicitly opposes abortion, which is considered the gravest of sins.”

Pope Francis has had a more lenient view and essentially told president Biden that Biden’s pro-choice views would not prevent him from receiving communion. Ms. Karni goes on, “The Vatican has warned against denying communion to politicians supportive of abortion rights. Pope Francis has preached that communion, ‘is not the reward of saints, but the bread of sinners.’”

Pope Francis has the tiger by the tail on this one, as conservative Bishops across the globe are not on the same page. “Bishops seen as allies of the Pope caution that encouraging bishops to deny communion to certain

politicians would lead to a ‘weaponization of the eucharist.’” The conservative bishops strongly disagree, citing, as noted above that, “abortion is the gravest of sins.” Quite an on going battle, both within the church and at the ballot box.

CRYPTO CRAZINESS AND CRAPSHOOTERS

Question: Who would you be more likely to rely on for investment advice, Kim Kardashian, Matt Damon, or duh hey, Mike Tyson- all big supporters of crypto currencies, or, second investment team, Warren Buffet and Jamie Dimon who think cryptocurrencies are so much rubbish? Well, if you selected the first trio, you are the winner in the popularity contest and the mega loser in your investment portfolio.

Ever since its inception the bit coin market has gone through crazy girations, as its supporters have urged calm in support for a technology that would surely become the future of finance. Not so, this time, say the experts who closely follow the industry.

First of all, more than 40% of investors in crypto don't have a clue what they are doing, they are merely following what they believe will be a fantastic asset play and become instant millionaires.

So, for starters, let's take the case of Mr. Do Kwon who developed two cryptocurrencies, Luna and TerraUSD. These were based on what is called a "stablecoin" concept, pegged to a stable asset like the US dollar, which is not supposed to fluctuate in value like other cryptocurrencies.

Crypto experts were, from the beginning, skeptical that the secret algorithm developed by Do Kwon would keep his currencies stable. Just to show how wrong they were, Pantera Capital turned a \$1.7MM investment into \$170 million. In April 2022, "Luna's price rose to a peak of \$116 from less than \$1 in early 2021, minting a generation of crypto millionaires.

In response to critics of his algorithm, Do Kwon said, "I don't debate the poor." - pretty brash, but, hey, look at the results - until the past couple of weeks. Example- a major

investor, Binance, had bought \$3million of Luna which grew to a peak value of \$1.6 billion. Its Luna holdings are now worth less than \$3,000. Basically Do Kwon, his algorithm and "let them eat cake" attitude have cost investors \$40 billion. The most used phone calls by his individual investors these days are to suicide hotlines, as many have lost their life savings.

This isn't just about Do Kwon. Into the fray steps financial writer, Paul Krugman, who points out that Bitcoin, the original cryptocurrency, has dropped 50% since November. Even though the crypto markets have previously gone through major fluctuations, Krugman thinks it's different this time.

He points out that celebrity endorsements have dragged a huge number of investors into a realm about which they know nothing. In summation he has this to say, "As we look forward , the value of cryptocurrencies will have to rest on their underlying uses which are... well, that's just the thing. I've heard many discussions in which crypto supporters have

been asked exactly what economic role crypto can play that isn't more easily and cheaply available through other means- debit cards, Venamo, etc. Other than illegal transactions, in which crypto may sometimes offer anonymity, I have yet to hear a coherent answer. As it is, cryptocurrencies play almost no role in economic transactions other than speculation in crypto markets themselves." Thank you Mr. Krugman. May I interest my readers in an offering for the Brooklyn Bridge?

BIG DISAPPOINTMENT

For those of our readers who have been looking forward to criminal charges against Hunter Biden for his foreign dealings. No, he's by no means totally out of the woods, but a major potential criminal charge has just been heavily diluted. Legal expert and Georgetown professor, Jonathan Turley, reports that it had appeared that Biden was close to being criminally charged as having violated the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA). Former casino magnate, Steven Wynn has been charged under that statute in conjunction with his dealings with China, but, the Justice

Department has elected to pursue the case as a civil lawsuit, resulting in Biden's legal team being able to argue that criminally charging Biden would be inconsistent with contemporary cases.

Too bad for those not wishing Hunter well, but if the Republicans take over the congress in November, get ready for more fireworks, as they press to see if the president's brother's statement about, "plausible deniability" protecting the president will, in fact, do so. A few, on the Republican side of the aisle, are already dusting off the Impeachment pay back playbook. Stay tuned!!

PHIL MICKELSON WANNABE

Mr. Sho Taguchi, in a town in Japan, received, in error, \$361,000 in Covid relief funds which were to have been divided among 463 households in town. In a couple of days authorities caught up with Mr. Taguchi. Unfortunately, he had already gambled it all away. Easy come, easy go.

Your faithful scribe, PB