

Quote, Unquote

As a rule, I prefer relying on my own words, but there are times when I'd regard myself as the worst sort of miser if I didn't share other people's thoughts with my readers.

For instance, Carl Sagan, the eminent astronomer, once stated the case for religious belief as succinctly as this: "If you wish to make an apple pie from scratch, you must first invent the universe."

Someone I can't identify once, in comparing actors and politicians, pointed out "If they can learn to fake sincerity, they have it made."

Eric Hoffer, the late longshoreman/philosopher who wrote my favorite work of non-fiction, *The True Believer*, observed: "If a society is to preserve stability and a degree of continuity, it must know how to keep its adolescents from imposing their tastes, attitudes, values and fantasies on everyday life."

To truly digest the wisdom of that statement, you merely have to consider the recent election in which this nation's youth, by giving Obama a seven million vote plurality over Romney, sentenced America to an additional four years of rule by presidential fiat.

But it isn't just youngsters who have taken leave of their senses. Here in California, Mohammad Safi, a graduate of a medical school in Afghanistan, first began working as a staff psychiatrist at a mental hospital in 2006, earning \$90,000 a year. Last year, he made \$822,302.

At first blush, you'd say there's no way Dr. Safi could be making nearly \$70,000-a-month legally, but you'd be wrong. It seems that he benefited from a bidding war after a federal court forced the state to improve inmate care. That resulted in prisons raising their pay scale to lure psychiatrists.

That, in turn, compelled the mental health department to follow suit in order to hang on to their employees. So you had two clearly over-funded state agencies bidding against each other, and in the end a guy with a degree from some school in Afghanistan ends up being a millionaire, all at the taxpayers' expense. Clearly, there are more loons serving in our state government than there are under Dr. Safi's supervision.

Lest you think this is an isolated case, last year 15 other psychiatrists on the state payroll made over \$400,000, while only one shrink made that much in the other 11 most populous states. Is it any wonder that whereas some American cities have what are called sister cities scattered around the world, California has a sister country? It's called Greece.

Even when Barack Obama does something right, it can have tragic consequences for innocent people. A while back, he signed a law prohibiting access for any Russian official linked to the murder of imprisoned whistle blower Sergei Magnitsky to visas or U.S. bank accounts. Magnitsky, in case you missed the news, was the man who announced that members of the Russian government had been robbing the country blind. A day or so before he was to be released from custody, he was killed, no doubt on orders from President Vladimir Putin, the former butcher in charge of the KGB.

In retaliation for Obama's action, Putin saw to it that a law was passed denying Americans the right to adopt Russian children. As I understand it, there were 46 such adoptions already in the pipeline when Putin decided to punish Russia's orphans in retaliation for a law that punishes corrupt Russian officials. And this was the schmuck to whom Obama promised greater flexibility once he won re-election.

That brings me to a pet peeve: the notion that there is something morally repellant about assassinations. I can understand why heads of state would take exception to it. I can even understand why those of us who live in a country

where we have access to free elections would be opposed. But when you consider that Pol Pot made it all the way to his 73rd birthday; Stalin made it to 75; Mao tse-tung, to 82; and that Fidel Castro and Robert Mugabe are still causing trouble at the ripe old ages of 86 and 88, respectively, it's hard to argue that the world wouldn't have been better-served if they'd been eliminated by any means possible decades ago. And is there anyone out there who's not named Bashar al-Assad, 47, who would have any objection if an assassin saw to it Syria's serial killer didn't make it to 48?

I will give the last word to Mrs. Duane Plummer, who wrote to let me know that she used to live on Lake Road, Webster, NY, where William Spengler recently murdered two firemen who had been lured to a fire he started because, as he confessed in a note he left behind, he really enjoyed killing people.

In response to the anti-gun hysteria generated by headline-chasing politicians and their enablers in the media, Mrs. Plummer wrote: "Another unbalanced person who served only sixteen years for killing his grandmother. Huh? Because of this latest travesty, my husband and I will no longer use matches and are starting a ban-the-match campaign. It may not get any further than our stop-making-roads campaign because cars drive on roads and kill people. But we need to do something to stop this madness!!"

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