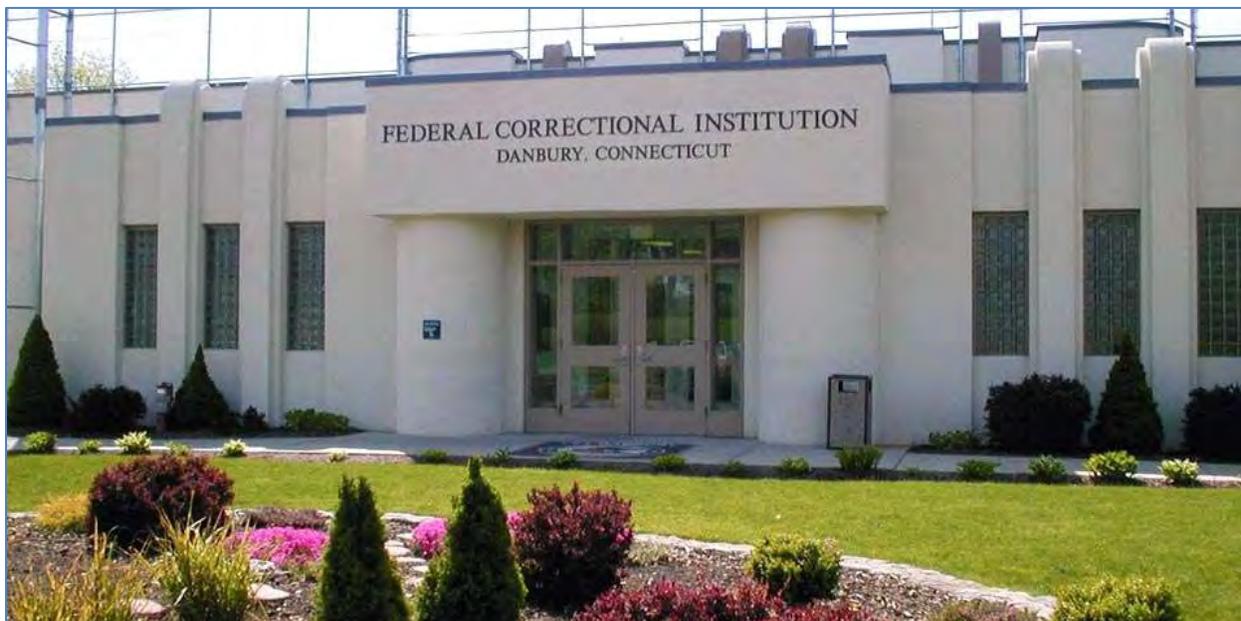


Making America Great Again - A short story

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November 7, 2016



It was 10:15 on a warm June evening. The van pulled into the parking lot of the Danbury Medium Security Correctional Facility. The driver put it in park and turned to the elderly couple in the back seat and said,

“We’re here folks.”

The matronly woman slumped deeper into the seat and said,

“But it was my turn.”

Billy Bob patted his wife’s knee and said.

“I know, I know.”

He looked at his Rolex and thought to himself; forty-five minutes and this whole thing would be over. He had a date with a couple of young ladies in mid-town Manhattan latter that night.

The old lady would be alright. They had been assured that as soon as she was in-processed, given her jump suit and a bunk in the women’s dorm, she would be able to get some sleep. In the morning she would be given a physical and a placement interview. As early as tomorrow she could request a transfer to the prison hospital.

Of course Billy Bob had his own legal problems to worry about. Without the protection afforded to them by the previous administration’s Justice Department, things were just not working out the way they always had.

“That SOB Trump is sleeping in my bed and eating off my china!” he burst out. Losing the election was something they hadn’t adjusted to well. Even thinking about it made him shout and her curse then bawl like a two year old.

“Come on Hills, its only fifteen years. You’ll be out in ten.”

Billy Bob looked at his watch again. She had to surrender by 11pm. The shock of November 8th had yet to wear off. They had had it all, the media, the polls and an opponent that everyone said was a buffoon. How is it that they had lost? After all, as she repeated over and over again, “It was my turn.” Apparently Trump hadn’t gotten that memo.

“We should have taken care of that Wicki Leaki guy,” she said for about the ten thousandth time.

“Woulda, coulda, shoulda,” said Billy.

The driver turned up the AC figuring the old lady might enjoy it one last time. She was long past enjoying anything.

At 10:55 he put the van into gear and rolled up to the receiving portal. Billy Bob looked at his watch again.

It had been in the bag he recalled again. Maybe it had been the emails. Maybe it had been the Russians or the Chinese, naw, probably not. The pundits had fallen all over themselves trying to cover up their predictions, pre-election day, and to explain the upset. Nowadays nobody wanted to remember how sure they had all been that the GOP was finished and the culprit was Trump. Billy Bob was still at a loss to explain how things turned out. Some weeks ago he had read a piece on-line that claimed the American people were simply fed up; fed up with the corruption, fed up with the lies, and most of all fed up with the Clintons. No, No, No, that couldn't be. How would those fools know what was good for them? How many angry old white guys were there?

The important thing now was to avoid the indictment that was coming down the pike. He would make a few calls tomorrow. He would reach as deep as he could into the Trump administration. There were still a lot of favors out there to be called in. After all, it was unprecedented to send a former president to the big house. Ya want others to think we've become a banana republic? He was still sitting on a mountain of cash and he would spend it all to avoid the fate of the old lady. Hell, if they locked him up he would have to go back to eating fried bologna.

It was, in the end, the RICO statutes that were her downfall. After the inauguration, the new president hadn't lifted a finger to go after his old nemesis. What he did do was to clean house over at Justice. A new Attorney General with no ties to the previous two administrations was sworn in. She in turn installed a special prosecutor, a professional with a history of taking down crime families, and he saw right away what he was dealing with. Under RICO she was charged with masterminding an ongoing criminal enterprise. A federal Grand Jury quickly agreed and returned a true bill.

The trial itself rivaled the OJ trial. For six weeks the nation had been riveted by the unfolding legal drama. The prosecutor presented evidence of lying to both the congress and the FBI. He showed the willful mishandling of secure emails in order to hide her financial dealings with hostile nations when she was Secretary of State. The election fraud committed by the Democratic National Committee at her direction was clearly laid out. The structure, activities and funding of the Clinton Foundation were dissected. Details of the business dealings of the defendant dating back to Whitewater and the Rose Law Firm were testified to by surviving witnesses. He tied it all together by explaining the motivation, the ambition to obtain power at all costs. More than 15,000 documents were entered into evidence and sixty witnesses were called.

As expected, the high priced legal team hired by the defendant did not roll over. Their narrative focused, not on documents or facts, but on the emotional appeal of a dedicated public servant being maligned by her political enemies. It had always worked to deflect criticism in the past and they had been sure it would work again. They had even brought in several A-list Hollywood actors as witnesses to the righteousness of the defendant and the cause. The jury stayed out for three days and returned a guilty verdict.

The appeals process took almost a year to play out. The press had gone on to other issues. The new president continued to try to Make America Great Again. Of course it sounded better as a campaign slogan than an actual policy. The fifth estate, as was their wont, screamed bloody murder at every misstep and gave only grudging credit where it was due. When she was ordered to report to serve her sentence, the wind went out of her sails. She was hospitalized with unknown symptoms. Her legal talent made one last appeal for sympathy to an unsympathetic judge. In order to avoid a media circus, the actual incarceration date was held as close as a state secret.

At the door to the receiving portal, the burly staff members dressed in white shirts, khaki slacks and blue blazers waited with a wheel chair.

At exactly 11 pm, the driver got out, walked around the van and opened the sliding door.

"It's time," was all he said. She moaned and then shrieked,

"Oh no, I'm not going. Get the fuck away from me."

Billy stepped out and to one side. He had seen her tantrums many times before and often had been on the receiving end. These boys were professionals and he would leave it to them. The professionals had hesitated and were considering how to proceed. There were several options and none were pretty.

Then the phone in Billy's pocket rang. He answered it, hell, it might be one of the chirpies who he was meeting up with later on.

"Hold for President Trump," a voiced said.

Billy's jaw dropped. He had been urged several times to approach the president directly and ask him to intervene on behalf of the old lady. He had refused. Some things, like swallowing your pride, were worse than death.

"Hello, that you Bill? It's me, Donald. Glad I got ahold of you.

A little perplexed Billy replied, "What can I do for you? I'm a bit tied up at the moment."

"I know exactly where you are. That's why I called. I've got some good news for you."

"Good news?" What now he thought.

"Well as you know very well, this office has wide discretion in granting pardons when it is judged to be good for the nation. In this case in order to help facilitate the healing this nation needs to go forward and in consideration of her continued health problems, I've decided to extend a full pardon to your Missus. I'll be holding a press conference in the oval office to announce it in the morning. I've already signed the executive order and you can take her home tonight."

"I don't know what to say." Billy was truly at a loss for words. He wondered if he could still keep his rendezvous.

"You don't need to say anything. My advice is for you to take her home tonight. It is my hope that she will endeavor to lead a quiet life from this day forward. With proper care and rest she may be able to recover her health."

"Thank you Mr. President."

"Good night Bill."