

TED STEVENS, THE “TOOBZ”, AND THE IDIOCY OF THE INTERNET

Alright, this will be a fairly short post, but I would like to remind people of some things.

Namely, regarding Ted Stevens. As background, Marcy wrote a serious, and important, post on the Trumps

Organization’s

curious, and semi-hilarious, use of Microsoft.

And, yes, Marcy is right, it was amazingly stupid. From clackers whining that Hillary Clinton had insecure internet. If it was not so stupid, it would be extra laughable.

But I want to cut back to something different.

In comments, Rayne Loled at Ted Stevens and, then, a relatively new commenter (like just today as far as I can tell), “CJ” chimed in with:

Bizarrely, it’s not an entirely bad metaphor, though that’s probably accidental on his part. See, e.g., Andrew Blum’s “Tubes: A Journey to the Center of the Internet”.

This is bunk. Blum, and his book, tried to make hay off of Stevens, and at his expense, but without giving him much of his due, nor acknowledging how the “tubes” of the internet falsely allowed the demonization of Stevens and cheerleader his prosecution. A prosecution that



turned out to be false and craven. In a review in the New York Times in 2012, Dwight Garner noted:

Reading this, you wish Mr. Stevens, who died in an airplane crash in 2010, were here to savor it. "Inside those tubes (by and large) are glass fibers," the author continues. "Inside those fibers is light. Encoded in that light is, increasingly, us."

That is exactly right, although Blum never really went deeper into the fraud by the Department of Justice that took Ted Stevens down before his untimely demise by plane crash.

So, as a bit of retrospective:

Say what you will about Ted Stevens, and much of that may be fair. But what was done to him at the end was wrong and a travesty. And the DOJ could not even deal with that then. Much less the pervasive and consuming wrong that is at hand today with Bill Barr and the DOJ he now administers.

For anybody that does not remember just how egregious and blatant the government/DOJ action against Ted Stevens was, here is one of my takes from 2008, and yet another in followup, from 2012.

You can joke about Toobz Stevens, and we have here before, but what happened to him was a complete travesty of justice. And there are serious lessons from that to keep in mind today. Without the "toobz" of the internet, I am not sure the reckless and false case against Stevens could have ever made it as far as it did. There is great irony in that, and it is a lesson that ought remain remembered, not just joked about.

That was a different, and in popular lore, more benevolent and honest era. So, what do you think are the odds for far worse from Trump and Barr? Somewhere, Ted Stevens has an idea.

IT IS OBJECTIVELY FALSE THAT TRUMP PROVIDED UNPRECEDENTED COOPERATION; STOP PARROTING RUDY CLAIMING HE DID

The emphasis on Trump's submission of his open book test to Mueller should be on the President's claim to Executive Privilege even before he took an oath to protect and defend the Constitution. Yet because so many journalists simply parroted Rudy Giuliani's claims that Trump offered unprecedented cooperation, the emphasis has been the opposite.

THE INFOWARS EMBED IN THE CNN FIRST AMENDMENT LAWSUIT

While I'm happy CNN is suing the White House for revoking Jim Acosta's press hard pass, I'm not a fan of how they've argued the case, as it seems to argue for a privilege, not a right.

ODDLY-TIMED STORY:

WHITE HOUSE COUNSEL MCGAHN'S CALL TO FCC'S AJIT PAI

Maybe it's something. Maybe it's nothing. But with White House Counsel Don McGahn under so much scrutiny earlier this week, this story's timing seemed odd.

WHAT DOES THE 'DOOMSDAY INVESTOR' GET OUT OF TRUMP?

There's a particularly interesting long read in this week's New Yorker; if you're not into investment and Wall Street machinations, you might go to sleep on this one. But stay with this one all the way through – there's a payoff.

JOURNALIST RECORDS FROM THE "LAST FIVE YEARS"

When DOJ responded to Ron Wyden's questions about whether they've changed their approach to seizing journalists' records, the government may have been engaging in linguistic parsing.

IT'S CALLED A SPINE, NOT A CONSCIENCE

If burning sources that lie to you is not a cardinal rule of journalism, it damn well ought to be. I suspect that Marcy's honest sources will respect her more for this, and her dishonest ones will be very very nervous. Isn't that something that all journalists ought to strive for? Sullivan lauded Marcy for being a journalist with a conscience – which she is, but that's not the point here. The point is that Marcy is a journalist with a spine.

GOOGLE AT TEMPLE: DID DOJ FOLLOW ITS NEW GUIDELINES ON INSTITUTIONAL GAGS?

The seizure of Ali Watkins' email subscriber records from when she was at Temple marks the second time the university had a community member's records seized without launching a First Amendment challenge.

THE MOUSE THAT ROARED, THE BIGOTRY ROSEANNE PERPETRATED AND

IGNORANT RACISM OF TRUMP

No, it is not enough that ABC and Disney canned the ignorant bigot Roseanne, the media needs to stop propagating the Salena Zito fraud that "Real America" supports ignorance and racism.

"JUST OBSTRUCTION" IS THE NEW "RED LINE"

Before the press fact checks Trump's claims that Robert Mueller's questions don't include any addressing "collusion," they might consider how they've been complicit in setting up that narrative.