

# tx citizen

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# table of contents

**3** **1st Word**  
The DA's five-year terrorism fiasco comes to an abrupt conclusion.

**Citizen Soundcheck**  
The ONLY guide of its kind for the NB/SM Metroplex!

**7**

**11** **Freeman on Sports**  
The Month that Was  
The Month that Will Be

**Blue vs Red**  
Himmel and Colby discuss the meaning of the word "best".

**15**



STALK US ON FACEBOOK

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# 1<sup>ST</sup> WORD

## Much Ado About Nothing

Mere weeks after Comal County District Attorney Jennifer Tharp beat a field of three Republican primary challengers, she conceded the case that brought her national attention as someone who kind of overdoes it.

Justin Carter, whose case began way, way back in 2013, finally pleaded out to the most that Tharp could expect to get him on – a misdemeanor charge of “Causing Alarm”, reduced from felony terrorism. (Not that he actually caused alarm, but taking this thing to trial would have put Tharp at risk of losing a very high profile case outright. This deal alone confirms that she knew a beating was likely.)

In a vacuum, the Carter conclusion isn’t worth noting. But factor in an obscene, half-million dollar bail (finally paid by an anonymous benefactor), five months in jail, solitary confinement, the fact that he was only 18 when they locked him up, and five years of the Carter family’s life spent trying to untangle this mess that Tharp has now conceded wasn’t terrorism to begin with, and it becomes the perfect example of what Tharp’s opponents said all along – she’s got poor judgment and no sense of justice. The DA punishes people, as hard as possible, even if she knows she can’t get a conviction.

What follows is a reprint of our original coverage of the case, from July of 2013, edited for space. Keep in mind that this overblown terrorism fiasco, in the end, turned out to be a misdemeanor - and even that’s pushing it.



off the bat, you’ll surely recognize his case. He’s the 19 year-old currently awaiting trial in the Comal County jail for a post he made on Facebook. His bail has been set at \$500,000.

There’s a lot to this story, and judging from other local media reports, you haven’t gotten it yet. So we’re going to lay it all out for you, based on our conversations with New Braunfels Police Lt John Wells, Carter’s attorney, Don Flannery, Carter’s mother, Jennifer Carter, and the statement provided to us by the Comal County District Attorney’s office.

On February 13, 2013, Justin River Carter was playing a computer game called League of Legends, against opponents from around the country, and possibly the world. He got involved in a Facebook insult exchange with another player, which, in typical Facebook manner, got ridiculous. We have no idea what was said before or much after Carter’s comment, or who reported it to authorities.

The comment was captured in a screen shot, and sent from Canada, likely by the person Carter was arguing with, and just as likely, simply to cause trouble for someone they were angry with. According to the indictment handed down by the Comal County Grand Jury, the comment read:

“I think I’m a shoot up a kindergarten. And watch the blood of the innocent rain down. And eat the beating heart of one of them.”

The grand jury thought that meant he was going to shoot up a kindergarten, watch the blood of the innocent rain down, and eat the beating heart of a student. Which is reasonable, as what they got was void of context. The defense is arguing sarcasm, in which context and intent become everything.

What they grand jury didn’t know when they handed down the indictment was what happened before or after that comment, because grand juries don’t get defense evidence. They see only what the District

Attorney wants them to see, or in this case, what showed up on the screenshot. They didn’t see or hear what the defense is asserting was the context. Read again, with the limited amount of context we were able to dig up:

**Carter Insults Unknown Facebook User**  
**Unknown Facebook User:** “You’re f####ed in the head!”

**Carter:** “Oh, yeah, I’m f####ed in head alright. I think I’m a shoot up a kindergarten. And watch the blood of the innocent rain down. And eat the beating heart of one of them. LOL. JK.”

**Teenage Girl (Name Withheld):**  
“i hope you f####ing bring in hell you f####ing prick.”

We assume the young lady wanted him to burn in Hell, but who can tell from the way kids talk these days? As for Carter, he was giving an example of something someone who was actually f####ed in the head would say.

His comment looks a little different as a comeback. Looks like what writers and other reasonable people call “hyperbole”. You might have heard of hyperbole, but if not, check it out on Google. Google has everything.

So anyway, on February 14, Carter was arrested by US Marshalls at his place of employment in San Antonio, and was held briefly at the Bexar County Jail. He was then transferred to the Travis County Jail, (because APD incorrectly believed he lived in Austin with his father – excellent police work!), at which time his bond was set at \$250,000.

In mid-March, he was finally questioned by both Austin and New Braunfels police, without a lawyer present, and admitted to writing the post. Note that his interview took place a month after his incarceration began, and that law enforcement didn’t even bother getting his computer until after he was questioned. Given that schedule, it doesn’t sound like police were what one might call “concerned” or “worried” or “fretting”.

Continued on page 4.

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First Word  
July 11, 2013

## Speechcrime

By now you’ve heard of Justin Carter, and while you might not recognize his name right

In late March, Carter was sent to the Comal County Jail, and on April 10 the Comal County Grand Jury handed down his indictment. For reasons unknown to anyone but Judge Jack Robison, **Robison doubled Carter's bail to \$500,000.**

So let's talk about bail for a moment. **By law**, there is one reason bail exists – to ensure that the accused actually shows up in court. Here's how the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure defines it:

**Art. 17.01. DEFINITION OF "BAIL".**

**"Bail" is the security given by the accused that he will appear and answer before the proper court the accusation brought against him, and includes a bail bond or a personal bond.**

Furthermore, bail is not meant to be set so high that it becomes a de facto conviction.

**Art. 17.15. RULES FOR FIXING AMOUNT OF BAIL.**

**2. The power to require bail is not to be so used as to make it an instrument of oppression.**

The typical bail for a murder case, a First Degree Felony with an actual dead body, is \$75,000 to \$100,000. Carter is accused of a Third-Degree Felony, based on an incomplete screenshot, and he's up to a half-million.

Our first question when we started looking into this case was "How much are his parents worth?" If they've got ten-million in assets, \$500,000 might be considered reasonable. We asked Carter's pro-bono (free) attorney if Carter's family was wealthy, and he told us that they are destitute, which, for our Canyon Lake readers, is the opposite of wealthy.

For those who'll rightly argue that that's just the word of his attorney, consider this: when a family is worth millions, they don't rely on pro-bono help or quibble about the

amount of bail – they get their kid out of jail. The fact is, this family can't come up with the \$50,000 it's going to take to get that bond.

Do you remember Dylan George? You should. Dylan George was at the Comal County Courthouse facing a charge of evading arrest last September, when he sent out a text message indicating his displeasure with the situation, and expressing a desire to "shoot up" New Braunfels High School, **specifically**. The school was put on lockdown, while police tracked Georg down.

He was charged with the exact same crime as Carter, but his bond was significantly less, \$492,500 less, to be precise. He was able to post a bond of \$7,500 and walk free after nine days. His family probably had to spend less than \$1,000 get him back home. Georg's name has not appeared in any media since that time, and a computer search of Comal County judicial records shows no action on the case.

Someone angry with the legal system, with a criminal record, who issued a specific threat that resulted in a lockdown, appears to have disappeared from the judicial map.

It's important to note that Carter has no criminal record, and that the police investigation, which began, in earnest, a **full month** after Carter was arrested, turned up no weapons, no manifesto, no axe to grind and no intent. In other words, Carter had committed what can only be described as a **speechcrime**.

Be that as it may, the next thing on the timeline is the copious beatings that Carter is alleged to have suffered at the hands of other inmates, beatings which have resulted in Carter becoming suicidal. Here's what happens when an inmate that is presumed innocent under law becomes suicidal:

They're placed in solitary confinement. Without clothes. Without lights. In a room with a hole in the floor in place of a toilet.

Granted, it would be tough to actually kill yourself in that room, but would you be more or less suicidal after some time in those conditions? Remember, we're dealing with a person who has not been found guilty of any crime.

Perhaps house arrest would be a better option. But that wouldn't hurt as much, and the point here is to make an example out of this kid without a conviction.

Let's talk about the alleged crime for a moment. You might ask, "What exactly is he charged with?" Well, we just happen to have that information for you right here, direct from the Texas Penal Code. He's being charged under subsections 4 and 5 of Section 22.07. Read it carefully:

**22.07. TERRORISTIC THREAT.**

**(a) A person commits an offense if he threatens to commit any offense involving violence to any person or property with intent to:**

**(4) cause impairment or interruption of public communications, public transportation, public water, gas, or power supply or other public service;**

**(5) place the public or a substantial group of the public in fear of serious bodily injury;**

In other words, he's not being charged for making the statement, or the ramifications of such... he's being charged with INTENT. Given that, there's not much of case here. We contend that the judges that set the bail know this, and that once Carter gets to trial, which could be a year away, that he will be found not guilty, and have therefore decided to punish him with unreasonable bail. Remember, if he's found not guilty, it means he was **never** guilty.

Many still think a \$500,000 bail is a good idea. We suggest they take their argument up with the State's Legislature. They made the rules against de facto imprisonment, we just expect our judges to follow them.

\m/

Mike Reynolds  
Publisher/Editor-in-Chief



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# soundcheck

## YOUR LIVE MUSIC GUIDE

**Fri 5.4**

**THE PHOENIX SALOON**

Larry Dial  
5pm  
Uptown  
9pm

**POWERPLANT**

Howlin' Water  
7pm

**Riley's TAVERN**

Chuck Mead & His Grassy Knoll  
Boys  
9pm



County Line Band  
8pm

Adobe Verde  
Doug & Glenn  
6:30pm

Gruene Hall  
Maren Morris  
8pm

Happy Cow  
Kim & Her Bad Habits  
8pm

Old River City Café  
Ruben Pacheco  
6pm

River Road Ice House  
Two Tons of Steel  
8pm

**Sat 5.5**

**THE PHOENIX SALOON**

The Georges  
9pm

**POWERPLANT**

Carol Cochran & Two Way Street  
7pm

**Riley's TAVERN**

Dallas Moore  
9pm



3 Chord Rodeo  
9pm

Adobe Verde  
Little Oddz n' Enzzz  
6:30pm

Gruene Hall  
Bo Phillips Band  
1pm  
Shawn Sahm & Friends  
9pm

Happy Cow  
Ryan Ross Band  
9pm

Moonshine & Ale  
Rock & Roll Piano Sing Along  
8pm

**Sun 5.6**

**THE PHOENIX SALOON**

Jeffrey Ryan Vaughn  
3pm  
Lucas Taylor  
7pm

**Riley's TAVERN**

David P Dunn  
4pm

Geronimo VFW #8456  
Sam Bently  
3pm

Gruene Hall  
Peterson Brothers  
12pm  
Shake Russell, Michael Hearne  
5pm

**Mon 5.7**

Gruene Hall  
Rusty Martin  
6pm

**Tues 5.8**

**Riley's TAVERN**

Troy Stone Band  
8pm

Geronimo VFW #8456  
Jam Session  
3pm

Billy's Ice House  
Austin Gilliam  
8pm

Gruene Hall  
Mark Stuart, Chris Wall,  
Cody Braun  
8pm

**Wed 5.9**

**THE PHOENIX SALOON**

Open Mic w/ Billy Roy  
8:30pm

**Riley's TAVERN**

Daniel Thomas Phipps  
8pm

Billy's Ice House  
Aaron Stephens  
8pm

Old River City Café  
Monte Good  
6pm

**Thu 5.10**

**THE PHOENIX SALOON**

Shawn Hart  
5pm

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## POWERPLANT

Billy's Ice House  
Clever Name Band  
8pm



Carol Cochran & Two Way Street  
8pm

Adobe Verde  
JJ Garrett Duo  
6:30pm

Billy's Ice House  
Austin English  
8pm

Gruene Hall  
Bill Small Band  
6pm

Vino en Verde  
Brett Cline  
8pm

**Fri 5.11**



Junior Nash  
6pm  
Blackbird Sing  
9pm

## POWERPLANT

Cherry St Hookers  
7pm



Mark Jungers  
6pm  
Mandy Rowden  
9pm



Monte Good & the Honky Tonk  
Heroes  
8pm

Adobe Verde  
Traveling Trees  
6:30pm

Billy's Ice House  
Clever Name Band  
8pm

Gruene Hall  
Cody Canada & the Departed  
8pm

Happy Cow  
The Lawless  
8pm

Moonshine & Ale  
Rock & Roll Piano Sing Along  
8pm

Old River City Café  
Nate Guthrie  
6pm

**Sat 5.12**



Ryan Quiet  
9pm

## POWERPLANT

Colton's Kin  
7pm



Tessy Lou & the Shotgun Stars  
9pm



Band of Bandits  
9pm

Adobe Verde  
Trace Owen Jr Duo  
6:30pm

Gruene Hall  
Bill Hearne Trio  
1pm  
Jerry Jeff Walker  
8pm

Moonshine & Ale  
Rock & Roll Piano Sing Along  
8pm

Old River City Café  
Brian Milson  
6pm

River Road Ice House  
Metalachi  
8pm

**Sun 5.13**



Jorge Gallegos  
3pm  
Lucas Taylor  
7pm



John Arthur Martinez  
4pm

Adobe Verde  
JJ Garrett Duo  
6:30pm

Geronimo VFW #8456  
Tom Teboe & River City Ramblers  
3pm

Gruene Hall  
Bret Graham  
12pm  
Jerry Jeff Walker  
8pm

**Mon 5.14**

Gruene Hall  
Mark Jungers Band  
6pm

**Tue 5.15**

Billy's Ice House  
JJ Garrett Band  
8pm

Comal Country Music Show  
KC Hall  
Winston O'Neal,  
Lorraine Chavana, Chris Rybak  
7:30pm

Gruene Hall  
Josh Grider, Drew Kennedy  
6pm

**Wed 5.16**



Open Mic w/ Billy Roy  
8:30pm



Mike Ethan Messick  
8pm

Billy's Ice House  
Aaron Stephens  
8pm

Gruene Hall  
The Georges  
6pm

Old River City Café  
Monte Good  
6pm

**Thu 5.17**



Ken Raba  
5pm

## POWERPLANT

John Boyd  
6pm



Made in Texas  
8pm

Adobe Verde  
Tony Taylor  
6:30pm

Gruene Hall  
Aaron Stephens  
6pm

Moonshine & Ale  
Live Band Karaoke  
8pm

Vino en Verde  
Brett Cline  
8pm

**Fri 5.18**



Larry Dial  
5pm  
Tunnel Vision  
9pm



## POWERPLANT

Hard Cover  
7pm

## Riley's TAVERN

Pepper's Blues  
6pm  
Jason Eady  
9pm



Painted Pony  
8pm

Adobe Verde  
Right on Red  
6:30pm

Gruene Hall  
Three Dog Night  
8pm

Happy Cow  
Garrett Simon Band  
8pm

Moonshine & Ale  
Rock & Roll Piano Sing Along  
8pm

Old River City Café  
Alli Mattice  
6pm

River Road Ice House  
Everclear, Marcy Playground,  
Local H  
8pm

## Sat 5.19

## THE PHOENIX SALOON

Natalie Rose Band  
9pm

## POWERPLANT

Tin Roof  
7pm

## Riley's TAVERN

Crown City Bombers  
9pm



Rick Reyna Band  
9pm

Adobe Verde  
Doug & Glenn  
6:30pm

Gruene Hall  
Jeff Plankenhorn  
1pm  
Patty Griffin  
9pm

Moonshine & Ale  
Rock & Roll Piano Sing Along  
8pm

## Sun 5.20

## THE PHOENIX SALOON

Jeffrey Ryan Vaughn  
3pm  
Lucas Taylor  
7pm

## Riley's TAVERN

TBA  
4pm

Adobe Verde  
Fallon Franklin  
6:30pm

Geronimo VFW #8456  
Countrymen  
3pm

Gruene Hall  
Music Jam  
12pm

## Mon 5.21

Gruene Hall  
Grouchy Like Riley  
6pm

## Tue 5.22

Riley's  
Troy Stone Band  
8pm

## Wed 5.23

## THE PHOENIX SALOON

Open Mic w/ Billy Roy  
8:30pm

## Riley's TAVERN

TBA  
8pm

Billy's Ice House  
Aaron Stephens  
8pm

Gruene Hall  
Hot Texas Swing Band  
6pm

Old River City Café  
Monte Good  
6pm

## Thu 5.24

## THE PHOENIX SALOON

Shawn Hart  
5pm

## POWERPLANT

Jeff Wood  
6pm



Meyer Anderson Band  
8pm

Adobe Verde  
JJ Garrett Duo  
6:30pm

Gruene Hall  
Bill Kirchen  
6pm

Moonshine & Ale  
Live Band Karaoke  
8pm

Vino en Verde  
Brett Cline  
8pm

## Fri 5.25

## THE PHOENIX SALOON

Junior Nash  
5pm  
Jorge Gallegos & Friends  
8:30pm

## POWERPLANT

Jimmy T & the Teardrops  
7pm

## Riley's TAVERN

Billy Mata & the Texas Tradition  
9pm



Knotty Grove  
8pm

Adobe Verde  
Tony Taylor  
6:30pm

Gruene Hall  
Wade Bowen  
8pm

Happy Cow  
Broken Duckfeet,  
Dizorderly Konduct  
8pm

Moonshine & Ale  
Rock & Roll Piano Sing Along  
8pm

Old River City Café  
Southside Sheik  
6pm

River Road Ice House  
Wayne Touns  
8pm

## Sat 5.26

## THE PHOENIX SALOON

Crown City Bombers  
9pm

## POWERPLANT

Howlin' Water  
7pm



## PHOENIX SALOON MAY EVENTS

Friday 5/4  
Larry Dial 5pm  
Uptown 9pm

Saturday 5/5  
The Georges 9pm

Friday 5/11  
Junior Nash 6pm  
Blackbird Sing 9pm

Saturday 5/12  
Ryan Quiet 9pm

Friday 5/18  
Larry Dial 5pm  
Tunnel Vision 9pm

Saturday 5/19  
Natalie Rose Band 9pm

Friday 5/25  
Junior Nash 5pm  
Jorge Gallegos & Friends  
8:30pm

Saturday 5/26  
Crown City Bombers 9pm

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## THE PHOENIX SALOON



**FRIDAY 5/4**  
CHUCK MEAD & HIS GRASSY KNOLL BOYS  
9PM

**SATURDAY 5/5**  
DALLAS MOORE 9PM

**FRIDAY 5/11**  
MANDY ROWDEN 9PM

**SATURDAY 5/12**  
TESSY LOU & THE SHOTGUN STARS 9PM

**FRIDAY 5/18**  
JASON EADY 9PM

**SATURDAY 5/19**  
CROWN CITY BOMBERS 9PM

**FRIDAY 5/25**  
BILLY MATA & THE TEXAS TRADITION  
9PM

**SATURDAY 5/26**  
DEBRA WATSON & THE SMOKING ACES  
9PM

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**Riley's**  
**TAVERN**  
Debra Watson & the Smoking  
Aces  
9pm

**THE WATERING HOLE**  
*(Saloon & Dancehall)*  
Kim & Her Bad Habits  
9pm

Adobe Verde  
Trace Owen Jr Band  
6:30pm

Gruene Hall  
Flat Top Jones  
1pm

Happy Cow  
Broken Duckfeet, Dizorderly  
Konduct  
9pm

Moonshine & Ale  
Rock & Roll Piano Sing Along  
8pm

Old River City Café  
Scott Morgan  
6pm

**Sun 5.27**  
**THE PHOENIX SALOON**  
All Mixed Up  
3pm  
Lucas Taylor  
7pm

**Riley's**  
**TAVERN**  
Ace Pepper  
4pm

Adobe Verde  
JJ Garrett Band  
6:30pm

Geronimo VFW #8456  
Glen Collins & Alibi  
3pm

Gruene Hall  
Slim Bawb  
12pm  
Flatland Cavalry  
8pm

**Mon 5.28**  
Gruene Hall  
Houston Marchman  
1pm  
Charlie & the Regrets  
7pm

**Wed 5.30**  
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Open Mic w/ Billy Roy  
8:30pm

**Riley's**  
**TAVERN**  
TBA  
9pm

Billy's Ice House  
Aaron Stephens  
8pm

Gruene Hall  
The Georges  
6pm

**Thu 5.31**  
**THE PHOENIX SALOON**  
Frank Paineter  
5pm

**POWERPLANT**  
TBA  
6pm

**THE WATERING HOLE**  
*(Saloon & Dancehall)*  
Jeremy Egg Band  
8pm

Adobe Verde  
Josh Holden  
6:30pm

Gruene Hall  
Midland  
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# FREEMAN ON SPORTS

WITH BRANT FREEMAN

You know what's changed as I've gotten older? My approach to going to the movies. When you're a kid your parents take you. Once you're a teenager, you go to the movies to socialize/get that first kiss (old man take: is that still the case?). In college you're either taking a date or a buddy... the point is, you were almost always with someone from age 4 to 30 and if you saw someone sitting by themselves, you wondered what was wrong with them.

WEEELP, I am now that guy that people are wondering about. Covering sports, I travel a lot and work nights so the opportunities to go catch a flick on a Friday night at 8:00 are far and few between. So dammit, I'm going to catch that 2:30 matinee of Black Panther and by god enjoy it\*.

\*NOTE: I had the theatre to myself that day which made me feel like I owned the place which was quite exhilarating.

The fact that my wife and I have different taste in movies (I can only watch so many rom-coms, and she, only so many people being eaten by zombies) also leads to many a solo trip to the local Cineplex. We are deeply in love with each other.

This is all to say that if you haven't experienced movie watching on your own, you should try it. Loneliness never felt so liberating. On to the month in review...

**NBA:** We're keeping it to one topic this month: the San Antonio Spurs. Following a first round series loss in five games to the Golden State Warriors, the season ended on April 24, the earliest a Spurs season has ended since they last time they failed to qualify for the playoffs back in 1997 (back when going to the movies with friends was cool).

Being the Spurs die-hard that I've been for 25 years now, I've always gotten fired up/nervous/excited/on edge about the playoffs but that simply wasn't the case this year. Sure, there have been seasons over the past two decades that the Spurs weren't true title contenders but even in those seasons, it felt like San Antonio would be good for a series win or two before

bowing out. This year, one of the strangest in recent memory, it felt like an accomplishment simply getting into the playoffs and taking a game from Golden State before exiting the postseason gracefully in a gritty defeat in Game Five. It's feels strange to say, but it's kind of a relief that the season is now over so that the attention can be shifted to the franchise itself, namely its future.

Before I go any further, let's all take a step back and realize how little basketball really means in the light of Erin Popovich's passing. Gregg Popovich is one of the most respected figures in the history of sports and to see him lose his wife of 40 years is heartbreaking. None of us really knew Erin, yet the outpouring of support that Coach Pop has received since her death has been overwhelming. It really speaks to just how highly regarded Coach Pop is, and not just for his professional accomplishments but also for his willingness to discuss important cultural issues. He's a man so many look up to and to see him suffer the loss of his wife is tragic. As for the basketball related questions...

*How about LaMarcus Aldridge and what he meant to this season?*

After many fans almost literally booed him out of town last year, Aldridge put the team on his back all season and just about single-handedly led the Spurs to the playoffs for the 21st consecutive season. Dude was a beast.

*Is this the last we've seen of Manu Ginobili?*

If it is, I'll need four months to recover before dedicating the next 26 columns to his career. I wasn't ready to deal with Tim Duncan's retirement two years ago, but was in a much better place then compared to where I am now if Ginobili decides to hang it up. Is he the "best Spur ever"? No. Is he the most loved? Hell, he might be the most beloved NBA player ever let alone Spur. We are never going to be ready to see this guy ride off into the sunset.

*What about the elephant in the room (or in this case, not in the room): Kawhi Leonard?*

I've written about Leonard in this column

before but here's my take as San Antonio prepares for its most important offseason in recent memory (because of Leonard): I get it. I get why Spurs fans are upset and frustrated. A simple, official statement of ruling him out for the season months ago would've eased a lot of minds. Leonard talking publicly about his situation maybe would've cleared things up as well but newsflash: that's never been Kawhi Leonard.

Because this whole situation involves the league's least transparent player and the league's least transparent team, it's led to a lot of rumors and speculation (especially as it pertains to the relationship between the team and the player) and now it appears that a decent size of the fan base has turned on him. But here's thing: you want him back. All of these trade scenarios that you see floating around online and fans dreaming of getting eight draft picks and an all-star in return won't happen. Superstars who are traded NEVER return equal value. Leonard is a once-in-a-generation type player and when healthy, maybe the best two-way player in the league; which in today's NBA, is saying something.

If I were a Spurs fan (BREAKING: I am), here's what I would want to see happen: Leonard return to full health, sign the "supermax" contract with the Spurs which he can't get anywhere else (costing him \$70 million if he goes elsewhere) and hope that he retires as a Spur. Leonard was supposed to be the bridge from the Duncan era like Duncan was from the David Robinson era. If he leaves, the rebuild will be long and arduous.

So do yourself a favor, and stop watching First Take and trust that all Leonard has done this year is assure that he's simply looking out for his long-term health and wants to remain in San Antonio. Otherwise, you'll be spending your future Mays and Junes buying tickets (for one!) at the movie theatre instead of tickets to Spurs playoff games.

Until next month...

*Brant Freeman is a seasoned local sportscaster, delivering the goods as a reporter for major pro and collegiate sporting events in the greater San Antonio area for over a decade.*

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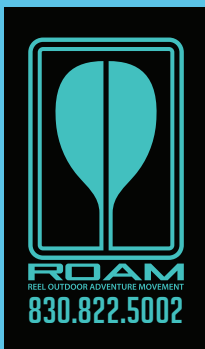


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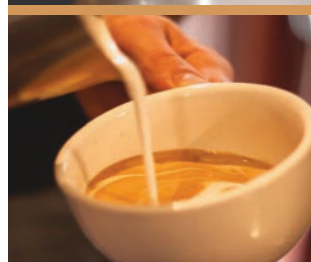


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# BLUE VS RED

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## All Those Best People

WRITING FOR THE RED STATES  
KELLY COLBY

I really didn't want to talk about President Donald Trump this month, but here we are. And I have to give it to the Petulant Child-In-Chief for making it impossible to not talk about him. Although, this is not as much about Trump as it is about his understanding of the word "best."

Remember when President Bill Clinton attempted to initiate confusion over the meaning of the word "is", and the world laughed at him? Rightfully so because that was an idiotic thing to say. I was a freshman in college at the time so I don't remember it too well, but I'm pretty sure people from his own party called B.S. on that play. So why then, hasn't every card-carrying GOPer stood up to scream at Trump for misinterpreting the word "best," and as a result, causing our flawed democracy to wobble ever closer to absolute failure?

Of Trump's best people, 47 have been fired or pushed out, resigned, or left for some unknown reason. In most cases, the departure is not without some encircling scandal. The most recent best performance came from Trump's personal lawyer and longtime fixer Michael Cohen. Though not officially part of the administration and not fired or forced out of anything, this one has been the most fun to watch because it's all so silly. Porn stars, hush money, Sean Hannity...

I know, I'm not bringing anything to light here. I just want to know when Trump's fans are going to stand up – or

sit down, I don't care – and say, "Yeah, President Trump clearly does not have the best people and does not understand the meaning of the word "best." The thing is that Trump's ability to surround himself with crooks, racists and morons is a clear example of his inability to make intelligent decisions that are in the best interest of our country. But there's that word again... "best."

Add his "best people" onto the –what did Comey call it? – *forest fire* that is the Trump presidency, along with his bullying citizens and world leaders, insulting entire regions of the world, defending white supremacists and looking directly at a solar eclipse without eye protection, and you have all the evidence you need to enact the 25th Amendment. Of course, that means we get President Pence, which wouldn't be a good thing for anyone.

Still, I'd rather have a crazy, hateful Christian who is afraid of women at the helm than the spastic lunatic we have now. I believe that Pence knows the meaning of the word "best." As in he thinks Jesus is the best! Trump's version of "best" is Anthony Scaramucci.

Really, what is it going to take for you all to admit, out loud, that Trump is a buffoon? By his own perception, he is the best POTUS. Just say it. You'll feel better. Unless you now want to debate the meaning of the word "is."

Can't find a Trump supporter willing to call him a buffoon? You need to get out more. I'll call Trump a buffoon, happily. In fact, I think it's actually a pretty good descriptor with one striking exception.

Most definitions indicate that a buffoon is a jester, a prankster, a joker, or someone who is acting like one. My only concern would be the suggestion that Trump is foolish as opposed to playing the fool. Trump is definitely a clown, but he's neither stupid nor unwise. He just plays someone who is on Twitter and TV.

After eight years of watching President Obama do untold damage to the nation using legislative legerdemain and executive, all the while being told he was the smartest man in the world, we were told that we'd take the smartest woman in the world next. And like it.

Trump's not just the result; he's the response: a giant middle finger to you and yours. Had we only wanted someone to undo all that Obama had done, to deny him any legacy and begin to fix what he broke, we could have elected Ted Cruz (or Rand Paul for that matter). I found myself supporting both at one time or another. At some point, though, it became clear that a u-turn was insufficient. It was time to take control of the wheel; club the driver over the head with a half-full bottle of scotch, throw her

unconscious body out the window, and head to Vegas on a Tuesday evening.

That the result is a bit chaotic is unsurprising, at least to me. The Trump turnover is dramatic because he has found himself besieged on all sides in Washington (and if he's surprised by this, shame on him). The election showed us that many people hate Trump far more than they love their country, and that was a national event. Now Trump's in deep blue D.C. fighting Democrats and Republicans. Draining the swamp is much more difficult when the alligators keep stealing your bucket.

Does Trump have the "best" people? He's working on it. He'll have to get through all the partisan Obama holdovers, Never-Trump establishment Republicans, various swamp creatures, every liberal judge who thinks himself Hammurabi, and the entirety of the mainstream media except for Fox News (sometimes), but he's working on it.

In the meantime, I'll have to satisfy myself with record low levels of unemployment, a bustling economy, good stock market, and regulations being slashed at a rate I would have expected from an actual libertarian. Well, that and liberal tears. Tasty, tasty liberal tears.



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