



Written by [John Larabell](#) on April 25, 2023

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A Banana Republic, Unless We Stop It

At the close of the 1787 Philadelphia Convention that gave us the U.S. Constitution, Benjamin Franklin, as the story goes, was asked by a woman what sort of government the delegates had given the new nation. “A republic, if you can keep it,” was his response.

The American Republic was set up as a nation based on the rule of law, rather than the rule of men. The phrase “if you can keep it” wisely proclaims that a peaceful, ordered society based on the rule of law and its impartial application is not a given — it must be jealously guarded and maintained by a well-informed, politically active citizenry.

For many, but not all, on the Left, the indictment of former President Donald Trump for the alleged payment of hush money through one of his lawyers, and failure to report the alleged payment properly, proves that “no one is above the law.” For others, it represents the breaking down of the rule of law and is a “witch hunt” designed to destroy a political opponent.

Whatever one thinks of Trump or the indictment, what is clear is that it has served to further divide our already-divided country.

Indeed, all of this political drama has led commentators to proclaim, somewhat seriously, that America is now, or soon will be, a “banana republic.” The term was coined by American writer William Sydney Porter (better known by the pen name O. Henry) and typically refers to a politically and economically unstable country dependent upon the export of natural resources.

The point is that the political scene in America has grown so embarrassing that it approaches levels seen only in third-world countries. After all, arresting political rivals, including former presidents, is commonplace under such regimes.

Even liberal legal luminaries such as Alan Dershowitz and Jonathan Turley noted the absurdity of this entire indictment, pointing out that it is a selective prosecution for a non-crime designed to destroy a hated rival. Supporters of Trump certainly see the indictment as a blatant attempt to destroy Trump’s reputation and to prevent him from running for president in 2024.

Indeed, prosecutor Alvin Bragg ran for office on the promise that he would aggressively pursue legal action against Trump. Trump is a mere stepping stone for the opportunistic, power-hungry lawyer.

Many say that, just like the two impeachments against Trump, this indictment has little chance of succeeding. Even if a heavily biased jury votes to convict, Trump could always appeal.

Trump is a very popular figure with a great deal of resources. But how would the average American fare under such persecution? Probably not very well.

As our cover story in this issue points out, if the ruling elites can weaponize the legal system to take down a former president, no one is safe. Trust in the legal system will have effectively been destroyed for the half of the population who did not vote for the party in power.

As mentioned above, a well-informed, politically active citizenry is the only defense against our descent into a banana republic.

— *John T. Larabell*



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