

DRAWN & QUARTERED

SIPAS



I AM...



AN INNOCENT...



MAN.



THE DEFENSE RESTS...



THE PUBLIC FORUM

So much is at stake

Memorial Day is a brief time once a year when we all honor those who have served our nation. What is our nation? We are not a nation. We are a conglomerate of complications. And we are at the brink of electing another president.

I am a registered Republican, but this does not cloud my thinking. So let's face it: We have two options: the duncery of B.K. Jr. aside.

An 80-plus-year-old Joe Biden. Experienced, wise, sane, with seasoned and skilled people around him who have the national interests at their core.

Or an almost-80-year-old former guy who demonstrates every day his unfitness — angry, vengeful, retributive, shallow — as well as already being a convicted rapist.

On Memorial Day, Biden was delivering respectful words at every turn.

And Trump? The presumptive nominee again for the presidency? Nothing. Nothing of value to say about our veterans (who he belittled off as mindless), about their and their families' sacrifices. Just tantrums of venom at the local quagmires he has brought upon himself.

There are many concerns we as voters must consider of course. But I implore my fellow citizens out there to embrace the larger picture. Biden (my president) has little control over inflation, energy prices, interest rates, etc. Don't vote so narrowly. Such factors ebb and flow.

This election, now just months away, could truly determine the course of our future — national security, separation of powers, global leadership, etc. So much is at stake.

Nye Thuesen
Salt Lake City

In memory of Scott Pierce

I was shocked and so very sorry to hear that Scott D. Pierce had passed away.

I've been a subscriber to The Salt Lake Tribune for almost four decades, since I arrived in Utah, and these days I relish getting the printed paper on Wednesday (the Midweek edition) and on Saturday (the Sunday edition).

On Saturdays, after a browse through the editorials (never missing Pat Bagley's brilliance), I would go to The Mix and look for Scott's column.

Recently, I appreciated the article he wrote about the end of "The Good Doctor." I have been a strong fan of that show and the many challenges that these characters are faced with, and I am sad to see it end, so I was particularly gratified to know that Scott, too, saw the value of this show.

For what it's worth, please add my appreciation for his wisdom, compassion, humor, and appreciation for the art of good storytelling and what it does for all of us. It builds empathy, and that is what gets us past our differences, which is so very important, particularly at this time.

My best to his friends and colleagues.

Barbara Bellows-TerraNova
Salt Lake City

To appear in the Opinion section

The Salt Lake Tribune encourages readers to submit their own commentaries for publication. These essays should address timely topics of general interest and should not exceed 800 words.

Authors should include a recent photograph and a sentence or two of biographical information that includes any experience or expertise in the subject matter addressed. They may be sent to Sara Weber, Voices editor, at sweber@sltrib.com.

Sending text in the body of an email is preferred, as attachments do not always arrive in a usable form. We accept one commentary per person in any 45-day period.

Submissions may also be mailed to The Salt Lake Tribune, Editorial Dept., 90 South 400 West, Suite 600, Salt Lake City, Utah 84101.



SETH WEISS

Former President Donald Trump comments to members of the media after being found guilty on 34 felony counts at Manhattan Criminal Court on May 30 in New York.

Trump's post-conviction defenders forget the rule of law

Several years ago I was asked to represent a prominent Republican elected official who had found herself in the crosshairs of a Democrat county attorney. She was seeking re-election to her office and was indicted by the county attorney for the alleged misuse of public funds. The timing of the indictment, comments made by the county attorney and the questionable charges all led us to conclude that this was nothing but a political prosecution. The charges had been filed close to the election — too late for the Republicans to get another candidate on the ballot. The prosecutor was overheard saying "I don't need to convict her; I only need to indict her." And the charges themselves were weak and not well investigated.

We always felt this was a political prosecution to keep the Republican from winning re-election and to put a Democrat in her place. Our client refused to call the prosecution political and refused to allow us to do so either. Even state Republican leaders refrained from jumping into the fray and calling out the county attorney.

On May 30, former President Donald Trump was convicted by a jury of 12 in the state of New York of 34 counts of felony falsifying business records.

It has been discouraging for me to read the comments of some local elected officials who have made wrong-minded comments about the recent Trump prosecution. It has been especially disappointing to read comments from local politicians who are lawyers.

Sen. Mike Lee, who by all accounts was once a highly skilled lawyer, called it "a political prosecution to help Joe Biden." Lee went on to remark, "I don't respect the verdict. Nor should anyone." Utah Rep. Celeste Mink, another prominent lawyer, said, "The justice system was weaponized in

this case to keep President Trump off the ballot. This has been about politics, not law, from the beginning."

What these and other lawyers seem to have forgotten is what is called the rule of law. It is one of the first things we were all taught in law school.

They have forgotten that Trump exercised his constitutional right to a jury trial. The judge didn't decide the case. Twelve jurors did. And the jurors were selected by agreement of the prosecution and Trump's own lawyers. They have forgotten that these 12 jurors were instructed at the outset of the trial that the former president was presumed to be innocent. They have forgotten that those 12 jurors swore to follow the law which also states that the prosecution bore the burden of proof in that case. They were instructed that Trump did not have to prove anything. These elected lawyers have forgotten that in order to convict the former president all 12 jurors had to unanimously agree that there was not a reasonable doubt as to his guilt.

That is called the rule of law and it's what makes the American legal system the best and fairest in the world. So yes, it's been incredibly disappointing for me, a lawyer for 42 years, to hear other lawyers make outlandish and defamatory remarks about a jury verdict in an American court in 2024. Those remarks tend to erode public confidence in a judicial system that is the product of the framers of our Constitution.

There is a far better way to prove that a prosecution is wrong and political. My Republican client knew that years ago. She insisted on exercising her right to a jury trial. She showed the prosecutor and the rest of Utah how wrong the prosecution was. She was acquitted of all counts.

Greg Skordas
Salt Lake City

Vote for the felon! He'll ensure no criminals cross the border!

Dear Gov. Cox and Utah GOP members, I can't wait to see which mental gymnastics you will perform when persuading us to vote for your guy come November.

Here are some suggestions:
• It's a witch hunt (always popular)
• The whole thing was rigged (again!)
• Here's one that may gain traction

around here:

• We need Trump to protect us from all those meanies coming over the border (I hear there are millions!) After all they are the ones committing all the crime, aren't they?

Beth Watson
Cedar City

LETTER POLICY

The Salt Lake Tribune welcomes letters of up to 300 words on a single topic of general interest. If published, they become the sole property of the newspaper, may be edited for length, grammar, accuracy or clarity, and be stored or reproduced by electronic means.

Letters must include the writer's full name, street address and daytime telephone number, though only the name and the city of residence will be published. Letters by email are encouraged.

They should have the word "letter" in the subject line and not include attachments. Only one letter per writer can be published in any 30-day period.

Send letters to letters@sltrib.com or mail to The Public Forum, 90 S. 400 West, Salt Lake City, Suite 600, Salt Lake City, Utah 84101.

Abravanel Hall is home

Abravanel Hall is one of the acoustically best and most beautiful halls in the world. It is a monument to what can happen when there is shared purpose and appreciation of cultural values, as Richard Eyre documented. Additional observations from a retired, thirty-eight-year-member of the Utah Symphony follow.

Having sat and played on the stages of great halls throughout the world, I never looked out on a hall as beautiful as ours or enjoyed playing in those halls as much. Proposals for changes to the interior of the hall are, I believe, without merit. The likelihood of improvement in acoustics is slim. Acoustics is more art than science, attested to by the controversy over the very costly, supposedly acoustically perfect hall, in Hamburg, Germany. Other changes may be needed, but changes to the interior hall are not, and could easily backfire. Renovation costs would be much lower with only essential upgrades.

The option of tearing down this monument to architecture, music and vision, seems shortsighted and foolish.

The Utah Symphony under Abravanel put Utah on the map worldwide. In 1967 in Bogotá, Colombia, (then two million population) I sought out a recording of Mahler's First Symphony. The available recordings were by the Utah Symphony! Through recordings and international tours, Utah and Salt Lake City became a shining example of support for what could be our legacy: beauty — in the form of great music, great dance, great architecture and art. These are what civilizations and cultures are best remembered for. The arts promote the uplifting of the human soul and unify people in a unique way through love and collaboration, not opposition.

Symphony orchestras cannot be bought and sold or moved to a different city. Home will always be Salt Lake City and, let's hope, Abravanel Hall.

Bonnie Mangold
Tombide

Guns To Gardens event

Utah is consistently one of the top fifteen states in the nation for its suicide rates. A 2018 Harvard study commissioned by the Utah Legislature concluded that high gun ownership contributes to our higher suicide rate.

Although our Legislature has had several opportunities to enact the kind of durable safe storage laws that are effective in reducing gun suicide and other types of gun violence in other states, they have yet to do so. While we wait, the lives of friends and family are needlessly lost.

Guns To Gardens is a national movement that takes a novel approach to suicide prevention by ensuring that unwanted, unused guns are kept out of unsafe hands. During the first two weekends in June, religious communities, civic groups, and police departments nationwide will host these events. Gun owners will voluntarily bring guns they no longer want, need, or use to be dismantled according to ATF specifications.

Once the guns are dismantled, the parts will be transferred to blacksmiths working with RAWoods to forge the pieces into garden tools and other useful nonviolent items. This echoes the biblical call to peacekeeping from Isaiah, "and they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks."

Utah's Guns To Gardens event will be Saturday, June 8, from 1-4 p.m. at First Baptist Church of Salt Lake City. If you have a gun, you no longer want or need or know someone who does, please use this opportunity to make sure that it's not the cause of a tragedy for your family or someone else.

Nancy Farrar Halden
Gun Violence Prevention Center of Utah
Hobbsville

OPINION PAGES ONLINE

The Tribune's online Opinion section includes additional commentary, cartoons and features. > See sltrib.com/opinion/

FOOR