

Curmudgeons, Conundrums and Druthers that Sail



Marc C. Sherman

ILLUSTRATED BY GABE SCHLEIFER

When I first read of the “Algonquin Round Table” where George S. Kaufman, Dorothy Parker, S.J. Perelman and Harpo Marx, among other gathered, I wanted to follow in those footsteps. Curmudgeons, Conundrums and Druthers that sail is my attempt to reach the platitudes that they conquered.

CURMUDGEONS, CONUNDRUMS AND DRUTHERS THAT SAIL

Written by Marc C. Sherman
Illustrations by Gabe Schleifer

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Mr. Schleifer's photograph by Jonathan C. Fox

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1.
Five Two O Three

Our tale begins on the Corner of Main
There stood a citizen, tall, balding and plain

When along came Kowalski, the cop on the beat
With his handcuffs, pistol and donuts to eat.

He said, "Move on Mac, or, I'll run you in."
I said, "What have I done, what is my sin?"

"I've heard enough, you're comin'
with me.
For violating ordinance Five Two
O Three."



He Called Headquarters,
hindquarters, four quarters,
alack
He checked all the pay phones
for his Quarters Back.

When asked what is ordinance
Five Two O Three,
Kowalski proceeded to cuff me to
a tree.



He read me my rights,
"be silent or speak,
You are the villain, that I've searched for more than a week.
You can call an Attorney, an Accountant or Doc
Realtor, Rabbi or a boy counting stock.

You've the right to be mellow, contrite or sad,
The right to wear yellow, just no stripes with that plaid."

Just then arrived backup, with sirens blaring.
I decided to speak, I was very daring.

"You've called in Kojak, Colombo, The Man from Uncle
and Maxwell Smart
You would have called Jake and the Fat Man,
but they couldn't fit in the Dodge Dart.

'What have I done to deserve all this attention?
Here comes Napoleon Solo, to take me to detention."

And then at the station, with Blue everywhere,
Kowalski must have thought it was time I was given a scare.
He took a deep breath, and then flatulated
He appeared to have pondered, maybe even debated.

"You're the one that I wanted, It's you on the poster."
And then he removed the Gun from his holster.

The poster said the perp, had "blonde, curly hair,
Stood barely five feet, on her stockings a tear,



In her womb she was carrying, one or two babies,
And may even be suffering, from a bad case of rabies.

Now, I'm a man 6 foot three, balding on top
So I understand the confusion of this myopic cop.
So for sheer entertainment, I played along.
I begged and I pleaded and sang them a song.

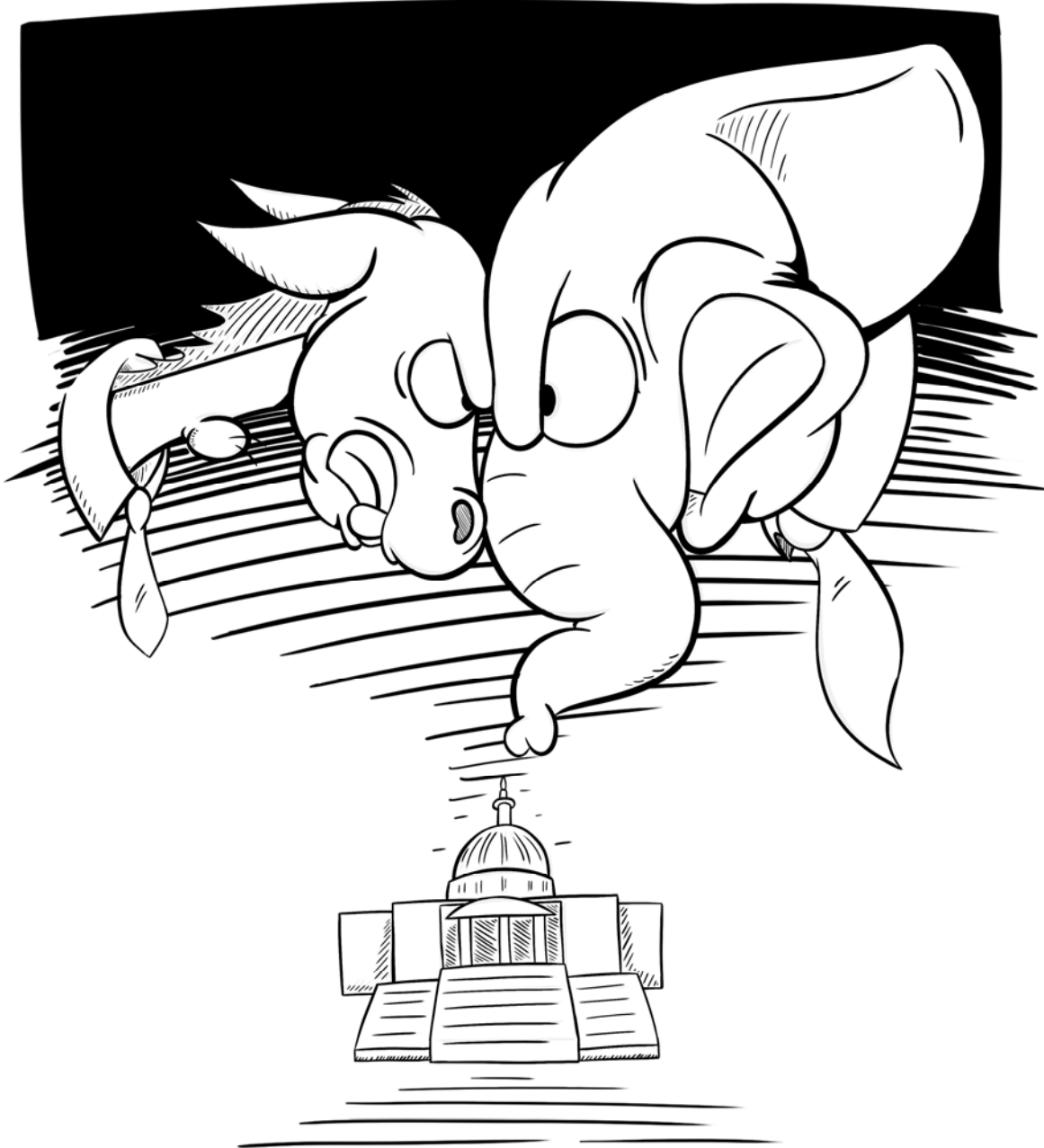
Now I sing quite poorly, or haven't you heard.
I can't carry a tune, and the words sound absurd

What happened just then, you may not believe,
But to stop me from singing they said I could leave
"I've told you the truth. You can trust my veracity."
He said "Since our prisons are filled way past their capacity.
Get out of town. I won't put you in jail,
But we'll meet again, and then I won't fail."

"Officer please I have one question to ask,
Then you can finish drinking what is in your flask.

What did I do, what is Five Two O three?
His eyes filled with rage, he removed the cuffs from the tree
Then he told me my crime as he unhooked me from the willow
"You were arrested for removing a tag from a pillow."

2.
Donkeys and Elephants



We were gazillions in debt...
From Congressional misuse,
So I'll tell you the story,
And I hope that you won't think me obtuse...
about an Elephant and a Donkey...
and a house with a dome...
that, oddly enough these creatures call home.

But that comes later in my rhythmic tome.

I have lived a long ttime, my age Ninety-Nine
A long time ago I had passed my prime.
Now, I'll tell you a story of what once did occur
Others survived it, I'm sure they'll concur.

The year is Two Thousand, the month November.
What's that you say, you cannot remember?
It is true that memories fade as time erases.
As my story progresses look at our old faces
You will soon see a change of expression
As we recall that fateful Presidential election.

In the land we call Unum
Where our story takes place
A once proud nation that will fall from grace
The land that was filled way over it's brim
with Donkeys and Elephants, who always seemed grim.

On the River that forms
At the Anacostia Mouth,
a city was formed...
just north of the south.
It's a City that's called home
To shirts that are stuffed
Many of whom, were taken and cuffed.

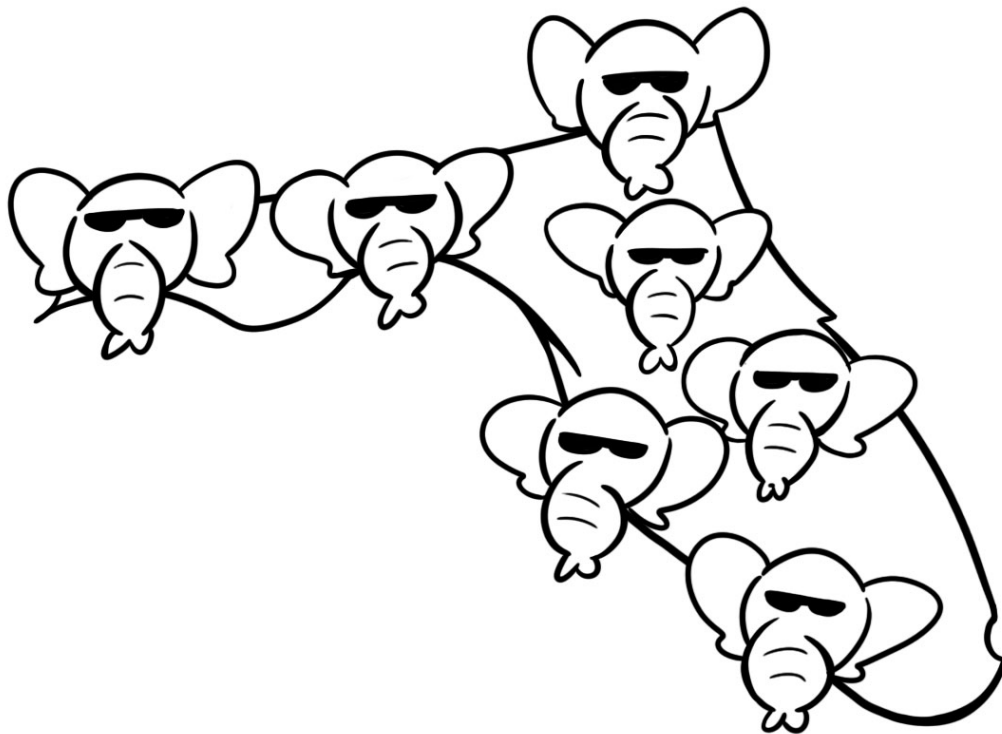
On the River Potomac
at the mouths
of two roaring rivers,
Anacostia and Connogochegue...
sit the nation's lawgivers...

Those who live in this City
Who call this place home,
Can't even vote
For the occupants of the Dome,

A beautiful city
That blossoms and blooms...
But when Asses meet Pachyderms
The result is pure gloom

As the page would soon turn from an Ace to a Deuce
In Florida Pachyderms were wild and loose.

That great Peninsula, that juts into the Gulf and the Ocean.
Would precede the new century, with quite a commotion.



One Mastodon candidate who we all thought a fool,
Never believed that my landsmen were cool,
Never having been invited to our homes for a Kiddish,
He was barely defeated in a district quite Yiddish.



“All votes should be counted!!” yelled all those Mules.
What we encountered was math not taught in schools.
That old cranky Elephant, who claimed to value “state’s rights”
Asked Washington to settle, the greatest of fights.
Very convincing were these Beasts of the wild
They sold the Supremes on forty-one’s child



They needed five judges, all dressed in black
These Judges held grudges, they wanted Washington back.

A glorious morning, in early September
Terrorist attacks on our mainland we'll always remember
We cannot claim not to have intercepted the warning.
Yet we were all shocked that late summer morning.

At 8:46 floors so up high
A bolt hit the North Tower from Out of the Sky.
Before we could figure out what to do.
A second bolt collided on Tower Two.

Remember all of passengers on flight ninety-three
They thought of their own safety after they thought about you and me
And those in blue and black who fight crime and fire
Were the bravest of all, in our moment so dire.
Many died and many got ill
A grateful nation should cover their bill.



I must say that at the beginning he allayed our fears
He was again that great leader of Cheers
Many who thought him devoid of leadership tools
Were glad to be proven wrong and called fools.
But was there another calling the shots?
One who refused to connect the dots.

That changed very quickly as we sought our revenge.

“It is for daddy that I avenge”

They meet in the house...
no money to spare...
giving breaks to big oil...
cause they truly care

What followed was eight years of war and of blunder
Our nation was near to going asunder



About marriage and bridges,
They feel they should dabble.
But to a frustrated nation
It was all Psychobabble.

Here the men and the women,
Who work in this house,
Are very concerned,
That we have the right spouse,

And in the old house
They know, that it's best
For a woman to mother,
A child whose dad
Is also his brother.

So we must remember
When we elect these strange creatures,
That their job description reads
Morality Preachers.

“The problem is such,” the leader declared
“That my Daddy had erred, with the despot he
spared.”

For the first time in history, in the Middle East Land
We would be aggressors, on a large pile of sand.



As One passed and Two and Three as did Four
I waited for this Pachyderm to be shown to the door
But this slow tired Elephant would outsmart those
dumb Mules
Said “ two men cannot marry,”
no money for schools

A long, lanky Burro, from Nantucket
served this great nation from out of a bucket.
He had heard warnings deterrent,
but refused a college deferment.
then fought in a land east of Phuket

He earned all the laurels he received for his service
But those without morals gave him swift boat
disservice

It rained in New Orleans, washed out part of the South
Why should they know this, word travels slowly by mouth
So what good could be said at the end of his term
"Nobody found any blue dresses with traces of sperm."

The burros took over in the year of naught eight.
With debt well past twelve zeros, was it already too late?
With movements described as quick and adroit.
Action was taken, that would soon save Detroit
One day was found, there in a cave,
our Number one enemy, who wasn't too brave.



Throughout this great land
The Great Mammoth Plotted
To remove voting rights
To those it was allotted.
When they lost those old Elephants, quickly decided
that the nation still needed what they had provided.
Their duties forgotten, no laws would be enacted
Until they could decide how to have the leader extracted

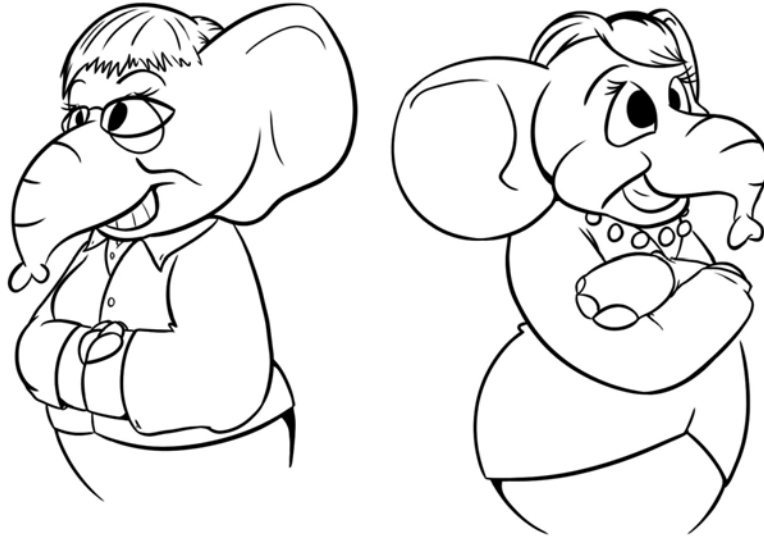
The Supremes were still there
all Sporting White hair.
Some new ones some old
We did what they told.
So when five of these nine
Declared that Corporations were people
All of the Elephants rushed to thank God in his steeple.

One day a young man, all armed to the nines
Entered a school
Totting evil designs
Now thought the mule, "It's our time to act.
Not even this Pachyderm, would deny us a pact."



The Mule told the nation, "It's time we admitted,
Not all should have weapons, not those who should be committed."
But the Elephant noticed its friends in the lobby
"Nobody will take away our good friend's hobby."

A Senator all filled with brimstone and bluster
with old cliched logic decided to filibuster.
This brings to mind Senator Smith
But that was the movies, no more than a myth.



But as we approached the year of one two
Came two lady elephants, with marbles too few
Oh these two lady Elephants, were smarter than Mules
They'd teach us some history, never heard in the schools

Like the story of Quincy, who at nine years of age
When playing in the schoolyard, was the big rage.
You see while other young men, were all getting their grounding
Adams, the younger, was this nation founding.



They'd accept only questions, both balanced and fair.
"Where did you get that dress?" "Who does your hair?"

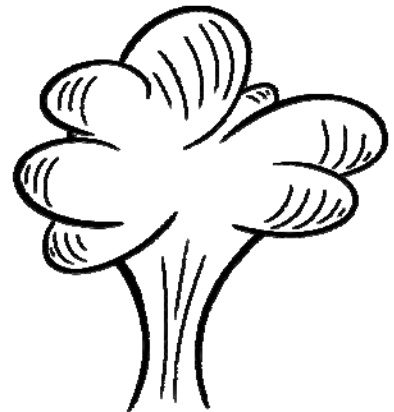


Now the Elephants would use Unum's new health laws
Admittedly filled with plenty of flaws
As the reason for their newest revolution
They yelled, and they screamed offered no solution



You remember that Land
All covered with sand
If we'd been welcome, that was worn out
So now we must find the best exit route.
It was known from day one, when we entered this land
That our exit would be quite far from grand

For a wise Elephant had once gave a prediction
"If you break it you've bought it. It's not our jurisdiction."



So when we had left
And left it bereft
In land with the sand
Where life wasn't too grand
The inhabitants felt that what they should do
Is gather a group and overthrow via a coup.

No sound man would claim
this old leader of sand
Was less than a tyrant when he took his last stand,
when told that reason for such an attack
"there is a shed full of WMD's he had stored in the back
Many a boy or girl were killed for this reason
What more do you need to be convicted of treason.

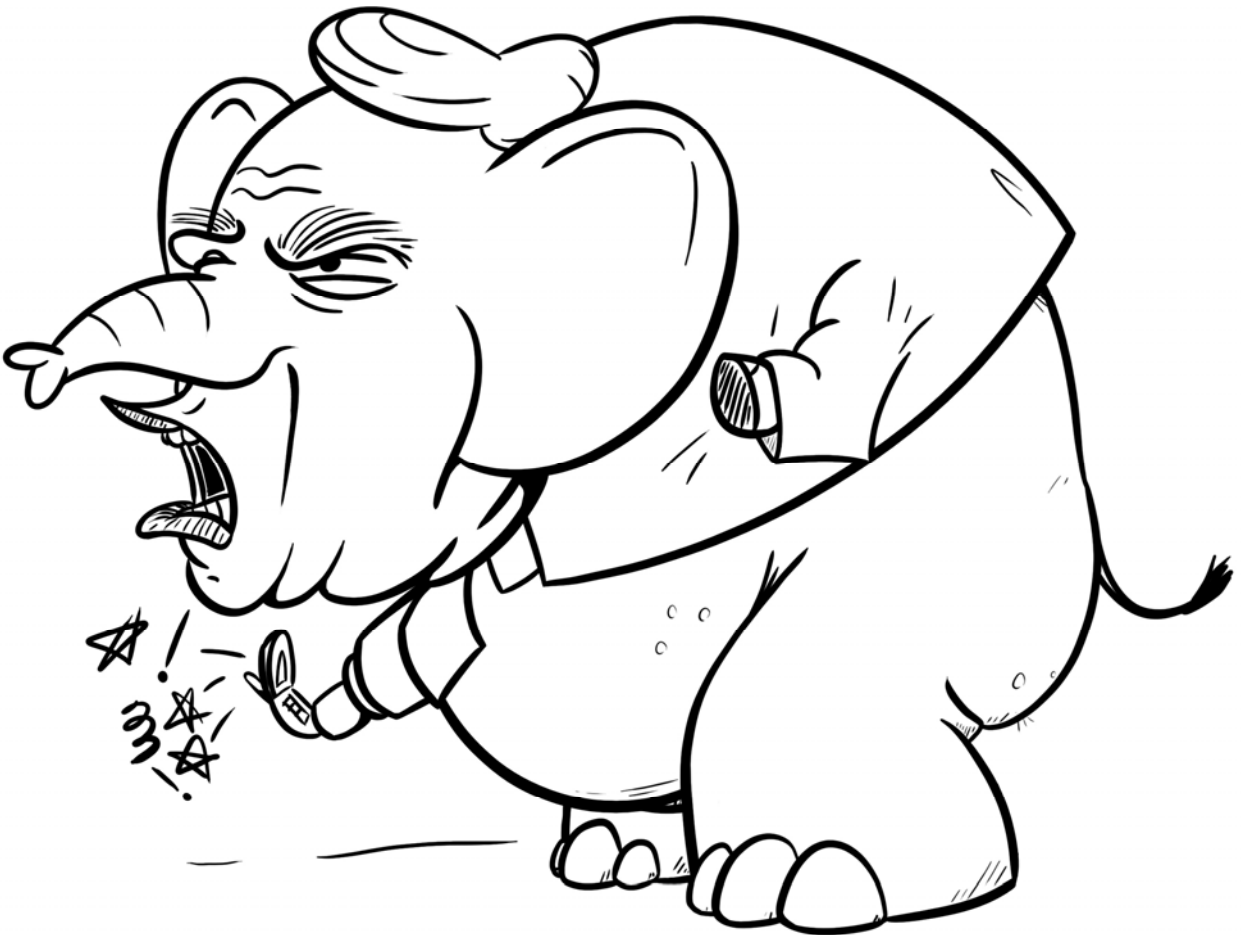
As we neared the end of the Donkey's second term,
There came from the tower an odd Pachyderm
He's always around,
far from profound,
Was an ignorant elephant spreading lies all around.
About places of birth
And how much he was worth.

Along came his comrades all from out east
The ones that old elephants had trusted the least
"We can help you win. We will give you some dirt
'bout your donkey opponent over there in a skirt."

I can do anything, he often averred
Not knowing that the words sound rather absurd
"I'll finish the Country's work before brunch
Then a quick 18 holes
And I'm ready for Lunch."

We thought all citizens of Unum would realize
“This Mammoth’s would ultimately cause our demise.
Say something once, be dismissed with a laugh
Repeat it again, some think it a gaffe.
some lies become fact when often repeated.
We should have considered the donkeys.
may be defeated.

Something occurred on election night!
Something absurd on election night!
Badgers and Beavers turned Red overnight!
Along with Buckeyes and Wolverines what a terrible sight!



After eight years
Of a donkey so ethical and wise,
I shed many tears
As class and dignity, I would eulogize,
For this fool who as always placed himself first
started his plan that all good be reversed.
In that great city, just north of the south
Now lived a man who doesn't know
what words will come out of his mouth.

This Elephant respects women, or so he said,
three he would marry, many more he would bed.
“Ladies have always been atop my agenda
As long as they remain very young and slender.”

He believed all of the stories heard while online.
It didn't matter if they were realistic, obtuse or sublime
He'd heard
things from Fake News, we all knew were lies
He's would twitter them out. That was not wise!

He had great respect for those words of independence .
All people are equal, so are their descendants.
“I have a solution, to this immigrant
Trouble,
I had hoped to deport only the worst Scum and Rubble.
But the law on this subject
Is clear as the nose on my face
All folks being equal
Regardless of creed or race.
“ We must treat each father and mother.
The same as the sister or brother
I have the right plan.
We deport all in the clan.”

Wherever he turned the press was unfair.
“Don’t ask me that question! No, don’t you dare!”
“ But sir all that I asked, all that I want to know,
Did you see the weather report?
Are they calling for Snow?”

And what of those claims that he was racist indeed?
He never saw race nor color nor creed.
It’s unfair and absurd to continue this attack
On a man who never met anyone.
Red, Yellow or Black!

It rained again, this time off of the mainland
It rained so hard there was no place for a plane land
After little help and much obfuscation
He said, we’ve done enough for this tiny nation.
The citizens of this nation had saluted “old Glory,”
Were appalled he would abandon citizens of Unam Territory.

How many of us have watched Bullwinkle and Rocky?
Who do you root for in International Hockey?
The line became blurred when he was involved.
And many of our foe’s wrongdoings were quickly absolved.

We must learn from history or be doomed to repeat.
This time we didn’t so our story’s complete.
What was the lesson that we didn’t learn
And what to we do on our next turn
Remember what once happened across the Atlantic.
Think for yourself, don’t be sycophantic.



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