

VIEWPOINTS

Marines owe apology

An old Marine told me that Marines guard Marines from the other side. And when one of their brothers is being threatened, the Devil Dogs (aka Marines) will "go wild on them" for eternity.

Yes, but what about the sisters? Do the Devil Dogs protect them, too? What about the female Marines whose nude photos were posted to a Facebook group where comments ranged from raunchy to suggestions of violence?

The questions arise as the Defense Department begins an investigation into recent revelations about the Facebook group, Marines United, which the Associated Press reports was comprised of active-duty and retired male Marines along with some Navy Corpsmen and Royal British Marines.

Some of the nude shots were grabbed from Instagram, which mostly prohibits nudity. Others were shot surreptitiously. Most were passed along a testosterone-rich grapevine. More than two dozen active-duty women in the pho-



Kathleen Parker Columnist

tographs were identified by their rank, full name and location. Needless to say, the women were horrified to learn that they had been sexually objectified by their peers.

The young women who knowingly had their photos taken apparently thought that viewers would be of their own choosing. One can imagine, however, that a libidinous corpsman who discovers a picture of a semi-nude or nude female Marine might be inspired to share it. Isn't "sharing" the operative terms in today's narcissistic, show-and-tell-all culture?

The difference and the distinction, however, is that the Marines United boys club basically stole the images and used them without the subjects' consent.

Two of my regular Marine correspondents, "Jack" and "Russ," both

of them Vietnam vets, explained the culture that creates killers and how this environment isn't conducive to civilian norms.

Russ explains the culture. "Marines embrace the warrior archetype more than other branches. The shadow of this is patriarchy, misogyny and brutality. We are trained to be killing machines, deadening all emotion except anger. We're told we don't have the luxury of sensitivity, so we objectify everything, including women."

Still, he's optimistic, saying that we need to return to "the embodiment of the hero archetype in the medieval knight. Aggressiveness can be coupled with honor, nobility and compassion."

Maybe so. But knights typically didn't joust with women. That said, chivalry has a place here. An apology to the women who exposed themselves to the few, not the proud, would be appropriate — both as gesture and punishment.

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Twitter still Trump's Achilles' heel



Jonah Goldberg Columnist

It was just last week that Donald Trump had the finest moment of his short presidency: his address to a joint session of Congress. Even many of his harshest critics praised his speech or reluctantly conceded that it was "presidential."

The collective response from Republicans was no mere sigh of relief. It was more like the discovery that some vital biblical prophecy had been fulfilled: The Holy Pivot is here at last! Huzzah and hooray! Give the plebes extra rations of grain and wine, for today we celebrate!

We've had President Trump for a while, but this was President Trump.

The obvious lesson drawn by Republican leaders was: This Trump could get serious things done. Just dialing it back to an 8 or 9 from his usual 11 or 12 (on a 10-point scale) reassures congressional allies, making it much easier for them to carry out his agenda. Acting presidential also undermines conservative critics and, more important, makes Democrats and much of the media look hysterical in their overreactions and calls for "resistance."

And since Trump's most loyal fans will celebrate anything he does, there's no need to pander to them with the greatest hits anymore.

In short, there is no downside and all manner of upside for Trump to play the part of a somewhat sober, serious, responsible president — even one with an ambitious populist-outsider agenda.

Naturally, Trump opted for Plan B. Step 1: Destroy all hope on Twitter.

Can you imagine the dread, the slow-burning existential panic that overtakes White House Chief of Staff Reince Priebus and Press Secretary Sean Spicer on Friday evenings?

After Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner — who are known to have a calming effect on the president — head off to honor the Jewish Sabbath, Priebus and Spicer have to white-knuckle it until dawn, gripping their phones with tobacco-stained fingers as they constantly refresh Twitter. They must feel like they work for a kind of werewolf who, in the dark, still hours of the weekend, transforms into a presidency-gobbling beast.

I can almost hear the wail that slipped past Priebus' lips on Saturday morning when, just as the chirping birds provided a hopeful soundtrack for the first light of a new day, the president's tweets started pouring forth.

"Terrible! Just found out that Obama had my 'wires tapped' in Trump Tower just before the victory. Nothing found. This is McCarthyism!" And: "How low has President Obama gone to tapp my phones during the very sacred election process. This is Nixon/Watergate. Bad (or sick) guy!"

There were other tweets, about this deadly serious allegation and, of course, Arnold Schwarzenegger. The president who announced before Congress, "The time for trivial fights is behind us," wanted to make sure the American people knew that Schwarzenegger was leaving "The New Celebrity Apprentice" because of his "pathetic" ratings.

But that info came only after he accused his predecessor of committing a felony, in what would be — if proved — one of the great political scandals in American history.

There is an enormous amount we do not know, though James Comey, the head of the FBI, and James Clapper, the former director of national intelligence, say the claims are untrue. I think more investigations are in order (including of the leaks plaguing the administration).

Trump is destroying his presidency one tweet at a time. Friday morning, Trump reportedly chivied out his senior staff for letting allegations of his campaign's collusion with Russia distract from his post-speech agenda. By the next morning, his tweets had made the Russia allegations a much bigger story and led to Spicer asking Congress to investigate whether his boss was onto something.

The pivot stuff was always false prophecy. Being president has a funny way of making people more presidential. And by day, Trump's White House staff can contain his worst instincts. But all bets are off when he's alone at Mar-a-Lago and the moon calls forth the beast.

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GARY VARVEL



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Hogsett must work to preserve Crown Hill forest

Bulldozers are poised to destroy the only virgin, old-growth forest at Crown Hill Cemetery in Indianapolis, and Mayor Joe Hogsett has thus far refused to do his job in representing, or even meeting with veteran, neighborhood and environmental groups who are working to preserve it. This 15-acre tract, an ecological jewel, set in the middle of urban Indianapolis, does not need to be destroyed to honor deceased veterans.

Our city has been provided the opportunity for a win/win whereby we can honor our deserving veterans with a columbarium and save this unique, pre-settlement Crown Hill forest as a nature preserve and park for veterans and the community. The Laura B. Hare Charitable Trust has stepped forward and offered a creative land swap purchase deal that even compensates the Veterans' Administration for the planning and site work to date. This offer, presently on the table to the Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Association, is not being given the attention it deserves due mainly to our politicians' lack of political courage,

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Expand Indianapolis Metropolitan Airport services

Fishers Mayor Scott Fadness seems short-sighted when it comes to development around Indianapolis Metropolitan Airport. As much as the populations of Carmel, Westfield, Noblesville and Fishers have

exploded, this airport, with a few commercial flights, has the potential to be a regional alternative to Indianapolis International.

With plans to extend the existing runway to accommodate larger jets, the time might be right to build a real terminal. As of 2013, Fishers had a population of 83,891, and Carmel had a population of 85,927. That's 169,818 together, more than the population of Evansville. Add in the 56,540 Noblesville residents and the 33,382 individuals from Westfield, and you get 259,740 — more than the population of Fort Wayne.

The people of Hamilton County and the north side of Indianapolis could use a closer commercial airport than Indianapolis International Airport.

They could start small. One useful frame of reference would be Concord Regional Airport (JQF) near Charlotte. Charlotte is similar to Indianapolis in many ways. Charlotte's primary airport is a major hub with many domestic and international flights, but Concord Regional Airport serves as a complement, offering Allegiant flights to five airports.

Daniel Dougan Indianapolis

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