

A very innocent man

Donald Trump is innocent squared. He never does, or is, anything by halves

By Theodore Dalrymple

After Donald Trump was found guilty on 34 charges, he said that he was “a very innocent man”: not just innocent, mind you, but very innocent. Ordinary people who do not do what they are accused of having done, by contrast, are only innocent; Donald Trump is innocent squared, as it were. He never does, or is, anything by halves.



I don't think I've ever heard anyone claim to be very innocent before; while to say of someone that he is very innocent is not necessarily complimentary, suggesting naivety – not what the former president is best known for.

I happened to be reading the Cass report on the day Mr Trump was convicted, a sterling if not beautifully-written piece of work, and I noticed the following:

Balanced information, which is realistic and practical, and does not over-exaggerate or underestimate the risks, is essential to support everyone involved and identify young people in most urgent need of help.

Over-exaggerate? Is, there, then, a correct amount of exaggeration in the information to be employed in supporting

everyone involved and identifying young people in most urgent need of help? We must also be careful not to over-
underestimate.

I was taken back to the time in the hospital in which I was working to a patient's notes that read, "Swallowed an overdose of bleach". Was there, then, a correct dose of bleach for the patient to have swallowed, perhaps in pursuit of what my grandmother used to call, when advocating weekly castor oil for us, "a good clear-out"?

The Cass report must have passed through many hands before it was published, but evidently no one noticed this odd locution. I don't want to over-exaggerate the importance of such ill usage, but on the other hand, I don't want to under-minimise it either. If we are not careful, we shall become hyper-insensitive to verbal solecisms.

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