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IT'S INSANITY'S BARBED-WIRE BACK-STORY

I TOOK NOTICE of Frank Amodeo shortly after he arrived at the Coleman Federal Correctional Complex's low security prison in July 2009. Another inmate pointed him out to me—mocking the drugged Amodeo's delusions of taking over the world. However, I didn't actually speak to "The Emperor" until sometime in late 2012. He'd been weaned off of the antipsychotic drugs and was, not only fighting his own criminal case, but dozens of other inmates' cases.

In typical hypermanic fashion, the disbarred bipolar lawyer had organized—from within the prison—the equivalent of a medium sized law firm, utilizing the only employees available to him: inmates.

By the time I approached him regarding my own case he had been teaching the Legal Research course for Coleman's Education Department for over a year. He had effectively trained a couple hundred inmates how to research and decipher case law, and formulate legal arguments.

Amodeo had a dozen drug-dealers operating as his paralegals, researching case law in the prison's Legal Library and another half a dozen sex offenders typing out motions on the prison-issue thirty-year-old Swintec typewriters with no word processing functions. He had another handful of inmates—consisting of drug dealers and fraudsters—whom he refers to as his associates.

These jailhouse lawyers handle everything from removing warrants, to divorces, to child custody cases. Amodeo, however, deals with the more complicated matters: habeas corpus petitions (2255 motions), motions for new trials (Rule 33 motions), appeals of convictions and sentences, et cetera.

The megalomaniac and his minions were cranking out motions on behalf of

Amodeo's one hundred plus "clients." After seeing his operation first hand, I recall thinking *What a mistake the government made locking this lunatic up*. And he does it all for free, not one single penny—in my own case, he even paid for copies and stamps.

My problem was not only unique, it was complicated. The U.S. prosecutor in my bank fraud case had promised to reduce my twenty-six years and four month sentence, provided I be interviewed by *Dateline* and *American Greed*. In addition, I was asked to help write an Ethics and Fraud course which is currently used to help train the nations mortgage brokers.

Despite fulfilling my part of the agreement, the U.S. attorney's office refused to file a motion to reduce my sentence. My public defender (and two criminal defense attorneys in Tampa) told me there was nothing I could do. The decision whether to file the motion was one hundred percent within the government's discretion. As a last resort, I spoke with Frank Amodeo.

Within minutes of hearing my issue he became indignant. "Don't worry," he told me, "I'm not going to let them get away with this." He and his associates would take care of everything he told me. "You'll see. We're going to force them to file the motion."

"How can you be so sure?" I asked. None of the sane lawyers thought it was possible.

Amodeo replied, "I use certain quantum phenomena to predict the future. It's a veritable certainty."

"Quantum mechanics?"

"Quantum mechanics." Amodeo proceeded to tell me—peppering the entire conversation with references to singularities, multiple dimensions and the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle, among other quantum phenomena—that he possesses the ability to apply certain principles of quantum mechanics to see the past, present and future simultaneously.

He then explained that he was more advanced than everyone else, and cheerfully referred to me as one of the "normals."

When I walked away from that meeting I was certain that I was going to spend every day of the remainder of my ridiculously long sentence in prison.

Less than six months later—after filing a habeas action and multiple rebuttals—Amodeo badgered the federal prosecutor into filing a motion to reduce my sentence. In October 2013, my sentence was reduced from just over twenty-six years to nineteen and a half years—he'd gotten roughly seven years knocked off my sentence.

When I returned from court Amodeo told me he had hoped it would be more. "It looks like we're going to have to eat this elephant one spoonful at a time."

In late 2015, Amodeo once again filed a habeas motion on my behalf—which was denied—and a subsequent appeal. At that point, the government buckled, and after some prodding, in June 2017, they agreed to reduce my sentence from nineteen and a half years to fourteen years and change—he'd gotten nearly five more years knocked off my sentence.

My projected release date is now July 2019; with halfway house, I'll be home next summer.

Amodeo and his staff of perverts and drug dealers, using obsolete office equipment, nearly cut my sentence in half. That's how I know Frank Amodeo.

In a little over a five year period, Amodeo has been responsible for correcting over six hundred sentences, resulting in 1,670 years worth of prison sentence reductions. (It should be noted, he has saved the American tax payer over \$90 million in incarceration costs.) Amodeo has dedicated thousands of hours of pro bono advocacy. He has litigated cases in all of the Circuit Court of Appeals, has been granted certiorari at the Supreme Court, has overturned Fourth Circuit precedent and has won eighty-nine reversals on appeal.

“YOU DON'T really think President Bush ordered the U.S. attorney's office to fabricate a case against Frank?” asked Pierre Rausini, a drug kingpin out of Los Angeles. Pete is doing thirty-four years for drug trafficking and ordering the murder of an FBI informant. Despite how it sounds, he's a great guy.

“I didn't say, ‘Bush set him up’,” I replied. “I implied that it was plausible he set him up. It's not the same thing.”

Pete shrugged. “It's not out of the realm of possibility; remember the Bush-Blair memo?” In March 2006, a five-page memorandum, written by British Prime Minister Tony Blair's foreign policy advisor, David Manning surfaced. The memo revealed that neither President Bush nor Blair thought the UN inspectors would find Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) in Iraq; as an alternative justification to invade, Bush proposed painting a U2 reconnaissance aircraft with UN colors and flying the aircraft over Iraq; hoping Saddam Hussein would fire on the U2, thus being in violation of sanctions.

In addition, Bush discussed using an Iraqi defector—a known fabricator codenamed *Curveball*—to testify Saddam had WMD's. Shortly after the Bush-Blair meeting, Secretary of State Colin Powell testified that Saddam possessed WMD's.

“I'm not saying it's beneath Bush to set him up,” I laughed. “There's just no proof.” The Department of Justice refuses to process any Freedom of Information Act requests regarding Amodeo due to privacy concerns and national security. “It could've just as easily been Capital Genesis.”

“Right, the grouping of interconnected business model; did he ever give you any specifics?”

“No, he said it was ‘proprietary,’ but—based on my vast experience as a con man—after reading the indictment, the court transcripts and my interviews with Frank, I can tell you with all certainty that the ‘proprietary model’,” I burst out laughing, “is fraud!”

Amodeo is fond of stating that once Capital Genesis is fully integrated throughout the global economy, governments will “*whither* and die.” No doubt this is true because part of his “business model” relies heavily on withholding the governments' payroll taxes; thereby cutting off their income stream. Ultimately, they would all run out of money, “*whither* and die.”

Struggling not to laugh, Pete gasped, “That's not true! It was more of a stock market pump and dump scheme—without the dump. He was using the Internal Revenue Service's money to grow Mirabilis; once it went public he would've paid them back—”

“It's still fraud!” I interjected. “He's a real life James Bond villain; he's Milton Krest, from The Holdebrand Rarity.” Although, Krest was not a power-mad

megalomaniac, both he and Amodeo bilked the IRS out of millions of dollars.

“Yeah, but because of Frank’s delusions, he couldn’t form the requisite intent,” said Pete. “He’s not guilty of a crime.” In fact, the court indicated in Wesley Snipes’ case the well established principle that, ignorance of the law is a defense to a tax crime, even if the belief is objectively irrational or—in Amodeo’s case—*delusional*.

Technically, what Amodeo did wasn’t a crime. It’s actually done all the time. The statute governing the collection of taxes is divisible. One section of the statute obligates the company to collect taxes; the second, obligates the company to report and pay over the taxes. It’s undisputed that employers must accurately report the tax obligation, however, they are allowed to defer payment—typically to the next quarter. Since Amodeo reported to the IRS that he had their taxes, his disclosure obviated the fraud as a matter of law.

It’s not unheard of for a company to get behind on their payroll taxes. Or even enter bankruptcy and list the IRS as a creditor. Provided they accurately disclosed the taxes, no one goes to prison, because it’s not illegal. At worst, it subjects the company to a civil penalty. (According to the IRS’s website, more than one million companies are currently behind on paying over their payroll taxes.)

“Intent or not,” I said, “he still committed a crime.”

“The problem is,” Pete continued ignoring me, “he was using the statute as part of his business model; and he was doing it with multiple companies. For massive amounts of money. In a stroke of genius, Amodeo had found a loophole.” The more taxes Amodeo withheld, the more leverage he had during his negotiations with the IRS; and if the government wouldn’t accept the payment plan, he would have no choice but to put the companies into bankruptcy with the IRS receiving pennies on the dollar. “It was an old school mob-style ‘bust out’ combined with corporate-raider tactics.” In reality, the IRS suffered from a lack of imagination; they had never contemplated an adversary such as Amodeo.

Plus, he was using the U.S. government’s own funds to take over the world. “That had to piss them off.”

I SPEND MY TIME with a small, select group of inmates. I’d like to say that they are all good guys—bank robbers, gang members, fraudsters and a few guys that swear they’re innocent—but most people would disagree with my characterization.

Several nights a week we meet at an area outside B-Unit; we sit at several concrete tables surrounded by a large circle of cement benches, referred to as “Stonehenge.” We discuss various topics—our cases, families, books, movies, the usual stuff—while inmates lineup to talk to Amodeo regarding their criminal cases.

They wait (for the most part) patiently, with their legal work. All hoping for a miracle. Of course, not everyone can be helped. Decades, and in some cases, lives are at stake. Tension and emotions run deep. That, coupled with Amodeo’s erratic condition, makes for dicey situations.

Before Amodeo agrees to take a case, the “client” gets “the speech.” In sum, Amodeo explains that he is the pilot and that the inmate is simply a passenger. He informs each and every client that should he try and tell him how to fight the case, Amodeo will throw him out of the aircraft into the engine. Over the years, this has come to be known as being “turbined.”

Amodeo's regular table sits a few feet away from where Pete and my table sits. For the most part we can hear most of one another's conversations. I can't tell you how many times I've been sitting at Stonehenge when Amodeo "turbines" some poor guy for trying to tell him how to fight his case. "The Emperor" always hears the inmate-client out, however, as the mania increases he begins biting his lower-lip in agitation. If the client doesn't accept Amodeo's assurances, he unceremoniously throws him out of the plane.

"Don't talk to me about the law!" I recall him snapping at one inmate—a convicted gang member—who fancied himself knowledgeable on federal statutes. "I'm the most experienced post-conviction advocate in the country. You don't even know what 'see' means!" Amodeo then rattled off "the primary holding of the citation that follows supports, but is not identical to, the immediate antecedent proposition!" He then proceeded to tell him he would have "his legions" cut the client's head off, and the heads of all of his associates, and have them placed on stakes. "You have no idea of what I'm capable of!"

I turned to Pete and asked, "I thought they were *peacekeepers*?"

I've witnessed Amodeo chastise inmates to the point they were shuddering in fear, near tears at the thought that he would quit working on their cases. Cowering in fear of the chubby diminutive fifty-five-plus-year-old.

During another turbine, I heard Amodeo advise his client if he continued to tell him how to proceed, The Emperor, in a hypermanic moment threatened, "I'll anthrax your entire village!"

"*Village*?" said the confused inmate, "Frank, I live in *Palm Beach*—"

"Palm Beach then!"

I recall telling Pete—between the beheadings and the biological weapons—Amodeo was sounding less like a benevolent emperor and more like a fascist dictator. "The little Fuhrer's future reign is sounding more and more like mass executions and concentration camps than acts of charity and kindness."

"Don't do that," laughed Pete. "He knocked twelve years off your sentence, you can't compare him to Hitler." I gave Pete a sideways glance and he admitted, "Alright, there are some similarities." Adolf Hitler was imprisoned in 1923 for attempting a coupe d'etat. Within ten years of his release, using his private militia and political savvy, the Nazi leader seized control of Germany.

"I'm not saying he's gonna get out and take over the world, but it's not out of the realm of possibilities," I said. "There are lots of examples."

Benito Mussolini was incarcerated five times prior to becoming the Italian Fascist dictator in 1922. In 1943, Mussolini was deposed and imprisoned, again. However, he escaped with the help of German commandos and was placed back in power, again.

More recently, Fidel Castro got fifteen years for leading an attack on a military barracks in 1953—he was released after serving only a few years. Shortly after exiting prison, Castro's force of eight hundred guerilla fighters defeated the Cuban government's 30,000-man army and the revolutionary became Cuba's president.

Hugo Chavez was imprisoned in 1992 after participating in a failed coup. Three years later, upon his release Chavez founded a left-wing political party, and in 1998, he was elected president of Venezuela.

"Amodeo told me he had attack-helicopters and stinger-missiles," I said. "I'm just saying if he get's out and takes over, there is no guarantee he's going to be benevolent."

Pete hunched over in laughter. "Where'd he get stinger-missiles from?" I informed Pete that one of Amodeo's private security firms procured them, but he didn't know any specifics. "Where do you even keep something like that?"

"He said that he kept them at the U-Storage place off Ridge Road in Orlando, next to the Hardees."

At that point we were both laughing. Between gasping for air Pete glanced over his shoulder at Amodeo and, in a hushed tone, Pete asked if I believed Amodeo regarding the missiles. "You've seen the newspaper articles, the photos, the documentary on Frank (*Nine Days in the Congo*), the indictment; other than the pure absurdity of the explanation, I have no reason not to believe him."

Pete wiped the tears out of his eyes, sniffed back some congestion and said, "You could compare him to Napoleon; he was imprisoned on the Island of Elba, escaped and took over all of France; and then there's Richard the Lion Heart or Lech Walesa—the leader of the Solidarity movement in Poland—he was arrested and imprisoned." Lech Walesa went on to be elected president in 1990. "He even received the Nobel Prize for Peace. That's it!" snapped Pete, excitedly. "Nelson Mandela! You could compare Frank to Mandela—"

For a hardened criminal that's spent most of his adult life in federal prison, Pete is remarkably soft hearted when it comes to Amodeo.

"Come on! He's *no* Mandela." Nelson Mandela spent from 1962 to 1990—twenty-eight years in prison—due to his actions in support of ending apartheid in South Africa. In 1993 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace and in 1994 he was elected president. "Look, I like Frank, but he's talkin' about chopping heads off; he's no Mandela."

From the table behind us—where Amodeo had been periodically eavesdropping on our conversation—he interjected, "The Apostle Peter was imprisoned and later founded the Catholic Church—"

I yelled back to him, "you're no Peter, Emperor!"

He tucked his head into his shoulders and grinned while quietly chuckling, "When I'm emperor, you'll regret that. And I will be emperor. I will be emperor."

"WHAT BOTHERS ME the most about Frank's crime isn't stealing the government's money—I'm all for that—it's the fact that he didn't spend any of it," I told Pete during another conversation regarding Amodeo. If I had over \$180 million at my disposal I'd have a fleet of European sports cars and a luxury high-rise condo full of twenty-five-year-old strippers. "I'd be a fuckin' rock star; Frank didn't spend any of the money on himself. He used all the money trying to pull off this insane idea. He was living in an upper-middleclass house, driving a used midgrade Mercedes... What kind of *criminal* does that?"

"He's not as shallow as you and me," grinned Pete. "He had bigger plans; he was trying to take over the world."

"That's what bother's me." In all of the true crime stories I've heard over the last decade of my incarceration; no one has ever told me they were trying to take over the world. *Ever!* "How crazy do you have to be to believe that world domination is even possible?"

During the writing of *It's Insanity*, Pete and I laughed numerous times, comparing Amodeo to Evil Gru from *Despicable Me*, and Austin Power's Dr. Evil, but in all seriousness, the story isn't a comedy. Amodeo is one of the most complex individuals I've ever encountered and I have nothing but the utmost respect for him. If ever a mad genius could take over the world, it would be him. However, I am often saddened by the realization that this immensely intelligent, talented individual, whom I owe so much to, is so deeply flawed.

Despite how I may have portrayed Amodeo, the reader should know my admiration for him has no bounds. I will forever owe Frank Amodeo a debt that I will never be able to repay, and I hope he knows I am, and forever will be, a loyalist.



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