


Substantial Disruption



Rolling Stone

By Mike Tully

Everybody needs a stone to roll.

- John Stewart, "Little Road And A Stone To Roll" (from "The Lonesome Picker Rides Again," 1971)

Roger Stone is going to jail. He might get there as early as next Monday (March 11th) when he and his lawyers are tasked with explaining why he should not be jailed for contempt of court. He has already been hauled into court for violating a judicial gag order by, incredibly, posting a picture of the judge online with a bulls-eye over her right shoulder, along with a critical commentary. The judge, United States District Court Judge Amy Berman Jackson, was not amused. She did not send Stone to jail for that, but tightened the gag order and warned him that there would be no "third strike." The judge's forbearance may have been inspired, at least in part, by a groveling "mea culpa" that his panicked attorneys made Stone sign and then filed in court. The man with the Nixon tattoo was reportedly panicked as well, but he was apparently "scared stupid," because nothing he's done since reeks of smart. His courtroom chair had barely cooled when he violated the updated gag order with an Instagram post and a book with a newly written section critical of the Mueller investigation, which had snared him. As the [New York Daily News](#) wrote:

"She set a March 11 deadline for Stone to detail 'his efforts to come into compliance' with her gag order and, given 'unexplained inconsistencies' in his past statements, provide the court with a cache of records relating to the Feb. 19 release of his book, 'The Myth of Russian Collusion.'"

Roger Stone is the client from hell. It doesn't take much time in the practice of law to learn that your client can be your worst enemy. You expect the other side to delay, obfuscate, maybe outright lie, but not your own client. Unfortunately, many clients believe it in their interests to lie to their lawyers, or withhold important information. Part of that is a human tendency to place oneself in the best light by emphasizing the most positive facts. Lawyers know that and carefully interview clients to make sure they hear the bad stuff, too. Cases are never as rosy as clients portray them and a competent lawyer always looks not only for the facts that help the client, but those that can hurt the case. Clients who withhold damaging information think they are helping themselves, but they are not. Many lawyers will drop a client who has lied to them. Roger Stone's attorneys are likely having second thoughts about representing such a loose cannon.

Roger Stone is incorrigible. When a waitress says, "Careful, the plate is hot," Roger is the guy who touches the plate. He's the kid with his tongue frozen to the light pole in winter. He's the guy in the formal photograph who refused to wear a tie. He probably runs with scissors, pets stray dogs, talks to strangers, and speeds in school zones. He's the guy with the hat who blocks your view at sporting events, who parks in disabled parking spaces, who gives kids copies of a cut-out coupon instead of candy on Halloween. When he was a kid, Roger Stone wasn't afraid of circus clowns – they were afraid of him.

Roger Stone is delusional. He sees himself as an embattled hero, fighting to save America from people who want us to, you know, follow the rules. He lives in a Manichean world of us versus them, a perfect elixir for polarized times. He worships strong men who are as delusional as he is: Richard Nixon, Donald Trump. He vows to never turn against Trump, who is unlikely to return the loyalty. Trump lives in a reality even Crazy Roger Stone can't understand. Roger thinks he and Donald are a team, but Trump only values a team as something he could buy, like the [Buffalo Bills](#). Stone sees himself as Trump's Sancho Panza, his Tonto, his loyal, trustworthy and important sidekick but, to Trump, Stone is just another tool, like a used putter. Stone thinks of himself as a hero, but the only hero Trump recognizes is the one in the mirror. To Trump, Stone is not a hero; he's disposable.

Stone's world may come crashing down when he goes to jail next Monday, or on a later date, because he is definitely going to jail. He can't help himself. Even if the judge gives him one last chance, he'll blow it. That's who he is.

In the movie, "[My Little Chickadee](#)," Mae West, as Flower Belle Lee, found herself in court. Like Stone, she angered the judge, who asked her, "Are you trying to show contempt for this court?" "No," cooed Flower Belle, "I'm doin' my best to hide it!" The judge let her walk. If you've seen Mae West walk, you know why. But that was a movie.

Roger Stone may be a hero in his own inner movie, but his delusion won't help him in court if he screws up again. He ain't no Mae West.