



VOISIN LAW

I understand that it was Elia Kazan (the film director of such classics as “A Streetcar Named Desire” and “On the Waterfront”) who said that: *“Whatever hysteria exists is inflamed by mystery, suspicion and secrecy. Hard and exact facts cool it”*.

For me 2017 has been the year of hysteria. Hard and exact facts have been ignored.

Internationally, the hysteria concerning Donald Trump has been unprecedented. Whether you love him or loathe him, the frenzied rhetoric surrounding him (mainly from liberal elitists) has been quite astonishing (sorry to deploy hysterical hyperbole). The simple act of feeding koi carp in Japan recently created an extraordinary exchange on various media platforms. Really? He was feeding koi carp. Are there not more important things to get properly excited about?

The hysteria surrounding the Westminster sexual harassment allegations has also been concerning. We have even discussed it in the States of Jersey. This is not to take away from the genuine claims but there needs to be a sense of perspective, particularly given the apparent suicide of a Welsh politician caught up in the scandal. At the time of writing this piece, it would appear that when suspended the politician was unaware of the particulars of the allegations being made against him. Leaving aside the rights and wrongs of the allegations, there must be proper processes in place. The decision making should not be formulated and executed in the wash of the media’s hysterical response. In the modern world, the simple complimenting of a man or a woman must be seen in context. Flirting est mort. Good luck with those Xmas parties!

And, of course, most significantly, hold the press.... some single women in the Kardashian/Jenner clan might be pregnant. The end is nigh.

Of course, this maelstrom of outrage and concern leads me onto the “Paradise Papers”. Frankly, what is that about? It strikes me that this is the liberal news elite once again seeking to shine a light into what they see as, and want to be, a very dark corner of the financial world. I suspect that they are very disappointed that having had 13 million pieces of paper at their disposal (questionably obtained or otherwise), they appear to have been unable to disclose one act of illegality. To my mind, this is a positive and reflects the “extraordinary” steps that offshore centres (in particular, Jersey and Guernsey) have taken to regulate their finance industry. Is this not cause for celebration rather than self-flagellation? Are you bothered about Mrs Brown’s kids? Would you not expect the F1 champ to have a private plane? Frankly if he did not have one what a disappointing chap he would be. Isn’t that the dream?

The fact that the most successful company in world, Apple, is associated with Jersey to my mind is a good thing (I am already sensing that the enraged keyboard warriors are polishing their poisoned consoles). As I understand it, Apple is the largest tax payer in the world. Apple claims that it has paid over \$35 billion in corporate income taxes over the past three years. In addition, it will have paid moneys in respect of property tax, sales tax etc. Its impact on local economies is, to say the least, significant. Does the fact that the “Apple transaction” originated from an EU country (Ireland) rather than being contained in a suitcase handed over by a man wearing “Carlos the Jackal’s” sunglasses demonstrate how much the offshore world has changed?

The problem is not with offshore financial centres but with the international tax system as a whole. I



VOISIN LAW

understand that Apple and others have been seeking the reform and simplification of the International Tax Code for years but to no avail. Doesn't everyone (particularly the press) need to calm down?

In addition to the Paradise Papers, Jersey has had its own peculiar hysteria this year surrounding matters such as the child care enquiry, the location of a hospital and the role or otherwise of our Bailiff. It is interesting to see how our own local media like to fire up these stories. I mean, in the grand scheme of things, is paying an expert consultant(s) to review/assess our gargantuan civil service such a big deal? The answer is: No.

These are all important issues but they need to be considered with Mr Kazan's hard and exact facts not with emotion and misunderstanding. We need to calm down. It must be terribly tiring to be so angry about "stuff" all of the time.

On a happier note, I would like to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous and non-hysterical 2018. My last act of 2017 is to simply report that the Jersey Royal Court has recently ruled that there cannot be a nativity scene in the States of Jersey this Christmas. This is not for any religious or constitutional reason. Unfortunately, the Court was unable to identify three wise men in the building. Conversely, the Court had no problem finding an abundance of asses to fill the stable. Ho Ho Ho.