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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Fitzgerald and Maynard-Gibson have nine political lives

Dear Editor,

Whatever a man sows, that shall he reap, said St. Paul to the Galatians.

Jerome Fitzgerald is learning about this reciprocal principle firsthand. He sowed reading the private email correspondences of Save The Bays members in the House hiding behind the cloak of parliamentary privilege. It was a move to intimidate and frighten members of that organization, with the aim of convincing Bahamians that they were engaging in treasonous activities in an attempt to destabilize the PLP government. The constitutional rights of Save The Bays members were trampled on in an arrogant and defiant manner.

Fitzgerald reaped his deed when *The Tribune* published his private email correspondences to former Baha Mar developer Sarkis Izmirlian. Thousands of Bahamians got to read his own words begging Izmirlian for hefty contracts for his father's business enterprises. It was a clear violation of the ministerial rules. He should resign. But Fitzgerald won't resign.

Nobody in Prime Minister Perry Christie's slack administration believes in doing the honorable thing after having violated ministerial protocol.

Fitzgerald should be given his pink slip. But for some reason or another Christie seems to be of

the view that he lacks the moral authority to fire his senior Cabinet ministers. The PM runs a very slack administration, as has been shown in this government as well as in his first government. He never shuffles his Cabinet or fires senior PLP ministers. Those within his clique are invincible. The only ones to feel the brunt of his wrath are the small minions.

Had this been former Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham's Cabinet, Fitzgerald and Allyson Maynard-Gibson would have been fired years ago.

Fitzgerald will probably argue that he is not a beneficiary of any of his father's business enterprises. This argument would be similar to the one used by Maynard-Gibson, who told the Bahamian people that her close family's business at Baha Mar does not compromise her position as the government's negotiator for Baha Mar. If there is one thing I have learned from Christie those is that they take the Bahamian people for fools. Whatever one makes of this Baha Mar debacle, it is beginning to look like Fitzgerald and co. elbowed Sarkis Izmirlian out of the way in petty retaliation for not acquiescing to their personal requests and demands.

Fitzgerald's leaked emails give the Bahamian people an inside clue as to probably why these people fought Izmirlian tooth and nail to prevent that bank-

rupt hearing in a U.S. court. Every single deal would have been laid bare for the whole world to see.

It was never about this country's national sovereignty, for, as Hubert Ingraham stated, Atlantis developer Sol Kerzner filed for bankruptcy in the U.S. before, and no Bahamian took umbrage to him doing so. Precedence in this regard had already been set. Furthermore, if Christie is so concerned about this country's sovereignty, why does he, along with his government, hide behind the cloak of the Privy Council when the issue of the death penalty arises? The Privy Council is a foreign court dictating to this country that it cannot execute convicted murderers, despite the fact that well over 1,100 murders have taken place in this country over the last decade.

The members of that foreign court do not live in our Nassau communities that have been taken over by dangerous criminal enterprises.

The PLP sacrificed 2,000 Bahamian jobs on the altar of political expediency. It didn't care about the thousands of families who would suffer needlessly because of their decision. Two thousand Bahamians were left jobless. But Fitzgerald gets to keep his soft paying job. Maynard-Gibson also gets to keep hers.

Those with good memories

would recall that Maynard-Gibson was instrumental in destroying the once promising political career of former PLP MP Pleasant Bridgewater during the John Travolta saga on Grand Bahama. Maynard-Gibson showed no mercy to her former political protégé and ally.

Fitzgerald has survived the Rubis oil spill debacle. He has survived the nolle prosequi saga. He also was seen along with some PLP ministers in a video at Nygard Cay with Massa Peter Nygard. Nygard was congratulating them on defeating the FNM. The calls for their dismissal fell on deaf ears. Any calls for Fitzgerald to stand down will also fall on deaf ears. PLPs are already defending him, even though it does not make one bit of sense to do so.

Fitzgerald, like Maynard-Gibson, has nine political lives, just like cats. No matter how many political deaths they suffer, they keep coming back to life, because their party keeps resuscitating them. Nothing will come of this latest scandal. Nothing ever does. Any further calls for the dismissal of Fitzgerald and Maynard-Gibson might incur the middle finger from the PM. Thankfully, the general election is just days away, so the Bahamian people will have the opportunity to do what the PM should have done years ago.

~The Whistleblower

PLP facing growing 'conflict' allegations

The Governing Progressive Liberal Party (PLP) is embroiled in allegations of blatant conflict of interest involvements. It has been 51 years since a governing party in The Bahamas faced such overwhelming conflict of interest allegations.

The Wall Street Journal, in 1966, published a detailed expose of members of the United Bahamian Party (UBP) receiving fees, allegedly related to their parliamentary status.

Ultimately, it was widely considered, that the controversy led to defeat of the UBP by the PLP in the general elections of 1967. Fast-forward to the present and three Cabinet Ministers are the targets of critics who claim the conflict of interest situations are way out of order.

Accordingly, supporters of the opposition forces, in particular the other major party, the Free National Movement (FNM), are emboldened and confident of victory on May 10.

It is amazing indeed, how the world turns.

The PLP, then, led by Sir Lynden Pindling and the rest of that courageous and pioneer group of political warriors who were pushing for Majority Rule, were forceful on the attack against the UBP. Among charges leveled at the UBP, were the unfair structuring of constituencies, and voting status that enabled one person to vote several times; and conflict of interest inclusive of questionable payment of fees.

The UBP was unable to overcome the strong charge of the opposing force. The PLP made significant inroads across the country in bringing new supporters on board and tied the UBP, 18-18 during the elections. Independent and Labor Party winning candidates (Sir) Alvin Braynen and (Sir) Randol Fawkes, respectively, threw their support to the PLP and Majority Rule came about.

How will the conflict of interest allegations impact the general elections this time around?

If the PLP wins, it would mean that the voters make the decision to endorse a party that is stigmatized, disapproved of and thought by many, deserving of being denounced. A victory, we think, would give the PLP the authority to function in a business as usual fashion.

If the people show a preference for the FNM, then that would be the case, in our view, largely because the conflict of interest charges became too unsettling for voters, generally.

It does indeed appear as though the campaign battle has come down to a conflict of interest issue. The party, able to do the best at painting negative views, will likely win. At the moment though, noted PLP Cabinet Ministers being involved in hot conflicts of interest, does not help the cause of the governing party.

Bran McCartney as leader of the FNM

Dear Editor,

Do you consider yourself to be an astute Bahamian? You don't have to be coy Editor, I won't judge you for being braggadocios. You can tell me if you consider yourself to be more informed about Bahamian politics than the average Joe Blow on the streets. You certainly have the advantage, because you publish all the latest news that goes on in our little country. And what has been making the newspapers in our commonwealth for the last five years? That's right, five years! Well Editor, it is this — the sustenance of The Democratic National Alliance (DNA) political party in The Bahamas. And it has been around on the Bahamian political scene for more than five years now. No one, and I mean no one, in The Bahamas who is as astute as you are Editor thought that this genesis of a party had any chance in hell of surviving. But, they are still around today, ready and waiting to contest the next general election.

During the last general election (2012) the DNA made a re-

spectable showing at the polls (taking their youth into account) by garnering approximately 8.5 percent of the popular vote. The results were totally unexpected, even by, in my humble opinion, members and supporters of this fledgling party. Subsequently, after the dust settled the DNA secured for themselves the nomenclature of being a "spoiler party."

What does that mean? Well Editor, when you take into consideration that during the last election, after all the votes had been tallied and the official outcome made public, the PLP had amassed for themselves (approx.) 48.6 percent of the popular vote and the FNM picked up (approx.) 42 percent of the popular vote, theory dictates that if the DNA had not thrown its hat into the ring and the 8.5 percent that they had garnered had been transferred to the FNM, theoretically speaking, the FNM could have won the election. But, that is just conjecture. Possible, but still a guess.

In the ensuing years, the hierarchy of the DNA, its members and its supporters did not take too kindly to the common practice of Bahamians to continue to refer to the DNA as "the spoiler party." Editor, there is an old adage that says "The truth hurts." And it is my humble opinion that there is some truth to that designation. Furthermore, even The Bible will tell you that the truth will make you free. Having regard to what The Bible says, in my humble opinion, it would be prudent for the DNA to wake up and smell the coffee, and come to the sensible conclusion (as I think most Bahamians have) that their chances of winning the government during the next general election are very slim. Would you consider that calcula-

tion to be reasonable, Editor?

Kindly allow me to theorize on the mindset and the voting patterns of the Bahamian people. What am I talking about? Well Editor, in my mind I have come to the conclusion that, based on my more than 50 years of experience on this earth, Bahamians cast their votes in three basic ways. Before they mark their "X" on the ballot, Bahamians take into consideration: (1) The qualifications of the candidate offering themselves for service as a Member of Parliament; (2) Their loyalty to a particular party; and (3) Who the leader of any particular party is.

If most Bahamians are like me (and I don't know if they are), the individual who leads a particular party weighs heavily on my decision as to how I will mark my "X" in a general election.

I'll get right to the point Editor. I like Bran McCartney (leader of the DNA). He is of my generation and everything in his character, personality, intelligence, oratory skills, charisma, sense of humor, and other idiosyncrasies make him the man that he is today. In my book, he is a natural leader! And, as far as I am concerned, my humble opinion is such that it was his leadership of the DNA that caused that party to brag of such an admirable showing during the 2012 general election. However Editor, I am not naïve. Even though I would one day want Bran to take up the mantle of prime minister of The Bahamas (and I wrote another letter to you explaining as much, appearing in the September 30, 2016 edition of *The Nassau Guardian*), I am one of those persons in this country who thinks pragmatically, and has relegated the DNA to third party

status in The Bahamas. That reference is not a good one. In fact, it is downright derogatory, plain and simple. And I apologize, but I happen to be one eligible voter who happens to have a firmly held belief that the DNA is just too immature of a party to expect to wrest the reigns of power from the PLP in 2017. They are only five years old for God's sake!

Having said that Editor, do you know what would persuade me to seriously consider casting my vote in favor of Bran and his party next month? The topic has been discussed in the public domain ever since Bran disassociated himself from the FNM five years ago. What am I talking about? It is the same ole', same ole' — if the FNM should lose the May 10th general election and the DNA should do the same, in all likelihood, why doesn't Bran swallow his pride and return to the FNM, and his supporters follow him? However Editor, it is my humble opinion that Bran should not even consider reaching out for the olive branch that I have heard has been extended to him on numerous occasions by the small and big in the FNM, if he is not offered (unequivocally) the leader's post of that party, of course after going through the formalities of inner party elections. Hubert Ingraham did it in April, 1990. And afterward he became prime minister in a short space of time (August, 1992). And it does not help Bran that, right now, the DNA is commonly known as a one-man party.

I don't have to tell you Editor, that concerning this same issue Bran has incessantly and adamantly made his position on the matter clear — he is not going back. His image is ubiquitous in the media, concomitant with the comments and stories about him. You can't miss it.

But, Editor, there is still hope. Hope? Are you kidding me? Yes, hope Editor. Do you know why? Because Editor, this is politics and Bran is the quintessential politician. And good politicians don't reveal their hand until it is the perfect and opportune time to do so. And so, I choose to believe that Bran will do the right thing when the time comes. And if he does, he certainly has my vote. But even before then, on May 10th, the DNA can count on my vote — only because of their leader, Bran McCartney.

Thank you for your valuable time and space in your newspaper.

~Marvin G. Lightbourn

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LETTERS & COLUMNS GUIDE

Because of the many unsigned letters and those with doubtful names, *The Freeport News* requests that letters submitted for consideration must be accompanied by the full name, address and telephone number of the sender so that they can be verified. Letters without these details will not be accepted. However, these details will be omitted on request.

• All LETTERS & COLUMNS must be emailed to: fred@nasguard.com and barbara@nasguard.com

THANK YOU