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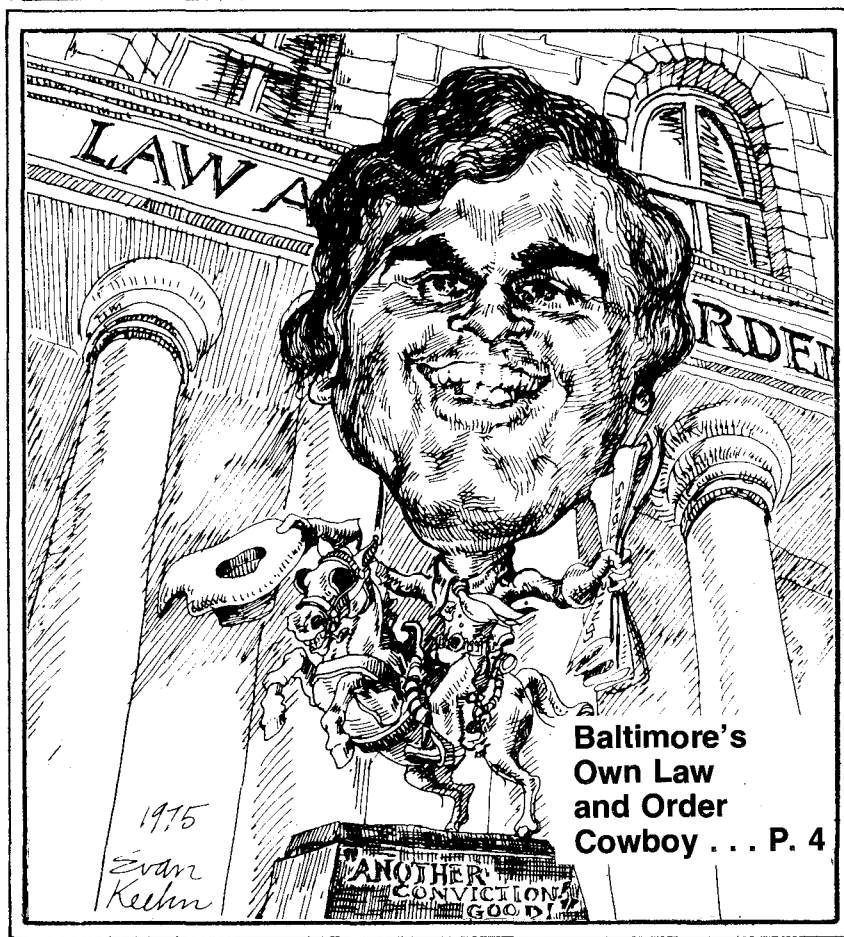
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THE FORUM

VOLUME VI

NUMBER 2

NOVEMBER, 1975



THE LAW JOURNAL OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF BALTIMORE SCHOOL OF LAW

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Letters to the Editor

Editor
The Forum Law Journal
The School of Law
University of Baltimore
1420 North Charles Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Dear Sir:

While I am quite sure that Mr. Justice Snyder and Mr. Chief Justice Garrity are the wisest of all possible Honor Code sages and although I have no quarrel with the substance of their decision as stated in the October 1975 FORUM, I am humbly dismayed by several points offered in explication of their august opinions.

Mr. Justice Garrity, in an attempt to clarify the incriminating nature of the defendant's statement to the complainant, instructs us that "'It's' is a pronoun, and as such, can be easily and grammatically replaced with the noun 'the exam'...". No doubt the word "it's" can easily be replaced by "the exam," but, I respectfully submit, by no means can the replacement take place grammatically.

"It's" is not a pronoun. The word is a contraction of the pronoun "it" and the verb "is." To replace "it's" by "the exam" — which, parenthetically, is not a noun, but a noun modified by the definite article, i.e. a noun phrase — is to leave the construction without a verb. No verb, no sentence? Mr. Chief Justice Garrity may well be able to contribute much to the moral edification of us all, but he offers little as regards basic English instruction.

Mr. Justice Snyder is "typographically" undermined by the misspelling of "ridiculous" in his last paragraph but he has a far more serious problem in the same passage. We are urged to adopt "the old adage, 'Silence is the best policy.'" The best policy silence may well be, but an old adage the saying is not. According to the world's greatest authority

on adages, Adage A. Case, Mr. Justice Snyder has combined two ancient adages, "honesty is the best policy" and "Silence is golden." The uniting of two great lineages to claim the prestige of each works for the Henry Cabot Lodges of the world, but not for adages. Mr. Justice Snyder is in distasteful violation of a basic rule of adages.

Please remind their excellencies as they return to their Olympian perches that as smokers we'll accept good grammar or good taste, but, as FORUM readers, we find the lack of either a bit "ridiculous."

L. E. MARTINY
Night Division
First Year

Dear L. E. Martiny:

I was overwhelmingly pleased to receive and read your letter to THE FORUM. It is, indeed, unusual to discover a law student who knows anything about English as a language.

I am sure you will want to become a member of the newly-formed group U.E.I.N.A.B.L. (an acronym for Use English, It's Not A Bad Language), for which I am, by happenstance, acting as chairperson. There are yet positions available, some with very impressive-sounding titles, on our board. We'd be delighted to consider your application therefore.

I assumed — as most probably did you — when I started law school that

law students, by definition, were skilled in English usage. After all, if a lawyer cannot speak and, especially, write well, what good is he/she? I discovered, to my surprise, that such was most certainly not the case. It's my opinion that were one to survey the law school population, one would discover few people who would be able to distinguish "its" from "it's."

By no means do I wish to defame our hallowed halls; this disease of grammatical sloppiness is certainly not a symptom only of the University of Baltimore Law School. Indeed, the evidence that the disease has reached epidemic proportions is available on any printed matter where one's eye might chance to land.

I sincerely hope that your letter, and this modest response — being, after all, an official encouragement from U.E.I.N.A.B.L. — will cause other students (who, formerly, fearing the consequences of disclosure, hid in the wings), to jump on U.E.I.N.A.B.L.'s bandwagon. After all, there are other small groups of students in our law school forming organizations, hoping their roles will swell, (e.g., B.A.L.S.A.); if they are optimistic enough to anticipate a growing organization, why shouldn't we?

If you have any interest in joining U.E.I.N.A.B.L. — and I hope you will — please contact me at the U.E.I.N.A.B.L. office.

Yours sincerely,

S. Timmerman Tepel
Chairperson, U.E.I.N.A.B.L.
Chairperson, F.E.M.L.A.V.S.
Exec. Ed., THE FORUM

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Humbly Dedicated
To Retired Justice
William O. Douglas**