

## THE IDLE AMERICAN

### **When Boredom Seems Terminal...**

Commentary by Dr. Don Newbury

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Now that the election is over, my ancient Uncle Mort and his domino-playing buddies down in the thicket can resume their usual mostly-minutia confabs that too often lack authenticity.

This reminds me of the annual extravaganza birthed in 1929 when old-timers of Burlington, Wisconsin held their first-ever “Liars’ Contest.” They called it “harmless fibs for fun and folly.”

The contest caught on nationally, thanks to hundreds of newspapers providing free publicity. One winner, some 50 years ago, was the late Choc Hutcheson of Lubbock, a brilliant eccentric before he learned to shave. He “lied” about a man who invented a duck call so authentic that it attracted decoys....

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**All this** to say that Uncle Mort and his gang may usher in a new contest. It’s goal in some respect is to mimic the Burlington bunch, but entries must be based on facts, even if loosely hinged.

Soon, Burlington will announce its 2024 winner, near New Year’s Eve on a slow news day.

Shucks, Texas may have bigger liars every year than contestants in Wisconsin, but with the East Texans’ slant may garner even more attention that outright lies. They, too, are expected to announce their winner around year’s end....

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They’re requiring contestants not only to cite threads of truth, but also to restrict entries to a topic. The first will center on the two most unlikely robberies in Texas history.

Someone mentioned the Santa Claus bank robbery that occurred on December 23, 1927, in Cisco, TX. In those days, bank robberies were commonplace, occurring an average of four times daily in the Lone Star State. Who “woulda thunk” that jolly old St. Nick would brandish a pistol while he and his gang made a record haul of \$12,400 in cash and \$150,000 in negotiable securities?

The record was disallowed, however, since the goods were left behind during the melee of gunfire that followed....

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“**Baloney, that** was ‘chump change’,” Mort asserted. “A far more unusual robbery occurred on Sept. 4, 2024. The total grab was \$240 million and, even with inflation, this record figure eclipses \$12,400, even with inflation factored in. And not a single shot was fired.” Three sets of eyeballs would have been hard-pressed to open wider. “What, in the name of the National Football League, are you talking about?” one asked.

Mort had done his homework, pointing to Dak Prescott’s \$240 million contract as quarterback of the Dallas Cowboys. This is the largest NFL contract in history, and no doubt it will be eclipsed next year.

“It’s been more than 96 years--nearly 36,000 days--since the robbery in Cisco, so I think it’s time to pin-point a more recent unusual ‘robbery’,” Mort chuckled. He mentioned that the bank robbers left their treasure behind, but Dak--and/or his agent--had enough ‘smarts’ to include a guaranteed payment of \$231 for the four-year commitment.”....

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**As their** “yakking” continued, someone mentioned that Dak’s being paid almost \$1,000,000 per game, regardless of the outcomes and whether or not he’s sidelined by injuries, as is currently the case.

Another quickly added that he earns more in one quarter than the \$985,000 San Francisco’s Brock Purdy makes for the entire season. (Footnote: The 49’ers beat the Cowboys, and Purdy’s salary will shoot upward next season.)

The fourth member of the “geezer group” suggested comparing Prescott’s salary with Babe Ruth’s record haul of \$80,000, grudgingly paid to the baseball star for the 1914 season. One reporter commented that Ruth’s salary was more than President Wilson’s. “I had a better year than the president,” Ruth responded.

Who can blame Prescott? There are two signatures on the contract. And all of this craziness is supported by gullible fans whose football appetites are insatiable. Stay tuned for Burlington’s 2024 winning lie. It may pale compared to the East Texans’ powerful comparison that has more than a few shreds of truth....

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