



Caveat Preemptive

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Were Donald J. Trump an exemplar of strict Kantian honesty; had he a reputation for exactitude about his achievements and acumen; if hyperbole had not become his own very public *modus* — then, and only then, would the near half a billion judgment against him make even a modicum of sense.

But the former U.S. president and infamous branding entrepreneur is and has always been known to be something of a b.s. artist. No one has excuse to take what he says *literally*. Business partners and all who make deals with Trump should do their own diligence. Their watchword should be: *caveat emptor*.

Yet, last week, New York State regulators and prosecutors bent over backwards to find Trump guilty. “On Friday, New York County Supreme Court Justice Arthur Engoron [ordered](#) Donald Trump to pay a staggering \$355 million for repeatedly inflating asset values in statements of financial condition submitted to lenders and insurers,” [explains](#) Jacob Sullum of

Reason. “When the interest that Engoron also approved is considered, the total penalty rises to \$450 million. All told, Trump and his co-defendants, including three of his children and former Trump Organization CFO Allen Weisselberg, are [on the hook](#) for \$364 million, or about \$464 million with interest.”

That is a lot of money to protect other businesses from Trump’s characteristic exaggerations, which so appalled the court. But not any of the banks Trump did business with.

No one has been harmed, for Trump repaid all the loans.

There is no victim — making Trump the biggest-name victim of victimless crime prosecution of all time.

We, the people, know that “honesty is the best policy” is not standard business practice, and that Trump doesn’t always follow it. But we are also not demanding that our governments insert themselves into every successful transaction looking for fibs and fakery.

That would be a recipe for selective prosecution.

Which is just what this case is: selective prosecution of a political opponent.

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.