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Letter: 'Catch The Conscience' Of Senators

- Robert F. Lyons, Kennebunk, Maine

When Sen. John Thune (R-South Dakota) was asked what should be done about former President Donald Trump who sparked a deadly Capitol riot which caused the death of five people, he could only say: "Well, that's a good question. One way, obviously, would be a court of law." (CNN, Jan. 29).

If Thune's undergraduate education at Biola University included a study of William Shakespeare's plays, he might find guidance to know the proper course of action to hold Trump accountable for his crimes.

In Shakespeare's remarkable play, "Hamlet," the prince wants to test whether or not his uncle, King Claudius, is responsible for the murder of his father. He sums up his strategy in this rhymed couplet: "The play is the thing, wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king." (Act 2, Scene 2).

Hamlet believed that if he staged a play based on how he thought his father was murdered, Claudius might betray emotions of guilt or otherwise behave suspiciously. Hamlet says: "I'll observe his looks;

I'll tent [trap] him to the quick: if he but blench,

I know my course."

Hamlet's play confirmed that his uncle did, in fact, kill his father.

Now it is the play in the Senate's impeachment trial which is the thing, wherein it must catch the conscience of 67 senators to convict Donald John Trump who engaged in high crimes and misdemeanors by inciting violence against the government of the United States.

All Americans can observe the senators' looks when the impeachment trial managers "have proclaimed [Trump's] malefactions;

For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak

With most miraculous organ."

If any member of the Senate jury is observed to flinch or "bleach" as witnesses and videos of Trump fueling the fires of the Jan. 6 assault on the Capitol are viewed, that will be sufficient evidence to convict the ex-president.

The question remains: Does Sen. Thune know his Shakespeare and the principles of our U.S. Constitution sufficiently to catch and convict this perpetrator of high crimes as charged?