

ODDS AND ENDS

First off, let's wish Marcy a big Happy Birthday! The woman is doing nothing but getting younger and smarter. Amazing.

Secondly, my fine Emptywheel friends, I'd like to apologize, I got a little sidetracked today with some work and duties with my daughter, Jenna. And, honestly, far more of my day was spent learning about some of the players and watching the action in Twitter Fight Club. While our own @emptywheel met her unfortunate demise in the second round (without question hampered by her lack of access to internet connection), I was somehow or another asked to judge the Elite Eight, which is taking place today. If you want to weigh in with your votes, all the Twitter Fight Club info is here. These are all excellent people participating in this game, and it is really a lot of fun. I have, just today, been exposed to several people I did not previously regularly track, even though I knew who they were.

The downside is, for all these reasons, plus now that there is once again a three hour difference between me and the east coast, I am hopelessly deep in the day without having written any substantive posts. In light of that, I will post a couple of interesting quick hits for discussion and make this an open thread for those subjects and all other things generally.

First up: A bit of a weird case was announced today in the Eastern District of Virginia (EDVA). An American citizen, Eric Harroun, was arrested for what appears to be pretty much only foreign terroristic acts:

A former Army soldier from Phoenix who joined rebels fighting the Syrian government and boasted to FoxNews.com of his exploits as a Muslim soldier of fortune earlier this month was arrested Wednesday in Virginia and could face life in prison.

Eric Harroun, 30, who left the Army in 2003 on full disability pay after a truck accident, was charged with conspiring to use a rocket-propelled grenade while fighting with the al-Nusra Front, an organization also known as Al Qaeda in Iraq. Harroun, who was in Syria or Turkey when he spoke to FoxNews.com by Skype, was nabbed shortly after flying in to Dulles International Airport after a voluntary interview with FBI agents, according to a criminal complaint filed Thursday.

There are all kinds of fascinating about this story. For one, Harroun was just featured in a big story in Foreign Policy. The FP story was only dated March 22, so the timing of when they really interacted with Harroun (the earliest date FP noted was March 2nd and the latest March 16th) in relation to the time and circumstances of his arrest are interesting. Here is the critical affidavit filed on him in EDVA so far. And here is a piece by Bobby Chesney at Lawfare on the Harroun announcement, and I completely agree with him about the curious disconnect between the charge maybe called for under 18 USC 2339(D) and the one contained in the one page, fill in the blank complaint that was filed, of 18 USC 2332(a)(b).

Second, the Sweet Sixteen is underway. I have a rooting interest in the Arizona Wildcats, who are playing an evil Bit 10.2 team, Ohio State. Go Cats! also on tap tonight are Marquette/Miami, Syracuse/Indiana and, in a battle of surprise teams, Wichita State/La Salle. These are all fantastic games, but I think the Buckeyes, Marquette and Indiana will likely win out. The one that is a crap shoot and really fascinating is the Wichita State Shockers and the La Salle Explorers. The Shockers have big and tough inside and the Explorers have guards. I always default to killer guard play in the tournament, and I will ride with La Salle.

Okay, what else you got? Whether in the news,

March Madness, or anything else, let fly.