

'Twas THE DAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS

by [Steve Brown](#)

'Twas the day before Christmas and we start

with a gripe, We hate to be negative, but this is way more than hype. Our issue isn't over failures, Dodd-Frank or the rate of inflation, But who approved this calendar without a Xmas vacation?

Beyond that we have an interesting story to tell you this year, It is a sign of the times, an allegory for what banks commonly fear.

The story starts with our legendary Bank of the North Pole,

This tale is not of performance, but what someone did stole.

You see, the Bank was the latest in a particular theft, It wasn't missing money or ideas, but something of more heft. Santa, the Bank's CEO, was the victim of the latest of trends - Employees that do harm by castigating their "friends."

It was one of the elves, that was turned down for a raise, So instead of working harder, he took revenge in other ways. He turned over a thumb drive with 3GB of e-mails, WikiLeaks was now in possession of some of the bank's tales.

The press had a field day and jumped to conclusions. The Bank's stock dropped just from the headline allusions. There were words of cBonuses," "TARP" and "CEO pay," Townspeople agog that St. Nick had lost his own way.

There were internal missives of employees laughing at Blair, And jokes deriding Bernanke for lack of his hair. Their were verbal eye rolls over customer demands, And more talk of the Board not executing their plans.

There were emails on Lost, Modern Family and other TV shows, Talk of lunch plans, football and Facebook was some of the prose. Shopping for iPads, cars and watches occasionally were done, And several threads on the World Series Giant's amazing home runs.

The CCO was caught with a bimbo's number in his Blackberry, Like Elin with a 9 iron to Tiger, the wife wasn't too merry. There were comments on this one teller and various tweets, Some said she looked like Lady Gaga with that dress made of meat.

The information was seemingly damaging except for one thing, The press, in its haste, was focused on the mud it could sling, But lost in the data, like other WikiLeak releases, Was a true story that did not fit into newsworthy pieces.

Like our US diplomats and Afghan military command, What didn't make the news is a point that is grand. There was no big cover up and no smoking gun, Most of the leaks detailed actual work that was done.

The evidence pointed to hardworking staff that tried their best, To make difficult situations slightly better with zest. Yes, they weren't perfect and some comments weren't benign, But it is hard to

second guess when it was their neck on the line.

Among the dirt there were tales of heroic customer service, Staff bent over backwards to make a profitability officer nervous. Credit wrestled with a borrower to get a guarantee from a spouse, All this so the family wouldn't get kicked from their house.

There was talk about credit stress and shareholder gain, Using social media, virtual branches and deposit campaigns. Some e-mails were on pricing and limiting debit interchange, These were all important discussions with nothing too strange.

At the end of the day, most of the threads were impressive, Santa, as CEO, turned out to be surprisingly progressive. The communication was largely intelligent and succinct, Heart, leadership and compassion is where they were linked.

Oh, and that CCO with allegations of sex, It turns out it was a marriage counselor he was sending the texts. He didn't want his wife to know that he was getting support, Then again it's none of anyone's business how he comports.

While few took the time to understand the details of the leaks, Those that did were impressed for what they did speak. The bottom line is that reputational risk is often a mirage, Risk can be positive, ironically discovered thanks to Assange.

While no bank wants to end up like this in the press, We hope if you do, your tracks show noblesse. May your communication be honest, your words not biting; If not, and it's about the regulators, at least not in writing.

As this comes to a close, we can tell you banking isn't tender, Just remember to never give up and never surrender! Please keep the faith and we want to thank you this year. It is you - the customer - which we hold the most dear.

We hope to see you all at various places and times, Because we need some new material to help with these rhymes. Until then, stay safe and feel free to call....

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