

"The first duty of a citizen is to question motives of his government."

—Folklore, attributed to Thomas Jefferson

"To announce that there must be no criticism of the President or that we are to stand by the President right or wrong is not only unpatriotic and servile but it is morally treasonable to the American public."

—Theodore Roosevelt, 1918,
Republican President

Verbum Sapienti Sat Est

Ancient Rome, early spring A.D. 64, alternate universe...

*Some history-literate readers will say that the story does not reflect true historic events. "Hey, Rome did not depend on olive oil from Greece! And anyway, how can oil prices get an empire into economical trouble? D'oh!... Not **that** oil!"*

The answer is simple: this is an alternate universe, where anything is possible. And if you don't see a connection with our world, maybe it's because there is none. Or maybe it's because you just don't see it.

But let's get to the story, in which the prefect of Praetorian Guards has a problem and the Emperor finds a solution.

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