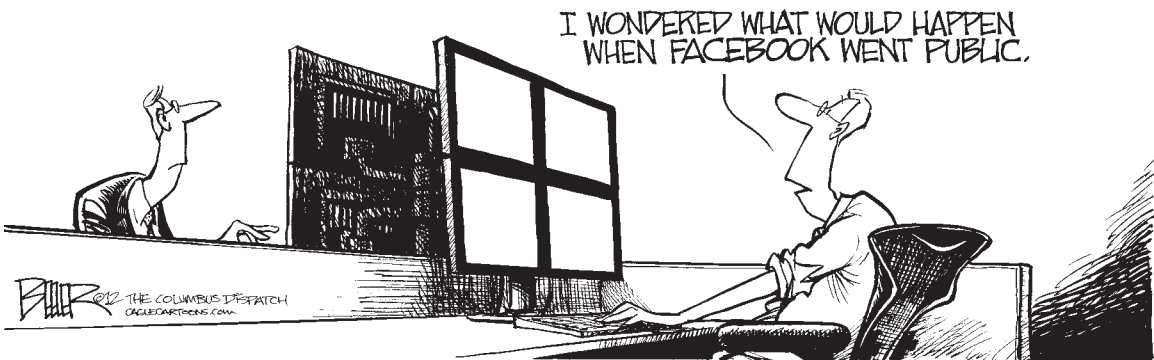


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BLT	JOE SCHMOE	ELO	MARK ZUCKER	
23	64.98 - 0.79	In the bathroom playing FarmVille.	15.32 +1.68	I'm rich! I'm rich



Tough On Justice, Too

BY LEONARD PITTS JR.
Tribune Media Services

So the people got sick of it, all those criminals being coddled by all those bleeding heart liberal judges with all their soft-headed concern for rights and rehabilitation. And a wave swept this country in the Reagan years, a wave ridden by pundits and politicians seeking power, a wave that said, no mercy, no more. From now on, judges would be severely limited in the sentences they could hand down for certain crimes, required to impose certain punishments whether or not they thought those punishments fit the circumstances at hand. From now on, there was a new mantra in American justice. From now on, we would be “tough on crime.”

We got tough on Jerry Dewayne Williams, a small-time criminal who stole a slice of pizza from a group of children. He got 25 years.

We got tough on Duane Silva, a guy with an IQ of 71 who stole a VCR and a coin collection. He got 30 to life.

We got tough on Dixie Shanahan, who shot and killed the husband who had beaten her for three days straight, punching her in the face, pounding her in the stomach, dragging her by the hair, because she refused to have an abortion. She got 50 years.

We got tough on Jeff Berryhill, who got drunk one night, kicked in an apartment door and punched a guy who was inside with Berryhill’s girlfriend. He got 25 years.

Now, we have gotten tough on Marissa Alexander. She is the Jacksonville, Fla., woman who said her husband flew into a violent rage and tried to strangle her when he found text messages to her first husband on her phone. She said she fled to her car, but in her haste, forgot her keys. She took a pistol from the garage and returned to the house for them. When her husband came after her again, she fired — into the ceiling. The warning shot made him back off. No one was hurt.

Like Shanahan before her, Alexander was offered a plea bargain. Like Shanahan, she declined, reasoning that no one would convict her under the circumstances. Like



Leonard PITTS

Shanahan, she was wrong.

Earlier this month, Alexander got 20 years for aggravated assault. And like Shanahan, like Berryhill, Williams, Silva and Lord only knows how many others, she received that outlandish sentence not because the judge had a heart like Simon Legree’s, but because he was constrained by so-called “mandatory-minimum” sentencing guidelines that tie judges’ hands, allow them no leeway for consideration, compassion, context or common sense. In other words, they prohibit judges from judging.

Charles Smith, the judge who sent Shanahan away, put it best. He said the sentence he was required to impose “may be legal, but it is wrong.” Amen.

The Eighth Amendment prohibits “cruel and unusual punishment.” In a nation where we execute people based on no evidence save eyewitness testimony, it is hard to imagine what meaning that prohibition still holds. But assuming it means anything, surely it means you can’t draw a 20-year sentence for shooting a ceiling.

Except that Alexander just did. In restricting judges from judging, we have instituted a one-size-fits-all version of justice that bears little resemblance to the real thing. It proceeds from the same misguided thinking that produced the absurd “zero tolerance” school drug policies that routinely get children suspended for bringing aspirin and Midol to class. In both cases, there is this silly idea that by requiring robotic adherence to inflexible rules we will produce desirable results.

By now, it should be obvious how wrongheaded and costly that reasoning was — and how urgently we need to roll back the wave that swept over us in the Reagan years. It is understandable that the nation wanted to get tough on crime.

But we have been rather hard on justice, too.

Leonard Pitts is a columnist for the Miami Herald, 1 Herald Plaza, Miami, Fla., 33132. Readers may contact him via e-mail at lpitts@miamiherald.com.

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The Rez of the Story

A Legacy That Mustn’t Be Overlooked

BY VINCE TWO EAGLES

Hau Mitakuepi (Greetings My Relatives), American poet Alice Carey (1820-1871) once wrote, “Women and men in the crowd meet and mingle. Yet with itself every soul standeth single.”

Karen Casey and Martha Vanceburg write: “Joy for living depends on the level of intimacy with others that we’ve grown comfortable with: sharing our grief, our fears, and our glories with others relieves their power over us and fosters a healthier perspective on all the situations in our lives ...

“Independently we share this universe, each of us giving to its continuance and receiving sustenance in turn. With little thought, really, we are living our lives bonded in myriad ways, great and small, to one another and to the cycles of earth housing us all.”

We are all in this together; of this there can be no doubt.

Recently the president has become the first sitting president to express his support for same-sex marriage. This position has sparked much conversation in both non-Indian and Indian communities alike. It is a sensitive and touch issue for many people because of their religious or cultural beliefs about homosexuality. It has been an awkward subject anyway for many of us and I don’t ever recall hearing anything about gay people growing up except as I got older in my teenage years.

Many years ago, Greenwood was the center of much of our tribal governmental activity. The Tribal Hall was where the old BIA school used to be. When I was in a top-40 band with my uncles, we played many a dance in the little gym that used to be there. There also used to be an annual pow-wow (wachipi) held there — only recently started up again. I remember seeing a man dressed as a woman who used to dance at this and other wachipis around the area by the name of “Pete Dog Soldier. He was what we call in our language a “winkta.” These are folks who grow up acting opposite of their birth gender. A little boy starts to show early on that he has effeminate mannerisms and little girls take on masculine traits and mannerisms as well — both referred to as winkta.

I noticed, even as a child, that no one made fun of old Mr. Dog Soldier and that the adults accepted him without reservation and that there were no kids taunting or pointing at him as he danced out in the circle. Talk about teaching by example, right?

I now know why. Ihana (a long time ago) “winktas” were considered to be sacred people in our culture. They were accepted as they were and were often sought after for their exceptional quill work. To appreciate their gift to the people, one only has to attempt to work with porcupine quills themselves to see what I mean. Even today, winktas are sought after to do needed beadwork items for giveaways and dance regalia. But I wonder about the place winktas had in our Tribal society in modern times.

I understand that now gay Natives are referred to as “two-spirits.” My mom tells the story (told to her by the late Madelyn Bird from Pine Ridge) about how a granddaughter of an elder had a dream (when she was younger) about coming to a fork in a road and she had to decide which fork to take. One way lead to a place where there was children and family life. The other lead to a place where there was much finery and beautiful things with extraordinary quill work decorations. She choose the family life path, but many years later she found that she didn’t want the children she had, so the extended family ended up raising her children so she could follow the path she felt she was meant to follow. Being a winkta was what made her happy, and she felt like she fit in with the people that way.

I notice how there exists in modern times men and women among our people who exhibit these “winkta” traits, but I can’t help but wonder if we have lost cultural way of viewing “two-spirits” as sacred. I hear about these young people who today face bullying because of the way they are. I think we need to re-educate ourselves about the wisdom our ancestors displayed regarding this issue and put in to practice that which we preach about the sacredness of our “winkta” relatives.

And now you know the rez of the story. Doksha (later) ...



Vince TWO EAGLES

YOUR LETTERS

Advisory To Public

Larry Nickless, Yankton

Deputy Chief, Yankton Fire Department

The Yankton Fire Department would like to thank the area businesses for supporting our upcoming South Dakota State Fire School to be held in Yankton June 7-9 by way of purchasing advertisement space in our fire school program book. The Yankton Fire Department is no longer selling advertisement and the book has went to print. The fire department has had calls regarding the sale of the advertisement from an unknown source. If you are approached by someone identifying themselves as a Yankton Firefighter, please ask for the firefighters identification card.

We apologize for the inconvenience this may have caused anyone and thanks again for your support.

Online Opinion

The results of the most recent Internet poll on the Press & Dakotan’s Web site are as follows:

LATEST RESULTS:

Will the price of gas influence your summer travel plans?	
Yes	57%
No	41%
Not sure	3%
TOTAL VOTES CAST	654

The Press & Dakotan Internet poll is not a scientific survey and reflects the opinions only of those who choose to participate. The results should not be construed as an accurate representation or scientific measurement of public opinion.

CURRENT QUESTION:

Do you consider the Missouri River to be “endangered”?

To vote in the Press & Dakotan’s Internet poll, log on to our Web site at www.yankton.net.

THE PRESS & DAKOTAN



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OPINION | OUR VIEW

Truth The Best Tool In Our Defense Efforts

An interesting battle of semantics may be brewing in Washington, and it will be interesting to watch the battle play out — that is, if we get to see it at all.

According to the BuzzFeed website, two congressmen have introduced a bipartisan amendment into the latest defense authorization bill that would allow for the repeal of two laws that currently prevent the Pentagon from targeting the American public with propaganda.

This little-noticed amendment would do away with the Smith-Mundt Act of 1948 — co-sponsored was Sen. Karl Mundt of South Dakota in an effort to “counter communism,” according to the *Washington Times* — and the Foreign Relations Authorization Act of 1987, which expressly protect U.S. audiences from what BuzzFeed called “our own government’s misinformation campaigns.”

The Pentagon disseminates what could best be described as propaganda in foreign countries to influence overseas audiences concerning U.S. policy. It’s a time-honored tactic that many nations use to sway hearts and minds around the world.

But the aforementioned laws that forbid such information to be disseminated to Americans is a waste, according to Rep. Mac Thornberry (R-Texas) and Rep. Adrian Smith (D-Washington). Thornberry says the laws now in the books “(tie) the hands of America’s diplomatic officials, military and others by inhibiting our ability to effectively communicate in a credible way.” The congressmen add that the domestic techniques are needed in this Internet age to counter propaganda tactics of groups such as al Qaida, which thrive on misinformation and distortion as a means of generating terror.

The times have changed dramatically since the days of the Smith-Mundt Act, and warfare now relies far more on psychological bully clubs than it ever has before.

Nevertheless, there are some imperative points that need to be made in response.

First, it’s hard to see how a propagandized public can be of better service to the national defense than a well-informed public. Proponents of the change cite the pervasive growth of the Internet and social media as a reason for opening up the propaganda floodgates. However, these communication tools also validate the need for good information and honesty (which would obviously demand some limitations) in order to trump misinformation — at least in theory.

Second, a skeptic might argue persuasively that there wouldn’t be much difference in the outcomes, that U.S. audiences are already being bombarded with propaganda and misinformation from our Department of Defense. For example, the public was led to believe during the 1991 Gulf War that the Patriot antimissile systems being used in Israel and Saudi Arabia were operating magnificently against Iraqi Scud missiles; however, it was later learned that the Patriots weren’t nearly as successful as advertised to an anxious American public. Others would point to cases such as the Jessica Lynch rescue in Iraq and the Pat Tillman death in Afghanistan as incidents that were either blown out of proportion and/or distorted beyond their true realms for more acceptable public consumption and motivation. So, the laws in place now may only be obligatory hurdles, not stonewall barriers separating fact from someone’s idea of patriotic fantasy.

Third, the question must be asked: Does issuing distorted information to our own public make us any better than those who spew out misinformation for their own ends?

Americans are better served by the truth. Whether we’re truly getting that now from our own defense department (let alone our news organizations) is certainly debatable, but that debate is just as important and vital to public morale as any news release or communiqué. Keep the laws as they are — strengthen them, in fact — and maintain an America with eyes wide open. The truth is the best antidote to distortion. It may not set as free, but it will certainly keep us free to think.

kmh

TODAY IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press

Today is Tuesday, May 22, the 143rd day of 2012. There are 223 days left in the year.

Today’s Highlight in History: On May 22, 1972, President Richard Nixon began a visit to the Soviet Union, during which he and Kremlin leaders signed the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty.

On this date: In 1761, the first American life insurance policy was issued in Philadelphia to a Rev. Francis Allison, whose premium was six pounds per year.

In 1860, the United States and Japan exchanged ratifications of the Treaty of Amity and Commerce during a ceremony in Washington.

In 1935, President Franklin D. Roosevelt appeared before Congress to explain his decision to veto a bill that would have allowed World War I veterans to cash in bonus certificates before their 1945 due date.

In 1939, the foreign ministers of Germany and Italy, Joachim von Ribbentrop and Galeazzo Ciano, signed a “Pact of Steel” committing the two countries to a military alliance.

In 1947, the Truman Doctrine was enacted as Congress appropriated military and economic aid for Greece and Turkey.

In 1960, an earthquake of magnitude 9.5, the strongest on record, struck southern Chile, claiming some 1,655 lives.

In 1962, Continental Airlines Flight 11, en route from Chicago to Kansas City, Mo., crashed after a bomb apparently brought on board by a passenger exploded, killing all 45 occupants of the Boeing 707.

In 1968, the nuclear-powered submarine USS Scorpion, with 99 men aboard, sank in the Atlantic Ocean. (The remains of the sub were later found on the ocean floor 400 miles southwest of the Azores.)

In 1969, the lunar module of Apollo 10, with Thomas P. Stafford and Eugene Cernan aboard, flew to within nine miles of the moon’s surface in a dress rehearsal for the first lunar landing.

In 1972, the island nation of Ceylon became the republic of Sri Lanka.

In 1981 “Yorkshire Ripper” Peter Sutcliffe was convicted in London of murdering 13 women and was sentenced to life in prison.

In 1992, after a reign lasting nearly 30 years, Johnny Carson hosted NBC’s “Tonight Show” for the last time.

Ten years ago: A jury in Birmingham, Ala., convicted former Ku Klux Klansman

Bobby Frank Cherry of murder in a 1963 church bombing that killed four black girls. (Cherry, sentenced to life, died in a prison hospital in 2004.) The remains of Chandra Levy, the federal intern who’d disappeared more than a year earlier, were found in Washington, D.C.’s Rock Creek Park.

Five years ago: British prosecutors accused former KGB agent Andrei Lugovoi of murder in the radioactive poisoning of Alexander Litvinenko. (Russia, however, has refused to extradite Lugovoi.) Olympic gold medalist speedskater Apolo Anton Ohno and his professional dance partner, Julianne Hough, won ABC’s “Dancing With the Stars.”

One year ago: A tornado devastated Joplin, Mo., with winds up to 250 mph, claiming at least 159 lives and destroying about 8,000 homes and businesses. President Barack Obama defended his endorsement of Israel’s 1967 boundaries as the basis for a future Palestine, telling the American Israel Public Affairs Committee his views reflected longstanding U.S. policy. Joseph Brooks, 73, the Academy Award-winning songwriter of “You Light Up My Life” who was awaiting trial for rape, was found dead in his Manhattan apartment, a suicide.

Today’s Birthdays: Movie reviewer Judith Crist is 90. Singer Charles Aznavour is 88. Actor Michael Constantine is 85. Conductor Peter Nero is 78. Actor-director Richard Benjamin is 74. Actor Frank Converse is 74. Former CNN anchor Bernard Shaw is 72. Actress Barbara Parkins is 70. Songwriter Bernie Taupin is 62. Actor-producer Al Corley is 56. Singer Morrissey is 53. Actress Ann Cusack is 51. Country musician Dana Williams (Diamond Rio) is 51. Rock musician Jesse Valenzuela is 50. Actor Mark Christopher Lawrence is 48. White House Press Secretary Jay Carney is 47. Rhythm-and-blues singer Johnny Gill (New Edition) is 46. Rock musician Dan Roberts (Crash Test Dummies) is 45. Actress Brooke Smith is 45. Model Naomi Campbell is 42. Actress Anna Belnap is 40. Actress Alison Eastwood is 40. Singer Donell Jones is 39. Actor Sean Gunn is 38. Actress A.J. Langer is 38. Actress Ginnifer Goodwin is 34. Actress Maggie Q is 33. Olympic gold-medal speed skater Apolo Anton Ohno is 30.

Thought for Today: “Pride is an admission of weakness; it secretly fears all competition and dreads all rivals.” — Bishop Fulton J. Sheen, American religious leader (1895-1979).

FROM THE BIBLE

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin’s name was Mary. Luke 1:26-27. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

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