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OPINION | OTHER THOUGHTS

Rape: Military Justice Is A Joke

THE STAR-LEDGER, New Jersey, N.J. (Nov. 13): If it were mostly men being raped in our military, it's hard to imagine the Pentagon fighting for its farcical in-house prosecutions, in which perpetrators are almost never punished.

But that's where we stand today, as one in five women serving our country suffers sexual assault, and fewer than 6 percent of their attackers are brought to justice.

The need to remove these cases from the military chain of command is clear. Yet Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand of New York is still facing an uphill battle to pass this reform, thanks to stiff opposition from the Pentagon. As the Senate prepares to take up the issue in coming weeks, she's taking her case to the public.

Sexual assault cases should be tried by impartial military prosecutors, she argues, instead of allowing the accuser's commander to oversee the investigation and decide whether anyone should be charged.

That's basic common sense. Yet top brass refuses to budge. In response, she invited former U.S. Marine Ben Klay, the husband of a rape victim, to testify on Capitol Hill last week. His wife, Ariana Klay, was a Marine herself, and an Iraq War veteran — but whose perspective do you think carries more weight with these military men?

Ben Klay described how his wife was assigned to the commander of an elite Marine Corps unit who said she deserved whatever harassment she got because she wore makeup and running shorts. . . .

Klay recalled finding himself seated in a room beside one of his wife's rapists, who was granted immunity so he could testify that he and his accomplice were innocent. Even when Klay was called to testify, not a single question was asked to help prosecute the attackers, he said.

That's what passed for justice for his wife.

"I'm lucky I married someone so strong," he said, choking up as Gillibrand and Sen. Rand Paul, Republican of Kentucky, stood by. "Even though she still suffers."

And as long as we require military commanders to prosecute their own top warriors, that's what will pass as justice for every other victim, too.

OUR LETTER POLICY

The PRESS & DAKOTAN encourages its readers to write letters to the editor, and it asks that a few simple guidelines be followed.

■ Please limit letters to 300 words or less. Letters should deal with a single subject, be of general interest and state a specific point of view. Letters are edited with brevity, clarity and newspaper style in mind.

■ In the sense of fairness and professionalism, the PRESS & DAKOTAN will accept no letters attacking private individuals or businesses.

■ Specific individuals or entities addressed in letters may be given the opportunity to read the letter prior to publication and be allowed to answer the letter in the same issue.

■ Only signed letters with writer's full name, address and daytime phone number for verification will be accepted. Please mail to: Letters, 319 Walnut, Yankton, SD 57078, drop off at 319 Walnut in Yankton, fax to 665-1721 or email to views@yankton.net.

ON THIS DATE

By The Associated Press

Today is Thursday, Nov. 14, the 318th day of 2013. There are 47 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On Nov. 14, 1862, during the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln gave the go-ahead for Maj. Gen. Ambrose Burnside's plan to capture the Confederate capital of Richmond; the resulting Battle of Fredericksburg proved a disaster for the Union.

On this date: In 1851, Herman Melville's novel "Moby-Dick; Or, The Whale" was first published in the United States.

In 1881, Charles J. Guiteau went on trial for assassinating President James A. Garfield. (Guiteau was convicted and hanged the following year.)

In 1889, inspired by Jules Verne, *New York World* reporter Nellie Bly (Elizabeth Cochrane) set out to travel around the world in less than 80 days. (She made the trip in 72 days.) Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of independent India, was born.

In 1910, Eugene B. Ely became the first aviator to take off from a ship as his Curtiss pusher rolled off a sloping platform on the deck of the scout cruiser *USS Birmingham* off Hampton Roads, Va.

In 1922, the British Broadcasting Co. began its domestic radio service.

In 1940, during World War II, German planes destroyed most of the English town of Coventry.

In 1944, Tommy Dorsey and his orchestra recorded "Opus No. 1" for RCA Victor.

In 1969, Apollo 12 blasted off for the moon.

In 1970, a chartered Southern Airways DC-9 crashed while trying to land in Huntington, W.Va., killing all 75 people on board, including the Marshall University football team and its coaching staff.

In 1972, the Dow Jones Industrial Average closed above the 1,000 level for the first time, ending the day at 1,003.16.

In 1986, the Securities and Exchange Commission imposed a \$100 million penalty against inside-trader Ivan F. Boesky and barred him from working again in the securities industry.

In 1997, a jury in Fairfax, Va., decided that Pakistani national Aimal Khan Kasi should get the death penalty for gunning down two CIA employees outside agency headquarters.

Ten years ago: John Kerry became the second Democratic hopeful to opt out of public financing for his presidential run, following the example of rival Howard Dean. A third person died following an outbreak of hepatitis A at a Chi-Chi's Mexican restaurant at the Beaver Valley Mall outside Pittsboro.

Five years ago: A lunar probe from India made a planned crash-landing onto the surface of the moon.

Space shuttle Endeavour and a crew of seven blasted into the night sky, bound for the international space station. Dr. Adrian Kantrowitz, the cardiac surgeon who performed the first U.S. heart transplant in 1967, died in Ann Arbor, Mich. at age 90.

One year ago: President Barack Obama held his first news conference since winning a second term. He challenged congressional Republicans to let taxes rise on the wealthiest Americans, saying that would ease the threat of another recession as the nation faced the "fiscal cliff" of expiring tax breaks and across-the-board spending cuts scheduled to take effect at the start of 2013. Marine Gen. John Allen said he would "fully cooperate" with an investigation into communications he had with Florida socialite Jill Kelley. (The inquiry came after Kelley complained about emails sent to her by Paula Broadwell, the woman whose affair with retired Army Gen. David Petraeus led to his resignation as CIA director.) Israel said it had killed the leader of Hamas' military wing in a wave of airstrikes it launched in response to days of rocket fire out of Hamas-ruled Gaza. Baseball's Cy Young Awards went to Tampa Bay's David Price in the American League and R.A. Dickey of the New York Mets in the National League.

Today's Birthdays: Former U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali is 91. Actress Kathleen Hughes is 85. Former MLB All-Star Jimmy Piersall is 84. Former NASA astronaut Fred Haise is 80. Jazz musician Ellis Marsalis is 79. Composer Wendy Carlos is 74. Writer P.J. O'Rourke is 66. Zydeco singer-musician Buckwheat Zydeco is 66. Britain's Prince Charles is 65. Rock singer-musician James Young (Styx) is 64. Singer Stephen Bishop is 62. Blues musician Anson Funderburgh is 59. Pianist Yanni is 59. Former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is 59. Presidential adviser Valerie Jarrett is 57. Actress Laura San Giacomo is 52. Actor D.B. Sweeney is 52. Rapper Reverend Run (Run-DMC) is 49. Actor Patrick Warburton is 49. Rock musician Nic Dalton is 49. Country singer Rockie Lynne is 49. Pop singer Jeanette Jurado (Exposé) is 48. Retired MLB All-Star pitcher Curt Schilling is 47. Rock musician Brian Yale is 45. Rock singer Butch Walker is 44. Actor Josh Duhamel is 41. Rock musician Travis Barker is 38. Contemporary Christian musician Robby Shaffer is 38. Actor Brian Dietzen is 36. Rapper Shyheim is 36. Rock musician Tobin Esperance (Papa Roach) is 34. Actress Olga Kurylenko is 34. Actor Graham Patrick Martin is 22.

Thought for Today: "I never gave away anything without wishing I had kept it; nor kept anything without wishing I had given it away." — Louise Brooks, American actress (born this date in 1906, died 1985).

FROM THE BIBLE

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live." John 11:25. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis



Writer's Block

Seasons And Cycles

BY LORETTA SORENSEN  
P&D Correspondent

My hubby has long said, "If it wasn't for the winter weather that follows, I would say I love Fall best."

That statement is likely to resonate with the majority of us residing here in the Northern Plains.

Still, while we know we'll soon face winter head on, we also know there's a spring of renewal and summer of bounty that will return again, too.

It seems to me that life often follows these same kinds of cycles.

Seasons of abundance and ease are always followed by a time when those experiences begin to fade and life carries us forward to events yet unknown. Not all of them can be a "walk in the park."

Just as some winters or periods of unpleasant weather seem to drag on and on, life's challenges can often appear unending. Still, we know, nothing is forever.

As we watch the brutal results of intense winter weather that recently wreaked havoc in western South Dakota, I can only imagine what thoughts are spinning in the minds of those who live there. Such early snow — so very much of it! So many hardships and losses, and winter hasn't even officially begun.

So how do we respond to these kinds of life experiences? Hopefully with hope!

Not the Pollyanna kind of "ignore it and it will go away," but with the knowledge that challenges we encounter are an opportunity to learn and grow. We reach deep inside to find our way through the difficulty. Sometimes, we are blessed to lock arms with others around us and face the challenge together.

Many times in my life, I've failed to cling to hope. Overwhelmed by life's storms, my grasp on hope weakened or failed me altogether. My



Loretta SORENSEN

focus gravitated to the icy cold of disappointment, fear, hopelessness.

Not many people know that I once dreamed of having 12 children. When I began dating the man who would become my husband, I modified that number, thinking 6 children would be acceptable. (He quickly agreed!)

Our first child wasn't even one year old when we learned we may never have others. A time of intense "winter" for me.

At the time, it seemed that terrible "storm" would never be over. And though the 6 children never materialized, we were eventually blessed with one more daughter. She and her husband have given us three grandchildren.

Through those early experiences I learned that dreams that often accompany the "summer" of our lives, don't always materialize. That's an "icy" reality.

However, by the time the second child (second daughter) came along, I had more appreciation for those easy, sunny days that typically fall between each "winter."

So, whenever winter's frigid fingers begin taking hold of eastern South Dakota, I'll reach for my comforting blanket of hope. When storms and freezing temperatures force me to cancel plans or hover over a heat source, I'll close my eyes and envision summer's radiant warmth and quietly whisper that little four-letter word: hope.

Loretta Sorensen, of rural Yankton, began her writing career in the early 1980s, developing her first stories about her husband's work with their Belgian draft horse teams. Working from her home office, Loretta now produces copy and photos for 20-plus national and regional publications as well as producing two quarterly newsletters.

A Letter To The President

BY LEONARD PITTS JR.  
Tribune Content Agency

Dear Mr. President:  
You lied.

More often than anyone can count you've said some version of the following in defense of the Affordable Care Act: "If you like your health-care plan, you'll be able to keep your health-care plan, period."

We learn now that perhaps as many as 2 million Americans cannot, in fact, do that under the new law. It requires that health insurance cover a comprehensive range of benefits, though more modest policies can be grandfathered in, provided those policies have not been significantly changed since the ACA was enacted in 2010. Anyone whose policy fails to meet one of those two criteria must get a new one.

So what you said was incorrect, and that's bad enough. You made matters worse in a Nov. 4 speech in which you claimed you didn't say what you did.

"What we said," you told the audience, "was, you can keep it if it hasn't changed since the law passed." The Pants on Fire rating that you got from PolitiFact was richly deserved.

It is hardly news that presidents lie. Bill Clinton parsed an intransitive verb to hide his dalliance with a White House intern, George W. Bush claimed he never advocated "stay the course" in Iraq, Ronald Reagan swore he never traded weapons for hostages to arm the Contras in Nicaragua, Lyndon Johnson escalated U.S. involvement in Vietnam by claiming American warships had suffered unprovoked attacks in the Gulf of Tonkin, Richard Nixon said, "I'm not a crook."

But surely you understand by now that you are not just another president. You are, rather, the embodiment of a movement, Exhibit A in the argument that a new America is taking shape before our eyes. So, the rules and expectations are different for you. No one who has been buoyed by that movement, no citizen of that new America, wants to see you acting like just another president, any more than anyone wanted to see Jackie Robinson strike out at bat or Neil Armstrong stumble while stepping off the lunar lander.



Leonard PITTS

Is that fair? No. So what?

You are probably familiar with the political axiom that one campaigns in poetry, but governs in prose. That's true enough, ordinarily, something voters understand, if only instinctively. But the byproduct of embodying a movement is that when you promise poetry, people expect a little poetry. This latest episode amounts to torpid prose.

It is worth noting that people maintain a deep reservoir of goodwill toward you, even now. And it says something that even after three years of strident, hypocritical, extreme and often delusional Republican pounding, even after bizarre comparisons with the Third Reich and slavery, even after claims that death panels are coming after Nana, the ACA remains popular with nearly half the American public.

This is something of a political miracle. But you stretch your luck beyond breaking if you think you can continue to defy gravity while absorbing both the wounds Republicans inflict upon you and those you needlessly inflict upon yourself.

The botched rollout of the ACA with its amateur-hour website was bad enough. Now there's this. An observer can only wonder what you were thinking. Did you believe the lie would not be discovered? Did you think the political gain was worth the embarrassment? Did you not know enough about the law to realize this bomb was ticking?

None of those scenarios reflects well upon you.

Thankfully, you have apologized and promised, albeit without specifics, to provide relief for people who now need to buy insurance despite your blanket promises. That needs to happen yesterday. Your legacy teeters here, Mr. President, Jackie Robinson waiting for the pitch, Neil Armstrong poised above lunar soil. Two words of advice:

Do better.

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

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YOUR LETTERS

A Brush With Kindness

Bill and Debbi Lippert, Yankton  
We wish to express our thanks to everyone involved in our recent Brush With Kindness project through Habitat for Humanity.

Thank you to all of the people who generously contributed their time, resources and brought food for the crew. We are forever touched by the Kindness shown to us during this project.

ABOUT THIS PAGE

■ The View page provides a forum for open discussion of issues and interests affecting our readers. Initialed editorials represent the opinion of the writer, but not necessarily that of the PRESS & DAKOTAN. Bylined columns represent the view of the author. We welcome letters on current topics. Questions regarding the Views page should be directed to Kelly Hertz at views@yankton.net.