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Fighting the bum rap

Carl T. Rowan

WASHINGTON — My column today is about the unpleasant business of having to go to court to plead not guilty to the possession of an unregistered handgun, which was used when my property was violated on June 14.

For readers who wonder what is going on, I offer without further comment two statements that I issued at the courthouse: "Ladies and gentlemen, I hope that one of you will nominate me for the Guinness Book of Records, because I surely am the subject — or victim — of the longest, most incredible coverage of a non-existent 'misdemeanor' in the history of American jurisprudence."

"After six weeks of 'water drop' torture by District of Columbia officials, I finally have been charged with the possession of a gun that I never owned and thus had no responsibility to register — a gun that still belongs to my son, Carl T. Rowan Jr., a former FBI agent who was told at least twice by District of Columbia police authorities that the law did not require him to register the handgun at issue and, further, that they would not allow him to register it voluntarily."

"District police officials confirmed to my lawyer and to the *Washington Post* on Friday that the Police Department's policy is that all law enforcement people are always told routinely that they are not required to register firearms, and that no paperwork is generated in such cases."

"Still, I stand here today not only as the victim of a 2:00 a.m. violation of my property and my privacy, but as the 'villain' in a terrible incident that has turned fairness and the law upside down and made my family and me the sufferers anew."

"I ask you to remember that often in 1987, and in the wee hours of June 14, 1988, several people scaled my eight-foot fence, bringing drugs, beer and the filthiest signs of sexual activity to my property. At least four of the June 14 intruders escaped and are free of criminal charges, although Second District policemen have ascertained their names. The two intruders who were arrested on my property have been told that charges against them will be dropped if they give 40 hours of unspecified 'community service.'"

"A man who repeatedly made harassing telephone calls to my home, fraudulently used my name and the U.S. mails to order numerous magazines and book subscriptions and applied for burial plots for my family at the Fort Lincoln Cemetery, is so far charged with nothing. A prosecutor in the U.S. Attorney's office told me that 'resources are limited' and that 'priority must go to murderers and drug dealers.'"

"Yet, I, the victim of all this, am to be prosecuted on a legal technicality."

"All I did in the dark morning hours of June 14 was to use what was lawfully available to me to protect my home and my wife. Some of you in media are repeating over and over the sensational lie that I rushed out Rambo style to my jacuzzi, or swimming pool, to shot a 'dripping-wet teen-age skinny dipper.' I implore you to get the facts from the U.S. Attorney's office and report them. You will learn that I never confronted anyone in my pool/jacuzzi area. I was confronted by intruder Ben Smith in deep darkness, some 150 feet away from the jacuzzi, out of sight of the pool area. I shot the intruder in the wrist at a spot immediately outside of my patio door as he tried to force his way into my family room. "Investigators from the U.S. Attorney's office and crime scene investigators found incontrovertible evidence that what I say is true. That is why the U.S. Attorney decided immediately not to charge me with any crime."

"So the 'jacuzzi vigilante,' Bernhard Goetz, 'Rambo' nonsense spread and was repeated by ideological fanatics, and much of the media has done me and my family a grave injustice. The incredible and often inaccurate press coverage has exposed my family to new levels of harassment, new death threats."

"I wish with all my heart that you were gathered here to ask me whether my scholarship program will in 1989 give black teen-agers more than the \$208,000 that went to 52 youngsters last May 11. I would rather now put my money in to Project Excellence instead of squandering it to fight a bum rap. But we all must deal with what fate brings, and I will."

"I am aware that I am the pawn in a brutal game between those who favor and those who oppose handgun control."

"I want to make it clear that I still favor a strict national law to control the availability of handguns to those who are not law enforcement officers. But we do not have such a national law and therefore we must live within the boundaries that exist."

"My boundaries include Virginia, where anyone can buy a gun at any time — Virginia from where my wife was telephoned eight days ago by a woman who said that a contract had been put out on my life running into 1989. Somehow we have to deal with such threats."

"There is no hypocrisy in advocating a national policy which no one can get through the Congress and then living according to policies that exist."



A calmer, rational approach

Colman McCarthy

WASHINGTON — Before lecturing citizens on what to eat, Surgeon General C. Everett Koop ought to avoid choking them. His 712-page report on nutrition and disease is a hard-to-swallow bulk of informational lard, with a shelf date long expired.

It's old knowledge that Koop provides: American diets are too fatty, salty and sugary and people are dying to eat what prematurely kills them. He's among the last to endorse the established way: choose "vegetables, fruits, whole-grain foods, fish, poultry, lean meats and low-fat dairy products." And his hype that the report is "a landmark in public health" is the intellectual equivalent of a bag of Cheetos washed down with Kool-Aid.

Koop is an assembler of information from several thousand past studies and reports. No supermarket has sufficient shelving for all the documentation published in the last 25 years on diet and disease. Compared with the customary federal temerity in confronting or regulating the meat, poultry, dairy and junk food industries, Koop may believe he's on the cutting edge of boldness by giving the nation what amounts to an anthology of old nutrition studies. Little critical thinking or fresh analysis is in the report.

By merciful coincidence, Koop's counsel arrives at the moment that another nutritional authority — legit — is on the scene. John Robbins, a Ben Lomond, Calif., psychotherapist, fulfills in "Diet For A New America" the promise he makes in the book's preface: to "show you how your food choices can be of tremendous benefit, not only to your own life, but to the less fortunate of the world as well. No self-deprivation is called for, but simply the understanding that the healthiest, tastiest and most nourishing way to eat is also the most economical, most compassionate, and

least polluting... You benefit, the rest of humankind benefits, the animals benefit, and so do the forests and rivers and the soil and the air and the oceans."

Leaving aside the question of why aren't Koop and his food feds writing with that kind of breadth and depth, Robbins has unique credibility. He is the son of Irv Robbins, the founding co-partner of Baskin-Robbins, now the world's largest ice-cream company. Born with a silver ice-cream spoon in his mouth — the family's swimming pool was shaped like an ice-cream cone — Robbins thought it normal to gorge a quart of ice cream at one sitting. He worked in the stores as a teen-ager and, being groomed, did junior management work. Having gone to Berkeley in the 1960s, plus a summer of civil-rights work in the South in 1965, Robbins spent his 20s figuring out that life was more than scooping ice-cream profits. He was on the way to learning the "health implications of consuming globs of frozen fat, sugar and chemicals." He would soon become aware, too, of the interconnectedness of food-eating and food-growing.

When offered the family business by his father, Robbins declined. He went on to do graduate work in nutrition and health. Now in his early 40s and with all financial ties to his family's ice-cream fortune severed, Robbins has written a book that is the pioneering match of Aldo Leopold's "Sand County Almanac," John Rawls' "A Theory of Justice," and Rachel Carson's "Silent Spring."

Like those volumes, "Diet For A New America," is rich with facts that are astounding but wouldn't be if the federal guardians of public health were on the job:

- Water needed to produce a pound of wheat: 25 gallons.
- Water needed to produce a pound of meat: 2,500 gallons.
- Training in nutrition during four years of medical school by the average U.S. doctor: 2½ hours.
- The dairy industry tells us: whole milk is 3½ percent fat.
- The dairy industry doesn't tell us: the 3½ percent figure is based on weight, and most of the weight in milk is water. The amount of calories as fat in whole milk is 50 percent.
- The feeding of antibiotics to livestock is banned by the European Economic Community. The feeding of antibiotics to U.S. livestock is fully supported by American meat and drug companies.
- Cost of hamburger meat if water used by the meat industry was not subsidized by tax money: \$35 a pound.
- 200 million lbs. of meat are imported annually to the United States from Central America while the average Central American eats less meat in a year than the American house cat.
- 1,000 species become extinct annually due to destroyed rain forests, much of it cleared to graze cattle killed for U.S. meat-eaters.

By providing that kind of information — which Koop doesn't — not a preachy line is needed by Robbins. Facts scream, not him. His philosophy is Albert Schweitzer's: reverence for life. He is Franciscan in seeking cooperation with God's world of nature, not dominance. His beliefs are those of Thoreau, "I make myself rich by making my wants few."

Everett Koop's dietary message is: Stop doing what's bad. Robbins' is the opposite: Try doing what's right. Koop says: If you don't stop, you'll die. Robbins says: If you try what's right, you'll live.

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The following editorial appeared in Wednesday's Baltimore Sun:

Given a chance to address the Soviet Union's top military officers, Secretary of Defense Frank C. Carlucci delivered a needed message where it counted. So far as the United States can determine, he declared, the supposed switch in Soviet military doctrine from offense to defense is evidenced only in words, not action. He complained of S-18 Soviet intercontinental rockets in first-strike formation and a Soviet navy whose reach threatened an "island" country like the United States. But his greatest emphasis was on the configuration of Soviet ground forces in central Europe.

"We have difficulty in reconciling a 'defensive doctrine' with what we see in Soviet force structure and operational strategy as an emphasis on the offensive, especially surprise and maneuver," he declared. "I refer to such things as the operational maneuver group concept, forward-based bridging units, and the heavy emphasis on tanks and artillery. We see no shift of emphasis to the kind of forces typically associated with defense."

This is military language military men understand. The 200 bemedaled generals and admirals in Carlucci's audience know very well that Warsaw Pact forces outnumber NATO, that they are

heavily weighted with armor for offensive operations and that they are massed close to main corridors of attack. No doubt many are resisting Kremlin party chief Mikhail S. Gorbachev's proclaimed intention to have armed forces "sufficient to repulse a possible aggression but not sufficient for the conduct of offensive operations."

Like Gorbachev's efforts to restructure the Soviet economic system (perestroika) and open up the Soviet political system (glasnost), the attempt to switch to a defensive military doctrine represents an upheaval against the established order. Gorbachev has to convince or coerce the military to accept smaller budgets, abandon weapons systems and the notion that Eastern Europe can be held with defensive

forces. In Moscow's "New Thinking," Soviet security is best served if the economy is strong and the West does not feel so threatened that it engages in a technological arms race the Soviet Union is bound to lose.

Viewed in that context, the blunt Carlucci speech should be welcomed by Gorbachev. Despite Kremlin assertions that Soviet offensive forces on the central European front might be reduced asymmetrically and even unilaterally, U.S. intelligence has noticed no significant change in arms production, deployment or maneuvers. At such a moment, Soviet military brass needed to be reminded that conventional force negotiations will succeed only when Mr. Gorbachev's defensive doctrine becomes reality, not just theory.

the small society

by Yates and Brickman

