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Frontiersman

Facing the truth, however great the cost.

December 2008

A Confession

Jim Sullivan

I'm a happily married man who loves his wife dearly. However, I care passionately for another. She's the public library! Yes, I'm owning up to this affair. Perhaps some of you knew. Certainly, my affection for this other has been apparent. A few of my friends have accepted it. Others disapprove. Frankly, I don't care. I've done nothing of which I'm ashamed. Besides, as some famous person once said, "The heart knows not its reasons."

Okay, the fact is, I'm in love with an institution housed in a building made of bricks and mortar. I can't put my arms around it. I can't even kiss it, caress it, or utter sweet words to it. But I'm quite fond of that structure nonetheless. My heart beats rapidly whenever I approach that facility. My pulse always quickens when I'm inside it. On occasion there, my breath grows short. And I can never get it out of my mind. If that isn't love, then what is it?

At night, or during the daytime, when I'm not near this love of mine, I hear it gently whispering in my ear: "Come see me. Step into my reading room. Look at my tomes for as long as you want." Those words are sirens' calls. I can't resist them. And I don't. I'm complete only when I'm with her. Obviously, I'm head over heels in love. So what's a guy going to do?

My wife, bless her heart, is understanding. She knows all about this other attachment of mine, and guess what? My spouse doesn't see the library as threatening.

Of course, I haven't told my mother yet. She might have a different slant on this attachment. But, then, she's a retired teacher. I can still recall her telling me, when I was a youngster, to "Read, read, read!" So how could she object?

Not surprisingly, I give the library little gifts from time to time to demonstrate my affection. Sometimes I donate new books, other times small financial contributions and, once in a while, used books for which the library staff is looking. In such ways, I show how much I care.

When I'm at the library, I love to roam her stacks. And boy, is she ever stacked! Roving around her, I take her books in hand, feel their hard-bound covers, admire their pretty colored dust jackets, and read their immortal pages. In this manner, I fall more deeply in love with her.

Though the library structure is a tad wide at the stairwells, her two stories are extremely well built from top to bottom, front to back. Her portals are wide opening, windows clean, and skylights admitting of bright, life-giving sunlight. And her roof keeps out precipitation. In summer she's cool and in winter she's warm. Moreover, with her abundant wares, books, magazines, newspapers, music, art, videos, and computers on the internet, this institution is endearing not only to me but to all who know her.

Best of all, I don't have to be silent, or even relatively quiet, in her presence. But I must confess, dear reader, the library and I have been, well, on intimate terms for more years than I care to count. Consequently, one day soon, I'll have to confess this to my spiritual leader. He might not be so understanding. On the other hand, he might care mightily for the library, too. Then I will have a jealous man on my hands. I'm speaking of myself, of course.

I'm well aware that the library has a past. Its branch libraries are all over the community. They're responsive, as they should be, to the main public library about which I care so much. But I understand. All relationships bring with them some baggage from the past.

I must tell you that I have absolutely no desire to break off this relationship. That's despite what other people might think. My love for the public library shall go with me to my grave! ∞

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Training Camps

Sam Aurelius Milam III

In November of this year, I watched a movie called *Take the Lead*. It was about using dance instruction to improve the attitudes of some high school students who were spending a lot of counterproductive time in Detention. Naturally, the movie included various scenes of routine activities in and around the school. I noticed that, at the front door, everybody went through a very thorough, Nazi-style checkpoint. Nobody seemed to be in the least concerned. Indeed, the checkpoint wasn't even a part of the plot. It was just a part of the scenery. The school had walls. The school had windows. The school had teachers. The school had lockers. The school had a Nazi-style checkpoint. It was a normal, routine, and unremarked part of the situation. So, the brainwashing continues.¹

I can hear the whining now. "But we have to make the schools safe, for the children!" Here's a better idea. Make the schools voluntary. We shouldn't be forced to send our children to school. It should be voluntary. Then, each family can decide for itself if the risk is worth the benefit. Kids can attend school or not, based on the outcome of that judgment. The trouble-makers probably wouldn't bother to attend school at all. They'd be out on the streets, helping to entertain the cops. That's probably a better use of their time and talents anyway because, then, the cops wouldn't have so much time available to harass the rest of us. They'd be too busy dealing with the kids.²

I can hear the whining now. "But the children have to be educated!" What are they being taught when they're forced, on the threat of punishment, to attend a Nazi-style political indoctrination machine that masquerades as a school? What do they learn when they go through that Nazi-style checkpoint? See footnote 1. Of course, training in the schools might be good practice for obedience in the corporations, later.

I can hear the whining now. "But what are we to do?" There are a lot of things. If we fol-

1 See [Enemies of Liberty](#), on page 1 of the February 2004 issue.

2 See [Rich Man, Poor Man, Beggar Man, Thief: A Satirical Essay](#). Copies are available upon request.

lowed my first suggestion, and made the whole thing voluntary, then kids would attend schools that suited them. In some schools, kids might be given a weapon every time they walked through the door — that is, unless they were already armed when they got there. If that's too extreme — and arming the kids is a lot less extreme than brainwashing them — then there's a less extreme alternative. Add marksmanship to the curriculum.³ Any kid who wants to take the course can take it. Any kid who passes the requirements is qualified to carry a gun. Anybody who tries to prevent him from doing so is liable to be shot. If his parents don't like that then they don't have to send him to that school. They can send him to a different school, or not send him to school at all.

I can hear the whining now. "But guns are dangerous!" More students are killed by football games than by guns.⁴ If danger was the reason for banning the guns then it would be an even better reason for banning football. You know why that doesn't happen? Because the cops aren't afraid of being confronted by angry citizens who're armed with footballs. The whole "security" thing isn't to protect the kids. It's to disarm any and all possible threats to the cops.

I can hear the whining now. "But you can't give guns to kids!" Why not? My father gave my first rifle to me when I was in high school.⁵ The dastardly deed failed, somehow, to turn me into a serial killer. I didn't try to assassinate the Principal. I didn't even try to assassinate the football coach.

Some people don't like guns. Well, I don't like brainwashing kids, stupid teachers, cops and Nazi-style checkpoints in the schools, and mandatory attendance at government training camps (AKA schools). I'm also pretty tired of people who whine at the ideas that we ought to be able to defend ourselves and that learning to do so ought to begin when we're young. ¶

3 See [Teach Them Responsibility](#), on page 1 of the June 1999 issue.

4 See [Reprint: Fatality Fumble: Football Kills As Many Students As School Shootings](#), on page 1 of the December 2000 issue.

5 I still have that rifle to this very day.

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Letters to the Editor

Sam:

Re this remark on the November newsletter:

“You know that you’re living in a police state when you realize that you’re more likely to be arrested than you are to be mugged.”

I checked the FBI’s Uniform Crime Reports at <http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2007/arrests/index.html>. In 2007, the FBI estimated that 14,209,365 arrests occurred nationwide for all offenses (except traffic violations), of which 597,447 were for violent crimes, and 1,610,088 were for property crimes.

Law enforcement made more arrests for drug abuse violations (an estimated 1.8 million arrests, or 13.0 percent of the total number of arrests) than for any other offense in 2007. (Based on Table 29.)

Law enforcement arrests three times as many people for drug law violations (which are mostly victimless crimes such as possession) than for violent crimes. And this is not counting all the people arrested for other victimless crimes, such as prostitution, gun possession, and curfew violations. Now you figure, if law enforcement were to put all the effort it currently puts into arresting people for victimless crimes instead into apprehending violent criminals, the police could probably really clean up crimes that have real victims. All this indicates the distorted priorities in the USA.

—Joseph; Northridge, California

It also says something about the cops. That is, they’d prefer to harass defenseless people than to confront somebody who might actually be willing and able to defend himself.

On the other hand, maybe it’s just professional courtesy. That is, maybe they just don’t want to interfere with the normal activities of their own kind, other criminals. —editor

Is this true? I couldn’t authenticate.

Read this slowly. Let it sink in.

Absolutely The Funniest Joke Ever ... ON US!

Does anybody out there have any memory of the reason given for the establishment of the DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY during the Carter Administration?

Anybody? Anything? No? Didn’t think so!

Bottom line, we’ve spent several hundred billion dollars in support of an agency the reason for which not one person who reads this can re-

member.

Ready? It was very simple, and at the time everybody thought it very appropriate.

The Department of Energy was instituted August 4, 1977, TO LESSEN OUR DEPENDENCE ON FOREIGN OIL. HEY, PRETTY EFFICIENT, HUH?

AND NOW IT’S 2008, 31 YEARS LATER, AND THE BUDGET FOR THIS NECESSARY DEPARTMENT IS AT \$24.2 BILLION A YEAR, THEY HAVE 16,000 FEDERAL EMPLOYEES, AND APPROXIMATELY 100,000 CONTRACT EMPLOYEES AND LOOK AT THE JOB THEY HAVE DONE! THIS IS WHERE YOU SLAP YOUR FOREHEAD AND SAY “WHAT WAS I THINKING?”

Ah yes, good ole bureaucracy. And now we are going to turn the Banking system over to them? God Help us.

—Forwarded by Steve, of Fremont, California

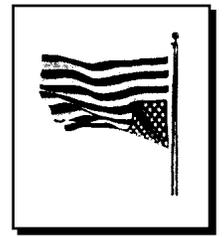
You’ve observed a specific instance of a general principle. I mentioned it, back in 1990, when I wrote my [essay about the limited liability of corporations](#).

... if a regulatory agency were ever to succeed in regulating an industry into a safe condition, then the agency would find its own usefulness diminished. Rather, any such agency will be far more successful at self justification if it can demonstrate a need for detailed and prolific audits, inspections, and investigations. An occasional industrial accident is a Godsend, irrefutably justifying expansion of the agency’s manpower and authority. The justification process relies upon the existence of problems. The threat of accidents is the regulatory industry’s lifeblood. Regulatory agencies don’t have any incentive whatsoever to prevent the industry from being dangerous.

At the time, I was writing about the Nuclear Regulatory Commission but the principle is general. Consider, for example, that when a doctor cures a patient, he loses a customer.¹ Given that, what should you logically expect from the medical establishment? From the point of view of the institutions that provide medical services, the best possible malady is one that is incurable, doesn’t kill the patient, and has symptoms that are intolerable if not treated. Such a malady provides great job security for the medical establishment. It shouldn’t be surprising that there are a lot of such maladies. —editor

¹ October 13, 1992, [Milam’s Notes](#)

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Nation in Distress

If you started eliminating legislation purely at random, then you'd have about a 99% chance of improving things.

—December 13, 1978

[*Milam's Notes*](#)



Acknowledgments

My thanks to the following: SantaClara Bob; Lady Jan the Voluptuous; my mother; Dewey and Betty; Joseph, of Northridge, California; and Sir Donald the Elusive. —editor

Court Quotes

From *Humor in the Court* and *More Humor in the Court*, by Mary Louise Gilman, editor of the *National Shorthand Reporter*. Forwarded by Don G.

Q The truth of the matter is that you were not an unbiased, objective witness, isn't it? You too were shot in the fracas?

A No, sir. I was shot midway between the fracas and the naval. ∞

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- Inflation — Cutting money in half without damaging the paper
- Myth — A female moth
- Mosquito — An insect that makes you like flies better
- Secret — Something you tell to one person at a time
- Toothache — A pain that drives you to extraction
- Yawn — An honest opinion openly expressed
- Raisin — A grape with a sunburn ∞

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—Sam Aurelius Milam III, editor

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