

Food for Thought (Or Random McNuggets)

By Dennis Knight

The topic at hand is an attractive one indeed, and I've had seven days to think about food, when what I needed was seven days to not think about food. Nevertheless, I sat this morning at my keyboard, ready to focus on rutabagas and parsnips, and my thoughts began to stray...

... Why, and when, did it become so easy to filibuster in the Senate? Shouldn't they at least be required to read *Pilgrim's Progress*, or *The Scarlet Letter*, or the dictionary?

When did it become the singular mission of the party in the minority to make the President fail, and how can it be good for America? And when did they scuttle the term, "the loyal opposition?"

Don't you hate the term, "politically correct?" It started innocently enough as a way to get Americans to speak respectfully to and about each other, but it quickly became a pejorative for the cynical.

Moving on... If you have made such a place for yourself in society that you live in a gated community, shouldn't your teenaged son be safe enough to walk to the store and spend a little of his allowance on candy and a soda?

What is it like for a mother or father, regardless of social position, to have That Talk with a black son entering his teens, the talk that tells a boy never to run in public and to carry nothing in his hands lest he be thought to be stealing, or carrying a gun?

What cynical thing does it say about us as a society when we call a person's simple and unquestioned right to self protection the "Make My Day" law? And when and why did we entrust the authority for our defense to a volunteer neighborhood watchman with a gun?

What does it say about the television pawn broker rubbing an AK-47 to a lustrous shine, and adoring it on camera as a "beautiful lady?"

More food for thought... A headline in Sunday's *Denver Post** asks, "When lifers kill in prison, is it a waste to prosecute them?" On that, I guess the jury is still out.

Is it the war on drugs that makes the prison system in Colorado such an industry of growth? Private prison corporations have lobbyists in Denver pressing to maintain or strengthen sentencing guidelines to keep the industry expanding with a continuous flow of nonviolent offenders swept up in the war on drugs.

Will the drug war ever end? The current edition of *Time** reports our country has 760 prisoners per 100,000 citizens. The next highest is Brazil with 242. Japan has 93. Pat Robertson, that bastion of progressive liberal evangelism, on his TV Show, *The 700 Club*, accidentally told the truth this week when he declared the war on drugs a failure.

If we have three to ten times more of our people in jail than other civilized nations, aren't we trying to absorb back into society three to ten times more ex-convicts than anyone else? Try to put an ex-con to work anywhere, doing anything that won't send her, or him, back to prison.

... And finally, back to the topic at hand, what's for lunch?

**The Denver Post*, March 25, 2012

***TIME Magazine*, April 12, 2012