

## **POLITICS CAN CLOG THE ARTERIES THAT BRING CRIMINALS TO JUSTICE**

**November 5, 2002**

By the time you read this it will be in its final throes – the election that is. I for one will be happy to see it in much the same way I look forward to the end of deer season. I feel obligated to do my civic duty for both, whether it actually means anything or not. Ironic that they coincide at the same time of year.

There are a lot of issues to be addressed in the political field. The candidates are both prone and more adept at attacking their opponents' personal flaws than they are at informing the voters as to what they actually intend to do about obvious problems. One thing is obvious and that is they place getting elected above any conundrums facing the public.

New York's race for governor is a perfect example. Only one of the three leading contenders has no political record to defend, but he has no compunctions about attacking the records and personal character of the other two. He is notable for investing enough of his personal fortune in the race that combined with the others' expenses makes it New York's most expensive campaign to date.

One thing is sure in the case of Pataki and McCall – they are both owned lock stock and barrel by special interest groups. These groups cover the campaign expenses for them and expect special considerations in return. Golisano has perhaps the only positive stance in that he has provided his own financing.

I have had many random thoughts on recent events and regardless of how onerous they appear to the nation in general, some politicians try to use them for political gain. Catherine Kennedy Townsend has tried to use the sniper attacks to promote anti gun campaign rhetoric. She has one problem with this in that she is an outspoken critic of the death penalty. That will not make much political hay in Maryland where she is running for Governor.

One thing that puzzles me in much of the terrorist activity is the reluctance in labeling these individuals for what they are. I keep hearing the motive in the sniper attacks is as yet unknown. John Allen Williams, the accused, changed his name to Muhammad the day after 9/11. Really hard to figure out where he is coming from. What concerns me is now many millions more of his ilk we have firmly ensconced in this country already?

We heard the same song and dance from the government after the murder of American diplomat Lawrence Foley in Amman, Jordan. He was hit with eight bullets in a Muslim country and no attempt was made to empty his pockets. If you rule out robbery, what do you have left? Official word was it's too soon to say terrorists are to blame.

Despite several international terrorist incidents in various countries including the Philippines, Russia, India and Indonesia, the government is tiptoeing around making a connection between the perpetrators and the Muslim faith. Makes one wonder if political correctness is being carried a little too far.

All of the chaos and the attempts to deal with it validate a statement I made in this column awhile back. One cannot depend on the police to protect him or her from harm.

They are only effective in bringing the criminals to justice after the fact. The same goes for the best-intentioned laws enacted by the various legislatures.

Correct me if I am wrong, but did we not already have a plethora of laws designed to prevent just such a tragedy as the beltway sniper attacks? To my mind, no laws will prevent such activity. The only remedy is to make the consequences such that would-be transgressors are discouraged from violating same or in the event they violate them, insuring they never have another opportunity to repeat the offense.

The only glitch in any efforts to affect this is that the whole process, regardless of how heinous the crime, too often is mitigated for political reasons.