



Judge questions agents using the wrong tactics

A federal judge in Chicago has questioned the practice of federal agents who invent a crime, then recruit and arrest willing "helpers" to carry it out, saying the government may be singling out racial minorities for prosecution.

Judge Ruben Castillo noted that at least half the defendants from recent "stash house" operations in that area were black or hispanic. That in itself might not be evidence of racial profiling, but it begs the larger question of whether the government ought to be promoting crime this way.

Nationwide, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, known as ATF, says it has locked up more than 1,000 bad guys in the last 10 years using this technique. Most of them probably deserve to be in jail for something, but still, the idea of government agents inventing a crime and then hiring the criminals gives many people the creeps.

Defense attorneys argue that their peaceful clients would never have engaged in armed robbery without the urging of federal agents. Some federal prosecutors refuse to allow the operations in their districts. These stings barely skirt the definition of entrapment, if that.

And while the agency says it's aiming at

some of the most dangerous, violent criminals in the nation, the truth is, as with much of federal law enforcement, the henchmen who show up often are fairly small fish.

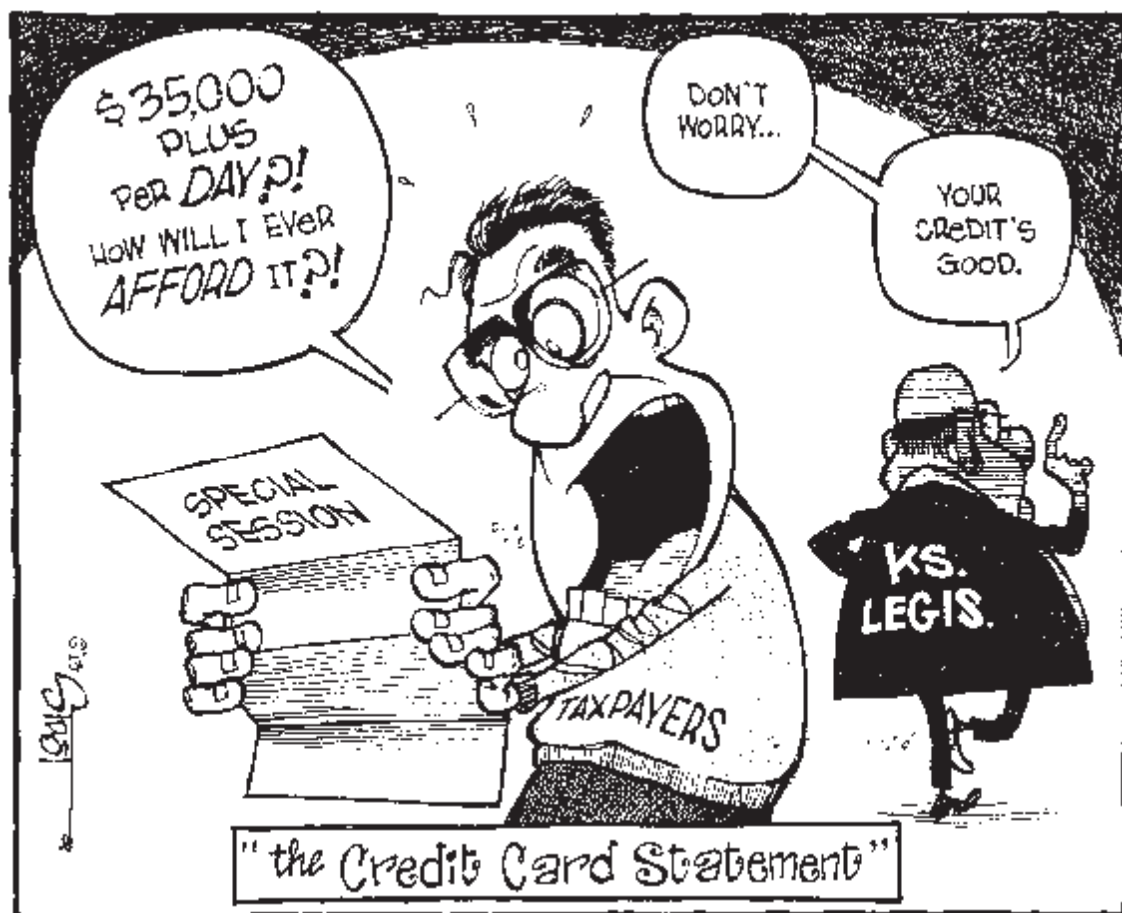
Perhaps the government is doing everyone a favor by getting these guys off the streets, but it seems to us that there ought to be a better way to catch crooks than by cooking up phony crimes. Sting operations are always a little suspect.

We'd prefer to see these agents focusing on crimes invented by the criminal, where the intent to break the law is clear from the start. The wife who wants her husband dead and agrees to hire a federal agent posing as a hit man, the burglar who sells his booty to an agent posing as a fence, the drug dealer who sells to an undercover cop, all know what they are doing is wrong.

So, perhaps, does the would-be robber who signs on for a job knocking off a fake "stash house" sheltering imaginary millions in illegal drugs. But would he have committed a similar crime without the government's enticing offer?

Surely, federal agents can spend their time dealing with people who commit real crimes.

- Steve Haynes



The Gardener

By Kay Melia



kvmelia@yahoo.com

Before we head out to the cantaloupe patch, I want to sincerely thank all of you who reacted to last week's column about the possibilities of Gardening 101. Literally dozens of you sent your stamp of approval for the creation of some kind of gardening instruction to our young high school students, and several of you forwarded the column to teachers, other school officials and school board members. Thank you!

Most of us enjoy a good cantaloupe, whether it comes from the store or our garden. Naturally, it tastes so much better from the garden because cantaloupe has a tendency to lose some of its flavor when shipped long distances. But growing our own cantaloupe isn't the easiest crop to produce in our garden and as a result, less than 25 percent of all backyard gardeners mess around with it.

In the first place, a cantaloupe seed is sometimes difficult to coax into the sprouting mode. You plant five seeds in a hill, and maybe only one emerges. There are two reasons for that. Number one, you planted the seed too deep. Never pile more than a half-inch of soil on a cantaloupe seed, and be sure the soil is moist.

Number two, cantaloupe seeds will not germinate in cool soils. The soil temperature should be a minimum of 65 degrees before you plant. Therefore, cantaloupe should be the last thing you plant in your High Plains garden, which also means that cantaloupe will probably be one of the last things you harvest, just before the watermelon. It generally takes from 75 to 80

days for melons to ripen.

And then there's the added problem of knowing when to harvest them, and that's important because a cantaloupe will not continue the ripening process after it has been picked, like your tomatoes do as they sit there on your kitchen counter. So, you should utilize the "slip" method of harvesting a melon at the time of its greatest flavor.

If you think the cantaloupe is ripe, carefully pick it up and give it a very slight tug. If it's ready, it will "slip" from the vine. If not, just lay it back down and try again tomorrow. Just because the color of the cantaloupe seems to indicate it is ready to harvest, be advised that different melon varieties show different color at maturity. Some will still have a few green streaks in the nice tan color when it's fully ripe. So try

the "slip" method several times when the melon is ripening.

I have always considered the cantaloupe as the dessert of the gardening season. The sweet, musky flavor can also be described as earthy, floral, spicy, or berryish.

A good cantaloupe is truly ambrosial. Years ago, I heard the story from a gardener that when cantaloupe are ripe and the aroma begins to drift over the neighborhood, the possibility of theft is extremely high.

A famous plant breeder agreed with that assessment. He said "when a cantaloupe is ripe, there is a huge increase in 'finger blight'... and there is no known cure."

Photo Policy

The Saint Francis Herald and Bird City Times wants to emphasize photos of people doing things in the community. If you know of an event or new happening that we should attend, please call 332-3162.

Please be sure to allow a couple of days' notice so we can be there.

Space in the paper is limited and so is the time of our staff, so we may not be able to get to every event. Because space is so limited, we cannot run team or group photos, any pictures of people lined up or of people passing checks, certificates and the like. (We will always try to make room for a story about any of these events, however.)

We do run wedding and engagement pictures and "mug" shots with stories and obituaries, when they are provided to us. Please remember that we need a clear, sharp picture. Dark or fuzzy prints will not work.

We cannot return photos unless you submit a self-addressed, stamped envelope with clear instructions for return. Other photos submitted may be picked up at our office within two weeks. After that, they will be disposed of.

Laser prints of photos which have run in The Herald or Times are available, first come, first served. Special-order laser prints of photos will be available at \$3 each.

Casey's Comments

By Casey McCormick



mccormickcasey@rocketmail.com

Baseball is America's game and I'm not embarrassed to say I love each. Both might be going through some hard times, but I have hope that our country and the sport will survive. There is too much good in both not to.

With the fall of Alex Rodriguez, Ryan Braun and a handful of other players, major league baseball is finally addressing the mess of steroids. By handing out heavy suspensions and hitting athletes where it counts - their wallets - real change can occur. Years of individuals cheating while others stayed clean may

finally come to an end.

It's like the alcohol or drug abuser who eventually hits bottom, realizing that life will continue to get more difficult and never better as long as poison keeps entering the system.

But, just as the addict can turn life around living "clean & sober," so will the great game of baseball be able to get back on track.

For decades men like Young, Ruth, Williams, DiMaggio, Musial, Mantle, Mays, Clemente, Yastrzemski, Jackson, Brett, Boggs, Ryan, Smith and

Glavin played the sport by the rules and with their God given talents. Those are the names that gave the game dignity and honor. Many current players do it the same way and future participants will restore the norm.

It is good to see things getting back to basics and fairness returning to the diamond. It's been a long time coming.

Committee appreciates help with St. Francis celebration

Letter to the Editor:

The dust is still settling even though the 125th St. Francis Celebration has waned, but what a celebration it was! St. Francis

Letter to the Editor

is 125 years young and this community and friends helped us prove just that.

The committee did an outstanding job organizing this event, but, it would have been impossible without the support of so many - be it funding, marketing, setting up, taking down, cooking, running - oh my - the list just goes on and on. You were all there to help make this a possibility.

Not only did we have such fantastic support with the

leg work of this wonderful weekend, but we also had a huge outpouring of participation. It was truly an awesome sight to see so much enthusiasm within the community!

As we promised, leftover funding will be set aside for another community event and to the new pool fund.

Thank you for your support and dedication to this fantastic community! Until next year....

The Celebrate St. Francis Committee

Honor Roll

New and renewed Herald subscriptions: Dr. Kenneth Stout, Benkelman, Neb.; Susie Paintin, Kit Carson, Colo.; Pete Davis, St. Francis; Clifford Page, Albany, Ore.; Ronald Smith, St. Francis; Gary Yonkey, Wheeler; Dale Crabtree, St. Francis; Troy Stimbart, Hays; Dale Faylor, St. Francis; Randy Rueb, St. Francis; Linda Carmichael, Lakewood, Colo.; Alan Wahrman, Hays; Olive Brent, Tullahoma, Tenn.; Harold Goodell, Martinez, Calif.; Richard Keller, Fresno, Calif.; Robert Ochsner, St. Francis; Theron Culwell, St. Francis; Perry Keller, St. Francis; Delbert Raile, St. Francis; Cale Reiger, St. Francis; Elmer Hilt, St. Francis; Robert Owens, St. Francis; Florence Peacock, St. Francis; Chris Hingst, St. Francis; Donna Moberly Ft. Collins, Colo.; Phyllis Bexley, St. Francis; Martin Hilt, St. Francis;

GOD SAYS He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. — John 12:48

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(785) 332-3162 Fax - (785) 332-3001

E-mail - sf.herald@nwkansas.com

STAFF

Karen Krien Editor/Publisher
Tim Burr Advertising Manager
Doug Sloper Office Manager
Margaret Bucholtz Columnist

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Peace Lutheran Church, AFLC 202 N. College Pastor Randy Nelson Church 332-2928 Parsonage 332-2312 Worship 9:30 a.m. Communion 1st Sunday



St. Francis Equity

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