

Why give a break to a rape suspect?



Lynn Orr

NOW ANOTHER judge, Louis E. Fairbrother of 50th District Court in Pontiac, is attempting to weaken the criminal sexual conduct statute even further with his latest ruling.

The Oakland County Prosecutor's office is asking the Court of Appeals to rule on whether a woman who was raped by a Pontiac policeman may be questioned about her conduct and alleged previous drinking habit.

Currently, rape victims cannot be questioned about their past under the Criminal Sexual Conduct laws, adopted by the Legislature a few years ago.

That law, applauded by feminists and law officers, made it easier to prosecute rape suspects. Before that law was adopted, only virgins and nuns had a chance at putting a rapist behind bars.

But judges and attorneys don't like the law. Fairbrother ruled that the woman could be questioned

about her activities and drinking by the defense attorney.

If the Court of Appeals rules in favor of the judge, the question will likely be appealed to the state Supreme Court.

IT'S GETTING tiresome to have to fight these battles over and over again.

Women are tired of the protection offered to criminals who perpetrate violence against women.

No other group of criminals is given the kind of protection afforded to those accused of criminal sexual conduct. If it's so damaging to reveal the name of an accused rapist before he has his first day in court, why don't we protect suspected murderers in like fashion?

Is it that being accused of rape is worse than being accused of murder? Or is it that we have less reason to trust women who accuse men of rape or other sexual crimes?

Is violence against women increasing at an alarming rate because the system doesn't take it seriously? Or is it a more drastic sign of the kind of society in which violence unleashes itself against the weakest target?

A GROUP of women unsuccessfully attempted to fight the battle head-on by asking for a night cur-

few on all men on a college campus. Their logic argued that men commit such crimes, so why should women have to bar themselves in at night for protection?

The request was denied. But it won't be the last. The support of men, including police, attorneys and judges, will have to be enlisted to stop the wave of violence. That support must include a serious response to violent crime.

Accused rapists must face the same court system as other accused criminals. Laws that permit suspected criminals to hide behind court benches must be abolished. Women must be permitted to accuse their attackers without fearing that any blemish in their past will be public information.

Women must be willing to take a stand against stupid, sexist jokes, comments, articles, films, television shows and anything else that demeans women.

Men must be willing to join in that battle. Nothing we will do can erase the terror and horror suffered by that elderly woman last week before her death.

But we must try to stop the violence before men and women gaze at each other with fear and suspicion at every turn, wondering if a wish to degrade is behind every leer or if that stranger is out to slit our throats.

From a dog's eye view . . .

I stepped into the dark back yard, spotted Beau the Head Poodle by the fence and said, "Come on in, old fellow. It's time for your birthday party."

Beau growled, "She-dog. Nor-nor-west by west. Twenty trees away."

I should explain: At 16, Beau is still interested in women. A scout of the old school, he still describes directions by the 64 points of the compass rather than the 0-360 degree system.

He doesn't measure distances in miles or meters, the way we do, but by major trees and bushes between one point and another.

"We have your favorites; O Head Poodle," said I. "Milk Bone biscuits with peanut butter, beer with raw egg. Come on in."

Beau condescended to come indoors. He played Kill the Rat with a fragrant old sock for a while, then joined us in the family room for his celebration.

AS WE MUNCIED and sipped — share and share alike — it occurred to me to ask Beau his philosophy of life. He, being a small dog, is the equivalent of 75 human years of age.

"Make puppies, not war," he replied with a doggy chuckle. Beau was young just when the Vietnam War was heating up, and he adapted that slogan from my coverage of some of the early anti-war demonstrations.

"Seriously, you old whippersnapper," I said, "tell us the philosophy you've developed from an adventure-filled lifetime of seeing the world from 14 inches off the ground."

Beau has seen a lot. He has shaken paws with three members of Congress, visited 15 states, survived an auto accident, been sewn up three times from various fights and had two operations to put artificial ligaments in his knees. He has fallen into uncounted rivers while digging zealously along the banks, tangled with two skunks, played with a timber wolf and sired 23 puppies that we know of.



Tim Richard

"DO YOU REMEMBER that movie 'O God' we saw on television?" Beau began. We did.

"God pretty well summed it up in the final scene when he advised people to be nice to one another. It's good theology and good ecology."

"The way I see it, people are trying harder than ever to push one another around. They are going nuts with the assertiveness stuff and demanding status."

"Look at the things you've been writing about. Tighter security in campaigns, with Secret Service goons herding newsmen around more than ever. The security checks when you cover Federal Court and those threat of four pompous guards."

"Remember that run-in you and I had with that lout of a dog warden? He was trying to rewrite city ordinances to suit himself and threatening people if they didn't 'cooperate' with him. We didn't let him get away with that, did you?"

"Lawsuits. You people are adding more and more judges because you're going berserk filing lawsuits against doctors, against companies, against government, against unions, against each other. You got a 'sue the bastards' mentality," Beau said.

"LOOK AT YOUR politics."

"One year, a gang from the old Anti-Saloon League wants to take away the drinking rights of 18-20-year-olds. This year, people are talking about the death penalty."

"Most of those tax plans you've been telling me



The well-traveled Beau

about are a farce. They're mostly attempts by which a majority will gang up, cut their own taxes, and make somebody else pay more.

"I have to wait in the car when you go to the store and put up with longer and longer waits in line, more and more waits while clerks hassle you over checks and credit cards. I notice, by the way, fewer stops by the mailman these days. You must be using cash more."

As usual, Beau was right. The nose knows. People are indeed trying to push each other around more.

"Say, O Head Poodle," I said after a while. "I hate to be paranoid, but some year we'll both pass to the Great Beyond. Now, I don't want to go to hell because it'll be full of lawyers and realtors."

"And I won't have much place in heaven because it'll be full of the long-suffering poor and disadvantaged, with whom I have little in common. Do you suppose I could join you in Doggy Heaven?"

Beau belched. "Been kind of busy in the neighborhood. But sure, I'll be glad to sponsor you."

"There'll be all kinds of mud and woods and biscuits and good things in Doggy Heaven. And nobody will push anybody else around."



Mike Scanlon

It's ballpark overkill

To hear Jim Campbell and most of the Detroit sportswriters tell the tale, these are marked men: Gorman Thomas, Mickey Rivers, Barry Bonnell, Bobby Brown, Rick Manning, Rick Miller, Famous Amos Otis, Fred Lynn and Ken Landreaux.

These men are all professional baseball players. More precisely, they are all members of American League teams. Even more precisely, they are all center fielders.

And to hear Campbell and the sportswriters, center fielders on patrol in the deepest part of the Detroit ballpark are doing something very close to taking their lives into their own hands.

Like Robert Kennedy, Campbell and the sportswriters have taken to dressing things that never were and asking why not? They've confused uvula-hawling, a key element in baseball, with mortal danger. These men see beachballs and think bomb. They see beer and think insanity. They see fistfights and think revolution.

In other words, they're tending a tad toward overkill with the bleacher bums down at Tiger Stadium.

In nearly every stadium, the bleachers tend to draw a somewhat eclectic crowd. In Detroit, from the looks of things, the bleachers tend to draw large numbers of suburban white youths who like to — gasp! — scream, and — my God! — howl and — who can believe it? — crush beer cups and throw them onto the field.

NOW IT SEEMS to me that when you stack 10,000-some people into close confines on a muggy night and make them wait two innings for the chance to plead with a frazzled counter lady for a \$1.15 shell of beer, a fistfight or 12 is a stroke of good fortune for management. They're getting off easy. Even a firebombing is probably less than they deserve.

And any grizzled bleacher veteran can tell you that every story you've ever heard about Tiger Stadium security guards is true.

Guards at Tiger Stadium are either young and black and dressed in blue uniforms, or they are old and white and wearing orange jackets. The ones in orange work everywhere in the ballpark except the bleachers, and their primary jobs are to direct people to their seats and tell kids not to run in the aisles.

The guards in blue work in the bleachers and their primary job is to maintain order, if necessary at the expense of sanity.

There are free-lance fighters in the bleachers, and plenty of them. But smart gamblers will clean up if they bet that most of the brawl breakouts because of the guards. When there are no disturbances, the guards still scan the crowd looking for one; they usually find it when one or more of the scannees tosses a crushed beer cup at them.

The guards love this. It gives four or five of them the chance to charge up the steep ramps and drag somebody away.

Policies should change at Tiger Stadium. The unbelievably long bleacher concession lines make tempers flare, and the incessant presence of the guards makes them handy for taking out frustrations.

The lines can be trimmed by creating more concession stands. The guard-inspired fights would die out if the guards maintained a lower profile and were only around being guards when something needed guarding.

But whatever happens, Jim Campbell's showboat, one-night bleacher shutdown isn't likely to be repeated. After all, that must mean a revenue loss of something like \$30,000 a game.

If it comes down to a loss of face or a loss of \$30,000 a game, I don't think it will take Campbell long to make the decision.

This grand party is just the start

Countdown's already underway for the long anticipated Grand Old Party convention.

Some media representatives are already in place and the first delegates, alternates and observers will invade the host city and environs in just hours.

Preparations have been long and arduous, but no one can afford to wear rose-colored glasses at the zero hour.

I'm reminded of a time some 13 years ago when my husband and I and our children left the country for our first trip abroad.

Inevitably, came the question: "Where do you come from?"

In all my naivete, I answered: "Detroit, where they make all the cars."

Immediately, the questioner shot back: "Oh, Detroit, where you had the riots. Tell me about the riots."

And in the years in between, the image of the town of my birth was, for a time, that of "Murder City."

We've overcome the dubious distinction of being first in violent deaths. And Detroit's come far in other ways as well. Just the fact that the Republicans decided almost two years ago to hold their big show for 1980 here is evidence enough.

OUR RENAISSANCE is well known, symbolized by the center of that name that has revitalized the downtown area markedly and stands tall and terrific at the waterfront.

But what of the guts of the city? What of that?

Thirteen years since the riots and just last week Cheryl Nobles and Maurice Clifton, a young black couple, were driven from their west side home.

First came the taunts of neighbors, then the graffiti, (a police word for the obscenities sprayed painted on the home) and then the rocks and the bricks.

If we can't live in harmony among ourselves, are we prepared to welcome thousands of raucous conventioners and the action that comes with them?

Gaining the attention of the country, even the world, can make everyone stand tall. Remember 1968 when the come-from-behind Tigers thrilled us all and became the world champions?



Shirlee Iden

Thoughtful Detroiters, especially sports fans, are probably sighing with relief that Tiger Stadium will be dark throughout the convention week.

Beer guzzling, beach-ball-throwing fans have turned recent games into near riots, necessitating the closing, for a time, of the bleachers.

TRUE, cutting the beer rations to nine ounces and taking stronger security measures seem to have solved the problem. But perhaps it's better that the Tigers play on the road when the Grand Old Party is in town.

Put workers back to work

The government should help put auto workers back on the job by subsidizing their wages instead of paying them unemployment benefits, says a Michigan State University international economist.

Prof. Mordechai Kreinin says that would cut automobile production costs and make the price of American-made cars more competitive. The subsidy should last two years, until the automakers complete the transition to smaller cars.

About 300,000 of the 1.4 million UAW members are now laid off. For at least a year, many of them receive almost their entire salary through unemployment benefits, supplemental unemployment benefits and trade adjustment assistance paid to workers who lost their jobs because of imports.

Kreinim proposes giving all that money to the automakers, who would rehire the workers. The government would subsidize a portion of the workers' wages, about 20 percent, while the companies would

pay the remaining 80 percent.

"At the same time, both the unions and the companies would have to agree not to raise wages or profits for the next two or three years," says Kreinin. And he believes they would.

He thinks the subsidy would be a better solution than putting import quotas or taxes on foreign-made cars and making all Americans pay more for automobiles. He also prefers this to a state proposal to boost sales by eliminating the sales tax on cars.

For some who may feel opposed to government subsidy of the auto industry, Kreinin points out that the government is already paying out this money anyway — to workers who are not working. Other industries have been subsidized and the government is already helping one automaker — Chrysler.

Import tariffs or quotas, which would violate international agreements, are just hidden subsidies, says Kreinin.