



James Bailey

Gilmore and the system

It had to happen sooner or later. Of the hundreds of convicted killers who have been sentenced to death in the years since Canada and the U.S. have effectively eliminated capital punishment, there was bound to be one who would choose that fate over the prospect of spending most of his life behind bars.

The death of Gary Gilmore Monday morning at the hands of a firing squad in a Utah prison has presented to the world the curious spectacle of a criminal being allowed to choose his own punishment. If, at any point in the legal machinations which flowed from Gilmore's demand that his death sentence be carried out, the two-time killer had changed his mind, there is little doubt that he would not have been executed. If he had given even the slightest indication that he was wavering in his decision, the courts would have found some excuse to delay and eventually prohibit his execution.

Even more curiously, when Gilmore tried to speed up the eventual outcome by making two suicide attempts, he was stopped by the provision of involuntary medical care. The system said, in effect, it's not good enough that you simply die, you have to allow us to kill you — only then will justice be served.

When a legal system becomes so fouled up that a convict has to insist on his right to be punished according to the law on the books, in the face of monumental opposition from the system itself, something's wrong. I've always been a supporter of capital punishment for murderers, not for its potential as a deterrent — because, as the Gilmore case shows, it often isn't — but as a retributive act in which society recognizes the value of the innocent life that was taken. The parole of a killer from a life sentence after seven or eight years of imprisonment has never seemed to me to be an adequate response to the evil inherent in the taking of a human life. In Canada, recent Criminal Code amendments have raised the minimum time to be served before a killer is paroled to 15 years for second degree murder and 25 years for first-degree, but I sometimes wonder if even that is enough, especially when many legal observers feel that earlier parole will inevitably be restored.

Gary Gilmore, on the other hand, beat the system by forcing it to carry out the suicide he so desperately wanted. At the same time, he was a classic example of its failures. First arrested at age 14, he spent 12 years of his adult life in prisons, and was on parole when he com-

mitted the two cold-blooded killings for which he was sentenced to death.

We've had our own examples here in Mississauga. John Graham, at age 26, last year was sentenced to indefinite imprisonment — probably for life — as a dangerous sexual offender after his conviction for a rape which occurred eight days after his parole from a sentence imposed for previous sexual offences. Acquitted of the sex murder of a Port Credit girl at age 17, Graham was subsequently charged, imprisoned and eventually released for several attacks on other teenage girls. He has spent all but a few days of his life since age 13 in prison. In his eight-day encounter with freedom Graham held up a Lakeshore Boulevard grocery store, and planned an armed robbery at the Jac's Milk store in Lakeview, in addition to committing rape.

Rehabilitation doesn't work. Psychiatry has so far provided little evidence of its ability to deal with the violent criminal mind. Imprisonment merely postpones the date when a dangerous offender will be able to commit another outrageous act. So what's the answer?

I don't have one, but I can suggest that we try more radical solutions. At present we treat all criminal offences from impaired driving to

murder in roughly the same way: arrest, trial and fine and/or imprisonment for various lengths of time depending on the offence. Dangerous murderers and non-violent confidence men wind up in the same cell block. The individual's past criminal record and personal situation are taken into consideration in sentencing, but the options are severely limited.

Instead, perhaps, the system should officially recognize the obvious difference between the merely dishonest and the potentially dangerous. For the dishonest, the humiliation and unpleasantness of incarceration in a traditional jail setting may well provide sufficient deterrence. Offenders, who are obviously committed to lives of violence could be sent to institutions which provide more comfortable living conditions, but where they must expect to reside permanently, or at least until they have demonstrated beyond a shadow of a doubt that their violent conduct won't be repeated. Isolated communities could be constructed where dangerous offenders could hold jobs, enjoy social activity and provide goods and services to the marketplace.

It's not an ideal solution, but at least the Gary Gilmore of this world wouldn't be in a position to harm the rest of us. And, we, in turn, wouldn't be forced into killing them.



John Stewart

You read it here first!

Sooner or later, it had to happen. With the increasing pressure on the film industry to be as topical as possible in churning out creative dramas based on recent current events, it was inevitable that we would get a poignant film chronicling the craze that has bars all over North America jumping again.

I am thrilled to announce in this space that "Disco Duck" is being made into a full-length feature film.

The made-in-heaven matching of celluloid and dance was the brainstorm of a host of Hollywood celebrities who came up with the idea one night after a raucous pool party where several sniffers of swine flu vaccine and a vial of Clearasil were apparently consumed.

Whatever the inspiration, the idea is considered the hottest property in Tinseltown at the moment, especially because of the enormously talented cast.

Where else but in this film would you find a musical "Battle of the Blands" between songsters Paul Williams and John Denver. After some hilarious patter about the height difference between Paul, seen standing at sea level, and John, high atop the Rocky Mountains, the two stage a melody mood confrontation fraught with stylistic tension. Paul sings "Rainy Days and Mondays" to the surging, black Atlantic Ocean while John croons "Sunshine on My Shoulders" above Aspen. The two finally come together in a draining emotional catharsis and duet on "Disco Duck."

Cameo appearances by superstars abound and half the fun is seeing how many you can recognize. For instance, Anthony Davis appears as the minority "Jock Ducker" who boogies up and down the gridiron.

Perhaps the highlight of the film is the re-emergence of Barbra Streisand who establishes here, once and for all, her pre-eminent claim to superstardom. Barbra plays Fannie Priceless, a narcissistic movie star who treasures her dancing feet as much as her beautiful singing voice. Miss Streisand, who insisted on the right to have everyone else in the movie sing out-of-sync, gets her mouth and words together for a stirring rendition of "The Disco Way We Were."

The trade magazines will soon undoubtedly be saluting her with huge headlines, announcing that a disco star is born (they're that tacky.)

Perhaps the weakest part of this spell-binder is a sub-plot starring Cher Allman as a young rock star who makes it big in music with her singer-husband (Henry Kissinger in an impressive debut); has a child which they name Chastity (it could only happen in the movies); falls madly in love with a drug-crazed rock singer whom she marries; and then gets back together with her ex-husband to perform on a regular TV show! If that doesn't win the Pulitzer Prize for inventive fictional writing, there's no justice.

Despite this single flaw, the film works well on several aesthetic levels and finally captures the essence of K-Tel which is at the core of the disco heartland.

Humor has it that Dino de Laurentis has already inked a contract for a sequel "Disco King Kong" to star Gloria Gaynor and unemployed former professional football star Russ Jackson, who is reportedly growing a beard and taking dancing lessons for his role.



Sid Rodaway

Culture as a corpse

They say that dinosaurs became extinct because they failed to adapt to changing conditions.

Dinosaurs dominated the earth for 100 million years but still fell prey to their own inadequacies.

In comparison we humans have been around as a species for a few million years and as an organized society for perhaps 50,000. Unfortunately, I have the feeling we are rapidly approaching the same crisis stage that turned the lights out for our giant forebears.

Having just returned from vacation in the U.S. I made a point of watching the NBC television network's three and a half hour special "Violence in America." It did little to raise my hope for civilizing our civilized society.

It has become popular to label violence American as apple pie. Unfortunately Canadians enjoy apple pie just as much as our southern neighbors.

If the most significant measuring stick of our culture's quality is the degree to which we care about what happens to others, then North

American culture is already dead. In fact the corpse is already starting to rot.

The individual is growing more isolated from his community and less capable of controlling his own destiny. The pressure and frustration relieves itself as a growing rash of arbitrary and meaningless violence.

Sensitivity seems to be the least popular of emotions today. Because violence remains the single most exciting emotional experience, unbridled violence has become this age's single most popular form of entertainment.

We package it in movies, television dramas, sports and even news. Violence gets attention; it sells. What the public wants, the public is going to get.

If it remained in the arenas and on the movie and television screens it might be accepted as a legitimate form of emotional release for a frustrated society. But the greatest sadness is that the more popular random violence becomes as entertainment, the less sensitive we become to it in reality.

The NBC special spent considerable time investigating the "subculture of violence" that now exists in American black ghettos and is

rapidly spilling over into once clean suburban white America.

When the individual becomes overwhelmed and loses the ability to alter his lot in life he has two choices; continue to work within a system that seems never to work, or lash out in an explosive act of violence in an attempt to recapture that power and control, if only for a few minutes.

Violent response to problems has become almost admirable in the slums. Taking action, whatever action it may be, is infinitely better than laying back and taking it on the chin.

When an old friend insults your masculinity you don't sit down and argue and discuss the merits of the charge. You grab your Saturday Night Special and make your point without further debate.

The parents determined to teach their children respect for the rights of others and a healthy abhorrence of needless violence receive little help from society at large.

Except for the sickly sweet alternative of a Walt Disney movie, the so called "family movie" has ceased to exist.

There is a fine line in films between a healthy and entertaining level of action and an unhealthy degree of sensation-seeking violence.

When I took my own nine-year-old to see King Kong, at least half the theatre was filled with youngsters. What they got was unnecessary additions of swear words, sexual assault and just plain bone-crunching violence. The greatest cheer came from the kids when an enraged Kong stomped on half a dozen New Yorkers, leaving them squirming in their guts like so many worms.

In Silver Streak, a new motion picture release being promoted as a comedy, the laugh-getting scenes are peppered with decapitation, spearings, shootings and sundry acts of human destruction. HA, HA, HA.

I still hope for a spontaneous public sickening of the never-ending flow of entertainment violence but I realize how pie-in-the-sky that dream is.

As an adult I can still reject and pick over what I will read, see and do. I pity the new generation of kids, however, who have never known anything different.



Stewart Page

Diminishing sensitivity

The ABC television network recently hired "America's first television millionaires," one Barbara Walters. Walters appears on ABC news shows, with partner Harry Reasoner, in order to "make the news a little bit more appealing and attractive," according to one ABC executive.

When the ABC evening news comes on one thus finds Walters and Reasoner pontificating, giving us the outer layer of the big stories. Walters, pursuant to landing a contract somewhere in the neighborhood of \$2 million a year, seemingly does very little on the news show. In fact, so does Reasoner. They take turns reading a few lines, then sit back to watch a huge TV screen while another reporter fills in the details. But, Walters apparently has a beautiful apartment and of course ABC just had to give us a guided tour of that apartment. That's part of the news, they feel.

The hiring of decorative elements such as Barbara Walters is directly in line with what the large commercial networks wish to offer to the public, namely, entertainment under the guise

of news. The networks say statistics show most of the steady television viewers are from the so-called blue-collar or working-class sectors of the population. On the average, such individuals watch television about six hours per evening. Many of them identify with publications such as Photoplay, Modern Screen, and so on. Walters represents an attempt to cash in on that mentality. The media decided some years ago to make her famous, as they did with Twiggy, so they could thus be better able to convince the viewers to be enraptured at her escapades, such as her being "lured" away from another network by ABC.

To some extent, the attention given to an event such as the hiring of Walters is related to an increasing insensitivity of the media to, well, humanity and its struggles, for lack of better terms. In other words, the events which comprise the news are reported as just that — simply "events," devoid of any great emotional significance for anyone.

In the movie network, for example, the TV news editor, played by Faye Dunaway, is

lamenting the fact that the UBS network news was so "very mundane." Not enough bad news. Bad news is what the viewers want. She leans through one of the New York tabloid newspapers, picking out newsworthy items — a stabbing, a murder, the Patty Hearst kidnapping. This, she knows, is the stuff of which the news is made.

As the major television networks of today continue to sensationalize and "dramatize" the news, hoping to create the really big show, one wonders at the effects of the "de-sensitization" upon young children. In *Jaws*, for example, several people are mangled and eaten alive by a shark. Undoubtedly, not many of the predominantly young viewers of *Jaws* left the theatre thinking much about the portrayal of those deaths. One scene shows a man being trampled by a crazed mob of swimmers running from the water onto the beach. That scene apparently has repeatedly drawn laughter from audiences.

As still further evidence of "de-sensitization" to human emotion and human

suffering on the part of the mass media and related mentalities, North America is now witnessing the introduction of a coin-operated game of amusement called *Death Race*. As of Dec. 30, 1976, more than 900 games of *Death Race* have been sold to various amusement parks, taverns and other such places. Players of *Death Race* pay money to operate the wheel of a car. The machine gives the player 60 seconds in which the goal is to strike down as many pedestrians as possible when they appear on a screen.

The experience is made even more pulsatingly exciting since, when a direct "hit" is made by the driver (hopefully it's a kill), the machine gives as its reward an electronic scream. Two players can compete against each other to see which one can flatten the highest number of pedestrians. After each hit, the figure of the pedestrian becomes illuminated by a tombstone.

Society is, indeed, becoming less sensitive. Dr. Page is director of research at Lakeshore Psychiatric Hospital.



Community Alive!

How to give your speech

Effective public speaking is simply persuasive conversation adapted to fit the occasion and suit the people listening.

Your speech should have an introduction, a body and a conclusion.

First, construct the body of your speech by asking yourself these questions: What is the subject of my speech? What particular points (not more than four) do I want to bring out? Why are these points directed at this audience?

Answer each question in as much detail as possible. If your audience is likely to disagree with you, present both sides of any argument. Your suggestions are more likely to be accepted if they're in harmony with the principles and loyalties of the group you are speaking to, and clearly affect their personal lives. Make sure nothing in your speech is offensive.

Then, assemble your material into concise and logical order. Your discussion of each point should lead naturally to the next. Avoid using jargon or other words your audience might not understand.

Then, based on the body, give your speech an introduction and a conclusion.

Read and re-read your speech. Commit it almost to memory (but memorize the beginning and ending). To help yourself, write the key elements on cards that can be read at arm's length, number the cards, and remember to bring them!

GIVING YOUR SPEECH

- Remember, careful preparation is the basis of good presentation.
- When you are introduced, walk leisurely to where you will stand, and make some natural gesture, such as moving an object on the speaker's podium. Look at your audience for a moment and take a few deep breaths. This will put both you and your listeners at ease.
- Talk to your audience, not at them.
- Keep your audience with you. Speaking in public is an extension of ordinary conversation.
- Make sure your words are clearly spoken, your voice loud enough and your pitch varied according to what you are saying. Speak a little more slowly than you would in ordinary conversation.
- Be relaxed and comfortable. This is essential for you to breathe and speak easily. Stand up straight and use your diaphragm to breathe deeply into the lower part of your lungs. Move about a little and use your hands for emphasis.
- Look at your audience. Choose a few people scattered throughout, or talk to the back rows, occasionally emphasizing an important statement.

By JOHN FISHER, JOANNE COOPER and CLARE PAGEAU



Karl Schuessler

Diane the policewoman

It's one thing to be pulled off to the side of the road by an OPP cruiser. And it's quite another thing to look up from your driver's window and see a policewoman standing in front of you.

That's the way things go nowadays. That's the way it is when Constable Diane Brock walks up to your car. Diane admits, "When you see that red light come on behind you at night and when you hear the crunching on the stones as an officer approaches your vehicle, you naturally expect to see a man."

Diane knows the shock waves she sets up in your system. She says she can see the look of astonishment spread all over your face. And it takes you a minute or so to recover from her approach.

But those are valuable seconds to her. It's this surprise element that puts her at an advantage. She's had guys jump out of their car and

start yelling, "What are you stopping me for?" But once they realize they're screaming at a woman, they stop short. "They lose right there," she says. "By the time they get themselves used to a woman, I'm in charge of the situation. I'm in control."

To have a young lady tell you she's clocked you in on her radar at 20 miles over the speed limit... Well, that's not so bad, is it? Why, it's something like taking a bitter pill from a pretty nurse. Her kind of medicine goes down so much easier.

Diane has that way about her. She performs her duty alright — yet you still feel all right. It's probably because she's such a lady. Her new police role can really tear up some of the men inside.

There she is. In line of duty. Taking a male prisoner into the lockup. She walks ahead to open the door for him, but no, he rushes past

her. He insists he must open up the door for her. Often there's an argument — who's going to open the door for whom?

Then there are the teenagers she's caught drinking on some of the back sideroads. And just as she's ready to pick up the case of beer and put it into her cruiser, the boys step up and help her carry it into her trunk.

And then there's the man who didn't pay his fine for a minor traffic violation she'd given him. "I'm going to let them send out a commitment for me and then you can come and arrest me," he said.

She tried to tell him this wasn't the thing to do — to refuse to pay the fine — on purpose, just so she could escort him personally into court.

Well, it boomeranged. When the committal came, Diane wasn't in his zone that day to serve the warrant on him. A male officer escorted him to court, instead.

But police work isn't all one comedy scene for Diane Brock. Not too long ago she was in one of those life-and-death chases. She got her man, a young man in a stolen car, but it took a 130-mile-an-hour chase before he ditched his car in a country field.

The OPP recently awarded her their highest award, the certificate of valor, for dragging the man from the burning wreckage. She matched her 120 pounds against his 165-pound unconscious frame, weighed down with heavy work boots and hampered by the Corvette's roll bar that got in the way.

That's the heavy side of police work for Diane Brock. But it doesn't dampen the lighter side of her work. She's a policewoman who's in there to stay and she'll keep on patrolling those provincial highways and byways. And this spring she'll have it made. She'll be First Class Constable Diane Brock.