



Straight Talk

by Muriel Sluyter

Feeding the Wrong Wolf

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Greetings, Gentle Reader,

A Cherokee Elder was teaching his grandchildren about life. He said, "A fight is going on inside me... it is a terrible fight, and it is between two wolves. One wolf represents fear, anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego."

"The other wolf stands for joy, peace, love, hope, sharing, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, friendship, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith."

"This same fight is going on inside you, and inside every other person, too."

One of the children asked, "Which wolf will win?"

Grandfather replied, "The one you feed."

Are Americans feeding the wrong wolf? Let's see: Do you lock your doors at night? Why? Do you let your children walk home alone at night? Why not? What do you fear?

What will happen to the man who raped and murdered Carlie Brucia? Chances are he will be out in twenty years. And he won't be the Lone Ranger; there will be plenty of his ilk with him. Why? Because we are no longer a civilized people.

Instead of producing fewer criminals and controlling the ones we have, we buy bigger locks. We used to leave the keys in our cars, now we lock our cars, then put them in locked garages.

Why are we producing so many vicious criminals? We are determinedly, even defiantly, feeding the wrong wolf.

We used to kill bears that threatened us. Last summer, a bear chased our stock. I called the Division of Wildlife and was told we could do nothing unless the bear attacked us. Hmm... How do I shoot a bear that's tearing me to pieces?

Some national agencies are run by half-civilized people with no sense of value. To such, humans are of lesser value than animals, plants and bugs. Nor is a little girl more valuable than the animal who rapes and murders her.

People in other countries think we are terrible. Why? Few know many Americans, but they see our movies, and

in most, Americans are awful. They spend the entire movie attacking other people and hopping in and out of bed with anyone available. They prove to viewers, in living color, that Americans are both repulsive and repulsively uncivilized.

Citizens used to be safe on our streets, because criminals were locked up. Now citizens are locked in mini-fortresses, because criminals are safe on our streets. If a criminal attacks with a gun, he will be back on the street before his victim is out of the hospital. If a victim defends himself with a gun, he is likely to find himself punished more severely than his attacker.

We are a civilized nation. Or are we? That is the crux of the matter. We are not only uncivilized, we wear our incivility like a badge of virtue.

Writers of letters to editors make politically motivated charges they know are lies, but they also know most readers won't know they are lies. In their minds, if a falsehood is not exposed, it's as good as truth. Stalin said a lie repeated often enough is accepted as fact. Every dictator of the past century - most of them mass murderers - operated on the same principle.

Candidates tell outrageous lies to cheering followers, most of whom, knowing they are false, repeat them anyway.

Large numbers of schools produce functionally illiterate children; when officials are called to account and threatened with competition, they fly into uncivilized hysterics. It's everyone's fault but theirs. All they need is more money.

We have become a violent nation. Why? Because, we have devalued virtue, elevated expediency and wealth, and belligerently, even self-righteously, fed the wrong wolf.