

Meanwhile Back at the Farm...October 4, 2001

Howdy,

Well your farmer is still here. No black Ford sedans have been waiting at the farm for my return. But others haven't fared so well.

Remember years ago when the government started seizing the assets of drug dealers? It was a new concept. Without a trial or any other sort of due process the government could seize a SUSPECTED drug dealers assets. They could take cash, homes, cars and other property if a government agent felt that the owner had obtained them with drug money. This was a big change in civil rights and we were assured that it ONLY would be used to fight big time drug dealers and NEVER be used on ordinary citizens.

Well of course once the rights are taken away abuse begins. This seizure thing has spread throughout law enforcement and resulted in things like a man's boat and fishing gear being seized at a lake by a ranger because fish the man had caught had net marks on it. Contractors had their pickup trucks seized by the INS because they picked up hispanic workers on a street corner in Marin. A black nursery owner had \$10,000 in cash taken from him in a Texas airport while he was enroute to do his quarterly buying of nursery stock simply because he fit the "profile" of a dealer. Young black drivers, stopped by police, in Washington DC were having cash in the range of \$50-500 seized by officers claiming they were on their way to buy drugs for resale.

In all of these cases the property was seized and the so-called perpetrators were never actually charged with a crime. None of them got their property back because it would have cost too much in lawyers fees to sue the government to demand their return.

This type of looting is fairly typical in dictatorial, dare I say it terrorist, countries like Guatemala. But we are supposedly protected by our constitution, due process and greater civilization. But unseen by most Americans the police have acquired tremendous power to loot the citizenry. Some suburban and rural police departments get more than 25% of their funding by selling seized property. The practice has become so common in the Midwest that entrepreneurs armed with helicopters and high tech infrared sensors photograph home, which have suspiciously warm foundations. They turn in the photos to local police departments which then seize the homes of people growing marijuana in their basements and the photographers get up to 25% of the sale price of the seized homes under federal snitch laws. Into this out of control situation add the new terrorism laws.

A key component of the new hastily passed unconstitutional anti-terrorist laws is the ability to seize property. But not just the property of suspected terrorists. This will also apply to anyone "harboring" or "supporting" terrorism intentionally or UNINTENTIONALLY. So upstanding Americans say, "So what? I'm not supporting terrorism. Go ahead ream those guys." Think you moron think.

Terrorism is not defined. When a Bush administration was asked for a definition of terrorist he simply said, "I know one when I see one." So how will this play out? It's impossible to say just how far this abuse can go after looking at the hundreds of ways that the anti-drug laws have been abused. But at least in the case of the anti-drug seizures you couldn't be attacked for harboring, supporting and certainly not "unintentional." If we took a typical case of northern California Drug busts and applied this new seizure principle to it we would see chilling cases. Let's say you are a Redneck Yahoo and you buy land next to someone who sneaks into the back acreage of your piece and plants pot. The government using new satellite technology invades your property and sees the pot. Under the new laws they don't need a search warrant and in fact can come onto your property and search for the pot even when you aren't there. They find the pot and put you in jail for "unintentionally" supporting, seize and sell your land. All this and you didn't have anything to do with the crime.

What? You don't think it could happen here? It's already happening here. Last week the Office Of Homeland Security had several websites taken off the air simply by threatening the use of the new laws. Our Americas, The Irish Republican Activist (not Army), and a couple of other sites were being hosted by an internet service provider. The OHS called the provider, not the owners of the sites, and told the provider that they were harboring and supporting terrorist groups by hosting these sites. They were told to get them off the net if they didn't want their assets seized. Our Americas is an award winning show on Pacifica radio which gives a somewhat left view of what is happening in Central and South America. Far from terrorist or middle eastern and barely left of center this show attracted the ire of the current administration so it had to go. Needless to say the ISP had the sites shut down immediately in fear of being put out of business by our own government. Who is the terrorist in this picture? Are you really ready to give up your rights this easily? AND THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING! McCarthyism is going to look like a walk in the park compared to the domestic state-sponsored terrorism we are about to be subjected to.

Remember those opposing genetic engineering are largely considered eco-terrorists by the FBI. What happens when your CSA gets defined as an eco-terrorist organization and your paying into it qualifies you as sponsoring terrorism? What happens when Greenpeace or Sea Shepard sink a whaling boat? Does your donation to them mean your house can be seized? Will you be intimidated to donate money to them because it might be construed this way?

Write your congressperson, fax them, email them do what you have to do to fight for our civil rights. Make sure they know that you do indeed care about the rights of free speech, assembly, due-process and that you aren't willing to give them up for any reason. Do it now because in a couple of weeks it may already be too late.

I want to thank those of you who have called or written to encourage me to continue to speak out on this issue. I have now actually received one letter from someone who disagreed with me and I am reproducing it here in the interest of fairness.

Farmer Dave,
I am so glad to live in a country where anyone can say whatever they like about the government. I support your right to say what you wish about the current administration and the events of September 11th. However, I also have a right to refuse to listen to, and to refuse financial support for, messages I don't agree with. Your statements in the last two newsletters that you believe our own federal government was behind these attacks are, to me, intolerable. I agree that our foreign policy in many of the cases you mention has been wrong. I agree that the people of Afghanistan do not need more war. However, I could not read your accusation against our government in this event without responding. So, in great American tradition, I vote with my wallet, and will not continue to support a message I feel is so wrong. Regretfully, our family will not be renewing our subscription to the farm for this reason. We have really enjoyed the great produce, and the insightful comments on sustainable agriculture.

Regretfully,
Robert and Elsa Carvalho
San Jose

My response to this is that I may be wrong on some of the details in my analysis of the situation concerning just who was responsible for the attack. For instance it might be the National Security Agency rather than the CIA. It could even be a private hit by other parts of the military industrial complex with some clandestine intelligence from people in the government. None of these details really matter. What really matters is what the reaction has been. The kindest thing you could say about it is that the Bush administration has cynically taken full advantage of the tragedy to push ideological and economic agendas.

The bald-faced attack on freedom and democracy is not represented in the plane attacks but in the creation of things like the Office of Homeland Defense, incarceration without due process, the whole concept of revenge on un-convicted, merely accused suspects, the interference with the rights of free speech, assembly, habeas corpus, all being conducted by a man who pulled off a bloodless coup but a coup nonetheless.

What if it turns out that it wasn't an inside job? The betrayal of trust by taking advantage of America's grief, suffering, trauma and fear to push a virtually undisguised campaign to move towards corporate fascism deserves as much punishment as if the attack was an inside job. There are signs that at least some people are realizing the cynical use of this event by those on the right is bordering on the criminal and certainly far beyond the moral behavior we have a right to expect by those we entrust with power.

The Food

Purple Basil: More of this nice mild variety.

Collard Greens: A southern favorite. Check out my mother's recipes and save the chard recipe for next week.

Spinach: A second cutting from our Pescadero patch. New spinach coming in a couple of weeks.

Anaheim Peppers: Almost as sweet and mild as the bell peppers

due to our cold summer.

Summer squash: These plants are still booming at Matadero

Cucumbers: Various types-Both lemon and normal types. Enjoy them while you can since the plants are starting to fail.

Tomatoes: The tomatoes are starting to fade out. Enjoy them while you can. More Mortgage Lifters and other heirloom tomatoes. Don't refrigerate tomatoes. Leave them on your counter not touching each other for best storage.

Turnips: The last of the Hakurei Turnips. We have traditional purple top turnips coming next week.

Cho-Ho: Next week you'll see some new types of greens.

Collards can be cooked pretty much the same as kale. It is full of nutrients and does not need to be cooked with salt pork for hours as is done in the South. This is a simple yet tasty way of preparing this valuable veggie.

COLLARDS WITH CRISPED BREAD CRUMBS

1/2 cup coarse fresh bread crumbs (rub bread on cheese grater)

1 Tbsp. butter or oil

Bunch of collard greens, washed, steamed, chopped

2 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil, peanut, or dark sesame oil

Salt and freshly milled pepper

Saute the crumbs in the butter in small pan until crisp and golden.

Toss the cooked collards in olive oil and season with salt and pepper.

Serve with the bread crumbs sprinkled over the top.

ENJOY!!

CHARD AND EGGPLANT MEDLEY (save this recipe for next week)

Washed, coarsely chopped chard, including stems which are finely chopped

2 Tbsp oil, (mustard oil if possible)

1 whole dried red chili

1/4 tsp. Chinese 5-spice

1 cup finely chopped

onion

1 tsp. seeded, chopped fresh green chili

1/4 tsp. turmeric

1/2 tsp. salt

1 tsp. sugar

1 cup water

1/2# cubed tofu

3 cups eggplant cut into 1" cubes

1/4 tsp.

garam masala

Garnish : raw mild onion rings

Steam greens and puree in blender. Set aside. Heat oil in pan over med. low heat. Fry red chili until it darkens. Add five-spice and fry until spices start crackling. Add onion and fry until it is richly browned but not burnt, 10 to 12 min., stirring constantly. Stir in green chili, turmeric, salt and sugar. Add water and bring to boil. Add tofu and eggplant, lower the heat slightly, and simmer, covered, til eggplant is soft, 20 minutes.

Add pureed greens. Cook uncovered for a minute or so to heat the mixture through, stirring constantly. Remove from heat and blend in garam masala. Garnish with onion rings and serve at once. For a vegetarian meal, serve with rice and green beans.

CHARD SALAD

Saute onion in olive oil til soft, then add chopped garlic, stir for 30 seconds. Remove from heat and cool slightly.

Steam chard leaves, then chop. Roast hazelnuts in oven at 350 degrees for 15 minutes. Rub them between your fingers, then chop.

Mix olive oil with Raspberry vinegar, salt and pepper. Mix onion and garlic with chard, then pour oil mixture over chard.

Sprinkle nuts on top.