



Free Press
Viewpoint

No light sentence
for Norway killer

If ever there was an argument in favor of the death penalty, it would be Anders Breivik.

Breivik is the confessed killer of 77 people in Norway on July 22 of last year. Disguised as a police officer, he set off a car bomb in Oslo that killed eight people, then shot and killed 69 people at a youth camp on Utoeya Island, many of them children. Hundreds more were hurt.

Breivik is proud of the killing spree though he denies any criminal responsibility. He says he did it to strike a blow against multiculturalism. The bomb was set off in a government building, and the youth retreat was a political party event. In a manifesto he published online, he said he was defending Europe from a Muslim invasion being enabled by the party he attacked.

He's on trial in Norway now. This is the trial of the century for them, drawing the sort of media attention that the Oklahoma City bombing or O.J. Simpson trials did here.

Breivik faces either prison or a psychiatric institution. It all depends on whether he's found sane or not. Several psychiatrists have declared him insane, a ruling he disputes. Per the Norwegian justice system, the case is being heard by a panel of five judges – two of them professional judges.

This case can be seen as a test of justice. He's charged with acts of terrorism, which carry a maximum sentence of 21 years. Norway does have a system by which jail time can be extended, but it's rarely used. The maximum sentence anyone can get is 30 years.

Norway does not have the death penalty.

The Norwegian justice system likely has worked well for a long time. The country has one of the lowest homicide rates in the world – .68 for every 100,000 people. Organized crime is limited, only 60 out of every 100,000 citizens are incarcerated, compared to 700 in the U.S., and less than 10 percent of felonies are violent.

The Norwegian system favors a lighter touch. Most prisoners only complete about two thirds of their sentences. The Nordic nation allow prisoners to vote and nonviolent offenders can sometimes wait a year to start their prison terms.

But 21 years doesn't cut it for someone who murdered 77 people in cold blood. Someone who confesses to this sort of attack, but is not remorseful and shows no signs of being able to be rehabilitated, should not have a light sentence.

Nothing can bring back the kids Breivik killed, but would anyone be served by keeping him in prison or a mental hospital for 21 years? He shows not the slightest sign that a prison term would change his mind or get him to show regret. If that is so, then he should not be set free under any circumstances. He would be a threat to society.

We would not and should not let Charles Manson free, nor would we have let go of Jeffrey Dahmer had he not been killed by a fellow inmate.

Even if Norway changes its justice system to allow for a life sentence, justice would not served by housing him at government expense, especially when Norwegian jails could be described as five-star hotels compared to American prisons.

This man must be removed from society in such a way as to not be a burden to the rest of us. While the death penalty is not a deterrent to this type of extremist attack, in this case it would be the responsible thing for society to do.

– Kevin Bottrell

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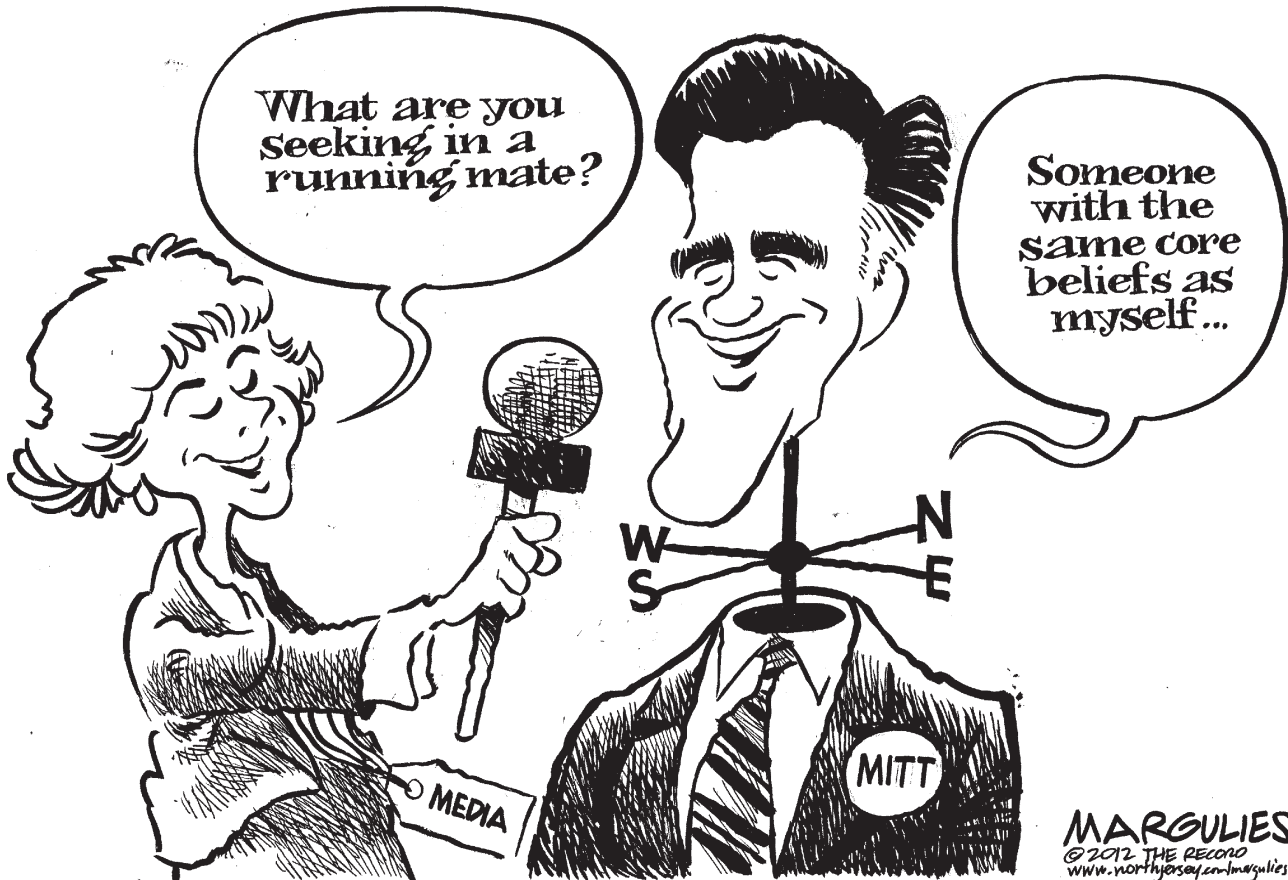
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Drive across Kansas beautiful

It's a long ways across Kansas, 425 miles from the Colorado border to Kansas City on Interstate 70. It's 365 miles from Oberlin to the city, a little less to Lawrence.

My kids always used to complain about the interminable drive. They mostly don't make it anymore. I do, but I have a secret.

I like to drive across this state. It's beautiful any time of the year, especially the summer, when the trees hang dark green and the sunset lingers in the hazy evening well after supper-time.

But I like it any time of the year; in the fall, when the tallgrass turns red and brown, even in the winter. But there's no better time to drive across the state than spring, the season of promise, when the trees are beginning to leaf, the flowers are in bloom and the endless pastures of the Flint and Smoky hills turn bright spring green. Even the Royals have a bright future in spring.

I have to admit, I'm getting older. I can tell by the way I feel when I get home from Kansas City these days. But I still love that drive.

I remember as a kid, looking forward to family vacations. We'd load up dad's 1958 Pontiac station wagon, two-tone white and brown, tying whatever wouldn't fit inside to the roof rack. Then the five of us, mom, dad and the three boys, would pile into the car and start off. (My sister, my parents' afterthought, wouldn't be born for a couple of years.)

We'd leave straight west from Emporia on U.S. 50 (what had been 50 South until just before that time) and then take K-150, a narrow two-lane blacktop, across the Flint Hills. That



Steve Haynes

• Along the Sappa

would take us to U.S. 56 near Marion, from which we'd follow one Santa Fe branch line or another nearly across the state.

After Marion, you'd be able to see the elevator in the next town soon after leaving the last, one after another across the state. That always seemed fascinating to me, the huge grain bins lined up in a row.

Those were the days of bench seats in cars. No seat belts. No air conditioning. We made our way across the state with the windows down, and usually found a place to spend the night somewhere out west. I can remember when the Airliner Motel opened in Scott City, dad thought it was great.

I remember the smell of hot asphalt after a summer thunderstorm, ant hills on the high plains, the sounds of night in a western Kansas town. The dry, hot high prairie seemed so different, so interesting, on a July morning.

Some years, we spent more time in Dighton or Scott City than we planned. I remember waiting while a mechanic replaced a U joint in that old Pontiac one summer.

The second day, you could see two or three towns' elevators on the horizon and watch them come closer for what seemed like hours. I'm

sure the three of us squirmed and complained a lot, as kids will, but we were excited to go to Colorado. It was special. We'd see deer, and there were none to speak of in Kansas then.

The roads always seemed to be under construction on those trips. In the time before what we call asphalt today, or asphaltic concrete, oiled roads were built up of tarmac, oil and rock mixed in place. The custom was to carry traffic through this work. Mom got stuck on a windrow of crushed rock in the center of the road one year.

Dad was fascinated that land was so cheap out here that they'd just move the road over sometimes rather than using the same grade. Some of those roads they built in the '50s are the ones we see off in the weeds today, though.

Afternoon of the second day, we'd leave Limon on the last lap into Denver. There was no Interstate, just mile after mile of narrow two-lane. U.S. 40 wound around a little east of Denver, but you came to a point out by Bennett where you could see the mountains.

The road ducked under the Union Pacific tracks and pretty soon, we were driving down Colfax Avenue toward the city. And we kids knew, there'd be plenty to see and do in the city.

Those were the days.

Steve Haynes is president of Nor'West Newspapers. When he has the time, he'd rather be reading a good book or casting a fly.

Environmental laws protect Kansas

Other
Opinions

• Barry Grissom
U.S. Attorney

Fifty years ago America was just waking up to the reality of environmental pollution. Rachel Carson had published the book "Silent Spring," heralding the modern environmental movement and raising America's consciousness about the impact of DDT pesticide use on the environment and public health.

Then in 1969, Cleveland's Cuyahoga River caught fire due to the oil-soaked debris clogging it, and the country's then-largest oil spill occurred in Santa Barbara, Calif. The culmination of these events inspired the call for a national day promoting environmental education and lead to the creation of the first Earth Day on April 22, 1970.

That year millions of Americans spanning social, political and economic spectrums joined together to work for the environment and to protest that oil spills, air pollution, raw sewage, toxic dumps, pesticides and wildlife extinction were ruining the American landscapes, waterways and skies.

This movement led to the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency and the passage of the Clean Air, Clean Water and Endangered Species acts by Congress, all signed into law by President Richard Nixon. Further legislation soon followed to address the nation's drinking water supply, hazardous waste management and toxic waste cleanups.

Enforcement of these laws has transformed rivers like the Cuyahoga from oily waste streams into waterways teeming with fish and wildlife and has made the air we breathe and the water we drink cleaner. In conjunction with industries' many voluntary efforts, enforcement has jump-started innovation, providing greater economic benefits with fewer environ-

mental costs.

Still, there are a staggering number of hazardous sites determined to present the highest risk to human health or the environment. There are 17 of these EPA designated "Superfund Sites" right here in Kansas, the direct result of an industrial period with no environmental laws, regulations or enforcement. They're hiding in plain sight. We drive past them nearly every day.

The list includes:

Ace Services in Colby; 29th and Mead, Big River Sand Co., John's Sludge Pond and 57th and North Broadway in Wichita; the Arkansas City Dump in Cowley County; Chemical Commodities Inc. in Olathe; Cherokee County mining sites, including Galena, Baxter Springs, Treece and other towns;

Doepke Disposal in Johnson County; Fort Riley near Junction City; Hydro-Flex Inc. in Topeka; Obee Road in Reno County; Plating Inc. in Great Bend; Pester Refinery Co. in El Dorado; Strother Field Industrial Park near Winfield and Arkansas City; Tri-County Public Airport in Morris County; and Wright Ground Water Contamination in Ford County.

If the environmental laws some take for granted today had existed 100 years ago, per-

haps Kansas wouldn't be in this economic and environmental predicament.

What occurs here in Kansas is only a small part of what the Department of Justice is doing. The Kansas U.S. Attorney's Office and the department's Environmental and Natural Resources Division are working to protect the environment and enhance the quality of life of those adversely affected by the daily air, water and soil pollution by corporations and individuals who fail to comply with environmental regulations.

During the past three years, the division has secured nearly \$21.1 billion in corrective measures through court orders and settlements in civil enforcement cases and more than \$1.9 billion in civil and stipulated penalties, cost recoveries, natural resource damages and other civil monetary relief. The criminal and civil enforcement of environmental regulations has significantly reduced the emission and discharge of pollutants, and as a result, promoted and protected the public health and the environment.

Today, Kansas is at a crossroad. Over the past four decades, environmental laws and enforcement have improved the state of our nation, its health and environment, and made the United States a leader in the world. The call for responsible and rational regulation is a legitimate debate we can have, but there is no reason Kansans must choose between a healthy environment and a healthy economy.

As a country we've come a long way in the past 50 years and the U.S. Attorney's Office and Department of Justice are committed to the continued enforcement of environmental laws which protect our citizens and our Earth.

Mallard
Fillmore

• Bruce
Tinsley

