

from our viewpoint...

# Abuse not tolerated even in war time

Maybe the next soldier who wants to beat or humiliate a prisoner will think twice.

Ten years is a long time in Leavenworth, where the U.S. Disciplinary Barracks is the polite name for the Army's penitentiary.

Ten years is how long Specialist Charles Graner Jr. will have to think about his sins.

Ten years for abusing prisoners in the now-infamous Abu Ghraib jail in Baghdad. An Army jury could have given him 15, and maybe they should have.

Graner didn't sound too contrite after the sentencing. "There is a war on," he said. "Bad things happen."

That's true. War, in the words of W.T. Sherman, is hell. It makes men do things.

But in this country, we care. We know right from wrong, and we expect our soldiers to remember the difference. We always have.

Now that Private Graner has been judged, though, Americans should make some distinctions:

First, though he claims intelligence agents put him up to abusing prisoners to soften them up for interrogation, the jury did not buy it. He'd still be guilty, even if someone put him up to it. He did it willingly. He was having fun.

Second, though the media likes to talk about what he did as "torture," it is not. Abuse, yes. Torture, hardly.

Making people do things to embarrass them for sport is crude and reprehensible, but it's not torture. Graner and his pals force people to strip, took their pictures in sexually embarrassing poses, had them masturbate, force devoted Muslims to eat pork and drink liquor.

It's all disgusting, but in Iraq, there are many who know torture. Saddam Hussein and his minion were experts. Women were raped, men hooked up to electrodes, interrogators had many and worse methods.

That makes no difference, either. Our country is not going to tolerate soldiers who abuse prisoners, local citizens, or anyone else. Just because there's a war on, we're not going to abandon our principles.

We hope Mr. Graner will not be the last convicted in the Abu Ghraib scandal. If intelligence agent put these soldiers up to abusing prisoners, we'd like to see them in court, too.

And we hope the whole world is watching, because people should know not only that Americans can make mistakes, but that we can and will make them right.

War is never pretty, but it can be decent and honorable. That's our commitment. That's what this trial was all about.

Many nations wouldn't bat an eye at the type of behavior Charles Graner was convicted of. But this is America, and we like to think we are different. — *Steve Haynes*

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"SOONER OR LATER, EVERYONE DOES CARSON."

# Canadians oppose cheaper drugs for U.S.

By Jane Orient, MD  
Association of American Physicians and Surgeons

Two recent events in North America could dash the hopes of American senior citizens who risk their own health and safety to buy prescription drugs from Canadian online pharmacies.

First, the U.S. Task Force on Drug Importation, chaired by Surgeon General Richard Carmona, released a study citing the potential safety and economic problems created by the importation of Internet and mail-order prescription drugs through Canada.

This 13-member panel was given a year to study and make recommendations regarding the safety, ramifications for national security and the U.S. drug supply and economic impact of importation — direct purchase from Canadian pharmacies by U.S. residents — on medical care in the United States.

On Dec. 12, just a few days before the task force released its findings, Canadian Minister of Health Ujjal Dosanjh said on Canadian television: "I want to make sure that we don't have 250 million Americans buying drugs in Canada. We cannot be the drugstore for the United States."

Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin responded by announcing that his cabinet would meet in a special session in late January to discuss banning Internet and mail order sales of Canadian prescription drugs to American customers.

Canadian officials are finally speaking up about their concerns that the purchase of price-controlled Canadian drugs by foreigners who do not contribute to the Canadian health insurance plan will cause too much demand, driving the prices up and consequently, the cost of Canadian health insurance. Since the Canadian health care system is government run, and paid for by the high personal income and sales taxes extracted from Canadian citizens, pressures within the medical sector create problems throughout the Canadian government and economy.

But it is the public safety factor that has physicians most concerned and also the agencies responsible for the safety and efficacy of prescription drugs manufactured in the United States, including the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).

Senior citizen groups like the American Association of Retired Persons are urging their membership to lobby their congressmen and

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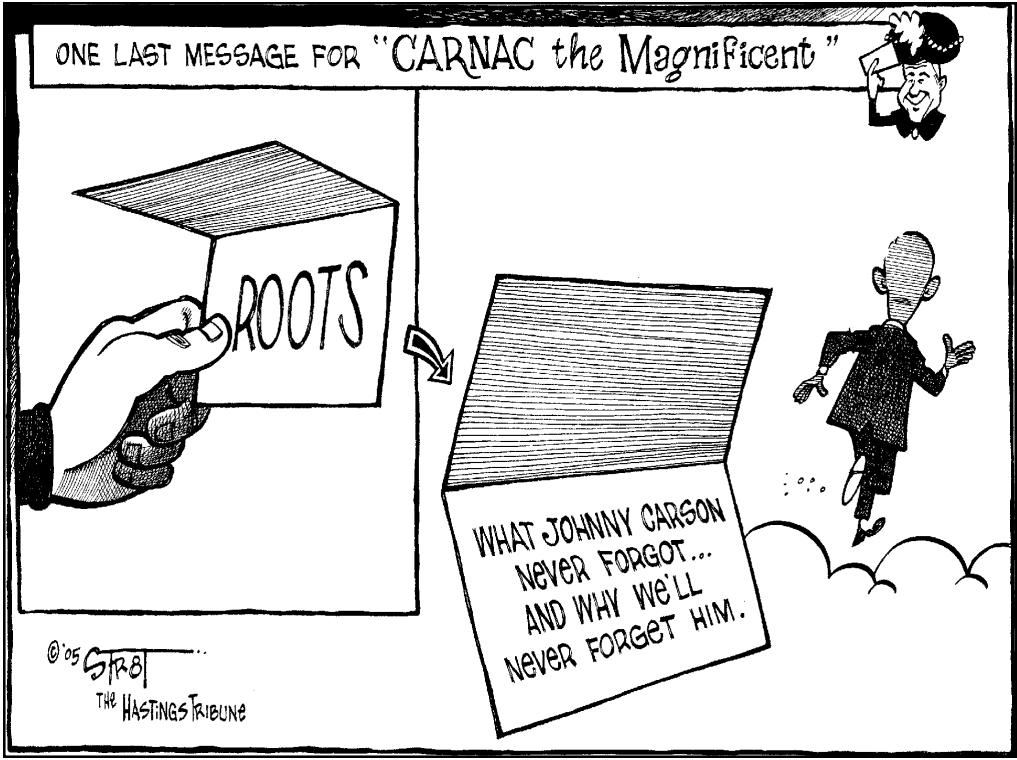
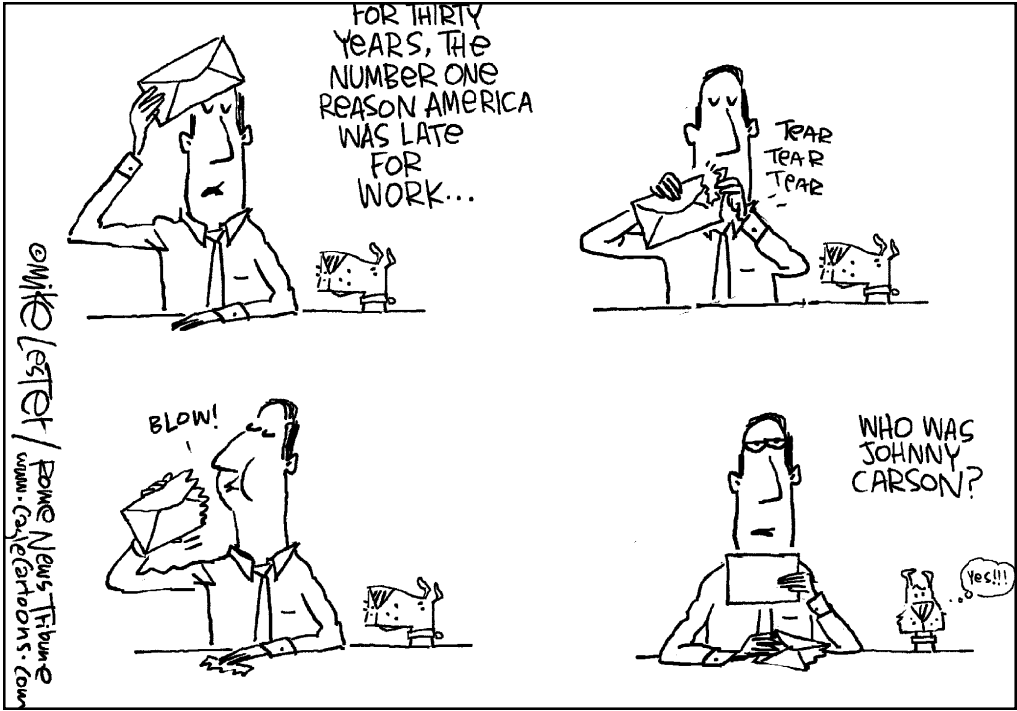
from other pens  
● commentary

senators to support the importation of foreign drugs.

Many members have supported legislation allowing Canadian drugs to be sold to U.S. citizens because they fear the political clout of elderly constituents.

On Jan. 5, Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich and Wisconsin Gov. Jim Doyle sent a joint letter to the White House to ask President George W. Bush to block Canadian attempts to thwart their plans to purchase drugs in bulk for their citizens.

When U.S. physicians write prescriptions for their patients, they are confident the drug being prescribed will be safe, effective and manufactured in uniform dosages. Online



## garfield

