

Eliau Is a Pawn

Editorial

As a young man in Australia during World War II I recall clearly the universal horror in the country of Hitler's SS henchmen entering someone's home and spiriting away suspects, many of whom were taken to gas chambers, and of Joseph Stalin's KGB thugs entering homes and taking individuals or groups to prisons, or psychiatric hospitals, or Siberia. Eliau will not be taken to a gas chamber but he will be taken to Cuba if his captors have their wish, a destination similar to the Gulag of Communist Russia.

I am an immigrant. If the United States had behaved in the late forties as they have behaved with Eliau Gonzales, I would have had doubts about coming to this country. If I knew that the majority of American citizens approved of this action by their government, I hope that I would have decided never to enter the United States and would have regarded it with contempt. The United States in the late forties was a grand country with high morals, far different from the brutality we have recently witnessed, and from the immorality that is commonly accepted.

Why this dreadful action? We hear trivia about the Miami family refusing to cooperate. The bottom line is that the Justice Department had determined to take the boy from his Miami family for reasons they have not explained and which have nothing to do with the custody of Eliau Gonzales. When the Federal Court of Appeals ruled favorably on the petition of Eliau and it appeared to speak favorably of his application for an asylum hearing, the Justice Department acted dramatically.

That the behavior of the Justice Department was abominable cannot be questioned. The photographer who was elected to represent the media was beaten and kicked in the stomach. Attorney Craig wrote to all representatives of the media asking them not to broadcast the event, knowing how dreadful it would appear, and they complied, with only Fox News and NBC giving coverage. The footage we received was by a photographer who climbed the fence and hid in the house. Without this man's daring we would never have known the brutality of April 22.

President Clinton was woken and told what happened. He approved, praised Janet Reno, and went back to sleep for another three hours. It was the day before, or thereabouts, that he spoke to the country about the evils of violence and the excessive use of guns!

If the Justice Department had raided a black community with the violence shown to the Cubans of Miami, cries of racism would have filled the country, violence spread from New York to Los Angeles, with the conventional media exhorting us about affection, love, forgiveness, tolerance, and any other piety that came to their minds. But the Cuban community of Miami is not politically correct, not having lived long enough in this country to become un-American. They are

white, Catholics, patriotic, lovers of freedom and the United States, with contempt for socialism and Cuba. And they are Conservative Republicans; thus they are referred to with contempt. I heard a television program between an editor of the main Miami newspaper and some spokesman on CNN, and this was the tenor of the remarks.

There has to be another reason to explain the determination of Clinton and Reno to return Elian to his father, and, ultimately, to Cuba. Clinton's former advisor, Dick Morris, no saint, says Clinton is afraid that Castro will dump ten thousand of his mental and criminal dregs on our shores if we do not do his bidding. He has done it before and is capable of doing it again. The theory makes sense. Juan Gonzales did not try to contact his son for months after arriving in this country, though he called the Miami family to tell them Elian and his mother were on their way. What got Castro motivated I do not recall, but, once he saw the political possibilities he steered a steady course. Everyone parroted the same message: Castro, Juan Gonzales, the grandmothers, Clinton, Reno, Craig. Clinton wants peace in his last days, and cozying up to Castro is a small price to pay. The life of a little boy doesn't matter.

At the present writing we see pictures of Elian being cuddled, having pictures taken for the benefit of the media. What are they doing in their seclusion? Do they spend their days sitting in armchairs, taking little walks around the buildings? Elian is now at a private residence with some children flown in from Cuba, presumably so that he is not lonely. The Court of Appeals has wisely stipulated that Elian will not be moved to locations having diplomatic immunity from U.S. laws, thus keeping him under control of the U.S. But we may assume Elian will have no association with normal Americans or his relatives in Miami. No display of affection will be permitted to or from American citizens.

There are sound reasons that Elian should not be returned to Cuba. First, his mother's wish should be respected, she who gave her life so that he might live in the United States.

For other details, we note the following which are enumerated in an affidavit by Jeanne O'Laughlin in the United States District Court, Miami Division.

At the meeting in Miami in Sister Jeanne's home, the Miami relatives were not permitted to have contact with the grandmothers of Elian, and were in great fear of the Cuban officials who controlled the meeting.

Contrary to the rules of the meeting, which stated no telephones were to be permitted, Cuban officials called the grandmothers during the meeting. The grandmothers lied about the presence of telephones in their rooms.

Sister Jeanne and Bob Edgar, President of the National Council of Churches, who helped arrange the meeting, concluded that Castro was calling the shots and planned to withdraw the National Council of Churches from the situation since it was obvious they were being used and Castro made all the decisions.

The grandmothers were refused permission to visit with Elian's relatives, even to offer condolences for the loss of his mother.

Sister Jeanne concluded that if the grandmothers lived in fear, so might Elian's father and his testimony could not be trusted. She believed that if Elian is returned to Cuba it will not be to his father but to Castro and the Cuban state.

Other matters listed by Sister Jeanne O'Laughlin in her filed affidavit: 1) Juan Gonzales lives with a woman who is his common-law wife. Many do the same in the United States, which does not make such a union the most desirable; 2) Juan Gonzales has been guilty of spousal abuse; 3) One of the grandmothers who was made afraid by her Communist guards wished to defect to the United States; 4) Juan Gonzales knew of Elian's coming to the United States before his departure. Presumably, he had no objections at that time.

Also, Juan Gonzales is a man of vulgarity, illustrated by an obscene gesture on national television.

In a *National Review* article, May 1, 2000, Kate O'Beirne, speaks of the future of Elian if he were returned to Cuba. According to Cuba's top diplomat in Washington. Elian is the possession of the state, which is superior to any rights of the parents. Here are her observations:

- * The development of a child's Communist personality is paramount, and any influence contrary to Communism must be fought, and advanced schooling is predicated on a child's political attitude.
- * Every child has an identification card where there will be notations of his political attitude.
- * Every student has a Cumulative Dossier which is a record of his and his family's opinions and behavior. Ω