

## KeyOpinion

# The Case of the Meandering Manatee

**Richard L. Hershatter**  
Contributing Columnist

*When a sea cow dares the Hudson to explore,  
So very far from the warm southern shore,  
It will find that ice cold rivers  
Can result in shakes and shivers,  
Notwithstanding the dire words of Albert Gore.*

Scientists have been warning that mankind's indifference to pollution and the by-products of an ever-increasing population were having a deleterious effect on earth's climate.

The recent documentary film, "An Inconvenient Truth," narrated by our former vice-president, spells out the evidence and the probable consequences to human and all animal life, unless drastic steps are taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and clean up the atmosphere.

Last month, Newsday reported shocked surprise on the part of New Yorkers upon the sighting of a Florida manatee, swimming up the Hudson River to a point 10 miles south of Kingston, New York.

Incredulous onlookers, who first spotted the ghostly one-ton leviathan moving slowly upriver at 3 to 5 miles per hour, thought a miniature submarine had invaded our shores, but further sightings established that it was indeed an errant sea cow.

An expert with the Riverhead Foundation for Marine Research and Preservation confirmed that, based on its size and swimming pattern, there was no doubt that the visitor was a male manatee.

Because the Florida species cannot survive for long in water below 68 degrees, the immediate concern was whether or not the aquatic mammal was in distress or suffering from illness.

Further sightings confirmed that the animal wasn't swimming in circles, listing to one side or breathing with difficulty — all signs that would have prompted a rescue attempt — so it was decided to leave the visitor alone and await developments.

Bemused New Yorkers gave the visitor a nickname — "Tappie" — based on its preference for the Tappan

Zee Bridge section of the river.

Our own Lia Martin, associate editor of this newspaper, did a thoughtful column on the subject last week, speculating that the wandering mammal might have been trying to escape red tide, or, in the alternative, was part of a secret Communist experiment.

There is a rumor being circulated that the conspiracy theory is in fact under investigation by Oliver Stone, who plans to do a movie on the subject, proving that the Russians brainwashed the manatee into defecting from Florida, in favor of the more liberal climate of New York.

If Stone does not do a documentary, there is talk that the Coen brothers will do a comedy, starring the Castro brothers of Cuba as the movers and shakers behind the journey north.

Not willing to be influenced by speculation, this column did its own investigation. Because manatees communicate through chirps, whistles or squeaks in the 3-5 kilohertz range produced in the larynx, we retained a retired opera contralto, to act as interpreter.

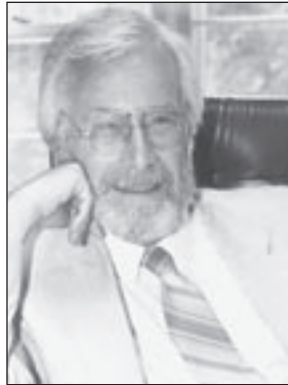
Contact was made in Westchester County, and Tappie was quite forthright in his responses.

He denied that his peregrinations were the result of anything sinister. He had made the journey in a leisurely month and a half, pausing frequently to ingest 100-150 pounds of vegetation a day.

His motivations were varied.

He reported that he had been born in Florida and was a life-long resident of the waters of the Gulf of Mexico. Recently, he had become thoroughly disgusted with the evolving politics of the region, as exhibited in the races for this fall's election.

None of the candidates for Governor in the forthcoming Florida election were willing to increase the home-



stead exemption.

Even more distressing to him as a Florida native was the prevalent criticism of the Save Our Homes amendment to the state constitution, which prevents politicians from raising property valuations in any one year for more than 3%, or the increase in the cost of living, whichever is less.

In a full page editorial, one of the local weekly newspapers had even labeled the provision unfair to snow birds and local commercial establishments and strongly advocated its repeal.

Tappie reasoned that this would be like giving a bank robber a blank check, because politicians would then have an unfettered ability to tax private property.

Instead of throwing out the baby with the bathwater, a more rational solution would be to extend the Save Our Homes amendment to all property, irrespective of its ownership or classification.

Unfortunately, manatees do not have the right to vote, even in Manatee County, and in frustration, Tappie headed north, in the hope that New York might be more temperate, both in taxing and in matters of climate.

He was asked what he had discovered about New York taxation and whether he had any plans to head back to southern waters.

"I've learned a lot," he replied sadly. "I'll be returning home as soon as the temperature reaches 68 degrees."

*Oh the seas are getting higher,  
As the northern glaciers shrink,  
And the desert's growing dryer,  
Or so the experts think,  
When the winters turn to summer  
And the ozone layer goes,  
It may be that politicians  
Deal the planet's final blows.*

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# None Dare Call Them Muslims

**Tom Burgum**  
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There is a very interesting series of events after any terrorist attack by a group of deranged Muslims. The news media, whether here or in Europe, always either fails to identify the attackers as Muslims or, if forced to do so, immediately adds, "but they are not representative of the Muslim faith which is universally one of peace." Even this cowardly and wholly inaccurate approach is not usually enough to satisfy many Muslims or whatever group is currently engaged in the anti-defamation for Muslim business. Nor is it enough to satisfy western journalists.

The reaction of British Muslims, Reuters News Agency, the New York Times, and the BBC, among others, to the news that Muslim terrorists planned to down at least 10 airlines was to blame Tony Blair and George Bush. Western news agencies not only report this claim but report it with seeming approval. There must be some rule in Western news agencies that causes them to automatically insert "Bush and Blair are at fault." As Mark Styn noted in the Chicago Sun Times, "The plot to commit mass murder by seizing up to 10 U.K.-U.S. airliners was well advanced long before the first Israeli strike against Hezbollah. Yet it's apparently axiomatic at Reuters, the BBC and many other British media outlets that Tony Blair is the root cause of jihad. He doesn't even have to invade anywhere anymore. He just has to 'refuse to call for an immediate cease-fire' when some other fellows invade some other fellows over on the other side of the world."

According to the Islamic leaders, and some American political leaders, the Blair and George Bush foreign policy has angered otherwise peaceful Muslims world wide. These same people then make charge that the current foreign policy of both nations is responsible for the terrorist activities such as the recent plot uncovered in London. One Muslim group in the U.S. was even outraged when President Bush referred to the terrorists

as Muslim Fascists. They may have a point as "Muslim murderers" would have been more appropriate but then Bush has never been known for adroitness in his descriptions.

It is difficult to answer the Muslim criticism of Blair and Bush because we simply don't want to admit that Muslims, yes Muslims, have been attacking us for years. Part of the problem is our news media and political class are so paralyzed by political correctness they cannot find it in themselves to accurately identify those who wish to kill us. Those who believe that we encourage Islamic terrorism when we are only defending ourselves are by this falsehood attempting to cover their ignorance of the truth. British philosopher David Hume once observed that a wise man bases his opinions and judgments on facts. It is recommended that those who believe the Muslim terrorists are only responding to the Iraqi invasion or the West's current foreign policy might consider the following record of Muslim terrorist acts, all committed prior to the Iraq invasion in 2003.

- 1968: Robert Kennedy assassinated by Muslim immigrant because of his support for Israel;
- 1972: Muslims kidnapped and kill 11 Israeli athletes at Munich Olympics;
- 1979: American Embassy in Iran taken by Iranian Muslims and 90 Americans are held in captivity for 444 days;
- 1983: Muslims blow up U.S. Marine barracks in Lebanon with a truck bomb — killing 220 Marines;
- 1985: The cruise ship Achille Lauro hijacked by Muslims and a 70-year-old American is thrown overboard in his wheel chair. (I wonder how many virgins you get for killing cripples.)



- 1985: Muslim terrorists hijack a TWA airliner and kill a U.S. Navy diver.
- 1988: Muslim terrorists destroy Pam Am 103 — killing over 200 people.
- 1993: World Trade Center bombed for the first time by Muslim extremists.
- 1994: Muslims hijack French airliner, killing three passengers.
- 1995: Police in Manila uncover a plot by Muslims to assassinate Pope John Paul II and explode bombs on 12 U.S. airliners. (This is very similar to the plot uncovered last week in Great Britain.)
- 1998: Muslim extremists bomb U.S. Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.
- 1999: Officials in Amman, Jordan discover plot to bomb tourist and millennium sites in the U.S. and Israel.
- 1999: Customs officials in Port Angeles, Washington apprehend Muslim terrorist seeking to bomb L.A. International Airport.
- 2000: U.S.S. Cole hit by suicide Muslim bombers while at anchor in a neutral port. Seventeen Americans were killed.
- 2001: (Sep) Muslim terrorists crash airliners into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, killing over 3,000 people;
- 2001: (Sep) Belgian authorities arrest Muslim suicide bombers planning to drive a car bomb into a NATO base and the American Embassy.
- 2001: (Oct) Plot uncovered where Muslims planned to bomb Algerian soccer match.
- 2001: (Dec) Muslim convert Richard Reid attempts to blow up airliner with shoe bomb.
- 2002: Daniel Pearl of the Wall Street Journal is kidnapped and beheaded. The event is filmed as the Muslim terrorists must have wanted the world to witness how they observe the Geneva Convention on treatment of prisoners.