

ELLEN GOODMAN



Is Tip selling out or just cashing in?

DENVER — I am sharing my hotel room with Tip O'Neill. This is not what you think.

Imagine the scene within a scene. Tip O'Neill is popping out of a suitcase in a hotel room — on television in my hotel room. He's been doing this all month as we travel together from one city to another.

The face is familiar. So is the voice. It's the words that are somehow out of place. The former speaker of the House is the current spokesman for the hotel chain. I like to think of him as Tip-in-the-box.

BACK HOME, I have seen Tip in another character role as himself. He and Al Haig, a daring sales duo, are replaying — once again lightly — their political duels: This meeting was brought to you by Trump Shuttle. They are performing for Donald.

During these commercials, I again check my emotional pulse. I search for the small beats of outrage, disgust, even surprise. After all, five years ago, when Geraldine Ferraro went from being a candidate for vice president to a star for Pepsi, I was appalled. I saw her passage as part of the process by which America turns every achievement into a hustle, and every achiever into a hustler.

Now I try out a few sentences sure to boost my horror-quotient. Tip has sold out! Al has traded his political character to become a caricature! Ideology is just another product! But I can barely get a rise out of my ire.

Has the transition become so familiar that it is what? — acceptable? Have I adjusted my outrage level down until it is what? — mere cynicism?

MAKING IT in America nowadays means you just might get to make a commercial. The best of our politicians, musicians, athletes, actors all become generic superstars. Superstars in turn are rated as marketable commodities.

Today if you write a trendy best-seller you'll get to star in an ad for T-shirts. Go for the gold and the real gold you'll get is a post-Olympic payoff from the shoe company. Become speaker of the House or secretary of state and you can at last cash in. "A little nest egg for the grandkids."

Maybe my cynicism grows out of the sense that the country has become an all-encompassing marketplace. There is no place anymore to escape from the sales pitch. You cannot go home and shut the door if home includes a television set, or for that matter a phone or a mail slot.

I KEEP TRYING to find a line that separates commercial activity from the rest of life. What is the difference between a politician who makes a 30-second commercial for his election and one who makes it for a hotel chain? What is the difference between the marketing techniques that sell ideas and those that sell beer? When you find out, tell me.

Tip O'Neill vowed he would not become a lobbyist. There is a cost attached to the revolving door that leads from public life to public relations. There is a line between lobbying for a company or country and making a commercial for it. But it gets harder to see all the time.

On the same television set, Linda Ellerbee, whom I also admire, is "hosting" a commercial for coffee that mimics a person-on-the-street report. Just how different is that from hosting a show sponsored by the same company? Very? Slightly? Is there one set of ethics for Willard Scott, another for Dan Rather?

I AM SHARING this hotel room with Tip because I am also a traveling saleswoman. Does it make a difference that the product is my own book? The publishers tell us it isn't enough to write; you must take your act on the road. In the green rooms of television programs, all of us — philosophers, journalists, chefs, politicians and actors — sign papers that call us "the talent."

The point is not merely that the lines are being drawn on some ethical Etch-a-Sketch. The reason it is harder to make distinctions is that commerce has become inescapable.

WE USED TO go marketing, now we are the market. The T-shirts on the athlete's back, the logo on the ballpark wall, the name on the designer's jeans, shoes, shirts. The television.

It's as if our homes were malls and our pantries supermarkets and our identities those of buyers and sellers. And it's only when the speaker of the House and the secretary of state play to please Donald Trump that it even strikes us as unusual, maybe odd.

So I sit here pressing for the pulse of outrage. No. Surprise? No. But maybe, yes, there it is, a small beat of disappointment.

Tip, we have to stop meeting like this.

Ellen Goodman's syndicated column appears Tuesdays and Fridays in The Gazette.

Bank robber held in HandiMart heist

By Roland Krekeler
Gazette staff writer

The man charged early Monday with the armed robbery of a Mount Vernon Road convenience store had robbed a bank across the street from the store 11 years earlier.

Frederick R. Coppess, 32, was arrested at 2:08 a.m. Monday, shortly after the 23-year-old clerk at the HandiMart store at 3349 Mount Vernon Rd. SE gave police the license number of the truck the robber was driving.

Assistant Police Chief James Barnes said the clerk reported the robber walked into the store, went to the restroom, picked up a bottle of pop, asked for an opener and then handed her some cash.

As she opened the cash register, he pulled out the gun, pointed it at her and said, "Give me the money, bitch, or I'll blow your head off, slut." She put her hands in the air and stood back as he removed the money from the register, she said.

She called police at 1:49 a.m., a few minutes after the robber left. At 2:08 a.m. officers checking the area found the truck, with Coppess in it, on 39th Street just south of Mount Vernon Road, Barnes said.

They found a loaded .22-caliber pistol in his pocket, he said, and the money was recovered.

The clerk identified Coppess as the robber at the scene of the arrest and again at the Police Station, Barnes said.

Coppess also gave a brief confession, saying he did it because he needed money, Barnes said.

Coppess remained in the Linn County Jail last night in lieu of \$28,750 bond. He gave no address.

THE STORE clerk said in an interview last night said she will be back on the job tonight, her next scheduled work time.

"I'm not gonna quit over this," she said, "but I have a couple degrees, and this is not my life's work."

She said she took down the license number of the truck, as she does every time an unfamiliar vehicle arrives at the store, and had a description of the man written down before he entered.

"Usually I throw them (pieces of paper) away, but this time I didn't."

Dave Nordstrom, vice president of the HandiMart company, said about \$30 was

stolen in the robbery, hardly worth risking the 25-year sentence first-degree robbery carries.

"The guy's in some trouble for peanuts."

The clerk, he said, did a fantastic job identifying the robber, as she was trained to do. He also praised the police, saying, "They had him in custody before I arrived at the store."

IN AUGUST 1980, Coppess was sentenced to an unspecified term of years in a federal youth corrections facility on his guilty plea to a 1978 robbery at the Mount Vernon Road branch of Merchants National Bank. A gun was also used in that robbery.

Judge Edward McManus said then that Coppess was to be imprisoned for appropriate mental health treatment.

Barnes said it does not appear Coppess was involved in the Sept. 8 robbery at another convenience store a few blocks west in which the clerk, Brian Schappert, had his throat fatally slashed with a knife.

One detective continues to work full time on the Schappert murder, he said, and others are called in when new leads come in, is one did four or five days ago, Barnes said.

C.R. man nabs suspect in burglary

When Michael Kimpton arrived at his mobile home at 4420 Bowling St. SW at 1:50 a.m. Sunday, he noticed his videocassette recorder and some stereo equipment were missing.

He went looking for the burglar. A few minutes later, he found a man starting to load the equipment into the trunk of a nearby car. He tackled him to the ground and held him there until a friend could flag down police.

Police arrested Jeffrey Ludwig, 20, of 387 11th St., Marion, and charged him with burglary and carrying weapons.

Ludwig was carrying a steak knife with a 5-inch blade and a pair of nunchakus, a martial arts weapon consisting of two pieces of wood or pipe connected by a chain or rope.

Kimpton could not be reached for comment.

A friend who answered the phone at Kimpton's residence said Kimpton "grew up learning how to take care of himself."

"That's good," Assistant Police Chief James Barnes said Monday of Kimpton's actions, "but it could be dangerous."

Children's Home sponsors contest to pick new name

The 110-year-old Children's Home of Cedar Rapids wants to change its name and is sponsoring a contest with a \$500 prize to find the best one.

The Children's Home's board of directors wants the new name because the old one no longer best represents the expanded services the agency now offers the community.

Begun in 1879 as the Industrial School for Destitute Children, the Children's Home today is composed of Heartwood Psychiatric Residential Treatment Center, family-centered services, treatment foster care, a sexual abuse treatment program, expressive arts therapy, Camp Good Health, Cedarwood Boys' Group Home, Maplewood Girls' Group Home.

The board is seeking a new name that is clear and concise, will be recognizable to the community and will represent the organization's work with children. The name contest will run through 5 p.m. Dec. 1. The winner will be announced Dec. 15.

Entries should be sent to: Name Change Contest, Children's Home of Cedar Rapids, 2309 C St. SW, Cedar Rapids 52404.



AP photo

Doing it the hard way

Joni Hunter, a scuba diver, shows off the prize-winning jack-o'-lantern she carved Monday while sitting on the bottom of Gull Lake near Battle Creek, Mich. Several divers participated in the underwater contest, sponsored by a local sports shop.

Hunters near Cresco bag the unexpected — tickets

By Val Swinton

Gazette Northeast Iowa Bureau

CRESCO — Some pheasant hunters driving near Cresco came home with more than just birds on Sunday.

Many bagged tickets for violating hunting and traffic laws when they approached Davis Corners, the intersection of highways 9 and 63 nine miles west of Cresco.

For nearly five hours Sunday, 18 conservation officers and two park rangers from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) conducted the "game check," while two state patrol officers stopped motorists for traffic violations. More than 100 cars were stopped.

The officers wrote 61 tickets for hunting and traffic violations and the DNR collected \$1,655 in fines, said Steve Pierce, law enforcement supervisor for the DNR's northeast Iowa district. Motorists receiving tickets from the patrol were to appear in court later, Pierce said. The patrol also handed out 13 warnings.

"I think we were all surprised by the number of

violations we did find," he said. "It was busy the whole afternoon."

A Howard County attorney was at the scene and a magistrate had set a fine schedule in advance for those who wanted to plead guilty, Pierce said. Violations included transporting an improperly dressed bird, being a non-resident of Iowa with a resident hunting license and carrying a loaded gun in a car. The troopers issued tickets for such traffic violations as driving with a suspended license or consuming alcohol in a car.

Pierce said he was particularly surprised at the large number of violations for having an improperly dressed bird. Hunters must leave a wing, a foot or the head so officers can determine the gender of the bird. That law has been on the books for two or three years, Pierce said.

"A lot of people said they knew of it; they just didn't do it," he said.

Pierce said a game check had not been conducted for many years in northeast Iowa, but he wouldn't rule out another one this hunting season.



Commitment to the future

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DON CANNEY

Don attended Oceanside-Carlsbad College, Oceanside, California, Iowa State University, Ames Iowa, and received a Bachelors Degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Iowa, Iowa City. Don served in the Marine Corps and is a veteran of the Korean Conflict in combat intelligence.

Please vote Don Canney for Mayor, Tuesday, November 7

My priorities are: Water Supply

1. We are constructing five new wells this winter to increase our raw water supply by 7 million gallons per day by Spring Reserve funds of the City Water Department are sufficient to pay for these new wells, which should be adequate to supply the City water needs, if drought conditions continue.
2. The City water usage restrictions of 1988-89 were not caused by any defects in our water treatment or distribution systems. Restrictions were instituted so that well pumps would not be subjected to extraordinary pressures to produce water, when the water table was extremely low due to drought conditions. The City water facilities are in good condition.
3. We are placing on-line an additional water purification plant and well field capable of producing an additional 20 million gallons per day by 1993.
4. We are constructing a treated waterline of sufficient size to serve both residential expansion westward and industrial expansion to the south. This includes Prairie Creek Valley and the Cedar Rapids/Iowa City corridor. The plant site will be large enough to be expanded to 100 million gallons per day.

Water Pollution Control Facilities

While we have a state of the art wastewater treatment plant, additional units will be built as our wet process industry and domestic needs increase. We are examining the potential of another facility in the Iowa River watershed to serve the Cedar Rapids/Iowa City corridor. Pre-engineered package plants could serve individual industry and residential subdivisions for a period of time until substantial development occurs.

Solid Waste

As in the rest of America, garbage, and its effective disposal, continues to be a major problem. We are studying alternate methods of processing, such as (a) point separation, (b) recycling, (c) composting, (d) pelletizing for fuel and (e) cogeneration. We will continue to reduce the volume of waste materials entering our landfills to insure against contamination of our groundwater supply.

Central Business District

The program of renovation started jointly between the downtown property owners and the city is moving forward to invigorate the heart of Cedar Rapids. The final product will be a "user friendly" area for all of our citizens. We must continue our efforts to attract and keep retail, first class office space and housing in our downtown area. Eventual expansion of our loop area to the south is being planned now.

Drugs

We are making a three-pronged attack at the local level with resources that come from the National War on Drugs. Enforcement, treatment and education are equally important at our level if we are to alleviate this scourge. We have proof of drug gangs in Iowa and the violence that comes with it. Confiscated drug assets are being used to counteract illicit drugs. Additional money, already in the pipeline, is coming from State and Federal sources.

Housing

Affordable housing is a national problem brought about by the high cost of materials and development costs. We are evaluating new developments in building materials, re-examining lot and dwelling sizes, and land development costs. We are encouraging development of moderately-priced housing without sacrificing basic quality. Finance charges for both construction and mortgage loans will need to be subsidized by Federal assistance.

Transportation

The multistate Avenue of the Saints road, as well as the routing of Amtrak through Cedar Rapids, continues to be of immediate market access importance to our city. Our municipal airport expansion will be carried out as passenger and freight loadings increase.

Paid for by the Canney Committee, Von L. Elbert and Kay Copeland, Co-Chairs.

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