



We are waging a war for our children's security. The public must insist that legislators at all levels support laws necessary to protect the young. In the process of creating a safe future for our children we will create a safe nation for all innocent citizens.

Marc Klaas is co-founder of the Marc Klaas Foundation for Children in Santa Rosa, California, which can be reached at (800) 685-1321.

18 FIGHT BACK. PERSONALLY.

by Jeffrey R. Snyder

Defense of your self, your family, and your property is not somebody else's responsibility. Every citizen should be personally prepared to resist maraudings—which are a kind of enslavement—else the moral sanctions against criminal behavior fade away.

The question of what to do about violent crime is often addressed strictly as a

problem in social engineering—as a search for policies that will deter the individual inclined to commit violent crime, or change the material or moral conditions from which such persons emerge. Missing from these schemes are measures to deal with crime as it occurs.

It is no answer to say that the police serve this function. Criminals choose the time and place for their deeds, and they take care not to commit their crimes in the vicinity of the police. No matter how many police we place on city streets, they simply will not often be there when they are needed.

There is, however, one person who is always at the scene of the crime and able to do something about it then and there—the intended victim. Amazingly, our policy discussions about crime never ask whether the intended victim has a duty to himself, his family, and his community to defend himself, and stop the criminal before he preys upon others.

The fact that both liberal and conservative crime policies studiously avoid the remedy of self-help reflects our desire for government to “solve” the problem institutionally, without our participation. Indeed, law enforcement and the media typically counsel us that when confronted by violence or the threat of violence we should simply hand over the goods and accede to the criminal's demands. Let the state deal with the villains.

The problem of rampant crime, though, can't be addressed without discussing the moral responsibility of intended victims. The notion that citizens ought to leave crime to be dealt with by the state, and ought not resist personally, amounts to a monstrous collaboration with immoral conduct. Why should crim-

inals respect our lives or our liberty if we do not ourselves hold them worth fighting for? If criminals are not met with immediate outraged resistance, why should they believe that what they are doing is wrong? Because laws make it so? Then their offense is solely against the state, not the person of the victim.

To say that victims should cooperate because no wallet or car is worth a life is to rationalize moral cowardice. Robbery or carjacking are no more about property than rape is about sex. Violent crime commandeers the victim's person and liberty. It is an act of enslavement.

Your wallet or your car may not be worth your life, it is true, but your liberty and dignity are. If those things are not worth fighting for, they do not exist. To cooperate in order to preserve your life is to affirm that you may be ruled by force. It encourages the very predation we all seek to avoid.

Violent crime flourishes in good part because each of us refuses to condemn the violent criminal with our deeds at the precise moment when that condemnation is required, believing instead that laws will “communicate”—and are sufficient to enforce—values we are unwilling to battle for ourselves. We marvel that crimes that 30 years ago were unthinkable have become commonplace, never seeing that the increased depravity of criminals mirrors our own refusal to act upon moral judgment.

Let the social engineers do their best. Perhaps their reforms can save us, without our participation. More likely, violent crime will continue to flourish and criminals will grow bolder, for the streets of America are currently a moral vacuum where each person believes his safety is someone else's responsibility. Criminals will hold the upper hand until we learn, and teach, that fighting crime is everyone's responsibility. Dignity and liberty require no less.

Jeffrey R. Snyder, an attorney working in Washington, D.C., publishes a quarterly journal entitled *Arms, Law & Society*.



RUNAWAY JUDGE

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**HOW HAS
THIS MAN...**



**HELD THE
STATE *of* MISSOURI
HOSTAGE
FOR 18 YEARS?**