

A Few minutes with the Boss

By: Joseph Andalina

A convicted killer no more

Earlier this month, convicted woman and child killer William Heirens died. He spent 65 years in prison for killing two women and slaughtering a 6-year old child. And slaughter he did, as he dismembered her in six pieces and threw her body parts in area sewers. Nice guy, huh?

He was one of those people that my parents and relatives spoke about in hushed tones when I was a kid. Being a child myself of the late 40s, they were still talking about him in the mid-50s. Scared the crap out of every parent.

A lot like the child killers of yesterday. Dugan in the 80s, and the monsters like Gacy and Dahmer. All spoken about carefully around children as they were bigger devils than any movie could portray.

So Heirens, who died at 86, spent those 65 years behind bars because he was spared the death penalty back in 1946 when he was 17-years old and committed these atrocities. One who deserved the death penalty but was kept from “the chair” due to his age and an apparent prosecution promise not to be given death if he copped out to these murders. And cop out he did.

But for the last 29 years, the remaining families and other officials had to put up with parole hearings to argue why this child killer should stay locked up. Because like most murderers, he later recanted and said he was innocent. Ah, of course he recanted. Jail forever can be unpleasant for some—especially child killers.

And that’s my point with a series of articles and essays I have written on the death penalty, the most recent appearing in the latest issue of the MAP Rap Sheet. Governmental agencies **do** let these people out. (But fortunately for children everywhere, this one didn’t get freed.) With the death penalty, the chance of parole no longer exists for the worst that our world has to offer.

In recent articles about Heirens, one has to read that procedures and interrogators were a lot different in 1946. Well, duh? I’ve read some whining on how there was no *Miranda* warnings, that a suspect could be injected against his will with sodium pentothal (truth serum) and that prosecutors actually took suspects out to re-enact a crime scene for them and the press, as they did with Heirens. I’m thinking—is someone in the liberal media trying to make a case that this guy was treated unlawfully?

And then there is the press of today, who inform us that Illinois is the state with the most wrongful convictions (a story for another time as maybe that statement is not always true). And of course, there was Heirens’ youth to be considered. Just a teenager, there could be a wrongful conviction here, too. He always said he was innocent, after he confessed. Of course, it usually does go that way. Hard to appeal your case and get lucky on a technical point unless you recant your confession. Nothing new here, folks, nothing to learn, so just move away from recanted confessions and how they always relate to innocence. In our system of jurisprudence, things are

not always black and white and confessions are not always truthful, or that's what the nosebleeds always tell us. But truth did win out here despite the machinations of a few to convince us otherwise. For example: one intern coordinator at the Center for Wrongful Convictions at Northwestern University said of Heirens, "there was no deathbed confession. He always said he was innocent. That makes us feel so sad." Makes me sick that they are sad. Spare me.

Of course the intern wrote a book about Heirens and became a close friend and was his power of attorney late in life. She related that she knew Bill for 27 years and he never for an instant felt any guilt for these killings. So telling me he never felt any guilt proves nada, zero, it's what some ultra-liberals might say just to cast doubt for their cause.

Wow—I would guess that a psychopath who killed two women and a child, by shooting, stabbing, and dismembering the 6-year old would probably never feel guilty. I think that's why they call these people psychopaths.

But there was evidence against this guy. He stayed in jail—where he really did belong—despite the ramblings of the ideologues who do "have a dog in the race" of wrongful convictions. But as one family member said "his (Heirens) supporters had decades to prove his innocence, but never could."

So Heirens got life for over 65 years with the public footing the bill. He got too much, too, one might say, as those he killed, especially that little girl, had only fear and torture in their remaining minutes and missed out on a lifetime filled with all the joys that we, who choose not to destroy, hope for. This time the system worked, but we should have said goodbye to this guy a long, long time ago. Now if our politicians would only reconsider bringing back "Old Sparky..."

Stay safe

Vita é bella