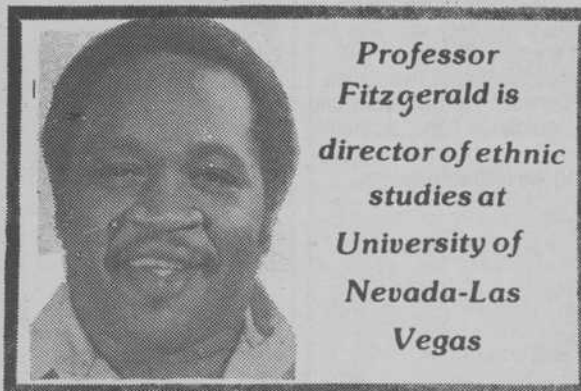


AN ENDANGERED SPECIES

by Professor Roosevelt Fitzgerald



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Do you get the feeling that there are some people who are happy that Carl Rowan is experiencing a few difficulties at this time? Seems that a few nights ago he was awakened in the middle of the night to a disturbance in his backyard in and around the swimming pool area. No one should have been there and whoever was there was, at the very least, trespassing.

Crime is on the increase in the United States and overwhelming numbers of decent Americans are indeed concerned and alarmed at its rise. Consciously or unconsciously those who fall into the aforementioned category must function in a society filled with risks. From the moment they leave home in the mornings until they return at night they are at risk. Work, school, shopping, visiting, a night on the town at night or whatever else — they are at risk. They do not know who around them might strike out at them for whatever reason or for no reason. Their days are filled with stress and anxiety. Every sound, every sudden movement gives them a start.

Every now and then the outside world follows them home. Sometimes, even it precedes them. It has been known to happen that there are some who return home only to find that their homes have been burglarized and all of their most prized possessions taken. They make all of the right moves—phone the police, report to their insurance companies, change the locks on their doors, put bars on their windows and doors and purchase a doberman pincher. Their things, however, are "gone with the wind." Nothing ever turns up and the victim feels violated.

There are still other times that even while at home some creature will burst into one's dwelling and, under gun point or knife point or by sheer physical intimidation, assault, rob, beat, rape, kill, steal everything and everybody in sight. Violent crimes are rampant and once again there are feelings of violation.

From time to time, we're told, there are some who return to parking lots or even their own garages only to discover that their vehicle is no longer there. More phone calls to all the right places and the same stupid question: "Did you leave the

keys in the car?" The insurance company does not make matters any better. Suddenly, they want you to feel sorry for them— that they have to pay out claims and they'll pay yours but it won't be enough to replace the car you lost and, to top it off, if you ever get another car, the premium will be higher. Violated going and coming and, for some, it's worse.

Not only is crime on the rise but so is racism. While the overwhelming numbers of decent Americans are indeed concerned and alarmed not everyone has to deal with it even though everyone is victimized by it. Those who are not victimized directly are indirectly in numerous ways. Those who are direct victims frequently do not comprehend or have the time to understand the detrimental effects on others. But, for the direct victims of racism, their tension, anxiety and stress is more than doubled.

Consider, there are criminals who will perpetuate acts of crime on anybody. Some of those who are victims of "regular" criminal acts will, and often do, comport themselves in a racist manner with those who might have a different skin color. On one day, they might be seen demanding more police protection in the light of rising crime. The next day they might be in the forefront of trashing or otherwise vandalizing a black person, who has had the audacity to move into their neighborhood, home or car or standing on the sidewalk in front of such person's homes and yelling: "nigger get out" as happened in the "City of Brotherly Love" — Philadelphia — a year or so ago.

That racially different person along with all of the anxious moments spent everyday by others, must wonder if he'll be served a

drink at a neighborhood bar or if he would be served dinner in a given restaurant or if he could stop off at a place like "Chaz's" and be admitted. Such people have violations and humiliations heaped on top of each other when it comes to them. Their only safe haven is home— where they can leave the criminals and the racists "outside."

Carl Rowan came home and left all of that "outside." Well, he thought he had. The outside climbed right over his fence, jumped into his swimming pool and when he did something about it, there are some people who imply that he did wrong. When I read the first report attacking his having shot the violator, I was amazed. After a moment's reflection, I wondered if that event had to do with more than Carl Rowan. There are some, following the lunatic leadership of Mayor Koch of New York, who are carrying on a relentless attack on Jesse Jackson. The ex-governor of Arizona carried on an attack of Martin Luther King. Around the country, similar things are occurring with other black men who've had the inclination, the wherewithal and the disposition to stand tall. A black politician in Florida, Julian Bond in Atlanta, Andrew Young during his tenure as Ambassador to the United Nations, Dr. Claude Perkins, former Su-

perintendent of Clark County Schools, and I'm sure we are aware of what is taking place with former Mayor Harold Washington of Chicago. Virginia Brewster used to refer to such individuals as our "eagles." Black men are indeed becoming an endangered species.

Carl Rowan investigated a disturbance on his property.

There were intruders. He had no way of knowing if they were simple criminals or criminals with racist tendencies. He summoned the police. He armed himself and waited. The police arrived and went the wrong way. Rowan, who had exited his home to file the complaint was isolated. One of the intruders approached. Rowan made him stop. The intruder reports that he gave Rowan no cause to shoot him. Ha. He gave cause when he climbed the fence. The intruder might have thought his actions innocent enough but, where I come from — anyone who uses that which is not theirs without permission of the owner is violating that owner's rights.

What if the person had walked in the house at dinner time and just sat down and started eating turkey. Sure,

he might not have meant any harm and when he picked up the carving knife he was only going to carve a piece of turkey, but who's a mind reader? Someone is playing polo on your front lawn without your permission and when asked to leave they approach you with mallet in hand. Who's a mind reader? Someone enters your car without your consent and when confronted, they exit it with a tire iron in hand. Who's mind reader? Some young strapping chap is in your mailbox and you're 50 years old with a heart condition and you yell to them to get out of there and they approach you — empty-handed — you make them stop the best way you can. Who's a mind reader?

Anything in my pool without my permission will be treated as "JAWS."

Community Baptist Church

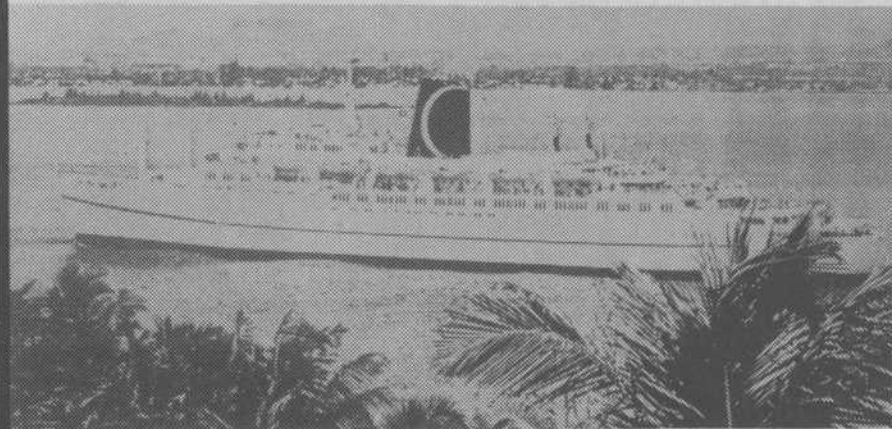
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