

## **Wild Rice and Radical Militia Members**

I know a Sergeant in the US Army who works in Psychological Operations. His job is to study and utilize every aspect of psychology to demoralize the enemy, write and distribute propaganda to the population of whatever country he is working in, apprehend and interrogate prisoners, and so on.

His team was recently recruited by The Dept of Homeland Security to perform a research project dealing with extracting information from prisoners. DHS (probably thru its Warrant-less Wiretapping program) had developed a profile for a particularly recalcitrant subject, whom they wanted to apprehend and interrogate. From the interrogation they hoped to obtain some simple facts and information.

The subjects, as it turns out, were Silver Creek Township residents who had evidence of being members of a Radical Militia identified as SCRAM (Silver Creek Radical Artists Militia), and engaged in the highly secretive activities of wild ricing, blueberry picking, and walleye fishing. The Sergeant and his team were given the identity and location of their subject, code named Potter.

The Sergeant and his team prepared, and moved in under cover of darkness. Using snatch and grab techniques perfected on various battlefields, they extracted Potter from his home, unbeknown to his wife, who is apparently a very sound sleeper. They moved him to a secret and undisclosed location in the area, but apparently not one used by the Vice President for hunting trips. This was a deer shack, not one used to bird hunt.

There they began the interrogation process. They tried the friendly and conversational approach over a cold beer with questions such as: "Hot enough for you this summer? How are the kids? Have you been ricing yet this year? Too bad about the Twins, but how do the blueberries look? What color jigs are the walleyes hitting on and are you using leeches or worms?" Potter looked up at his captors and laughed. Others had tried without success to extract the same information from him. He'd hung around the Finland Co-op drinking coffee, eavesdropping on the conversations of others, trying to glean the same information. These SCRAM members are not rookies in this field of clandestine interrogation. They know how to get the info they are after, and not give up what they want kept secret.

Next came the use of drugs. Using some psychotropic concoction, they made Potter talkative, having gotten thru his inherent sense of caution and discretion. They hoped that these drugs would not only make him willing to talk, but also open to suggestion. Using this method, they were able to obtain a wealth of information, including the combination to his locker from junior high, the fact that during his freshman year of college he had both smoked and inhaled, had once voted for a Republican, a summary of the various business expenses he had as well as his overall income. One of the team members, as it turns out, is a CPA and from the last batch of facts was able to determine that Potter had, in fact, over-paid his estimated taxes for the

past 3 years. However, they were not one wit closer to finding the locations of the wild rice, the blueberries, or the walleye hole.

For the next step they played Pink Floyd music at about 3 decibels above the threshold of pain. Potter likes Pink Floyd, especially the *Scream* album. Too many years of rock music and the operation of heavy equipment had left him with a very high threshold of pain, as well as a deafness his wife often referred to as “highly selective”.

The Sergeant was getting desperate. He needed to get the info, and time was running out. Blueberry season is about over, the rice might be gotten by others, and the Sergeant hadn't gone fishing all year

Finally, they brought in the Doberman, barking, foaming at the mouth, sounding hungry and mean. The Potter just laughed. In Amazement the Sergeant asked: Aren't you afraid of this mean dog?" Listen," replied Potter, "for 6 years I drove school bus for the Two Harbors School. Have you ever seen the kids on the Brimson/Toimi Activity bus? They've had a long day, are hungry, tired and crabby. They make your Doberman look like a poodle."

In great exasperation, the Sergeant signaled his team to pack up and get ready to pull out. They had failed. Miserably. It wasn't the enemy that was demoralized. Extracting information from Al Quida detainees at Gitmo was child's play, compared to getting SCRAM members to talk about blueberries, wild rice and walleyes.

Using another pharmaceutical concoction, they returned Potter to his home and own bed, with the knowledge that he would wake up in the morning with a slight headache and the belief he had just had a very, very, bizarre dream. He could not, however explain the overwhelming urge that plagued him for the next three days to contact his accountant about filing an amended tax return.

*Greg Hull is a sawyer and philosopher-at-large, who owns and operates Hull's Sawmill. He suspects The Sergeant may be slipping unauthorized chemicals into his coffee before he writes some columns.*