



The Ross Retort by Lisa Ross

www.lisaross.com

Dear Mr. Taliban: A Note From the Suburbs of America

Good morning, Taliban brothers, from Carmel Valley, San Diego—just a word about life in America's suburbs post-September 11 from a woman who must decline your website's offer of protection from the evils of sexual objectification proliferating around our community.

Thanks to you, I awoke to our daily dose of CNN Anthrax reports and MSNBC sensitivity sessions about Good Islam versus Bad Islam delivered by a generic anchorwoman, as if anyone growing up in this diverse society wouldn't know the difference between rabid extreme control freaks like you folks and religious people who also happen to live down the block.

After applying the antidote, a fresh yuppie Starbucks brew, my first offensive American act of the day, I discovered that the US Congress was hunkering down in the Capitol after an Anthrax letter ended up in Senate Majority leader Tom Daschle's office.

Additionally, according to the morning reports in our local free press, my municipal government began frisking folks on their way to City Council meetings where nothing has happened or ever does (except for raising sewer fees 30% this week). I also read that the Mayor refused to meet with local Muslim leaders because he wasn't going to treat them any differently than any other citizen unconnected to his campaign. That's real democracy.

Well, in spite of your best attempts at reigning terror on my country's most ridiculed and important institutions, this morning I intend to write this column, drive my car to the Jewish Community Center gym to work out among a multi-cultural mélange of sweating half dressed men and women, followed by an angst ridden meeting with my daughter as she moves on to college.

So stone me.

I then will return to that most irreverent of places, my Carmel Valley neighborhood shopping center, to recreate in the supermarket, where women patriotically shop 'til they drop in their beach clothes or worse, in their three piece- work suits, unaware of the terrible things lascivious lusty men do to gals sans the head-to-toe Burkha as described and prescribed on taliban.com.

Later, I'll check in with our Carmel Valley Planning Board Chair, the mother of two young women who are military pilots by trade, to get the poop on her unrelenting battle to free the neighborhood from stupid ideas like cellular towers on the fire station, civic leadership being high on the list of female activities, here. But, mostly I like to revel in the idea that her daughters are coming after you.

And that's because it is clear to me that your war is about the Stone Age versus the New Age and it is aimed squarely at the life-style of me and my neighbors, not to mention the aspirations of women everywhere.

It wasn't long ago when you sent your best-looking and most articulate spin doctor to Hollywood to woo a group of influential liberal Hollywood women, telling them that Afghan women under Taliban rule, living under house arrest without benefit of education, medical services or economic futures, were better off than American women because they weren't treated as sexual objects. That emptied the room.

While there are millions of American women who chose to live under Islamic law, many under the Burkha, they do so by choice, because this is America. And, before you guys showed up, few of us felt threatened by that choice. After all, no follower of the Koran I know living in this country ever publicly expounded a need to return to the 10th Century.

But, we now have seen images of Afghan women stoned to death for showing their ankles or buying food from men, followed and harassed by male religious cops in jeeps if they dare venture onto the streets of Kabul.

And, we do understand that this struggle isn't about liberating Beaver's mother from her shirtmaker dress or even about 72 cents on the dollar—this is about repelling a bunch of strange men who want women everywhere to join the ranks of "the walking dead," as Afghan women call themselves.

The Taliban website is now gone, and in its place is posted a characteristically oblique statement: "You step in the stream, but the water has moved on." If what you mean is that you guys have stepped in it this time, you said a mouthful, brother.