

Does America have a Culture?

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The culture of the United States is said to be a youth culture, which is defined in terms of entertainment: sex, rock music or its current equivalent, violent video games, sports, and TV reality shows. This culture has transformed the country and appears on the verge of transforming the rest of the world. There are even indications that secularized Arab and Iranian youth can't wait to be liberated and to partake of this culture of porn-rock.

America's former culture-accountable government, rule of law and presumption of innocence, respect for others and for principles, and manners-has gone by the wayside. Many Americans, especially younger ones, are not aware of what they have lost, because they don't know what they had.

This was brought home to me yet again by some reader responses to my recent columns in which I pointed out that Strauss-Kahn, the IMF director (now former) accused of sexually assaulting a hotel maid, was denied the presumption of innocence. I pointed out that the legal principle of innocent until proven guilty was violated by the police and media, and that Strauss-Kahn was convicted in the media not only prior to trial but also prior to his indictment.

From readers' responses I learned that there are people who do not know that a suspect is innocent until proven guilty by evidence in a public trial. As one wrote, "if he wasn't guilty, he wouldn't be charged." Some thought that by "presumption of innocence" I was saying that Strauss-Kahn was innocent. I was accused of being a woman-hater and received feminist lectures. Some American women are more familiar with feminist mantras than they are with the legal principles that are the foundation of our society.

Many males also confused my defense of the presumption of innocence with a defense of Strauss-Kahn, or if they knew about "innocent until proven guilty," didn't care. Right-wingers wanted Strauss-Kahn out of the picture because he was the socialist party candidate likely to defeat the American puppet, Sarkozy, in the French presidential election. With Sarkozy, Washington finally has a French president who has abandoned all interest in an independent or semi-independent French foreign policy. Didn't I realize that if we lost Sarkozy, the French might revert to not going along with our invasions, as they refused to do when we had to get Saddam Hussein? With Sarkozy, the French are doing our bidding in Libya. Why in the world did I think Strauss-Kahn and some silly doctrine like the presumption of innocence were more important than French support for our wars?

Many left-wingers were just as indifferent to a legal principle that protects the innocent. They wanted Strauss-Kahn's blood, because he is a rich member of the establishment and as IMF director had made the poor in Greece, Ireland, and Spain pay for the mistakes of the

rich. What did I mean, “presumption of innocence”? How could any member of the ruling establishment be innocent? One left-winger even wrote that I had “reverted to type,” and that my babbling about presumption of innocence proved that I was still a Reaganite defending the rich from the consequences of their crimes.

It evidently did not cause the feminist, the right-wing or the left-wing to wonder that if such a powerful member of the establishment, as they regard Strauss-Kahn to be, can be denied the presumption of innocence, what would be their fate?

Independent thought is not a concept with which very many Americans are familiar or comfortable. Most want to have their emotions stroked, to be told what they want to hear. They already know what they think. A writer’s job is to validate it, and if the writer doesn’t, he is, depending on the ideology of the reader, a misogynist, a pinko-liberal commie, or an operative for the fascist establishment. All will agree that he is a no good SOB.

As I wrote a while back, respect for truth has fallen and taken everything down with it.

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