

DEATH IN ATLANTA AND GENDER SAMENESS IN THE HAPPY LAND OF MAKEBELIEVE

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America today is The Happy Land of Make-Believe. We've become exquisitely adept at ignoring reality when it offends the prevailing cultural ethos. But reality always reasserts itself in the end – often with deadly consequences.

Take gender differences.

In the Happy Land of Make-Believe, we like to pretend that men and women are interchangeable – physically as well as psychologically. According to feminist dogma, women can be tough and aggressive – men sensitive and nurturing. Hence women firefighters, female soldiers and 5' 2" cops.

In Atlanta, on Friday, reality had the last word.

Brian Nichols, a former college football player on trial for raping his ex-girlfriend, wrested a gun away from a female deputy who was taking him to trial, and shot and killed Judge Roland W. Barnes, court stenographer Julie Ann Brandau and Deputy Hoyt Teasley. (He's also suspected of the murder of an off-duty federal agent.)

It wasn't until the sixth paragraph of The New York Times' Saturday story that we learned the name of the deputy who was disarmed, sparking the tragedy – Cynthia Hall.

I'm guessing it wasn't that hard for Nichols (all 6'-1", 210 pounds of him) to physically overpower Hall – all 5-feet-2-inches of her.

But to The New York Times, Deputy Hall's gender is no more relevant than her eye-color or ethnicity. That the average woman is considerably smaller, weaker and a lot less aggressive than the average man is inconsequential in the Happy Land of Make-Believe.

Officers don't have to be bruisers, we're told. After all, cops have guns, don't they? – that is, until a prisoner who's larger, stronger and more aggressive takes their gun away from them.

Despite the manifest absurdity of assigning Thumbelina to guard King Kong, thanks to feminist lobbying and a judiciary bent on gender equality at any cost, physical standards increasingly are obsolete in determining who wears a badge and carries a gun.

The FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin for May 2001 noted that police forces which attempt to establish physical standards had better be damned sure that they don't result in what the courts call “disparate impact.”

Even standards that are entirely rational could leave a department open to a federal civil rights suit. The Bulletin cites the case of the Philadelphia transit system which, in 1991, established endurance standards for its 234-*man* force.

Based on the latest scientific studies, and after exhaustive research, the Southern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority determined that there were occasions when its officers would have to run (fast) to: pursue a fleeing suspect, make an arrest, assist a *fellow* officer or stop the commission of a crime. Yea, verily, it determined that the inability of officers to move rapidly endangered the public.

In light of the foregoing, the Authority decided that potential recruits should be able to run 1.5 miles in 12 minutes – not exactly an Olympic record, but fast enough to do the job.

But that's where *disparate impact* came in. Even though the Authority didn't intend to discriminate against women, its standard did (due to a little thing called reality).

As the FBI Bulletin informs us, during the years 1991, 1993 and 1996, almost 60 percent of male applicants for the Transit Authority police force met the 1.5-miles-in-12-minutes standard, but only 12 percent of female applicants did so.

In 1997, five women who had been rejected for the force filed a Title VII (gender discrimination) civil rights action. The U.S. Justice Department

– under that great friend of female-kind, William Jefferson Clinton – intervened in their behalf.

The Authority eventually prevailed, after the case wended its way through the federal court system, at a cost of millions to taxpayers. Despite the positive outcome, rest assured that the expense will discourage other departments from establishing physical standards that the average little lady can't meet – exactly what feminists intended.

One public-safety job that's largely escaped the reality-defying, feminization drive is firefighting.

As of May, 2002, out of more than 11,500 active-duty firefighters in New York City, exactly 25 were women. This might possibly be related to the fact that running into a burning building carrying 60 pounds of equipment, and dashing up stairs with same to rescue trapped tenants, requires physical endurance that all but a very few women lack.

Still, feminists excel at long-distance whining. Take Brenda Berkman, who, in 1982, successfully sued the City of New York to have physical standards for firefighters lowered because they – you guessed it -- discriminated against women (as does nature, when it comes to stamina).

In a TV interview a few years back, a feminist (I believe it was Gloria Steinem) wondered why firefighter recruits should be required to carry victims over their shoulders. They can drag them out (and down several flights of stairs?), can't they?

Anyway, Berkman, now a captain by virtue of quotas, says she was traumatized by tributes to firefighters who fell at the World Trade Center.

Said she: “What was most *hurtful* was to be invisible at the funerals and memorial services. The officials giving the eulogies would talk about ‘firemen,’ the ‘brothers,’ the ‘men.’” Oh, the agony! How did Berkman endure it?

So, even though .002% of New York firefighters are people of the feminine persuasion, including none of those who perished on 9/11, officials eulogizing those heroes were expected to speak of the brave “guys and gals,” “brother and sisters,” and persons-who-fight-fires. Amazing.

Where reality-avoidance really gets risky is in the military. For over a decade, Elaine Donnelly, president of the Center for Military Readiness (www.cmrlink.org), has been fighting a lonely battle against political correctness in uniform.

Despite clear Congressional mandates against women in land combat, the Pentagon's feminist-whipped brass keeps moving female soldiers closer and closer to the front lines.

Donnelly notes: "Modern body armor alone weighs 25 pounds. This weight is proportionally more difficult to carry by female soldiers who are, on average, shorter and smaller than men, with 45-50% less upper body strength and 25-30% less aerobic capacity, which is essential for endurance. Even in current non-combat training, women suffer debilitating bone stress fractures and other injuries at double the rate of men.

To summarize an enormous body of well-documented evidence by physiologists in the U.S. and Britain, in close combat women do not have an 'equal opportunity' to survive, or to help fellow soldiers survive."

There are other considerations weighing against women in combat. As prisoners, they tend to get sexually molested by an often-less-than chivalrous enemy -- witness Pfc. Jessica Lynch, an Army truck driver taken prisoner at the outset of the Iraq war, who was gang-raped and sodomized by her captors.

Also, men in combat tend to get themselves killed trying to protect women in combat. (This was the Israeli experience in 1948.) And, mixing the sexes at a time when hormones are running high tends to result in fraternization. (Thus the high rate of pregnancy among female troops stationed in the desert during the first Gulf War.)

The fact that men and women are different offends our modernist sensibilities. (Feminists really should sue God for giving women breasts and vaginas and a maternal instinct, and men penises and testosterone, as well as a warrior ethic and a natural inclination to serve and protect what used to be called the gentler sex.) So we pretend that men and women are fungible commodities -- that anything he can do, she can do better -- or just as well, at any rate.

It comes down to this: You're a young soldier with a leg wound. Who do you want to count on to carry you to safety, a 180-pound man, or a 110-pound woman?

Or, you're trapped in a burning building. Who do you want Ladder Company 49 to send in to save you, a strapping, 6'2" fireman, or a gal with a ballerina-build in a fireman's uniform?

Or, you're a spectator at a trial. Who do you want to escort the 210-pound, 6'1" rape suspect to the courtroom – Dirty Harry or Little Mary Sunshine?