

## Ye Olde Ethics Alarms

December 2, 2017 by Mark Draughn — 1 Comment

I just went through yet another [argument about illegal immigrants](#) in the comments at Jack Marshall's *Ethics Alarms* blog. Jack has been a frequent source of blogging ideas (at least when I used to blog more), but he's been kind of hard to take ever since Donald Trump was elected. It's not that he likes Trump, but he's clearly attracted to Trump's authoritarianism, especially when it comes to making life hard for people who are here illegally.

Jack is in the "What part of *illegal* don't you understand?" camp: He regards our immigration laws as axiomatically beyond reproach, so his analysis begins and ends with the fact that these people broke our immigration laws — an unforgivable sin. (For an example of Jack's style, he [regularly ridicules people for getting upset when illegal immigrants are torn from families, friends, jobs, and communities by DHS.](#))

One of my biggest complaints about U.S. immigration policies is that they impose the will of anti-immigrant restrictionists on all Americans, [even if we would benefit from the presence of immigrants](#), and [even if we explicitly welcome them](#). This reminds me of the Fugitive Slave Laws imposed on non-slave states before the American Civil War. These laws attempted to force Northerners to return escaped slaves to their masters, despite the harm that would come to slaves sent back, and despite the clear rejection of slavery by Americans in free states.

Every time I read one of Jack's posts about illegal immigration, I find myself trying to imagine what he would have written about those escaping slaves. So, without further ado...starting with Jack's attitude toward illegal immigration, and mixing in some of his rants against Black Live Matter and the media, I arrived at the following, which I imagine to be a pamphlet published shortly before the American Civil War by one of Jack's ancestors:

### *Ethical Alarm #28*

by Jackson "Cotton" Marshall

#### Unethical Anti-Slavery Editorial of the Year:

##### Now THIS is Unprincipled Hooliganism!

The *Salem Times-Gazette* has published yet another crazy editorial that threatens to make my cranium shatter.

Last week, in Salem, Ohio, federal marshals were in the process of apprehending two slaves who had illegally absconded from a fine cotton plantation in Georgia, when they were set upon by a crowd of thugs, who identified themselves as members of the unprincipled, law-breaking Liberty Party. The marshals were injured, and the criminal slaves escaped, presumably to make their way to Canada instead of returning to their lawful owners.

The *Times-Gazette* actually applauds these criminals for "helping escaped slaves."

*This is Unethical.*

1. Newspapers should report the news accurately, not spout "abolitionist" propaganda.
2. The editorial refers to the fugitive slaves as "escaped," thus promoting the *false narrative* that plantations are harmful to slaves. The utterly nonsensical nature of this should be obvious to anyone who considers that slaves are an investment, and slave owners can't afford to mistreat them, not if their plantations are to succeed. Admittedly, there have been some abuses, but for the most part slaves are well cared-for — given food and a place to live — unlike factory workers in the so-called "free North" where this act of hooliganism took place.
3. The entire abolitionist movement is itself based on the lie that the Negro is equal to the white man. But if Negroes were really equal to white people of European extraction, they wouldn't be complaining so much about doing the same kind of farm work that *Europeans have been doing for thousands of years*.
4. Also, if Negroes are supposed to be equal to whites, how come none of them have helped their community by investing in cotton plantations? This is nothing more than an excuse for the unwillingness and inability of Negroes to perform the leadership roles that white plantation owners have been taking on for over a century.
5. White people did not enslave free African Negroes. The slaves brought to the Americas were all provided in legal sales by legitimate African traders.
6. The federal marshals were enforcing the Fugitive Slave laws. These laws were passed by the United States Congress, and they are entirely Constitutional. I know this because I've actually read the entire Constitution, including Article IV, Section 2, Clause 3 which specifically states that

No person held to service or labour in one state, under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labour, but shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such service or labour may be due.

No honest person could read that and conclude anything other than that fugitive slaves must be returned to their owners. The *Times-Gazette's* bias makes it stupid.

7. It's true that legally, according to the 1842 Supreme Court decision in *Prigg v. Pennsylvania*, no State can be forced to assist the Federal Government in enforcing the Fugitive Slave Act, but that's a mere rationalization. That it's not illegal does not justify supporting the flagrant violators of Fugitive Slave laws.

8. Canada continues its unethical subversion of our longstanding institution of slavery. Canadians are not bound by United States law, but that doesn't change the fact that they are unethically depriving Southern plantation owners of their property.

9. Abolitionists continue their Orwellian deception of conflating free Negroes with absconding slaves. Bounty hunters who capture free Negroes certainly are a real problem — they deserve censure, and the free Negroes should be released immediately — but the truth you won't hear in the media is that the vast majority of Negroes captured by federal marshals are slaves who are too lazy to do the important agricultural work that is their God-given duty. Yet abolitionists scream and yell every time a Negro is captured in the North, as if these lazy slaves were deserving of the same rights as hard-working free Negroes. What part of "fugitive slave" don't abolitionists understand?

10. It is reported that 157 illegally absent slaves were apprehended in the North so far this year. Nobody knows how many weren't apprehended, but it is probably more. No, they aren't all rapists and murderers or even criminals, but they all went north or tried to go north illegally. That makes them wrong and undesirable, and all the linguistic tricks being employed to make that simple statement difficult to express won't alter that central fact.

The *Gazette* goes on to complain that the slaves are being returned to the South, where they will be punished for what the *Gazette* calls their "attempt to gain the freedom of which every man is deserving."

**Good.**

What abolitionist rabble-rousers refuse to admit is that Southern slavery of the Negro is the *law of the land*. Enforcement of the law against slaves stealing themselves away had, under previous administrations, been flaccid. It's good to have strong leadership that sees the wisdom of bringing federal marshals to the fight. The refusal by some in the Northern States to enforce those laws is incompetent, it is irresponsible, and it is foolish.

Except for the rampant anachronisms, I think I nailed it.

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**Chris says**  
May 31, 2018 at 9:47 am

This remains an excellent piece of satire, though I'm afraid it can't compete with Jack's latest self-parody about why it was unethical for a woman to ignore him while jogging.

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