PS1 for 5/11/89 Willie Horton and Susan Estrich

Left-wing political types whose ideology or patrons ware out of favor with the voters can usually find a well-paid sanctuary on some university campus. Defeated liberal Senators and Congressmen, and former employees of liberal Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, Carter, and would-be President Michael Dukakis, can continue to preach their discredited liberalism to college students who lack enough real-world experience to refute it.

So we find that Dukakis's campaign manager, Susan Estrich, has moved to the cloistered reserve of the Harvard Law School where she is currently teaching Criminal Procedure. The views she imparts to her captive student audience she has just shared with readers of **Washington Post Magazine** in an article called "Willie Horton & Me."

The article shows that Susan Estrich either doesn't understand or misrepresents – the crime issue which was so important in the Dukakis-Bush campaign. According to Estrich, the Republicans made Willie Horton a campaign issue, Willie Horton was black, so therefore it was an appeal to racism.

Estrich misses the point. The issue wasn't Willie Horton; it was Michael Dukakis. The issue wasn't Horton's race or even the crimes he committed; the issue was Dukakis's unique furlough policy.

Estrich complained that "the Willie Horton story could happen again today in virtually any town in America." A heinous rape could, indeed, happen in any town, but a Dukakis furlough couldn't and didn't happen in any town outside of Massachusetts.

The point was not that Willie Horton raped a woman and beat up her husband, but that Dukakis let Willie Horton out of prison after the court had sentenced him to "life without possibility of parole."

A majority of other states have furlough programs, although California, New York and Illinois do not. But nine do not allow furloughs for first-degree murderers at all, and the rest allow a furlough for a first-degree murderer only if he has first received commutation or parole.

Willie Horton had been convicted of robbing a 17-year-old gas station attendant, brutally stabbing him 19 times, and stuffing his body into a trash can. Since Governor Dukakis had vetoed a death penalty bill a few weeks before Horton's conviction, the court gave him the toughest sentence possible: life imprisonment without possibility of parole.

In any other state, Willie Horton would not have ever been eligible for a furlough because he would have been executed or locked up for life. And in Massachusetts, he would not have been given a furlough except that Dukakis was enthusiastic supporter of the policy of furloughing criminals whom the court ordered locked up for life.

The reason the furlough issue was so powerful in the Presidential campaign last year was that the American people had a real choice between George Bush, who supports the death penalty and

tough-on-crime policy, and Dukakis, who oppose the death penalty and supports the extreme liberal American Civil Liberties Union attitude toward criminals. The ACLU favors suspended sentences with probation in order to re-integrate criminals into the community, and says that "exceptions to the principle are not favored."

In her **Washington Post** article, Estrich espouses this soft and fuzzy attitude toward criminals. "We can't keep all criminals locked up forever," she writes, "or even for very long." Dukakis-ACLU liberals are just not comfortable with punishment, and the American people are not comfortable with leaders who are not comfortable with punishment.

Except when taught by ACLU liberals, students in criminal law courses in law schools learn that the punishment of convicted criminals, whether by execution or incarceration, has five legitimate purposes: prevention (of future crimes by the criminal himself), restraint (isolation from targets of his criminal intent), rehabilitation (reformation of his behavior), deterrence (of others from committing similar crimes), education (of the public by demonstrating that crime doesn't pay), and retribution (to teach respect for the law).

We are sick and tired of the liberals' apologies for criminal such as those who today are explaining the savage gang attack on the female jogger in Central Park by bemoaning the teenagers' lack of "recreational facilities" and their feeling of being excluded from successful New York society.

Unfortunately, there are many Willie Hortons today, black and white, young and old. In the world we know, there will always be some bad guys. The challenge is how to deal with them. The Dukakis-Estrich plan is to slap them on the wrist, blame their crimes of "society," and reintegrate them into our communities. The American people soundly rejected that policy and understood very well that the issue was not Willie Horton's rape but Dukakis's furloughs of criminals who should have been executed.