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**Notes from editor (not for publication):**

Hi, Jimmy: You might not like the editing I've done here — I don't often edit contributions this heavily or directly — but I worry about how the tone of your original was coming through. I think front-loading it with the disclaimer set it up to be misread and misunderstood, and you had too many specifics about the mouse and too many direct connections with the boat strike. I think by pulling back the details, making the comparisons more gentle, and more subtly integrating your clarification about your convictions, your real message comes through. At least that's my intent. Do let me know what you think. All the best, Jeff

**HEADLINE ELEMENTS:**

####BEGIN HED####

Of mice and inhumanity

####END HED####

####BEGIN SUBHED####

'I knew of no laws or rules of engagement around what to do with a surviving mouse. And yet, I rescued my enemy. Admiral Bradley had very clear laws and international rules of engagement that he chose to disregard and instead killed two injured, nonthreatening human beings.'

####END SUBHED####

TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

THIS MORNING, in my rural Vermont home, I found myself facing an unexpected moral dilemma.

A couple of weeks ago, after setting traps, I had killed 17 mice. Today, I discovered one more dead mouse on my basement workbench and another, very much alive, dangling from a trap on the floor after a 3-foot fall onto the concrete.

*Now what? I asked myself. Should I finish off this terrified, helpless, injured creature?*

I rehearsed both options: the quick, grim efficiency of a second attack, or the slower and more cumbersome task of rescuing it.

As I approached, the mouse twisted frantically, doing its confused best to escape what it surely assumed was my fatal decision.

I hesitated, picked up my hand-held grapple, and found I could free the mouse without harming myself or making its fear any worse. Once released outside, it vanished into the snow in the blink of an eye.

Walking back to the house, it struck me: If this same scenario had played out in the hands of my government, the outcome would have been different.

A second strike would be rationalized as the only acceptable choice — after all, mice can cause structural damage and even house fires. Eliminating the “threat” would be labeled smart, defensive, and necessary.

\* \* \*

PLEASE ACCEPT my apologies if you feel I’ve trivialized drug policy and the lives of two survivors of the Sept. 2 Venezuelan boat strike.

Let me be perfectly clear where I stand: Without evidence of criminal activity and the opportunity for due process, the nine boaters killed by the first strike and the disregard for the rules of law and engagement for killing the two survivors (e.g., the Geneva Convention defines the ethical and strategic

42 responsibility to war survivors), I personally find the U.S. actions  
43 abhorrent.

44 But I did find that this small incident in my daily life  
45 resonated with something in the bigger world.

46 There's at least one interesting difference between me  
47 and Admiral Bradley, the commander of the Joint Special  
48 Operations Command who oversaw the boat strike.

49 I knew of no laws or rules of engagement around what to  
50 do with a surviving mouse. And yet, I rescued my enemy. Admiral  
51 Bradley had very clear laws and international rules of  
52 engagement that he chose to disregard and instead killed two  
53 injured, nonthreatening human beings.

54 In my basement, I had everything I needed to rescue and  
55 release my lone survivor and risk its return attack on my  
56 windowsills and wiring. A U.S. Navy ship — with thousands of  
57 personnel, advanced aircraft, and technology capable of  
58 retrieving wreckage from the bottom of the sea — had more than  
59 enough capacity to rescue two human beings clinging to a  
60 destroyed vessel.

61 If I could have looked my government in the eye, I would  
62 have like to say: "Get a military-grade grapple. You certainly have  
63 one."

64 \* \* \*

65 I HAVE NEVER served in the military, and I hold deep  
66 respect and gratitude for those who have.

67 But had I been in the position of making that decision, I  
68 hope I would have found the moral clarity and courage to say,  
69 "Rescue them. Warm them. Feed them. Confine them safely. Treat  
70 them with dignity. Follow the rules of engagement and the law.  
71 Protect their due process."

72 And to those eager to slash government spending?

73 I'm willing to bet a house full of mice that rescuing two  
74 survivors clinging to a capsized motorboat costs far less than  
75 firing another missile from one of the most advanced — and  
76 expensive — weapons systems on Earth.

####END TEXT####

BIO/COATTAIL:

####BEGIN BIO/COATTAIL####

77 **JIMMY KARLAN** is professor emeritus at Antioch  
78 University in Keene, New Hampshire.

####END BIO/COATTAIL####

*LAST ISSUE IN WHICH THIS FILE CAN BE RUN:*

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LINKS:

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VIDEO:

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LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

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