

IN MY OPINION

Caroline Porter

Death American style

Aw shucks, cancel my reservation.

A huge event in an Indiana city has been postponed. Caterers complain they had already prepared thousands of dollars of food ordered by the news media. All of the city's hotel rooms, 1,600 of them, had been booked and are now canceled. People who were going to attend the Indy 500 had been displaced that week-end so have found other accommodations.

Daniela Peck, manager of the Fairfield Inn said her hotel will lose as much as \$10,000. "To rely on revenue, then to lose it, will hit everybody hard, hotels, restaurants, everyone," Peck said.

"It means a tremendous loss of business in Vigo County," said Rod Henry, President of the Chamber of Commerce.

Henry said he planned to tell congressional leaders that the new date is not a good time for his city — the Hoosier Boys Club will be having an annual meeting at Indiana University and the Miss Indiana Scholarship Program starts the day before.

And what big tourism event was postponed, causing such a loss of money and an extreme scheduling conflict? You guessed it. It was the execution of Timothy McVeigh at the Federal prison in Terre Haute — scheduled for May 16 and postponed until June 11.

I admit I don't know anyone personally who was killed or injured in that terrible bombing in Oklahoma City, but surely the the execution should not be such a public

circus. First of all, it gives me the creeps that anyone would want to watch McVeigh die. It's barbaric. Secondly, it gives him all sorts of publicity, an opportunity to become a martyr and espouse his cause through his book and the news media. We ask for this, you know. We lap up this junk like it was ice cream on a 90 degree day and the news media gets into a 24 hour a day frenzy covering every gory detail for us.

Frankly, I think the guy ought to rot in isolation for the rest of his life. Give him plenty of time to think about what he's done. I watched CBS "60 Minutes" just long enough Sunday night to see McVeigh interviewed. I had the impression he is trying hard to justify what he's done before he dies, but given enough time, I think he would sink into despair with the stark realization of the terror and destruction he caused. I thought his demeanor was of a man who hadn't entirely convinced himself. If we kill him, he won't have to face this revelation when it comes.

As for Terre Haute, I feel sorry for a city which has to deal with such an event and have regular events jeopardized for the sake of a man who murdered 168 people. I fear, however, that if the execution hadn't been postponed, we wouldn't be hearing any complaints. Business would be booming. Hotels would be bustling and glasses raised high. Next year we'll schedule the Christians and the lions. Let's hear it for good old American fun.

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