

The Barefoot Burglar Colton Harris-Moore

Colton Harris-Moore is a young alleged genius and thief from Washington State who has already become a folk hero. He has escaped from jail, evaded sheriffs, the Royal Canadian mounted police, and the FBI, for two years and two months, is only 19 and suspected to have stolen numerous airplanes, cars and boats. Essentially playing as one reporter put it "Grand theft auto: the reality version" until being caught on July 11th in the Bahamas. The same reporter stated "Hell yeah this looks like the birth of a outlaw legend."

Born into a working class family and raised in a mobile home on Camano Island he ran into trouble with the law at an early age. He was caught after breaking into his middle school with friends and was given the nickname Klepto Colt by his schoolmates. Soon he skipped out on a court date and lived on the lam in the woods of Camano Island. Artfully using survival skills (which he is considered to be a natural in) and breaking into empty vacation homes. These homes he used as way to obtain supplies, credit cards, and the occasional shower. Colt was eventually apprehended and spent a year in a maximum-security juvenile prison only to escape upon being transferred to a lower security lock up. Since then he lived on the run in the northwest.

Police allege Harris-Moore is responsible for more than 100 burglaries in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Indiana, Canada, and the Bahamas. He ordered, with stolen credit cards, night vision goggles, bear mace, and importantly flight manuals as well as other supplies, which he then returned to pick up in empty houses. Having no experience flying Colt allegedly stole a \$500,000 Cessna and flew 300 miles crash landing on an Indian reservation walking away unharmed. His mother later stated "I hope to hell he stole those planes. I'd be so proud. But next time I want him to wear a parachute."

Even among the cops that were chasing him he is legendary for his ability to escape and evade. On July 17, 2008 he lost the police on Camano Island by leaping from a stolen Mercedes and running into the woods. In one run in with the cops Harris-Moore kicked off his shoes to better evade police chasing him through the forest. Earning the nickname some of his fans call him "the barefoot burglar." Supposedly he also stealthily broke into a sheriff's vehicle and stole a assault rifle. Cops on numerous occasions say Colt "vaporized" "vanished" and "ran like lightning." On September 13, 2009, Orcas deputies identified Colton and in hot pursuit claimed "We could hear him

laughing," Colt ran through a churchyard and eventually, circled around to a dock where he stole a boat and rode off into the sunrise, escaping to Point Roberts, on the mainland. On another occasion of pursuit police mobilized two counties' worth of SWAT in armored personnel carriers, canine units, a sheriff's helicopter, and a Department of Homeland Security Blackhawk helicopter, only to have Colton once again disappear into the woods. Still another incident led to the police finding one of Harris-Moore's camps in the woods including his dog. This prompted Colt to leave a letter for his mother, stating "Cops wanna play huh!? Well its no lil game....It's war! & tell them that." Sadly Colton was caught in the Bahamas in true outlaw fashion after a boat chase where the police had to shoot out the engine.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the ballad of Colton Harris-Moore is the popular support he has garnered. One fan even made lucid statements about his support on network TV, proclaiming "He could either learn how to fly from the internet and go on a crime spree or go get a job at McDonalds. I think he made a good decision." There are support websites, t-shirts, stickers, and tens of thousands of members in his facebook fan club. One support t-shirt says "fly Colton fly" below a stencil of his face, another proclaims "momma tried, momma tried" and yet another has an image of billy club wielding cop chasing a running Colton with the word "owned" stamped on top of the cop. The residents of the Washington islands that are his stomping ground seem divided. Some cheered him on stating roughly that during hard economic times why not support a working class kid who steals from the islands' vacation homes of Seattle's millionaires. Another proclaimed "I'm glad he's sticking it to the cops." Other locals wanted to help the powers that be by forming a search party to catch him. Although he has always had the full support of his mother who, when he was still on the run, even wanted to buy him a bullet proof vest saying "I don't care if he wants it or not. I'm getting him one and he's going to wear it. Sometimes a mother has to put her foot down."

Feel free to write to Colt because as his mother Pam Kohler has said "Now, there's not a break-in or a theft in the entire Northwest that the media or law enforcement doesn't rush to pin on Colt... Colt will have to fight for his freedom against the full force of the legal system."

Write to Colton at

Colton Harris-Moore #83421-004
FDC SeaTac
PO Box 13900
Seattle, WA 98198

For more info check amiableoutlaws.wordpress.com



This flyer features two brief biographies of outlaws whose lives are or have been unmanageable, rebellious, uncontrollable, ungovernable, and generally a pain in the ass to power and its servants. Although we don't think that individual acts similar to those taken by these rebels are enough to spark the social uprising we want, they are nonetheless inspirational. Colton Harris-Moore's case reveals the possibility of widespread support for brazen acts against the current order. No matter the lack of revolutionary aims, in fact little is known about Colton's ideas, the popular fascination with his acts should help quiet the critique of those who say that in the U.S. the time is not ripe for class conflict and confrontation with the state. The actions themselves and the extensive approval so many people have of them should also in the very least embolden our own projects. While Stephen Reid's similarly bold acts and at the same time clear statements offer us a useful picture of the ridiculous and yet still horrifying situations we find ourselves in when confronting and being confronted by authority in its many forms.

Stephen Reid of the Stopwatch Gang

"That very afternoon we had strode into the hallowed interior of a downtown city bank, the figurative and literal core of capitalism.....and we had taken what we wanted. We had ripped the mask off the lone ranger and we had spit into the wind. It wasn't met as a lucrative form of social dissent..."

So our first unmanageable is Stephen Reid modern bank robber extraordinaire. Born in 1950 in Massey Ontario, Reid formed one third of the stopwatch gang. It is estimated they robbed over a 100 banks in the seventies and eighties and netted a total of 15 million dollars. Named the stopwatch gang by the FBI on account of the fact that Reid wore a stopwatch around his neck during hold ups to ensure the gang always left within two minutes. The gang once emptied two banks in one day, and one of their more famous exploits was the \$700,000 worth of gold bars stolen from an Ottawa airport. Their idea of a road trip was to travel from city to city robbing banks after meticulously planning each heist months in advance. They operated across North America from Seattle to Montréal to Miami. Heading back to a hideout in Arizona after their "west coast tour" (which included stealing \$283,000 from a San Diego bank, putting them on the FBI's most wanted

list) Reid and a partner passed a religious billboard reading "the wages of sin is death." They promptly stopped the car and climbed up to the billboard changing it to "the wages of sin is \$283,000."

Reid has served more than 20 years in 20 different prisons in the US and Canada and escaped three times. He became well known in Canada after publishing the autobiographical novel Jackrabbit Parole in 1986 with the help of BC poet and soon to be wife Susan Musgrave. He is currently on day release in Victoria after serving 8 years for robbing a Royal Bank of Canada in Victoria in 1999. Upon exiting the RBC with about \$90,000 dollars a police car happened to be near by dealing with a panhandler, in the pursuit that followed shots were fired and Reid took refuge in an elderly couples house. After a 5 hour stand off Reid was arrested and accused of kidnapping, among other things. During his trial the "kidnapped" elderly couple was giving him words of encouragement and rolling cigarettes for him. After the trial and against the cops advice the husband "hostage" met with Susan Musgrave for tea.

Stephen Reid interests us not just because of his amazing life. Recognizing the importance of ideas in relation to action, it seems appropriate to emphasize a few of his thoughts and give a rough sketch of his world view by sharing some of his quotes relating to different subjects.

On the power of money in society

"Curiously enough I receive more subservient smiles and yes sirs with a billfold full of hundred-dollar bills than I do with a pistol full of bullets. There is a lesson in that somewhere."

On judges and the rich

"When the boys on the top floor of the First National speak everybody listens. Defense lawyers may play a little racquetball with the prosecutors but judges play golf with the people who count the money."

On court

"I listened in snatches, to the effect not the words. This was medieval theater. Black robes. Raised dais. Lowered heads. Mumbled incantation. The clerk should be walking about with a smoky lamp swinging from the end of a chain, fixing leeches to the necks of prisoners, or preparing hot knives for their tongues....He finally ran out of seventeen-syllable legalese, dropped his gavel, and stung us each with twenty five years."

On justice

"Justice was a shit sandwich without the bread"

On the FBI

"They are the modern day pinkertons, on permanent call to the bankers association....They're more often found making

decisions like which tie goes best with what suit while dressing to appear at the office or the courtroom, their evidence stacked neatly in a debriefed briefcase. The law enforcement elite. Like Yuppies, but with crew cut ambitions."

On prison guards

"Most applicants are given rigorous examinations to determine their compassionate and humane qualities- if they are found its el rejecto."

On super maximum security prisons

"Hundreds are being built by federal and state governments at breakneck speeds across the length and breadth of America. The new supermax model is a bloodless, antiseptic and remote-monitored environment. The cells are prefab, the furnishings fixed, molded and as cold and lifeless as their designers. Many of the newer prisons are literally buried beneath the ground, saving the prisoner the imaginative leap to understanding the metaphor. A farmer standing within the vicinity of Tamms, Illinois, describes the bone-chilling cries he hears coming across his fields on some nights. Perhaps, when a more compassionate age dawns upon us, the new supermaxes will be kept as museums of man's inhumanity to man. Until then, the unfortunate souls who remain imprisoned inside these sterile tombs will continue to howl as they descend into their madness, void of witnesses, void of human contact."

On hedonism

"Hedonism, a worthy enough pursuit, loses its energy as a pastime. Life can't be one long blow job in a hot tub.....well maybe that's a bad example."

On how to rob a bank

"I once read in playboy that there were only four original jokes and that the rest have all been variations. The same premise holds true for bank robberies...It's pretty straightforward. Set up a base to operate from Call it A. Find a bank. Call it B. On the big day leave A, drive to B, rob it, and then return to A. To count your money, or your bullet holes, depending on how you and your plan made out."

Sources:

Jackrabbit Parole, by Stephen Reid p17,38-39, 72, 85,86,92,167,169,170,194

The Stopwatch Gang by Greg Weston

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http://www.cbc.ca/lifeandtimes/musgrave_reid.htm

http://www.macleans.ca/culture/books/article.jsp?content=20051222_140126_5452

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_Reid_\(writer\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_Reid_(writer))