

OPINION

Lack of action, lack of concern

Japanese journalists stood by and watched a murder Tuesday, but they did nothing to try to stop the killing. About 40 journalists gathered outside the home of businessman Kazuo Nagano in anticipation of an arrest. While they waited, two men smashed in a front window armed with a bayonet and emerged a few minutes later splattered with blood.

The journalists got some lovely pictures of the event and a nice interview with the alleged killers. One of the reporters said the two assailants admitted they had come to kill Nagano, but no one thought they were serious until "it was already too late."

It would seem that two men, one armed with a bayonet, who tear off an aluminum grating and smash in a window of a private residence might be up to something more suspicious than door-to-door solicitation.

Journalists are not exempt from being responsible citizens merely because of their profession. The actions, or lack of actions, on the part of the Japanese journalists reflects a lack of concern for the very people they are supposed to be serving.

The reporters were so concerned with their objectivity that they ignored the plight of their fellow man. They are human beings first and journalists second, not vice versa as their actions would suggest.

Informing readers of an arrest of a prominent businessman, or even a murder, is part of the journalists job, but that objectivity does not extend to standing by and refusing to prevent a man from being killed.

The Battalion Editorial Board

Tobacco growers don't cause cancer

"Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined That Cigarette Smoking Is Dangerous to Your Health."



LOREN STEFFY

The familiar message can be found in the bottom corner of every cigarette ad and on every cigarette package. This a subtle way of saying, "Hey, if you want to stick this flaming harbinger of cancer in your mouth, fine. Just so you understand your lungs will probably rot out because of it."

Now a group of people feel that the tobacco industry should assume the responsibility for cancer "victims." Cancer victims have filed three lawsuits against five tobacco companies, seeking \$17 million in damages. They claim the companies are responsible for their smoking-related illness.

The Tobacco Products Liability Project, the organization filing the suit, charges that the tobacco industry "misleads the public by disputing scientific links between cigarette smoking and cancer." Naturally, cigarette companies aren't going to say, "Sure, our products lead to numerous physical disorders, but buy it anyway," they're going to deny any link between their cigarettes and a disease as widely feared as cancer.

But by denying the scientific research, the tobacco companies aren't forcing cigarettes into the mouths of smokers. John Bullitt, a Harvard professor, says his lung cancer is a result of a smoking habit he claims was encouraged by ads which made the addiction appear "glamorous and even patriotic."

No one tied Mr. Bullitt down and stuffed cigarettes in his mouth. He

made his own decision each time he placed a cancer stick between his lips. Now that his body is deteriorating because of those decisions, he is looking for someone else to assume responsibility for his actions, and he's looking for some money.

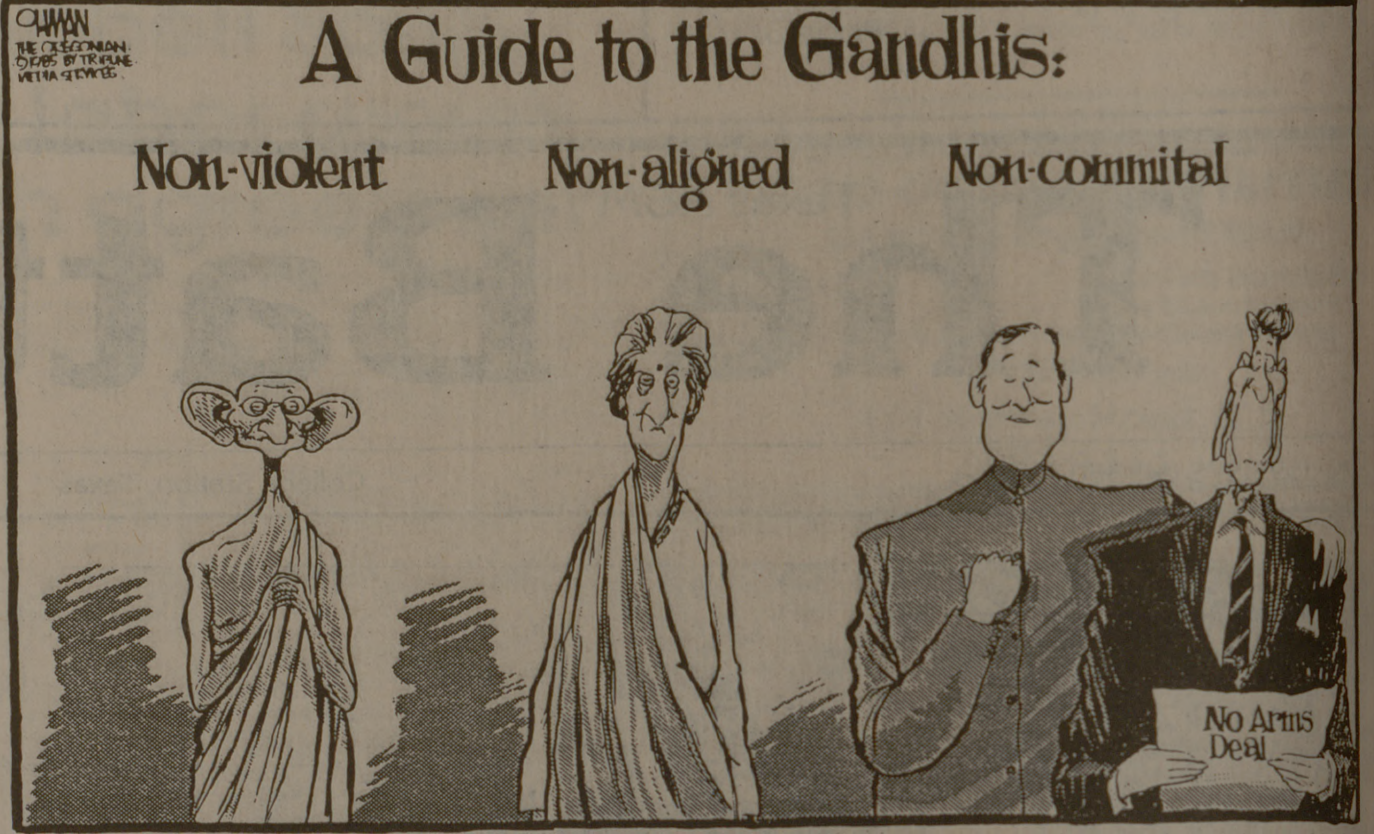
Unfortunately, life isn't that simple. There's no such thing as a free smoke.

If tobacco companies are to be held accountable for every person suffering from lung cancer, then auto makers should be held responsible for all accident-related death, even fatalities related to drunken drivers or falling asleep at the wheel. After all, they make driving cars, especially American cars, seem "glamorous and even patriotic." Of course, we couldn't let the candy companies off the hook — all those cavities out there can't be the fault of people not brushing properly.

Smoking tobacco is like drinking napalm — you know it's not part of a fitness diet. If cheese is found to contain a strange bacteria which you get sick from eating, you can sue because you didn't know what you were ingesting. Similarly, if you purchase cyanide-laced aspirin, you can sue, because the product wasn't what it appeared to be. But if you smoke a cigarette, you know what your getting, the Surgeon General even leaves you a little note in case you forget.

Certainly, without too much effort, we could find someone else to blame for all of our problems and shortcomings. We could live in a blameless Utopia. But sooner or later, we have to accept responsibility for our actions. You put the cigarette to your lips, you strike the match, and you watch your body rot away before your eyes.

Loren Steffy is a junior journalism major and the Opinion Page editor for The Battalion.



Mail Call



Letters Policy

Letters to the Editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must be signed and must include the address and telephone number of the writer.

National leadership real threat to security

EDITOR:

Here we are in the midst of a national debate on security, spies and more security — and, to pique our professionalism in these areas, the Reagan administration manages to lose track of a plane full of hostages!

I wonder, how much easier could our security establishment trace a dozen enemy agents, or a hundred?

I say that the danger posed to this nation by the Soviets and their terrorist comrades-in-arms is a weak second to the threat of our own national leadership. A technological or strategic secret we can afford to sacrifice now and again — how better to develop new and more effective strategies to replace antiquated methodology — but to impale our national consciousness on the fate of a few hostages to terrorism, that's tantamount to political blackmail of the entire citizenry of this great nation!

I don't deny the duty of the media to dwell so on our latest hostage crisis, for all Americans are concerned for the fate of those hostages, our fellow citizens. But, to misuse our might, our mandate, in neglecting the safety and whereabouts of those hostages in lieu of the publicity it affords our national leadership — they would have us compound inquiry into shame!

Now, instead of a few innocent citizens falling victim to the international forces that prey on the power of the United States, the present administration would hold the entire nation hostage — out of spite, no doubt, for trusting our leaders to carry out the duties contingent upon their offices.

William H. Clark II

Specialist Fourth Class
United States Army

Library hours don't meet student needs

EDITOR:

I have a question: why can we not establish summer hours for the library that are more consistent with student necessities and demands?

Since I have begun attendance at this university, I have had few complaints, however, I simply cannot understand the logic of:

- Closing the library at 11 p.m. during the week.
- Closing the library at 5 p.m. on Saturdays.
- Reopening the library at 1 p.m. on Sundays.

As we are all aware, the Board of Regents as well as the vocal Association of Former Students, are fervently committed to establishing A&M as not only the premiere engineering school of the Southwest, but also keeping the University comparable to such notables as Purdue, MIT, Cal Tech, and numerous European sophistates.

I am an alumnus of a small South Texas college, Pan American University, whose library hours during my academic career were very simple: the only time they were closed was 12 a.m. to 6 a.m. Monday morning.

Why can't a major university with such commendable goals avail to their student body the essential facilities to accomplish their ends?

The vast majority of students are more than proud of what the faculty and alumni association envision for us. We also recognize that tremendous budget cuts have put universities in general in a bind — to point that they not only cannot offer more jobs, but

also are forced to cut back on personnel.

However, the anomaly that I have trouble with is how we can afford a 1.4 million dollar bell tower and cannot afford the additional personnel to simply keep the library open.

It is understandable that a proud alumnus would like to see himself memorialized in perpetuity by erecting a monument to himself. In better times, it seems to me that such an extravagance might be justified. These, however, are not easy times.

It seems to me that if an alumnus wants to open his checkbook, better uses might be made of the funds — the tax break is still the same.

Don't get me wrong, I think the bell tower is beautiful, but I had a physics test Friday and was kicked out of the library at 11 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Tuesday I had a Petroleum Engineering 417 test and was kicked out of the library at 5 p.m. Saturday.

My home study facilities are negligible at best and I need the library.

Isn't there some way we can keep the library open a little longer?

Tom Collins
Clay Self
Mike Roark

The Battalion
USPS 045 360
Member of
Texas Press Association
Southwest Journalism Conference

The Battalion Editorial Board

Kellie Dworaczyk, Editor
Kay Mallett, John Hallett, News Editors
Loren Steffy, Editorial Page Editor
Sarah Oates, City Editor
Travis Tingle, Sports Editor

The Battalion Staff

Assistant City Editor..... Katherine Hurt
Assistant News Editor..... Cathie Anderson
Entertainment Editors..... Cathy Riely, Walter Smith
Staff Writers..... Karen Bloch, Ed Cassavoy, Jerry Oskin, Bryan Pearson
Copy Editor..... Trent Leopold
Make-up Editors..... Ed Cassavoy, Karla Martin
Columnists..... Cheryl Clark, Karl Palmmeier
Photographers..... Greg Bailey, Anthony Casper

Editorial Policy

The Battalion is a non-profit, self-supporting newspaper operated as a community service to Texas A&M and Bryan-College Station.

Opinions expressed in The Battalion are those of the Editorial Board or the author, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Texas A&M administrators, faculty or the Board of Regents.

The Battalion also serves as a laboratory newspaper for students in reporting, editing and photography classes within the Department of Communications.

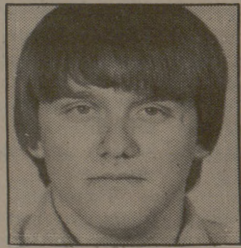
The Battalion is published Tuesday through Friday during Texas A&M regular semesters, except for holiday and examination periods. Mail subscriptions are \$10.75 per semester, \$33.25 per school year and \$35 per full year. Advertising rates furnished on request.

Our address: The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald Building, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843. Editorial staff phone number: (409) 845-2630. Advertising: (409) 845-2611.

Second class postage paid at College Station, TX 77843. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Battalion, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas 77843.

Grove audience's actions unjustified

Let's go see a movie.



Karl Palmmeier

How many times have you used that phrase? How many times has someone said that to you? "Let's go see a movie," a phrase that is used everyday, is not an accurate description of what someone is about to do. Yes, you do see a movie but you also hear a movie. Well, at least sometimes you do.

In 1927 Warner Brothers released "The Jazz Singer" with Al Jolson. "The Jazz Singer" was the first real "talking" picture. Since then movies have come to depend on sound as well as pictures to tell a story. But sometimes you can't

hear that story. Wednesday night was one of those times.

A few of my friends and I went to see "Stripes" which was being shown at The Grove Wednesday night. There were quite a few people there. Maybe there were a few too many. Sitting front row center was a group of students who were obviously interested in having a good time. First of all they had brought a few bottles of rum to help spice up the soft drinks they had bought at the concession stand. I don't object to that in particular, I had a bottle there myself. But only six people, my five friends and I, knew about our bottle. We were not throwing bottles around to insure that everyone knew we were "drinking."

When the movie started things really got out of hand. One young man in their crowd had obviously seen the movie before. He felt he had to yell out

each line before Bill Murray got the chance to. When there were no good lines to yell out he made various editorial comments about what was happening on the screen. His comments about some of the actresses in the movie showed that he would qualify for the title: "Male Chauvinist Pig of 1985." He also showed off his inability to fully comprehend the movie and his limited knowledge of the world. Bill Murray and Harold Ramis rescued their friends from Czechoslovakians, not those "(various expletives deleted) Russians" that he enjoyed screaming about. He probably doesn't understand that there is a difference between the C.S.S.R., the U.S.S.R. and the G.S.S. since he used the last two terms to refer to the first. The audience enjoyed this guy's remarks so much they often yelled "Shut up you (expletive deleted)!"

Since I have been at Texas A&M, I

have spent more time at the movies than I have in some of my classes. I am well aware of the fact that Aggies make a lot of noise at movies. But Wednesday night was both ridiculous and unnecessary. I have not heard that much ruckus at a movie since I went to see "The Rocky Horror Picture Show." The "audience participation" at "Rocky Horror" can be justified as an attempt to make a bad movie bearable. The full-scale, inconsiderate, attention getting of certain people at "Stripes" can not be justified at all.

When a movie comes to a theater it is a finished project. Writers, directors, actors, cameramen and scores of other artists and technicians have worked hard to tell a story. They don't need any help from the audience

Karl Palmmeier is a senior journalism major and a columnist for The Battalion.