

Opinion

Battalion columnist jailed; friends do lunch

Friday, Sept. 26, 12:25 p.m. I was arrested.



Karl Pallmeyer

Detective Will Scott of the University Police Department burst into *The Battalion* newsroom and slapped the cuffs on me. The charges — publishing biased opinions. Scott carried me out to the police car and drove me to jail.

This wasn't a typical jail. This jail was

in the middle of Post Oak Mall where the prisoners were in plain view of hundreds of shoppers.

Brazos County Crime Stoppers was having its annual Jail-a-Thon, where concerned citizens could have various "criminal types" incarcerated for a fee. The convicts then have to raise money to buy their freedom. All proceeds go to provide reward money for those who call Crime Stoppers with information that leads to solving crimes.

A short trial was held before I was thrown into the cell. I had to plead guilty to the charges of writing biased opinions, since that's the nature of opinion. Bail was set at \$100.

There were four phones, several phone books, a couple of chairs, pens, paper, a cold pizza and a roll of toilet paper in the cell. The wardens had intended for the prisoners to use the toilet paper to wipe up the mess made by the pizza, but they had been careless. All I had to do was bend back the bars, roll the toilet paper out the window, slide down the roll and have an escape.

Usually prisoners are allowed only one phone call, but that was not the case here. I was expected to get on the phone and call all of my friends to donate money so that I could get out. One of the guards said that now is the time you

learn who your real friends are. I know my friends, and I also know that they don't have any money.

My first call to *The Battalion* proved worthless. Everyone at the paper was too busy laughing about the incident to raise any money. Then they decided to go to lunch. That didn't do me much good because I was hungry and not too fond of cold pizza.

I banged on the bars in typical B-movie fashion and asked for something to drink. A few minutes later, two sweet, little old ladies brought me a Coke and a bag of cookies. As it turned out, these women, and all their friends from the registration office, were responsible for having me jailed. They were not happy with my column about registration and wanted to teach me a lesson.

I have learned my lesson and apologize humbly to all of the registration people who worked so hard to help me and 35,000 other students despite problems beyond their control. I need to learn how to keep my mouth shut unless I have something intelligent to say.

A call to *The Eagle* — the "competition" — proved more beneficial than the call to my own paper. Despite the fact that journalism is a low-paying profession, several reporters were willing to help free an imprisoned comrade. They couldn't do anything for Nicholas Daniloff, so they did the next best thing. Editor Bob Rogers, a former journalism professor, contributed to my fund. Writers Robert Poole, Virginia Kirk and Jann Snell also were generous with their hard-earned pay.

Next I began calling some of my professors. Most of them offered money to keep me in jail longer, but Dr. Mike Buchholz of the journalism department, Dr. Larry Hickman of the philosophy department and Dr. Jeffery Cox of the English department agreed to help me out. I'm grateful for their sacrifice because teaching doesn't pay much more than journalism.

Being jailed in a mall has advantages and disadvantages. The advantage is that there are lots of people around who might contribute to your cause. The disadvantage is that some of those people might actually know you and will be seeing you behind bars. After a few laughs Gary Engstrom, a friend from my dorm days and Andy Richardson, a friend from my video yearbook days, forked over a few bucks for my release.

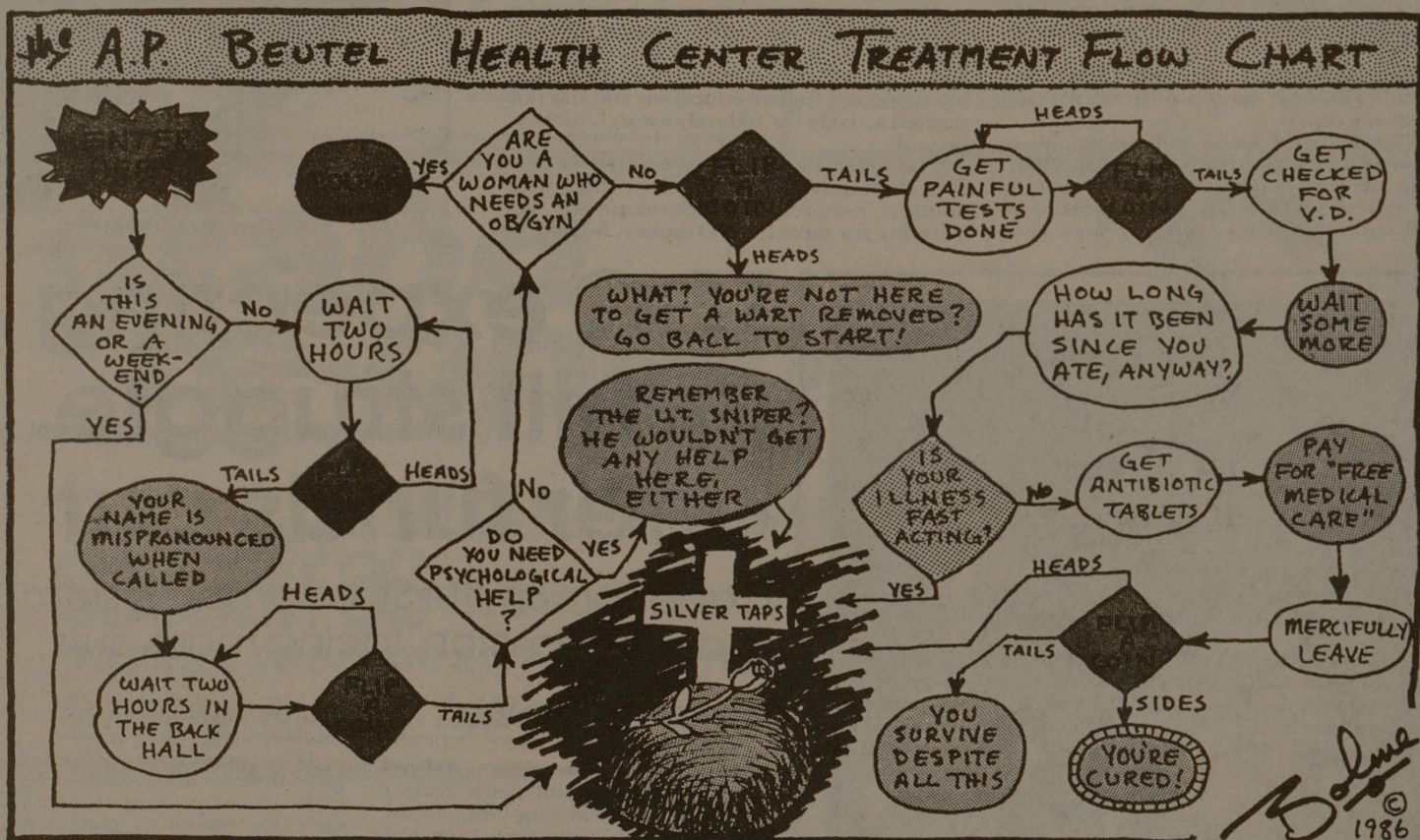
Since the University Police carried me in, I thought I would see if they would help to carry me out. Director of Security and Traffic Bob Wiatt said he was jailed last year during the Jail-a-Thon and would be glad to help me out. He suggested I get a haircut, though.

Another call to *The Battalion* helped to raise some more of my bail. One mentioned *The Eagle* had donated money, John Makely, Dawn Butz, Tom Casper, Kevin Thomas, Marybeth Rohsner, Greg Bailey, Rodney Rabe, Jeanne Isenberg, Amy Couvillon, John Jarvis and Mona Palmer scraped together more bucks for my release. Everyone else still was out to lunch.

I needed more money so I decided to go to the top. Vice President for Student Services John J. Koldus always is willing to help students. He even helped me get out of jail. I went to the very top and called University President Frank L. Vandiver. For some strange reason Vandiver donated to the cause.

After three hours my sentence was ended. With lots of help I was able to raise \$120 for Crime Stoppers, a wonderful cause. Henry David Thoreau did some of his best writing as a result of being imprisoned. Maybe my time in the slammer also will be inspirational.

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



Mail Call

Dear Karl...

EDITOR:

As long as you have a columnist on your staff whose apparent function is to aggravate readers rather than inform them, you need a section titled, "DEAR KARL."

Dear Karl:

Your cheap shots at our U.S. congressman in the Sept. 24 *Battalion* should embarrass the newspaper. You are entitled to an opinion, of course. But outright rudeness and name-calling toward an elected official who has worked tirelessly for the benefit of this institution and its students has no place in Aggieland.

Concerning the use of the "Gig'em" symbol on bumper stickers, the congressman's campaign staff merely reprinted something that was effective two years ago. Many Aggies just happen to prefer using things with Texas A&M logos on them.

The various A&M symbols have been used for many years on everything from beer cups to toilet seats without paying royalties. Everyone but you realizes that using those logos in no way implies official University endorsement. Barton had no reason to know of any problem.

It is entirely appropriate for Barton, Class of '72, to ask for support from fellow Aggies. His position on issues — which you incorrectly say he avoids — has been consistent with the opinions of the great majority of A&M students and former students.

Joe Barton's attitudes were shaped while attending this University. He not only earned an A&M diploma, Barton also earned his way through college with jobs and scholarships.

Real Aggie experience gave Joe Barton the strong conservative character he has consistently shown in Congress. That same character — not just being a "lap dog" — is what led the national Democratic leadership to make his a key target in this election.

Rodger Lewis '76

EDITOR'S NOTE: Users of the A&M logos have had to pay royalties since the inception of the licensing program in 1981, Barry C. Nelson, manager of administration services, says. Legal challenges concerning logo use were settled June 26, when the Texas Supreme Court let stand a previous ruling by the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals, granting A&M control of the logos.

What moral repugnance?

EDITOR:

Your criticism of President Reagan's policy on South Africa in Monday's *Battalion* has incited me to send these comments. Your editorial exhorts Reagan to use economic sanctions in accordance with "the rising tide of public opinion."

I support Reagan in his courageous stand for rational behavior. Public opinion has been fanned to flame by the slanted, biased reporting of you and your fellow journalists.

Weekly, blacks are killed and tortured by black opposition groups. Yet our media spends less time debating these acts of "moral repugnance" than the policies of South African President Botha's government.

I question whether blacks in South Africa will benefit at all if you and those bastions of freedom, Students Against Apartheid, get your wish for the overthrow of Botha's white government. It is difficult for me to see that a nation will benefit when a somewhat stable government is traded for a divided opposition.

Your editorial cited Nicaragua as an example of Reagan-imposed sanctions which should be emulated in the case of South Africa. In 1979, the United States refused to support Gen. Anastasio Somoza in Nicaragua, to the extent of asking his government to step down. The result — a Soviet puppet; much worse, I fear, than the Pretoria government could hope to be.

The world is full of such precedents. China under Chiang Kai-shek, Cuba under Batista or South Vietnam under Thieu are all examples of what happens to former allies when we abandon them. The communists, almost invariably, turn these nations into armed camps against our interests. They brutally cut their way through moderate opposition and will do so in South Africa if they are allowed. I ask, simply, "Where is the real moral repugnance?"

David V. Wilson II

Reagan's veto disappointing

EDITOR:

President Reagan's veto of Congress' proposed sanctions against South Africa strikes a deep disappointment to anti-apartheiders — including Congress, black South Africans, Texas A&M Students Against Apartheid and the majority of the American people.

In 1945, Hitler was defeated primarily as a result of Congress' declaration of war. American soldiers and black South Africans had fought bravely for a just cause.

No one thought they ever would see, tolerate or experience another shocking horror of a bigoted regime's fallacious concept of a "master racist's" right to manipulate the worthless lives and freedoms of others.

But in 1948, Afrikaners' legislation made apartheid a reality.

One of the reasons cited for the veto is that withdrawal would "result in more turmoil that could be exploited by the Soviet Union."

But what could be more exploitive than the present situation? The West, to date, has refused to finance any liberation movements in South Africa. Black South Africans fought Hitler alongside Americans, and most Americans are in favor of sanctions. But in South Africa, it is hard to differentiate Westerners from Afrikaners since both benefit economically from slave labor, live in "whites only" neighborhoods and utilize "no blacks allowed" facilities and privileges.

Another veto explanation was that it amounted to a "declaration of war" against the people of South Africa and the surrounding interdependent black nations.

However, 70 percent of black South Africans and 90 percent of all anti-apartheid leaders insist on sanctions.

Furthermore, front-line states neighboring Pretoria — Zimbabwe, Zambia, etc. — are active proponents of stronger measures than those included in the Congressional bill.

When all is said and done, it makes one extremely uncomfortable to know that the only people drinking champagne over the veto in South Africa are P.W. Botha and his apartheid hierarchy.

Norman Muraya '87
President of Students Against Apartheid

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 classification, address and telephone number of the writer.

Trains of thought on keeping Amtrak

There was a time in my life — not too many years ago — when, if I didn't drive to a place, I took the train.

Lewis Grizzard

The problem was the rest of the world was on a jet plane schedule, and so I had to learn to deal with my fear of flying. The way I learned to deal with it was to drink double screwdrivers before boarding the flight.

The more double screwdrivers I had, the less nervous I was on the flight. But I covered all that, of course, in my famous scientific paper entitled "The Grizzard Double-Screwdriver Theory: How I Conquered My Fear of Flying the Easy Way."

But I had this trip up to Baltimore, and who has ever been in a hurry to get to Baltimore? I decided to catch Amtrak's overnight "Crescent" from Atlanta and see what was going with passenger trains since I took to the skies.

The train was only 15 minutes late leaving Atlanta. When was the last time you were on a flight that was only 15 minutes late?

I went to my little room in one of the sleeper cars, stowed my luggage and checked to see if my restroom was as small as I had remembered sleeper restrooms to be. It was, and I was reminded of that wonderful love song with the touching phrase, "Passengers will please refrain from flushing toilet while train is standing in the station, I love you."

Then I went to the diner. One thing that has changed on Amtrak is that if you pay for a sleeper, you get complimentary meals. I had the steak. One

thing that hasn't changed on Amtrak is that train food is still infinitely better than airplane food.

After dinner, I went to the club car and ordered a half bottle of red wine. It was served with a plastic cup full of ice, certainly am not a wine expert, but I know better than to drink red wine over ice.

I unscrewed the cap off the wine bottle, sniffed the bouquet and then turned the bottle up to my lips.

"A bit arrogant," I said to the waiter after a long swallow. "But not offensive."

An older man joined an older lady in the booth next to mine. The old boy was making a move.

"I haven't had any men friends since my husband, Mr. Willoughby, died," said the lady.

"Don't worry, honey," said the man. "I'm too old to be dangerous, just still young enough not to realize it."

I went back to my sleeper somewhere between Greenville and Spartanburg, S.C. The elderly couple was holding hands by that time. I would have slept quite well had it not been for the fact that the door to the bathroom rattled each time the train bumped, which was approximately every two seconds.

The engine broke down just out of Washington, and I was two hours late arriving in Baltimore.

Still, I enjoyed the trip, and I remain against any administration plans to cut the Amtrak budget.

Had the elderly pair in the club car not taken the train, neither might have realized there was yet some cickery in both their clacks.

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The Battalion

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