

Opinion

The Battalion

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

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

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Guilty as charged

Blame it on lack of experience, haste or foolish oversights, but regardless of where the blame is placed, two dangerous criminals may soon be free to walk the streets of Bryan-College Station.

In a case that has been handled unprofessionally from robbery scene to courtroom, Felix Orta and Crispin Morales undoubtedly will luck out.

Orta and Morales were found guilty by jurors in Brazos County's 272nd District Court Wednesday on three charges of the Oct. 26 aggravated armed-robbery of a local 7-Eleven store. Orta, 32, was sentenced to life in prison, while Morales, 26, was given a shorter sentence.

But considering the manner in which the whole case was handled, a judicial slip-up was inevitable.

The bumbling began with a Rambo-style round-up of the offenders which claimed the life of a third offender at the scene of the crime. According to the A&M student who was held hostage, his life nearly was claimed by police as they shot at the offenders.

In the courtroom, defense attorneys kindly were given a choice by the court as to which reversible errors they wanted to use to win their client's acquittal:

Presiding Judge John Delaney left out an important phrase while reading from a paragraph listing the elements of the crimes alleged in the charges. He ordered the jury to return to deliberations and reconsider its decision in light of the new clause.

Defense attorneys say the judge's action constitutes "double jeopardy" — meaning the defendants are facing the possibility of conviction twice for the same crime — and is illegal. In all likelihood, Orta and Morales will win their freedom because of the mistake.

The second choice was offered by a juror who told a KBTX-TV reporter that she recognized him from the previous evening's newscast. The only story the reporter had done the night before was the Orta-Morales trial.

Unfortunately for College Station prosecutors, jurors are forbidden by law to watch or read any material about their cases during the trial, and doing so may lead to dismissal of a case.

In the end, instead of treating Orta and Morales like the criminals they are, the city has housed and fed them for three months and will more than likely have no choice but to free them, enabling them to repeat their crimes in College Station.

Justice is supposed to be blind. But when it's carried out with the lack of finesse and professionalism demonstrated in this case, it should be a crime.

Killing is too good for him

Earlier this month, German police arrested a man at the Frankfurt airport carrying liquid explosives in his luggage. He turned out to be Mohammed Ali Hamadei, one of four men indicted by the United States, following the 1985 hijacking of a TWA jetliner, for the murder of a passenger. The Germans, to their credit, refused to extradite Hamadei until the United States agreed not to seek the death penalty. Almost 42 years after World War II, it is the Germans who instruct us in morality.



Richard Cohen

If guilty, Hamadei would seem the perfect candidate for execution. Not only was the TWA passenger, Navy diver Robert D. Stethem, killed in cold blood, but 39 others passengers were forced to spend 17 harrowing days as hostages in Beirut. And now there is additional evidence that Hamadei was intent on even more killing. At only 22 years of age, he is a man to be reckoned with.

But what purpose would be served by executing him? Would other zealots be deterred from further acts of terrorism? Not likely. Terrorists court death. They do not put much of a premium on their own lives, not to mention the lives of others. Some of them willingly sacrifice themselves to further their cause. The Marine barracks in Beirut was blown up by a suicide driver. The terrorists who slaughtered Jews in an Istanbul synagogue came prepared to blow themselves up. They did.

So deterrence is not a factor. What is left? Simple vengeance, that's all. And while that urge is nothing to sneer at, we have to recognize that at bottom it is partly what motivates terrorists. They, too, have a desire to strike back. There

would be nothing as appalling as watching the United States sink to the moral level of a murderer.

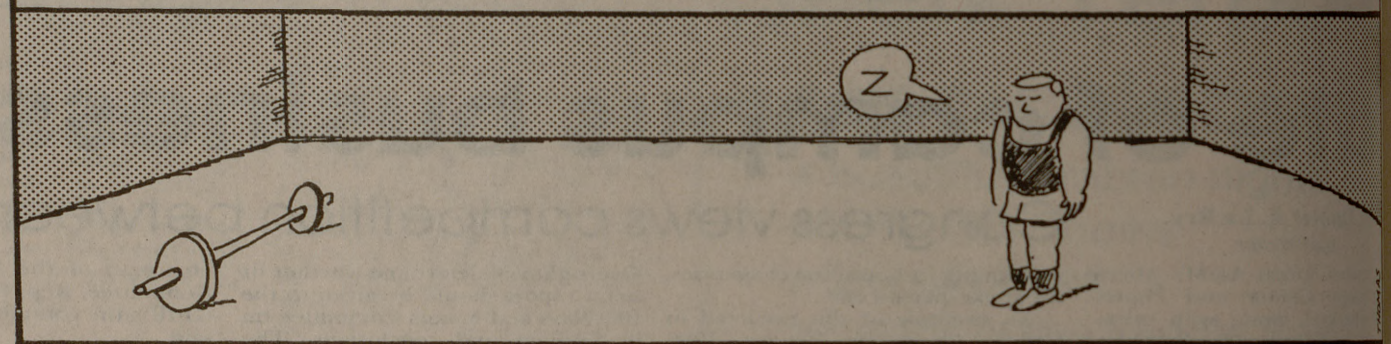
Since the death penalty was reinstated by the Supreme Court in 1976, it has been a moral blot on the United States. Sixty-six persons have been executed and yet — ask yourself — do you feel any safer? If you hesitate to answer, let me give you some statistics. In 1986, the urban-homicide rate was up sharply, in some cities returning to the record numbers of the 1970's. In Chicago and New York, homicides were up 20 percent; in Washington, the figure was 60 percent. Atlanta had a 30 percent increase in homicides and in Miami, Dallas, Boston, Baltimore, St. Louis and Philadelphia killings increased by as much as 20 percent.

Homicides are often cold-blooded, which means the killers know full well what the penalty could be. As a result, they should be deterred. Clearly, they are not.

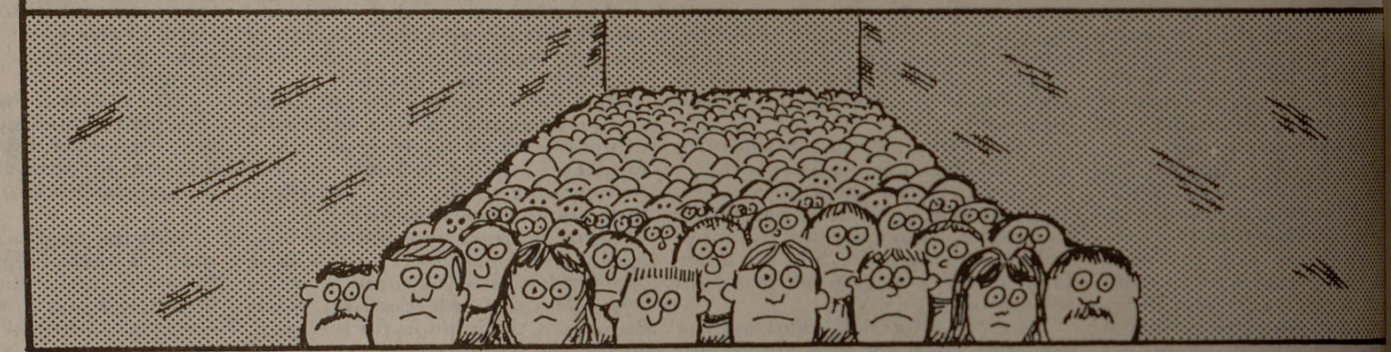
In his book about the founding of Australia, "The Fatal Shore," Robert Hughes says that 162,000 convicts were shipped from Britain to its most distant colony. There, they were often abused — tortured, starved, worked to death. Often the crimes were petty, but the punishment was not. There was hardly a criminal in all of England who did not know what arrest could mean — banishment to the other side of the world and, often, death. Yet criminality thrived, probably for the usual reason: Few criminals think they will be caught.

And yet the United States keeps looking for the quick fix when it comes to its own crime problem. To that end, the death penalty is often justified as a deterrent when it is nothing of the sort: Murder rates rise and fall in sweet and bloody obliviousness to capital punishment. That is especially the case for the most common of all types of homicide — the crime of passion in which reason takes a powder and a spouse, friend or lover is killed. There has been no deterring that.

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How about a little chicken to go with your additives?

We've all eaten them in some form or another; Chicken McNuggets, Chicken Tenders, Chicken Chunks, Chicken fingers — the list goes on and on. These bite-sized, batter-fried bits of chicken and various other ingredients have taken America's restaurants, supermarket freezer sections and kitchens by storm.



Paula Vogrin

Since McDonald's introduced the first Chicken McNugget in 1983, chicken nuggets have become, according to the *Washington Post*, "the hotdog of the 80s."

Nuggets are easy to fix and quick to eat. If you don't cook, you can pick them up at virtually any fast food restaurant. If you know how to turn on the oven, you can get the frozen variety at your neighborhood grocery store. If you do like to cook, there are hundreds

of recipes for nuggets ranging from Cajun to nouvelle cuisine.

But what exactly is a nugget? Is it all one piece of chicken? Is it little bits of chicken from different parts of the bird smashed together to look like a single piece of chicken? Is it chicken meat alone? Is it chicken meat and skin? Is there any chicken in it?

The answer is all of the above, depending on what kind of nugget you buy. If you like the nugget shape, not the chicken, you can buy ham and cheese nuggets from Swanson, turkey nuggets from Chef's Pantry and ice cream nuggets from Isaly.

If you're interested in chicken nuggets, the *Washington Post* published a list of ingredients used by some of the major fast food chains and in frozen chicken nuggets.

The description of the chicken filling used in fast food nuggets varied widely. For example, Burger King described their filling as white chicken breast meat, while McDonald's used white meat, dark meat, skin, salt and sodium phosphate. Which would you rather eat?

In the world of chicken nuggets, the use of skin is a hot topic. Some nuggets have it and some don't. In fact, some nuggets add more skin than naturally occurs on chickens. The U.S. Department of Agriculture says when the ingredient label lists "chicken skin" you're getting an extra dose of skin. MMMmmmmmm... extra fat and cholesterol — the cornerstone of a good meal.

But if the ingredient label doesn't include skin, the USDA says you won't know if it's been removed or included in naturally occurring proportions.

The skin advocates listed several reasons in the *Washington Post* for using skin. McDonald's says, "Moisture." Bojangles says, "Flavor." Tyson Foods says, "Cost." And Wendy's says, "Helps the breading adhere to the meat."

So much for skin.

I also learned there are two different types of chicken nuggets: chicken patties and chicken tenders. The difference between these two is like the difference between night and day.

If the meat has been ground, chopped and formed with added ingredients such as water, soy protein, sodium phosphate, the final product will be labeled a patty, or something else to that.

Chicken tenders are described as a whole piece of chicken breast tenderloin, not a combination of dark and light meat that has been chopped or ground.

Those definitions seem pretty good.

Here's a little bit of ambiguity for you. Banquet makes a product called Chicken Sticks. The package says "meat used is 100 percent chicken." The meat used may be 100 percent chicken but the meat used is only part of the filling. The filling includes ingredients other than meat. According to a compilation by Con Agra, there are 15 ingredients in the filling.

How healthy are chicken nuggets anyway? They're made from chicken instead of beef so they can't be too healthy, right? Wrong. Each three-ounce serving of McDonald's Chicken McNuggets has about twice the fat as a regular hamburger.

But rest assured, you're not getting any old chicken in your chicken nuggets. Just like certain cows are bred to be steak, certain chickens are bred to become chicken nuggets.

In an interview with the *Washington Post*, Bill Roenigk, director of economic research for the National Broiler Council, said nugget chickens are grown five and one-half to six pounds, as opposed to four pounds for broiler chickens. The larger bird has more breast meat and can furnish more nuggets, said.

I guess those big leg-and-thigh-at-the-supermarket are a result of a huge batch of chicken nuggets.

I don't know — maybe it's just me, but as far as chicken nuggets are concerned, I'd prefer to make my own. I have none at all. If you are what you eat in the case of most chicken nuggets, we'd all be unrecognizable.

Paula Vogrin is a senior journalism major and a columnist for *The Battalion*.

Mail Call

Nonsense

EDITOR:

In the Jan. 28 *Battalion* a column entitled "Abolishment of Corps is key to A&M's Growth" appeared. I feel the concern expressed therein is completely unfounded. Sullivan's argument is based on the Corps. In my experience, this simply is not true. During the early 1980s I spent some time in Honduras. Texas A&M was fairly well known and almost invariably described as either "a good engineering school" or as "a good agricultural school," not, as Sullivan would have us believe, a military school.

My undergraduate degree was from the University of Pittsburgh. When I told my professors where I would be attending graduate school, they congratulated me on being accepted to such a good engineering school. They didn't even know of the Corps' existence. I rarely run into people whose image of A&M is influenced by the Corps.

A university's academic reputation is built on its research and, to a lesser extent, on its quality of teaching.

Research, especially in the sciences, costs a great deal of money. MIT has built its reputation on its \$1 billion research fund from the Department of Defense. A&M can use its military presence to favorably influence the DOD.

The Corps, through its presence and work on campus has built a school spirit of which no other school can boast. That school pride translates into graduates who come back to A&M when they or their companies need research performed.

I'm sorry, Sullivan, I'm afraid your faulty assumptions led you to a fallacious conclusion. Or as we say in computer science, "Garbage In, Garbage Out."

Jeffrey C. Lockledge
Graduate Student

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