

Opinion

Americans are blind to Ollie's ambitious ego

Oliver North concluded his sixth day of testimony before the Iran-contra investigating committee Tuesday with another brilliant performance.

Jerry Oslin
Guest Columnist

The hurt expression, the forthright demeanor, the right touch of anti-communist fanaticism all came perfectly together in his excellent portrayal of the "good soldier just following orders." If I were a drama critic, I would give North four stars.

In fact, North's performance was so good that many in the country could not distinguish between Lt. Col. North the patriot and Ollie the overambitious mid-level bureaucrat.

Supporters of North in Texas, Illinois and New Mexico have even announced the formation of "Oliver North for President" clubs. Many have sent telegrams in support of North, while others have contributed more than \$100,000 to his defense fund.

A New York Times-CBS News survey even found that an overwhelming

majority of Americans believe that North is telling the truth about the Iran-Contra affair.

All this for a man who has already been caught lying about the arms for hostages deal, who has admitted lying and who a Justice Department official said would probably lie again?

All this for a man who accepted a free security system for his home and then falsified documents in an attempt to cover it up?

All this for a man who shredded documents to keep investigators from knowing the truth about his involvement in the affair?

All this for a man who used money from the profits of the arms sales to pay food bills and buy snow tires?

Americans are noted for short memories, but this must be a new record.

But then again, maybe they just don't care.

Maybe Americans will believe anybody in a uniform who jumps up and says he did it all for the love of his country. Maybe they'll believe anybody who portrays himself to be the embodiment of great American virtues.

I hope not, but it seems this wolf in sheep's clothing is successfully using an old defense to deflect criticism. After all, it's been more than 200 years since Samuel Johnson wrote, "Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel." (I knew that someone in the Reagan administration would eventually give me an excuse to quote Johnson.)

I don't doubt that North loves his country. I do doubt that what he did was for the love of his country. It was more for the love of Ollie. Egotism was his motivation. Patriotism was his rationalization.

During his testimony, North described himself to chief Senate counsel Arthur Liman as a person who gets things done, a person who can cut through red tape and a person who "fixes" things. It seems as if North had a definite idea of what he was all about.

Ronald Reagan, CIA Director William Casey and former National Security Adviser Robert McFarlane were probably all familiar with North's can-do attitude when he came on board the National Security Council. They probably knew that all they had to do was drop a hint and Ollie would run with it. If the plan were successful, they

would reap the benefits. If the plan failed, North would get the blame. Such manipulations are nothing new in politics.

But what did the country have to gain with the dealing of arms to a country whose leaders are our sworn enemies and the subsequent release of the hostages? Some good feelings? Certainly. More freedom in counteracting terrorism? Probably. Better relations with Iranian moderates? Maybe.

What about the diversion of money to the *contras*? Could the United States really destabilize a militarized country like Nicaragua through the use of a rag-tag group of intermediaries? Who knows?

What's clear is that the Reagan administration would have benefited politically from the release of the hostages, and that North would have benefited personally from the release and from finding a creative way of supplying the *contras* without Congress knowing about it.

Albert Hakim, one of North's operatives, testified that the Marine lieutenant colonel told him the President wanted the hostages home

before the 1986 elections, for political reasons. North later testified that he had lied when he told Hakim that.

Nevertheless, North knew that Reagan wanted the hostages home, what better way to score points than chief than accomplishing what seemed to be an impossible task? What better way to climb up the administrative ladder than to please the boss?

A pat on the head from Reagan would have been a big ego boost for workaholic like North who was always trying to get ahead.

Former Presidential Spokesman Larry Speakes was quoted in *Time* magazine as saying that North was always starring in his own movie, a better way to be the hero than to be the hostess home or to help topple a hostile dictatorship?

Oliver North is probably not the villain some make him out to be. He is certainly not the sainted patriot of the country likes to think he is. He is more of an ambitious junior executive who got caught breaking the rules trying to get ahead.

Jerry Oslin is a graduate journalism student and opinion page editor at The Battalion.

Mail Call

Library change to improve operations

EDITOR:

This is in response to the letter of Niels K. Bauer concerning the change in the procedures of the Current Periodicals Department (CPD) of the Evans Library. First, no circulation policies were changed. Current periodical issues do not circulate outside of the building except for photocopying. What was changed was to combine the areas used by the CPD and the Reserve Department and to discontinue the security checking at the entrance to the area. What this means is that users will no longer be checked when they leave the area. It is hoped that patrons will continue to use materials in the area, but there are no restraints on individuals leaving with materials.

The change in procedure was instituted in an effort to conserve staff and therefore improve operations. The change was put in place with the understanding that the system would be monitored to determine the degree of success or failure of the procedure.

To date, there have only been a few complaints about locating materials. Statistics are being kept on reshelving but nothing is conclusive at this time.

Irene B. Hoadley
Director

Where have all the rockers gone?

EDITOR:

As I left the house Friday morning to go to school, I glanced at the sky. I saw big, billowy cumulonimbus wonders that threatened to drench College Station and possibly ruin the chances of Saturday golf.

I smiled because I knew that on a cloudy day I could get Houston radio stations on my car stereo.

The fact is that THERE IS NO ROCK AND ROLL ON THE AIRWAVES IN BRYAN-COLLEGE STATION. Maybe many of you out there share my frustration at the lack of decent local programming. If it weren't for cloudy days, rooftop antennas or Eastgate Live, I seriously doubt anyone would hear any good non-country music in this area.

The irony of this situation in a college town really hit me several months ago when local station KTSR was transformed into the "people's station." A disc jockey who sounds like a reject from the Casey Casem school of broadcasting announced for several weeks that they were building a radio station based upon listener input.

It sounded like a good idea at first. Until I heard the milktoasts they aired on the radio requesting music. Some of them touted how wonderful the music they ALREADY were playing is. More Fogelberg, More Loggins and Messina. And how about throwing in that rockster Barry Manilow. Give us a break.

What is even more ironic is the fact that the other popular non-country station in town is nothing more than a pop clone of the first. I sincerely hope that the music scene on the Bryan-College Station airwaves is not an accurate depiction of the demographics and attitudes of most people who live here.

John MacDougall
graduate student

Congress should listen to the public

EDITOR:

The rash of articles pertaining to the Iranamok hearings currently being held in Congress should point out to our nation's elected representatives the wishes of the people they condescendingly chose to ignore. A *Wall Street Journal* survey found that 71 percent of the American public approves of Oliver North and his agenda in general. Many acts perpetrated in this scandal were indeed illegal and in conflict with his oath to uphold the constitution. However, the laws that were broken are not felt by the general populace to be in the best interest of our country. We must be able to respond to unfriendly governments (does anyone recall the warm welcome Daniel Ortega received in Moscow?) in a manner that fits the occasion. Congress, in wanting to be in on all decision-making processes of the presidency, is rendering our government incapable of conducting foreign policy in a way that allows the U.S. to pursue its best interests. The president should have the power to apply pressure to governments which call for the destruction of all other political systems and restrict the freedoms of the people they represent. No public servant or citizen should take lightly the duties of ascribing to and upholding the laws of this great country, and no elected officials should force upon us laws which do not reflect the wishes of the electorate. Members of the Congress take heed: spend more time with your constituencies rather than engaging in a partisan campaign to ouster the current president!

W. Bachmann '88



Sex in a rocking chair gets you nowhere

My friend Rigsby, the lover, called in great distress.

"I've been thinking about sex," he said, "and I've just had a horrible thought."

Most of us think about sex, but nobody thinks about sex more than Rigsby, who, at last count, has had 48 real-life sexual experiences published in *Penthouse* magazine's Forum.

"I walked into the diner and there were three beautiful girls ordering waffles. I grabbed a stick of butter and walked over to their table," began his latest work, to be published in a future issue.

"What," I asked Rigsby, "is your horrible thought?"

"It's like this," he began, "all this talk about

AIDS is making people really cut back on their sex lives, right?"

"Those who have sex lives to cut back on in the first place," I said.

"I'm serious here," Rigsby said. "You can't just go out and have sex with anybody you please these days because you might catch a disease and die."

"There's nothing new to that idea," I said.

"But here's what's bothering me," Rigsby went on.

"In 25 years, they'll probably find a cure for AIDS. Until they find that cure, people are going to do a lot of abstaining."

"But after that, when it's safe to have sex again, it will be like the repeal of Prohibition all over again. People are going to go wild and crazy and run naked in the streets."

"You won't be able to find a vacant motel room, an empty back seat or an uncrowded hayloft anywhere."

"And let me tell you what really is my horrible thought," he continued.

"You know where you and me will be when the next sexual revolution comes along? We're going to be sitting in a rocking chair in some home."

"We're going to be so old, it won't matter to us that it's safe to have sex again."

"All we'll be doing is playing gin and waiting for the next serving of prunes, and young people will be out there having all that fun."

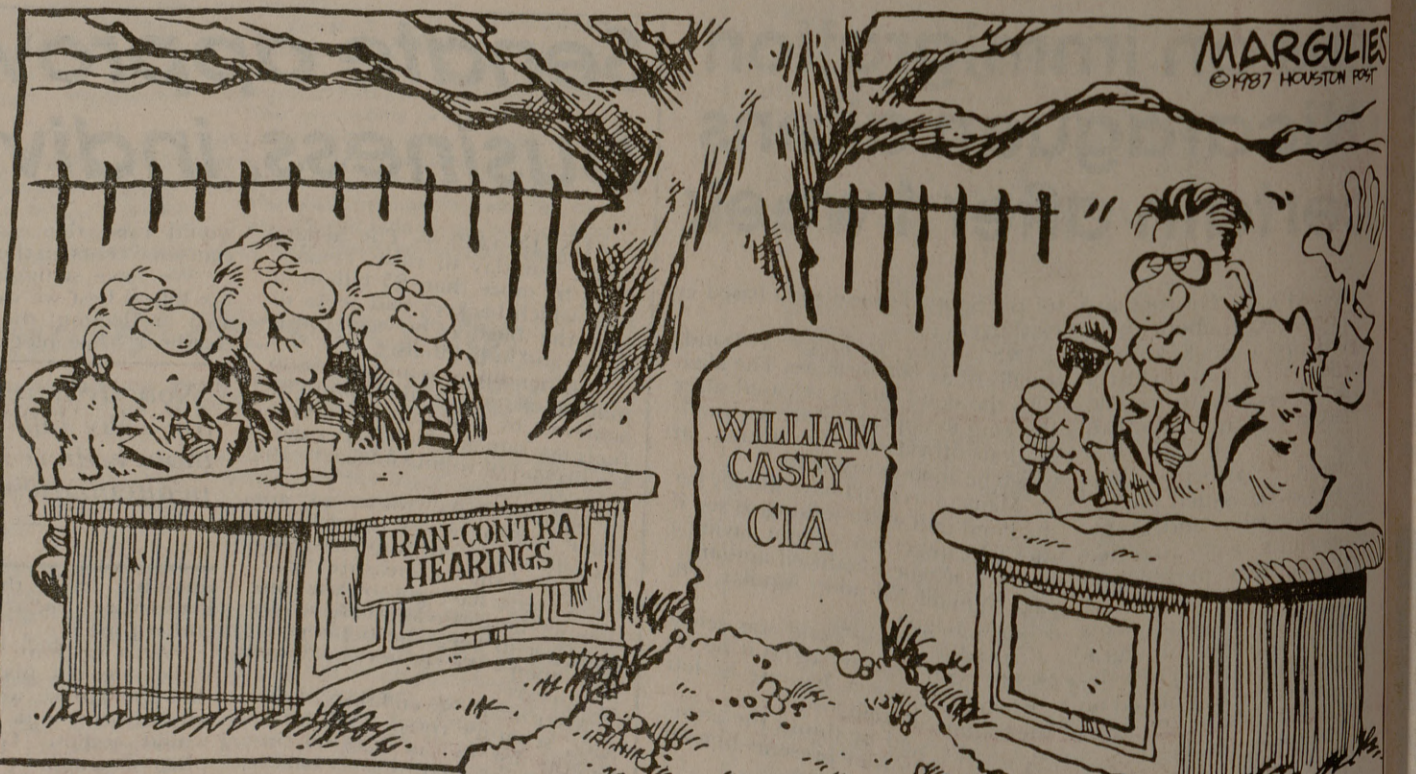
I admitted to Rigsby that wasn't a pleasant thought.

"By the way," I also mentioned, "what really happened with the three girls in the waffle shop?"

"You'd be surprised," Rigsby grinned. "I know just how much fun you can have with a jar of syrup."

If Rigsby can't participate in the next sexual revolution, I thought to myself, at least be a hit at the home when he shares his memories with the rest of us.

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"The committee calls Oral Roberts to the witness stand..."

The Battalion

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