

Opinion

The many, the proud, the burglarized

Ooooooh, those dang burglars. Even in our beloved thriving metropolis of Bryan-College Station those dang burglars abound. The last I heard from Mike George (a.k.a. The Man On The Scene from Channel 3), there were about nine billion burglaries in B-CS during Christmas. Give or take a few.



Mark Nair

And like many of you, I have firsthand knowledge of this vicious crime spree. Yes, I too was one of the many. The proud. The burglarized. I suppose being burglarized can be very traumatic. That is, if you own anything of quasi-value. I own nothing of value. For example, before the burglary my net worth consisted of:

- One pair of socks, holes included
- One jar of generic, super-smooth peanut butter

- One game of Trivial Pursuit (played only once — honest)
- One gumball machine the gum My net worth now consists of:
- One pair of socks, holes mysteriously darned
- One jar of generic, super-smooth peanut butter
- One game of Trivial Pursuit

One of my roommates had his VCR stolen; my other roommate had all his clothes stolen. I had my gumball machine stolen. That's what I get for having nothing of value. The thing that made me the maddest, though, was not that some burglars broke into my place, threw stuff around, and searched my dusty Trivial Pursuit game for loot, but that I had been burglarized by the world's stupidest burglars. Case in point: see the nice expensive stereo in the living room. See the nice, portable compact disc player in the living room. See the nice, inviting television in the living room (I own none of

the above. I own nothing). See that everything is still there. Wow. Burglar #1: *after entering the duplex, leaving the twisted carnage of the patio door lock writhing on the floor behind him.* Golly, Ace, (NOTE: All burglars have names such as Ace, Slick, Fast Eddie, or Melvin) There sure is a lot of neat stuff around here. Help me load up this jar of super-smooth peanut butter. Oh, wow, and let's get the CD player, and the stereo, and the TV, and oh boy! Burglar #2: *Posh, Melvin. Forget such trivialities. Here is a prime time to appropriate a wonderful gumball machine. It is within our grasp. Do not tarry.* Burglar #1: *Golly, Ace, I should have thought of that. Stupid me.* Second case in point: (I own none of the following. I own nothing.) See three remote controls — one for the stereo, one for the VCR, one for the television. Now see two remote controls — one for the VCR and one for the television. Where is the VCR? It is gone. Where is the stereo? It is here. Smart. Take the wrong remote control. Smart. Burglar #1: *Boy, Ace, remote controls. Boy.* Burglar #2: *Verily, Melvin, it would be best to borrow these items for our home entertainment system. Let us appropriate the VCR and a remote control.* Burglar #1: *You want I should grab the remote control for the VCR?* Burglar #2: *Negative, my fellow scofflaw and iniquitous malefactor. Snarf the remote for the stereo. That way it will surely be an exorbitant demand for us to operate it with precision.* Burglar #1: *And should we take the box of blank checks that are here on the desk?* Burglar #2: *I scoff at your attempts at petty theft. Of course we will leave the checks but instead gather the prodigious amount of raiment in the closet here.* Burglar #1: *You mean the clothes? What'll the guy wear?* Burglar #2: *Burlap often makes for particularly choosy attire. Ace combs his hair and shakes off the*

excess 10-W40 to the floor. He grimaces at the tarter-control grin. Burglar #1: *It sure is great, the world's stupidest burglars.* Burglar #2: *Indubitably.* From our burglary, though, roommates and I have gained valuable knowledge of the criminal mind, and have taken the appropriate measures. Now, 569 million volts of pure, shocking current are now flowing around doors and windows. Eight Doberman pinschers make their rounds around the duplex every hour on the hour. We've placed machine gun nests strategically near entrances and exits and have lowered the bacon in the refrigerator to decay into nuclear waste. No one's getting in this time. But someone does, that burglar had been pretty dang smart, or I'm calling Schwarzenegger. And then you really know I mean the R. We n... Clearl... Amer... b... Gr... man-J... ance... some... law's... "I... whole... work... Rudn... "I... stock... we co... done... Co... spend... Cong... "It... betwe... gress... riage... brou... altar... a man... think... done... than... Gr...

Learn to love the thrill of kicking machines

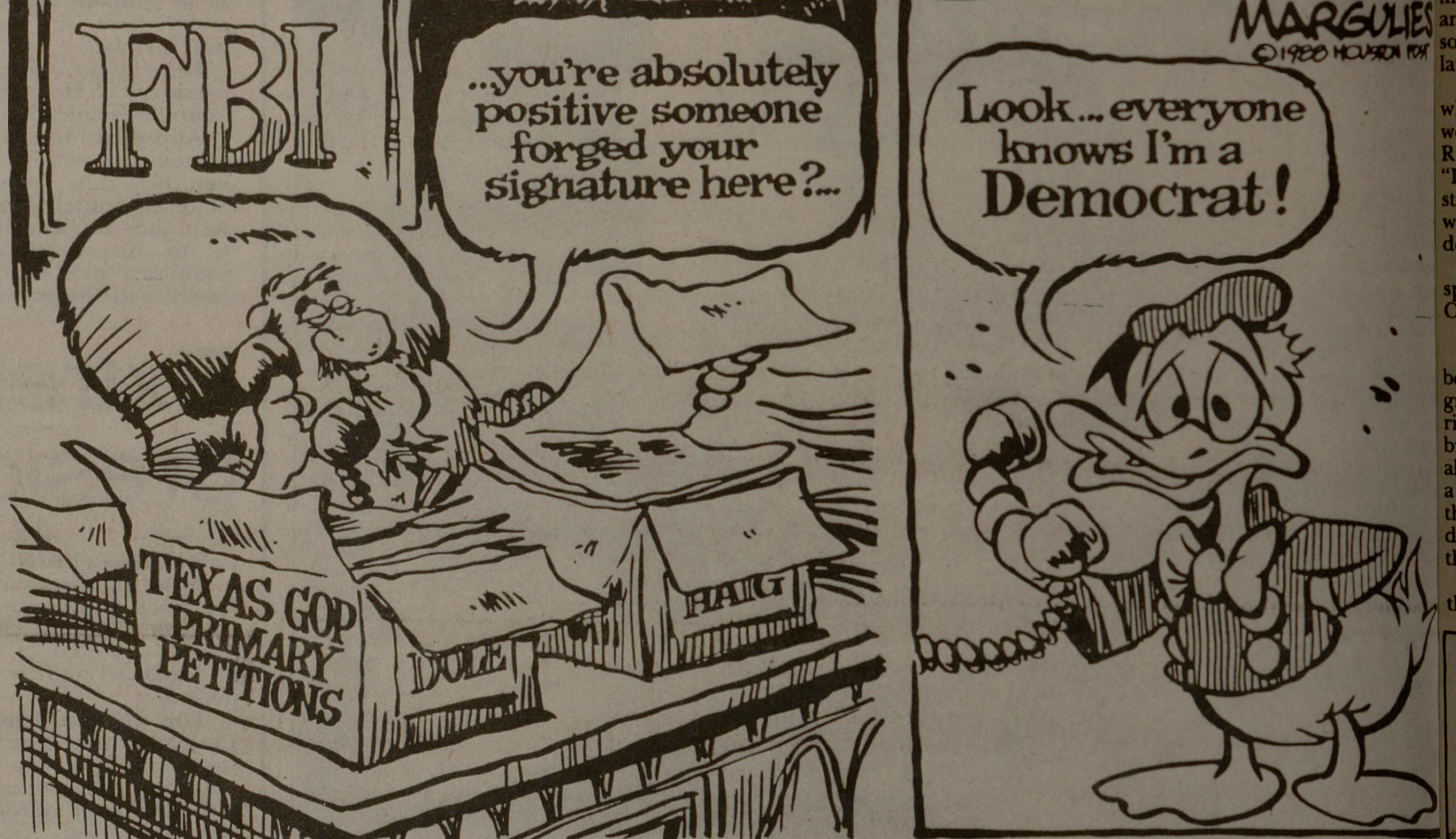
The guy in front of me put his coin in the coffee machine. The cup dropped, the machine whirred, but nothing came out. He muttered, then started to walk away looking dejected and embarrassed. That's the way many people react when a machine doesn't come through: as if they have been outwitted. They feel foolish.



Mike Royko

"Aren't you going to do anything about it?" I asked. "What's there to do?" "What a question. If he had gone in a bar and ordered a beer, and if the bartender had taken his money but not given him a beer, he'd do something. He'd yell or fight or call the police. But he let a machine cow him. "Kick it," I said. "What good will that do?" he said. "You'll feel better," I said. He came back and go into position to kick it, but I stopped him. "Not like that. You are going to kick it with your toe, but you can hurt yourself that way. Do it this way." I stepped back and showed him the best way. You use the bottom of your foot, as if you're kicking in a bedroom door. I stepped aside, and he tried it. The first time he used the ball of his foot. It was a weak effort. "Use more of the heel," I suggested. That did it. He gave it two good ones and the machine bounced. He has big feet. "With feet like that," I told him, "you could knock over a sandwich machine." He stepped back looking much more self-confident. Somebody else who had been in line said: "I prefer pounding on it. I'll show you." Leaning on it with his left hand, he put his forehead close to the machine, as if in deep despair. Then he pounded with his clenched fist. "Never use the knuckles," he said, "because that hurts. Use the bottom of the fist, the way you'd pound on the table." "Why just one fist?" someone else said. "I always use two." He demonstrated, standing close to the machine, baring his teeth, and pounding with both fists, as if trying to break down a bedroom door with his hands. Just then, another guy stepped up. Seeing us pounding on the machine, he

asked: "Is it out of coffee?" We told him it had shorted on a cup. He hesitated, then said: "Sometimes it only skips one, then it works OK." "It's your money," I told him. He put in his quarter, the cup dropped, the machine whirred, and nothing came out. All he said was "Hmm," and started to walk away. "Why don't you kick it?" I said. He grimaced, "It's only two bits." Only? I don't know anyone who hasn't been cheated by a machine at least once — usually a lot more than once. First it was the gumball machine, taking your last penny. Then it was the gum machine on the L platform. Then the peanut machine. And now they all do it. Coffee machines, soft-drink machines, candy machines, sweet-roll machines, sandwich machines. Only two bits? There are more than 200 million Americans. If each of us is taken for a quarter, that adds up to \$50 million. And it has to be more, now that machines have appeared in every factory and office, depot and terminal. I once lost an entire dollar to a dollar-changing machine. I gave it five kicks, and even that wasn't enough; for a dollar, I should have broken a chair over its intake slot. If everyone in the country is taken for a dollar, as I suspect we all will be eventually, that's more than \$200 million. The empty cup is a giant industry. Putting up a note, as many people do, saying, "This machine owes me a quarter," does little good. The men who service them always arrive before you get to work, or after you leave. They are ashamed to face the people they cheat. You can put up a note saying, "Out of coffee," which saves other people from losing their dimes. But that doesn't get you a dime back. The answer is to kick and punch them. If you are old, lame or female, bring a hammer to work with you, or an axe. I feel better, having got this off my chest. But my foot still hurts. Copyright 1987, Tribune Media Services, Inc.



Mail Call

Hush the band

EDITOR: As avid fans of the Texas A&M's men's basketball team, we are annoyed by the largely unappreciated noise being blasted in our ears by the Fightin' Texas Aggie Band. Call us two-percenters, but when we go to a game (and we go to all of the games), we come to cheer our team to victory, not to be blown away by decibels of destruction. Remember, it's quality, not quantity that makes a fine band. If you think we are ungrateful Aggie students, take a look at the former students' section and notice the members of Old Army covering their ears. The purpose of a band is to stir up the crowd, not to mute our senses. If you think we are suggesting that the Aggie Band should not play at basketball games, you're right. Would it be possible for one of our quality university jazz bands to perform regularly at the games? We are not

suggesting this is a new idea, but it is a good one. We know some of you die-hard traditionalists will claim this will destroy the very foundation that makes this university what it is. But get it straight. Marching bands play at football games, jazz bands play at basketball games, and nobody plays at a baseball game (two out of three ain't bad, but 67 percent is still a D). If you think this idea reeks of Karl Palmeyer Liberalism, a smaller subset of the Aggie Band would suffice. Anyway, they take up too many of the good seats. Robert Martin '87 Lynn Foster '87 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.

Now is the time for all good Ags to protest

I was a kid when student protest in America hit its peak. I hear and read stories about the '68 Democratic Convention, Kent State, Woodstock, draft card burnings, and the many other sit-ins, walkouts, marches and riots that took place in the "hippie" era. Today, college students at A&M are much too apathetic. No one seems to have a cause to protest for these days. To many students here at A&M, the only concerns are sex, alcohol, money, and the next test. Of course, there are students here who have a cause, which they will even fight or protest for. But their problem is that to get a good reaction from a protest it needs to touch home and actually affect people. What we need around here is an old-fashioned, traditional protest. If you have an interest in becoming a part of the great tradition of protest, then there are a few basic pointers you should follow: 1. You need a cause. You can use a popular one such as divestment in South Africa, or you can make one up. It doesn't really matter as long as it

pleases you. It could vary from excess faculty drug use (pro or con) to financial support for ice cube farmers in Brazos Valley. 2. You need a name or a slogan. You want something that will catch the student's eye. Slogans range from "Hell No, I Won't Go!" to "Save the Whales"; names range from Farm-Aid to MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Drivers) and DAMM (Drunks Against Mad Mothers). Choose your own, but anagrams and blank-Aid seem to be in vogue these days. 3. You need a group of followers. They are not always easy to find, but you should still check references to weed out the undesirables. 4. Most important to any successful protest is the method used to protest. It should be imaginative and different enough to attract attention. If you are still having trouble getting started, here are some ideas to consider: • Go to Austin and kidnap Bevo. Bring the cow back here and chain it to Sul Ross in protest of Aggie apathy about apartheid. • Sit on the student side of an Aggie football game wearing a Russian flag and drinking vodka to promote our world-class university.

• Get a funny haircut, and pierce various parts of your anatomy with sharp metal objects. • Break into the Corps' battery, steal all the weapons, and stage a coup-campus to overthrow the Corps' bloc vote. Once your man is in power, have him do nothing too (only he would do nothing from a liberal point of view). • Storm President Sherrill's office and stage a sit-in until that ridiculous sarge costume is burned or at least dismantled. • Dismantle the bell tower and stack all the bricks in the library to protest how that money was used. Hopefully these ideas have stimulated your political juices. If your ideas are good enough, you could get arrested, even deported. Remember, protest dates back centuries and was secured foremost as a college tradition by the students of the '60s and '70s. Texas A&M was built on tradition. If you are a true Aggie, you will not hesitate to throw caution to the wind and organize your own protest. And for all you two-percenters who don't believe in tradition, remember, highway 6 runs both ways. Ken Gleason is a junior psychology major.

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