

Policeman enters plea for assault

AUSTIN (AP)—An Austin police officer who was videotaped punching a prisoner three times has pleaded no contest to a misdemeanor assault charge.

Gaylon Dunkin, 34, earlier had been tried on a civil rights violation charge. The trial ended with a hung jury.

Police Chief Jim Everett fired Dunkin for using excessive force, but he was reinstated after an arbitration hearing.

Dunkin entered his plea to a Class C misdemeanor assault charge Monday before Justice of the Peace David Crain, and State District Judge Jon Wisser dismissed the civil rights violation.

Crain ordered judgment in the assault case deferred for six months.

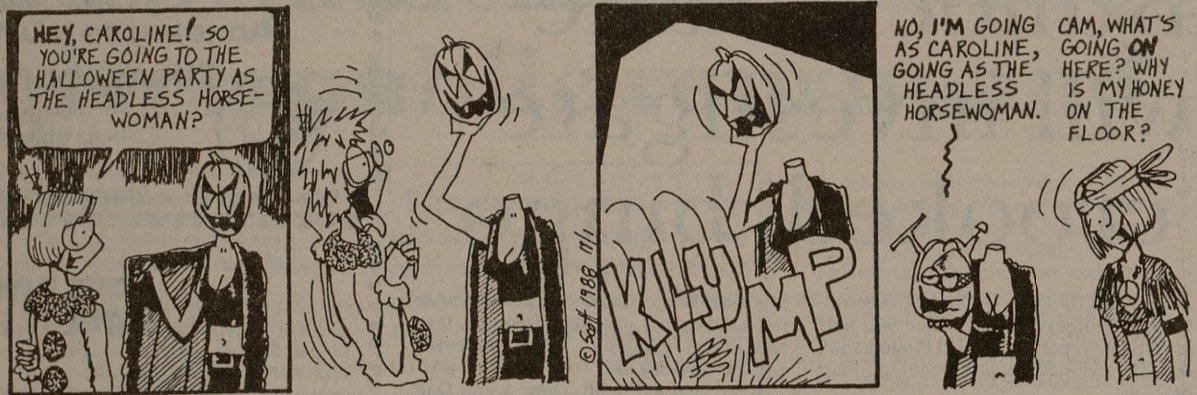
If Dunkin does not break any laws during that time period, there will be no final record of a conviction.

Dunkin said he had no comment about the plea. His lawyer, Bill McQuillen, said his client's plea should not be considered an admission of guilt.

"We could fight it again, and win," McQuillen said.

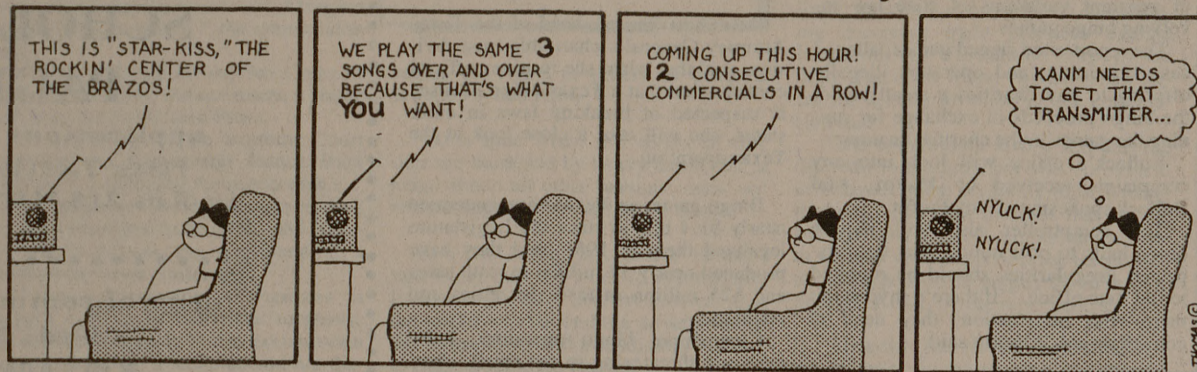
"The only reason we entered into this agreement is to avoid another trial, to put the agony of the past year behind us," he said.

Warped



by Scott McCullar

Waldo



by Kevin Thomas

Researcher: Gorbachev gets credit for reforms designed by predecessors

By Scot Walker
Staff Writer

Mikhail S. Gorbachev is receiving credit for instigating reforms in the Soviet Union that are actually the work of one of his predecessors, a Texas A&M researcher says.

Dr. Richard E. Thomas, director of the Center for Strategic Technology, says that Yuri Andropov, who led the Soviet Union for a short period before his death in 1983, was the first Soviet leader to work to fix problems in the structure of the nation's economy.

"Andropov hand-picked Gorbachev as his successor," Thomas says. "Even while Konstantin Chernenko was president (after Andropov and before Gorbachev), Gorbachev was really running the country."

Thomas says that the reason Andropov, and now Gorbachev, wanted to try to instigate change is that they saw the Soviet Union losing to the United States in the competition for new technology.

"Technology is what the world is all about," Thomas says. "If you keep ahead

in technology, your economy stays strong and your national defense is strong and the whole country is better off."

Thomas, who has been studying the Soviet Union since 1964, says that in order for the Soviet Union to keep its superpower status, it has to catch up with the United States within 25 years. He says that even many Soviets see that goal as unattainable.

"I've talked to Soviet researchers who say that 25 years is out of the question," Thomas says. "One of them told me that it would take closer to 60. So they are begging the United States to help them, and knowing us, we probably will."

Thomas says that the prospect of the Soviet Union's becoming a non-superpower should not necessarily be comforting to Americans.

"The reason they are a superpower now is technology, namely their weap-

ons systems and their space program," he says. "Without those, they are just another third-rate country. If they now see themselves as falling behind in those areas, and if they think that the gap in the future will be significantly wider than it is now, perhaps they will decide that now is a better time for drastic action."

He says that Gorbachev sees a need to galvanize the Soviet citizenry behind the drive for new technology.

"Without the input of the private sector the Soviets will never catch us," Thomas says. "The idea behind *glasnost*, which is often translated as meaning openness but more correctly refers to debate, is to make the people believe that the Soviet system is something worth improving."

He says that many Soviets are disillusioned because extortion and bribery run rampant throughout all levels of the system. He says that is why there is so much

publicity given to uncovering corrupt officials.

"The citizens are urged to turn in anyone who is abusing their position," Thomas says. "However, *glasnost* and *perestroika* (the restructuring of the economy) are designed as economic reforms, not political reforms, and there is no validity to the assertion of some observers that there will be changes in the role of the Communist party as the sole power in the country."

He says that he did not think that Gorbachev would succeed in carrying through with his reforms. He predicted that within two years, Gorbachev would be ousted and replaced with a caretaker-type leader, who would stay in charge until the country was ready for another round of reforms.

Thomas says that the Soviet Union has in the past faced crises similar to those it confronts it now.

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Swim Coach

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