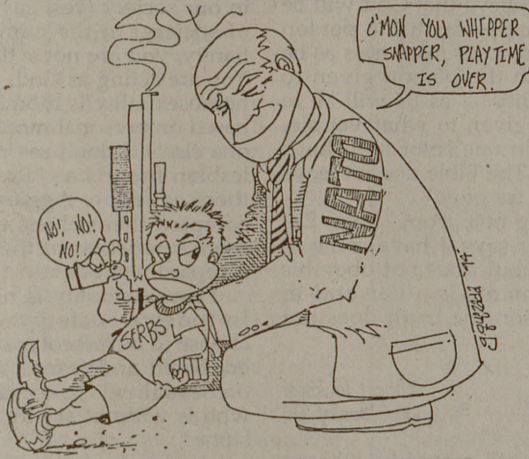


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EDITORIAL

No more excuses

Victims can still break the law

In the "Dagnet" days of law enforcement, people were told to stick to the facts. But things have changed in our legal system.

We are supposed to feel sorry for criminals when they say they have been victims of abuse. But the consequences of a criminal act should not be discarded because the offender has had a hard life, a bad relationship or a crummy childhood.

If the prosecution can show motive and means and prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the accused is guilty, then the case should be closed and the criminal behind bars. But recent history has shown that while confessions can be helpful in determining actual events, they are not as helpful in convicting the guilty.

The Menendez brothers and Lorena Bobbitt are two examples of these misguided ideas about justice. When two brothers brutally murder their very rich parents without being involved in a physical conflict

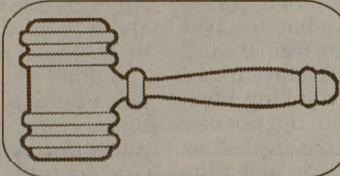
and then later confess to it, the case should be a no-brainer for jurors. Whether John Bobbitt was a bad husband does not have anything to do with the fact that his wife cut off his penis.

Society as a whole is showing an alarming tendency toward dismissing unacceptable behavior as "understandable." Something has to be done.

Criminals should not be allowed to continue manipulating juries of their peers into believing they are victims of the crime they committed.

When a criminal has a history of abuse, it is as unfortunate for that person as it is for any human being. And while an abusive history can and should be used to shed light on the motivation of the criminal, it should not be used as an excuse.

There are more constructive ways to deal with abuse than to resort to a criminal act. Our legal system needs to return to the basics. It must learn to stick to the facts.



Lewd behavior not confined to students

Some university employees engage in verbal harassment

Janet wanted to take a break from studying. Research Park seemed to be the perfect place to go on a warm spring afternoon. Almost every student at A&M has gone there to sunbathe and watch people play catch, throw frisbees or walk dogs. She figured she would catch a little sun and read up on some school work in the comfort of a school park.



ROY CLAY
Columnist

She found a spot a short distance from the road where she spread her towel out on the grass and put on some tanning lotion. Then she heard a loud rough voice say, "Oh baby!"

Startled by the comment, Janet turned to see two men dressed in university uniforms inside a Texas A&M pickup sitting there and staring at her.

"Take it all off!" shouted one of them. She watched as the men drove away. Her much needed break from school was spoiled by a couple of men whose salary she helps pay.

Jennifer has similar experiences to recount. As a student-employee at the University Center last year, she received derogatory remarks from workers on her way to work.

"I get it everywhere I go on campus. Everyday I went to work [last year] the

workers would stare at me and call me 'huerra' and say a lot of stuff in Spanish. They thought I didn't know what they were saying," said Jennifer, who speaks Spanish. "But I just turned it off as soon as I heard them start."

"Huerra" in Spanish means "blonde" or "white-skinned girl" which is used by men of Hispanic origin to denote sexual interest in a woman. Basically, it is a come-on line.

Another female student, who asked not to be identified, said she too has received this sort of harassment by University employees.

Yet another says she has been followed by men in university trucks. Once the men pulled up beside her and one said, "Now that's a healthy girl, a damn healthy girl."

That Janet, Jennifer and others have to listen to such a lewd comments is simply not acceptable under any circumstances. Sexual harassment is a crime no matter who engages in, whether the offender is a young handsome college student or an unattractive old man makes no difference. Harassment can happen at a bar, a swimming pool, a Sunday social, anywhere. But the fact that these comments came from University employees on school grounds is unconscionable.

The harassment is said to come from a variety of sources, including men in the little Daihatsus seen so frequently around campus. A couple of the women said that there are certain places on campus where the harassment occurs more often.

"Try going out to the little road behind the [northside] parking garage and watch the guys that sit out there. That's where a lot of that sort of stuff goes on," Janet said.

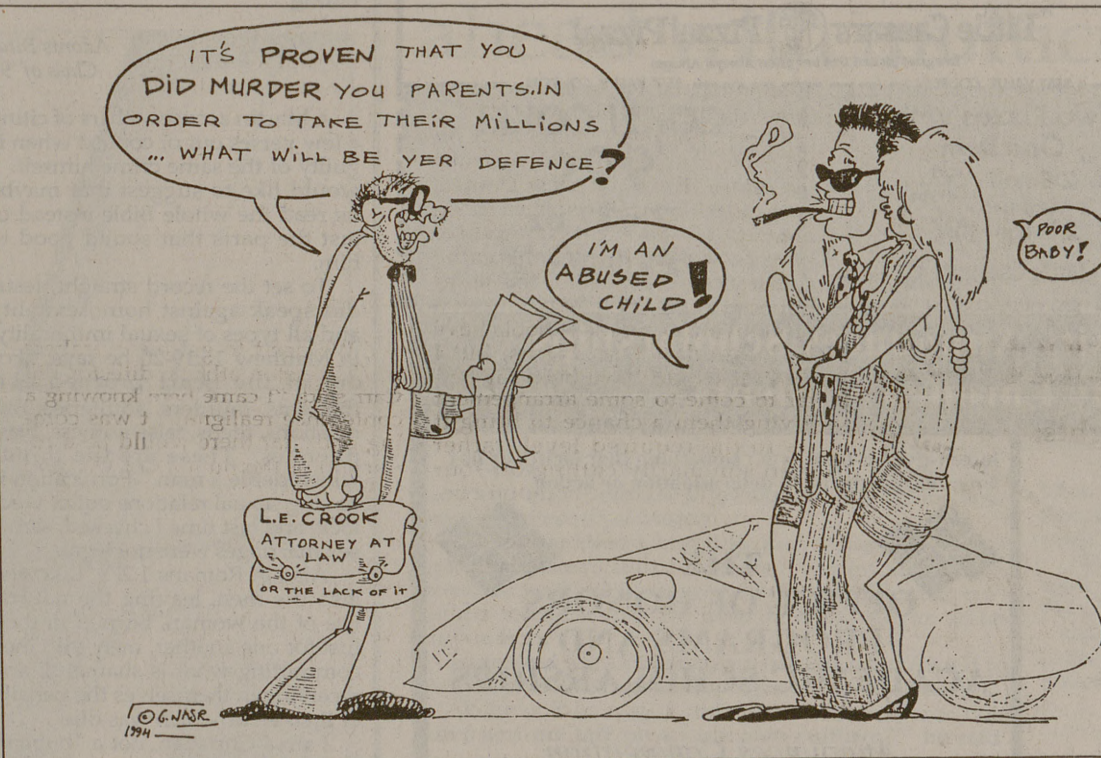
University employees have the right to be their own persons. However, there is a certain code of conduct that any employee should follow on company time. For example, if you had a business and someone who worked for you whistled at clients, how long would it be before that employee was sent packing? The fact that it would hurt your business financially is only half of the problem. If your employee offended someone while on the job, that action would reflect poorly on you, the employer.

The same scenario applies here. These women are students at this institution. They and their parents pay a lot of money to this school for an education, and the last thing they should have to deal with is sexual harassment from school employees. This sort of behavior is not only offensive to women but it is bad for the University's image — and A&M's reputation doesn't need any more tarnishing.

So what can women do who experience such abuse? First, they should try to get the vehicle number or the offending person's name. Then call Janet Winniford's office at Student Services. Inform them of the incident even if you don't have identification. They might be able to draw out information from your memory. Just let someone know that sexual harassment is happening. Your actions may keep others from being subjected to this unwanted garbage.

Sexual harassment is a crime — just because it is not violent doesn't mean a person is not violated when it occurs.

Roy L. Clay is a senior history major



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Eye can see clearly now, the pain is gone ... no thanks to Doc

There is no faint smell of alcohol, no contagious sick person coughing in your direction or old issues of People magazine with the second page of the feature story missing. But don't be fooled by the flashy displays of eyeglasses decorating the walls like ornaments. This is a doctor's office just the same.



JENNY MAGEE
Columnist

Optometrists are a funny hybrid of the medical variety — they are not real doctors, but they are not real people either.

With every trip that I make to my optometrist, I am more amazed at the technological advancement made in optical equipment. I am beginning to think that all the people who were employed mak-

ing bombs and machinery during the Cold War are now creating torture devices for the optometrists of the world.

Dr. Rudgee (the name has been changed to protect the guilty) walks out into the lobby with a postcard-sized grin and motions me into the chamber ... I mean, examining room. The walls are covered with various eye parts magnified to outrageous proportions. The only evidence of semi-humanness is a picture of Dr. Rudgee, with the same postcard-sized grin, holding a chain with six dead fish hanging from it. This brings to mind an image of my grandfather sticking hooks through minnows' eyes when he baits my line.

Suddenly, the room is getting smaller. It is closing in on me like a dilating pupil. It is dark now, but I can see two shield-like flaps moving toward my face.

The cold metal catches the end of my nose, just as Dr. Rudgee gives me a small control panel with video game-like buttons to push every time I see a red flash of light. Old fashioned or not, I am still par-

tial to the good ol' alphabet eye charts. The first time this same man decided that I needed glasses, all he did was ask me to read a bunch of letters off of a chart. When I couldn't get past the big E, he determined, with all the scientific exactness of this highly technical procedure, that I couldn't see past the end of my nose.

After I finishing the video game, Dr.

At the first machine, I'm told to open my eyes as wide as possible. Then without any warning, a quick, hard burst of air is shot into my eye ball.

Rudgee takes me into the new edition of the examining room. In this separate room, machines of all different shapes and sizes are lined up like an obstacle course.

At the first machine, I am told to open

my eyes as wide as possible. Then without the least bit of a warning, a quick, hard burst of air is shot into my eye ball. This of course makes my eyes produce 10 minutes worth of uncontrollable tears.

After I finally manage to compose myself, I am lead through more machines, where I have to pick between clear and unclear images. My head is beginning to ache; the room is beginning to spin, and I can still see that damn red flashing light from the video game.

Dr. Rudgee puts two squirts of some sort of stinging liquid into each of my eyes. I am told to blink rapidly for a couple of seconds — he wants to make certain that my entire eyeball gets to feel an equal amount of pain. Then it happens. I am lead to the monster of optical torture devices — the camera.

Dr. Rudgee prides himself on the fact that he has a photo of every left and right eye of each of his patients for every visit they ever have made to his office. I am certain that Dr. Rudgee has piles of photo albums stored somewhere in a back

room.

As I sit in front of the large machine, my body begins to shake. Finally, Dr. Rudgee finishes messing with the numerous buttons on the side of the large metal contraption.

Click. Suddenly the world is a giant yellow ball. I stumble back into the main examining room. Dr. Rudgee is standing in the doorway, taking a last look at the machines like a child in front of a Christmas tree.

"Well, everything seems to be just fine, Jennifer," he says. "You're contacts are retarding your nearsighted condition just fine."

Somewhat the fact that my condition is being "retarded" doesn't sound like such a great thing to me. As I hobble out of the office into the much too bright sunshine, I realize that I can't focus enough to drive home.

Jenny Magee is a sophomore English and journalism major

COLLEGE STATION, TX
 Feb 23
MAIL CALL
 1994

Alpha Phi Alpha benefits community

I am writing to express my opinion over the recent controversy about Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity and their guest speaker, Quanell X. I am not qualified to give opinions on the speaker as I was not present at the occasion in question, but I would like to say something which I feel has been overlooked.

I have attended some of the other

activities which they have prepared and sponsored, including some of the presentations at their "Go-To-High-School, Go-To-College" 1993, their celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and their Miss Black and Gold pageant.

Though I am neither male nor African-American, I enjoyed each of these events tremendously. Each was well-organized and professionally done. Though it was important to me that I felt welcomed and included in these events, more importantly I learned something not just about race relations but about life as a whole.

I am writing to encourage people to attend such programs. I wish that I could have heard Quanell X speak — I would not have agreed with what I feel were prejudiced statements, but my beliefs would have been challenged, and I would have learned something more about myself and the world in which I live.

Finally, I would like to encourage people not to condemn Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity as an organization. They do many things to benefit the community and to encourage personal responsibility and commitment to improving not only oneself or African-Americans but ultimately the whole society in which one lives.

Personally, I would like to thank them for their contributions to Texas A&M.

Christi Sahl
Class of '95

On youth violence and the seventies

In response to Friday's pro-con, I'd like to say to Robert Vasquez: if you are old enough to do the crime, you are old enough to do the time — even if it is the death penalty.

The juvenile justice system was set up when youth violence was uncommon. Today we are dealing with murderers and rapists, not just the kids who take cars for joy rides or throw eggs at houses.

One of your arguments is that juveniles can't vote or they can't drive cars when they're under 16 years old, and therefore they shouldn't be treated as adults.

If you let a juvenile off with a slap on the wrist instead of punishing him or her as an adult, that juvenile now

thinks there is no punishment and will commit more crimes later. Criminals of all ages need to be dealt with harshly to discourage repeat offenses, since they will also be dealt with harshly.

If a youth is convicted of a capital crime, that youth should be sentenced to death or life in prison just like an adult. They are old enough to know right from wrong.

And in response to Dena Dizdar's column on the '70s: We need a good dose of the '70s? A good dose of bad music, bad fashion and bad interior decorating? A good dose of the highest inflation rates in the last 40 years? A good dose of mile-long gas lines and oil shortages? A good dose of higher unemployment than we have now?

No. Thanks, I'm doing better in the '90s.

David R. Webb
Class of '93