

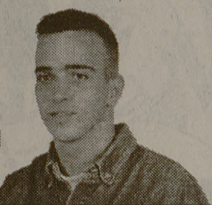
OPINION

SHOULD COURTS ACCEPT EVIDENCE FROM 'RECOVERED MEMORIES?'

No —

JEREMY KEDDIE

Columnist



essentially lab rats. However, the patients are not the only ones who are affected by the use of sodium amytal. Those who have been wrongly accused of child abuse suffer as well. It is immoral to convict people of crimes when evidence is lacking or obtained in a questionable manner. These methods of recovering memory should also be viewed as inconclusive evidence.

Until further research is conducted in this area, prosecutors should seek other methods of testimony to convict alleged molesters.

Jeremy Keddie is a junior journalism and political science major

Yes —

MELISSA MEGLIOLA

Columnist



Sexual abuse is one of the most devastating experiences a person can be forced to endure.

Unlike robbery or assault, sexual crimes are personal invasions attached to a social stigma. Victims may feel shame and embarrassment and want to hide the shame they feel from everyone they know. Often, they bear guilt, wondering what they might have done to provoke such treatment from the stranger or loved one who hurt them. Recovery from such trauma can take many forms. Some victims turn to religion, others rebel or become

depressed. Some turn to alcohol, drugs or even end their lives.

Still others repress the memory and try to go on. There is no "correct" way to deal with the pain.

Should the right to prosecute the violator be taken away based on the method of recovering the memory of abuse?

The resurfacing of buried memories is necessary to completing the healing process. Failing to allow recovered memories in court punishes the victim yet again.

Those who oppose testimonies based on recovered memories suggest that the memory cannot remain accurate over a period of years. They feel a statute of limitations should be put into effect.

While studies have accurately reported cases where eyewitnesses incorrectly recount details of a past event, the event itself is not in question. Misinformation about something like the speed of a passing car during an accident is not the same as failing to remember the essential event — the accident.

Another argument is that therapists lead their patients into remembering false stories. Critics say that the practices of the therapists cause their patients to misinterpret visions and dreams. However, ethical practice is the responsibility of the therapist, just as it is that of the physician or surgeon. Also, patterns of biological reactivity can be used to help confirm the existence of past trauma.

Surely, cases do exist where charges were falsified and recovered memory was used maliciously. But they are no different from false charges that do not involve recovered memory. Perjury in court is a crime that is in no way linked to repressed memories, as they would only make it more difficult to convince a jury.

Memory repression is quite common among trauma victims. A study by Briere and Conte found that 59 percent of a sample of adult clients with a history of sexual abuse reported having a temporary loss of memory in relation to the abuse. Other more conservative estimates believe that at least one-third of all victims at some time repress traumatic memories.

The use of repressed memories in court is essential to the legal rights of sexual abuse victims. They should be allowed to prosecute their violators, regardless of when they bring the case to court.

Melissa Megliola is a senior industrial engineering major



Cosmo-quiz: Are you really a 'nice' person?

Take this test and find out your rating

I like to believe that human beings are basically nice, but ever since I formulated this hypothesis I've noticed fluctuations in both my behavior and other people's. Whether we're stuck doing laundry all Saturday afternoon or driving down Texas Avenue during rush hour, we tend to be extremely irritable in certain situations.

While these actions don't necessarily mean we lack inner goodness, they do make me wonder how nice we really are. I have devised a Cosmopolitan-type quiz to evaluate behavior in everyday situations.

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1. You are standing on the third deck of Kyle Field in 96 degree weather. Three guys behind you have been yelling, "Uncover! Uncover, Ags!" at a group of people 20 rows in front of you for the last half of the game. Their pleas for hat removal are aimed directly into your eardrums. You:
 - A. Continue to ignore them although your ears are ringing.
 - B. Politely ask them to please refrain from shouting quite so loudly.
 - C. Threaten to have your muscle-bound boyfriend uncover their necks.

2. You have been standing in line at the Pavilion for an hour and a half. As you finally approach the window, the cashier goes on lunch break. Left with the options of getting in the back of another long line or putting off paying your bill for another day, you:

- A. Sigh and get into the next line. It's a long wait, and you'll miss your next class, but nothing is more important than paying that bill.
- B. Meekly beg the cashier to please help you, as it will only take a few seconds.
- C. Start being obnoxious. Consider jumping over the window ledge to throttle the cashier, meanwhile saying things like, "Can you believe this [expletive] is going on lunch break when I've been here an hour and a half?!" to the incredulous people around you.

3. You arrive in Zachry lot at 7:45 a.m. for your 8 o'clock class, and calmly wait in line for a space. At 7:55 it is your turn to grab a space, and you put on your turn signal and wait as a

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Columnist



car backs out. Out of nowhere, a half-ton Chevy truck zips around you and everyone else in line, stealing the space from you. You:

- A. Rationalize that you'll be late to class again, but that's no reason to cause a scene.
 - B. Begin to screaming obscenities at the errant driver as you wait for another car to back out.
 - C. Reenact a scene from "Fried Green Tomatoes" by repeatedly ramming your car into theirs.
4. Your roommate invites yet another member of the opposite sex over for fun and loud music at 2 a.m. on a Tuesday night. The two of you have already had a conversation about respecting each other's need for sleep and privacy. You decide to:
- A. Try to go to sleep despite the distractions. Maybe they'll notice your discomfort and take the party elsewhere.
 - B. Announce that you really need some peace and quiet and ask them to leave the room.
 - C. Bolt out of bed and say something like, "Gee, (roommate's name) your beer goggles must be extra thick tonight!" thus beginning yet another shouting match.

5. You've just failed a crucial history test. On your way home, you run into the old flame, who broke your heart two weeks ago, and his new woman. You:

- A. Smile weakly at them and say, "howdy."
- B. Stare fascinatedly at a tree on the other

side of the sidewalk and pretend you don't see anything.

C. Beam a saccharine smile at them and innocently say to her, "Wow — you look different than you did last night. I thought your hair was blonde!"

6. You're watching the final five minutes of a close Cowboys game on TV. As the Cowboys get possession of the football, your significant other walks into the room, turns off the tube, and announces that the two of you need to talk. You:

- A. Smile calmly at your loved one and agree that your relationship does need to be discussed right at that moment.
- B. Turn the TV back on, muttering that you'll be ready to pay attention as soon as the game ends.
- C. Start sobbing and demand to be held, then finish watching the game in "mute" over your loved one's shoulder.

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The aim of these questions should be clear. If you answered "A" to everything, you're nicer than anyone I know. But you probably had a few "B's" or "C's." By sacrificing perfect goodness, we hold onto our sanity.

Still, wouldn't it be nice to always be nice?

Lynn Booher is a junior English and psychology major

MAIL CALL

Professor's tantrum wastes everyone's time

I just wasted time and money I could not afford to lose. Thursday I went to class just like I always do. Unfortunately, my professor decided not to do his job. After a short recap of what we talked about on Tuesday, he proceeded to rant about the fact that the students in his class had not sufficiently read for the day. Understanding his displeasure, we attempted to explain that our failure to complete the given assignment did not reflect disinterest in English literature. We were behind because we have had quite a few tests this week, along with our regular work and study schedules. One student in the class said he was behind because he is carrying 19 hours of classes and working 40 hours a week at the same time. Earlier in the semester, that same professor failed to lecture over what the syllabus said he would that

day, politely indicating even professors are not always on schedule. The professor's less than generous answer was, basically, "Then you should quit your job."

I am appalled that a man employed to educate and help students would sit back and decide what part of our lives should or should not be important to us. I am an English major and believe the only way to pass an English class is to read the assignment. However, when I stand before my own classroom of men and women struggling to get an education, I hope I can remember what I feel like at this moment. The goal of the college experience is to teach students what they need to know to be a part of the competitive job market. Part of that world is learning to prioritize to get things done. If we know the material by the time we are tested over it, his job will have been accomplished. Until that time, I hope he could learn to let the adults in his classroom do their jobs as best as they know how.

*Amy Michelle Bench
Class of '96*

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