

Mixing business and pleasure blurs vital distinction

Robert Smith is paying for betraying the dignity of his job

He's been found guilty. Robert Smith, that is. Found guilty of "Solicitation of gifts by a public servant," a Class A misdemeanor. The Robert Smith who up until this summer was vice president of Finance and Administration, who oversaw 12 major departments of this University and had more stewardship and authority than any of the other vice presidents. A veritable big cheese.

ERIN HILL
Columnist



Smith was also the chief negotiator of the contract with Barnes & Noble Bookstores which is how all this trouble came in the first place.

What's all the fuss about? Well, Barnes & Noble spent \$37,838.67 on entertainment and accommodations in New York City for Smith and other A&M administrators from 1990 to 1993.

Smith's lawyer Dick DeGuerin said the trips were for business, not pleasure. Oh, really? Broadway shows, expensive dinners, limousine rides and yacht rides are business? The last time I checked, that stuff was fun. Business, my foot.

That's not why Smith is in hot water. He's in trouble because he brought his wife, Pat Smith, along, and the bill totaled over \$12,000. Smith

said he didn't solicit the trip for his wife, implying that Barnes & Noble invited her.

Why would Barnes & Noble volunteer to pay for Pat Smith's trip? Could it be because Smith had the power to say Yay or Nay to the contract? Could it be? Do you think? Is it because they stand to make millions off of us.

A probable scenario has Barnes & Noble agreeing to pay for the trip in an effort

to convince Smith to sign the contract with him. It doesn't make sense that they would invite his wife along. It does make sense that they let him bring his wife along because they wanted his signature.

Pat Smith said that she went because she thought she had been invited. She also said that Robert didn't tell her what went on at A&M "businesswise." Can we see why?

For many people, what he did probably doesn't seem strange to many of us. The attitude of "Take What You Can Get" is prevalent everywhere. Many folks would have done the same thing. But the prevalence of such selfishness does not make it OK.

It is alarming to discover just how common

corruption at the top is. It is also alarming that this corruption doesn't bother us. It should.

How many people actually know or care what Smith did? How many think it wasn't really a big deal?

While there are many men and women in positions of authority who do not abuse their power, it only takes one situation to put doubt in the public's confidence. It only takes one bad apple to spoil the bunch.

The Brazos County District Attorney Bill Turner said "Smith is the vice president. He's the leader of 12 departments. Does he lead by example?"

No, he did not unless you consider that his behavior led other administrators to mess up too. He did not act in accordance with his position.

Smith's actions may appear to hurt no one but

ty? Or about the other good things Aggie students are doing? Do they think about the students at all?

No, they don't. They hear about corrupt administration, alumni who can't keep their wallets in their pockets and staff members who falsify documents.

Doesn't it bother you that in spite of your years of hard work at A&M all of the press goes to people in charge who are continually messing up? We are, in effect, helpless to stop what they do with our school and our school's reputation.

The coverage shouldn't be a surprise; those administrators have more power than any of us. But it's a shame they haven't put their positions ability to garner media attention to better use.

If Smith wants to truly rectify the situation he ought to publicly apologize to the students of Texas A&M.

It's our school not his but the men and women in charge don't always act with our best interests at heart.

They've disappointed us, Smith in particular. Perhaps he should resign from the position he was given after the indictment, Director of Special Operations. Perhaps not. That's his call.

But we can expect an apology, formal and sincere. We demand as much. And deserve much more.

Erin Hill is a senior English major

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himself. Actually they have damaged the reputation of the University considerably.

Do people on the other side of the country think of how we rebuilt Bonfire in less than a week when they hear the name of this Universi-

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EDITORIAL

STOPPING THE VIOLENCE

Rape Awareness teaches precautions

The recent acts of violence that have taken place in College Station are yet another reminder that A&M students need to prepare themselves to deal with violent crime.

Students should take advantage of the University System if they feel their personal safety is being threatened in any way.

Programs such as the Corp Escort Service and Dial-a-Ride can prevent students from walking on campus alone after daylight. For many criminal offenders, particularly rapists, this is the prime time to strike. Furthermore, the Rape Crisis Center offers students prevention programs and counseling for victims of rape. Students are encouraged to use these services in order to prevent more violent acts from occurring.

A&M offers students the opportunity to take self defense. The course is offered through the kinesiology department, and counts as a kinesiology credit.

College Station, although it is the revered home of Aggieworld, it is by no means Disneyland.

In spite of its conservative and safe atmosphere, there are criminal offenders and potential rapists lurking around the area. Just because

College Station and Bryan are not considered major cities, that doesn't mean that violent acts, including rape are non-existent.

In a recent example of crime in the area, A&M junior, Laurie Ann Baker became a victim of violent crime. Her story shows that victims often know their attacker. Even people who take common sense precautions such as not walking alone at night, carrying mace or learning self defense are not necessarily safe from crime.

A great deal of information concerning rape is geared toward women, but men should be concerned about their safety as well. Contrary to what many may think, men can be rape victims also. They too need to take precautions and be aware of the situations around them.

When it comes to issues such as rape, a student cannot be "too informed." In this time in society where crime, including rape is on the rise, one cannot get too much information and education.

Rape is a violent, tragic act, and it can happen anywhere to anyone. Proper precautions, information and basic safety are a must in preventing such a horrific crime.



Vampires just want to be appreciated

Underneath the fangs, lurks a culture wounded by misrepresentation

I sit here in my room, the window cracked open, the dark wind whistling between the surrounding roofs. I had a phone call from a secret informant who promised me a, "delicious," story about the film industry. Besides the coarseness of the man's voice, as if sheets of paper were being rubbed together, there was no hint what the person I would be inviting into my apartment would be like.

Josef Elchanan

Columnist



The doorbell rang at 9 p.m., just as the man promised it would. I slid the bolt in and jarred the door open, only to discover that no one was there. "Damn kids," I breathed, closing and locking the door again. Then I froze. Sitting in my living room was a slim man, hidden in dark folds of a raincoat.

"I did not see you come in," I said in the strongest voice I could muster. "I am sorry, it is a bad habit of mine," the dark figure whispered. "I have come to voice a complaint against idiocy," he said, somewhat louder.

"That is a tall order," I said. "Well, yes, but this continuous misinformation must end sometime. You know, we never minded the books you people wrote about us, or the stories you told by your fires, but this new age of television and movies makes us look like a bunch of bloodthirsty hooligans!" the dark man exclaimed.

"Who do you represent," I asked, while wondering what this man, obviously a terrorist or criminal of some sort, would want from a part-time student journalist. I hoped it was not something of a permanent nature.

"I," he again began in a whisper as he rose to his feet, "am honestly a real life vampire."

"Oh boy, I am alone in the room with a lunatic, my mind screamed. Where's a bazooka when I need it?"

"No really," he said, "I know you won't believe it, but you must believe it. And you must listen carefully. We live parallel to your world, on the fringes of your evolution. All we have ever wanted is escape hunger and to be represented in a more accurate manner than by a man dressed-up in his socks, shirt and underwear, dancing amongst living room furniture to 60's music."

"You mean that you came all the way here to tell me that you are a vampire and that you do not want Tom

Cruise (who did a pretty good job) to play your role?" I was in a state of shock.

"Yes, and that's not all."

"What else," I asked impatiently.

"You see," said the dark man as he turned and sat gracefully on the couch, coat tails whipping behind him, "We also hate what Francis Ford Coppola did to us, what 'The Lost Boys' did to us and what Salem Lot did to us. We are good people, leading our lives responsibly, only drinking the blood of a few humans in exchange for our lives. We kill, but at least we don't discriminate against you all. After all, you kill and eat animals, and many of them would eat you if they had the chance. But do you make them the bad guys? Oh, no! Instead, Disney comes along and makes 'The Lion King,' while vampires get treated like a bunch of ghouls. Even Bugs Bunny hates us!"

His eyes had turned an evil red, and his breath came in torrents. I could safely assume he was extremely angry and, vampire or not, I did not like that look one bit.

"OK, OK, what do you want?" I inquired, feeling the my heart pound in my chest at the rate of a rabbit's. "We want the people of America to know that we are their friends, their mothers and their fathers. We do not want to be treated like this anymore. We want respect. We want people to remember that they cannot just go around putting stakes in our hearts and expect us to sit there idly. We have a culture. We are Vampiric-Americans, and we demand that Hollywood stop exploiting us and return us to the state that Bram Stoker left us in."

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exploiting us and return us to the state that Bram Stoker left us in - something to be feared and respected."

I turned away from him, giggling horribly, afraid he would go into a mad rampage if he saw me, but I could not help myself.

Suddenly, something blew past me and when I turned, he was gone.

I have never been sure what I saw that night, maybe it was just a dream or maybe the man was so strange that I let my imagination run away with me, but his demand for freedom to be who he chose to be struck a chord within my psyche. Maybe it is not so horrible to be the undead, as long as one has the heart to be a decent undead person.

Josef Elchanan is a senior business management major



MAIL CALL

Many options protect Aggie Bucks on lost I.D.s

The Nov. 10 letter concerning the Aggie Buck system included a good question. "What happens if you lose your student I.D. card? Who do you call?" Victims of lost student I.D.s may first call the MSC Lost and Found at 845-8908 or the Commons Lobby Lost and Found at 845-2821, 24 hours a day. If no luck there, you can call the Aggie Buck office during business hours at 845-4661. They will immediately block all use of your Aggie Bucks. You may also call Network Availability, 24 hours a day, at 862-4884 to immediately cancel your I.D. In the event that you find your I.D., just visit room 110 of the Pavilion, and they will reactivate your I.D. free of charge. If your ID is no where to be found, you can be reissued a new one at a current fee of \$12. And your RA or RD can also assign you a temporary card access I.D. to get in your dorm, until you get a new I.D.

*Chris Johnson
Class of '94
Accompanied by 14 signatures*

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Appearance says little about a person's virtues

I cannot believe that in this day and age we have a male student writing a letter about the abundance of attractive women on campus. I assume has good intentions, as do those "kind gentlemen" who offer me the only available seat on the shuttle, but I'm sure many women did not come to A&M to act as decoration for the male population to enjoy. I attended school in a "northern state," and though I did not focus on how attractive the student body was, I did not observe the blatant sexism that I see here on this campus. There are many things about people which make them special, but how one looks matters little in the measure of a person's worth. If more men looked on women as intellectuals, peers and friends and not as simple creatures whose only purpose is to "look pretty", women would not suffer the societal injustices which still run rampant today.

*Jennifer K. Wormuth
Graduate Student*