

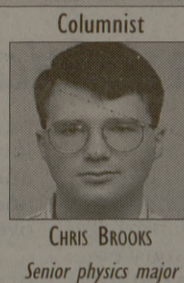
# Death penalty serves to protect, not to deter

Darkness closes in. It becomes difficult to breathe. The heart beats furiously, trying to keep the darkness at bay, but, finally, the darkness wins. Alone and afraid, an innocent dies. And the killer smiles. This happens every day, and there seems to be little that anyone can do to stop it.

The innocent victims can be men or women, adults or children and any race, religion or socioeconomic group. It could be you or your mother. There is only one thing these victims have in common — some animal decided to snuff out their lives. No one knows why these animals, who so deceptively walk upright, commit these acts, so there is no real way to prevent them from happening. But there is a way to keep these kinds of crimes from happening again. No murderer who has been put to death has ever killed again.

An animal that bites a human is automatically "destroyed" because it is a dangerous creature that does not know, or care, right from wrong. A human who takes another person's life is no better than a rabid dog — disregarding the concept of right and wrong when it becomes inconvenient. Such a person is no less dangerous than a rabid animal and should be "put down."

Many people feel that capital punishment is wrong. Some claim that it is no less murder than what was done to the criminal's victim. Some claim that murderers are a product of



Columnist  
**CHRIS BROOKS**  
Senior physics major

this society, and society certainly cannot kill a man for being what it taught him. Both groups claim that the death penalty is not a deterrent. On the last point, both groups are right — as it has been applied, the death penalty is not an effective deterrent. It serves another important role though: protection.

Those who oppose capital punishment believe that life in prison is a perfectly good form of punishment. If our prisons were, say, in orbit around Pluto, that would be true. Instead, though, American prisons offer criminals better lifestyles than many college students enjoy. The worst part of a life sentence, however, is that a living criminal can escape. "It can't happen," many say. Charles Everitt would disagree with them.

According to the Houston Chronicle, Everitt was sentenced to life in prison for the 1987 murder of a Houston man. In December of 1996, he escaped. He was in good company. Lance Brown, who was sentenced to 40 years for murder, also got bored and left his jail cell in 1996.

And more escapes happen every day. If escapes were not bad enough, there have even been instances of criminals being "accidentally" paroled. Jails cannot keep the criminals in, so they cannot keep innocent people safe.

When society is blamed for the existence of criminals, poverty and lack of education are

usually pegged as the culprits. In 1932, 10 million people were unemployed. Millions went hungry. This Great Depression was a time of unmatched poverty. During this time, as well as afterward, it was not at all uncommon for children to quit school after only a few years to go to work. In short, this was a time of great poverty and a lack of education. And yet no one killed another person for his new tennis shoes. No one went around eating young men, either.

There is no reason to blame poverty or education for crime. Right and wrong are not dependent on education. No one has to go to school to learn that killing is wrong. Absolutely no one needs a \$1500 computer in class or designer jeans at home to know that killing is wrong. People commit crimes because they are evil, not because they cannot read.

If every person who murdered another person was put to death, if everyone knew that to commit murder was to ask for a guaranteed one-way trip to the chair, it would be an effective deterrent. As things are, though, executing murderers is the only way to be absolutely certain that a murderer will not kill again. If it became physically impossible to escape from prison, capital punishment would lose one more supporter. Until that time, though, society must say to the criminals, "Kill us and die." Any less is putting everyone at risk.

Killing killers is not murder. It is the only way to keep the darkness from closing in on us one by one.



## MAIL CALL

### Equal punishment for Drill Team deserved

Congratulations to the Corps of Cadets and this university on making the decision to disband the Fish Drill Team next year. It is simply about time the University held the Corps and the fraternities to the same standard. Earlier this year an entire fraternity was punished for the misguided and ill-advised actions of a few members.

The same happened in the case of the Fish Drill Team very recently. Given the history of judgment and punishment of fraternities, it is only fair and just that the Fish Drill Team be suspended.

Don't get me wrong - I'm not out to crucify the FDT. It is sad and unfortunate that the FDT was suspended, but one needs to keep in mind the men from the suspended fraternity as well. I won-

der if anyone will mourn their loss as well?

The point is that both organizations broke the law and both were punished on an equal, and just level. Equal punishment is something this university has not seen in a long time and I'm very happy to see the beginning of the end of the double standard that was so long held here in Aggieland.

Mark McEl  
Class of '98

### Racist thoughts inferred too often

Racism has been a problem this country for centuries and we have not ridded ourselves of it yet. However, not everything that has a racist meaning.

When I saw the MSC Open House advertisement in the Battalion, I saw a man with golf balls in his mouth. So he's black. Must we infer racist thoughts out of everything we see?

I'll admit that I didn't like the ad because it was so odd. But it was my personal preference to ensure the makers of the ad meant no harm. So the guy willing to throw golf balls in his mouth was black? What if he had been Hispanic or even white? I doubt anyone would have complained.

Many in the black community need to get the chips off their shoulders. Everyone is not racist, and those who are should be dismissed. The racists are fools. Let God be their judge.

Carino  
Class of '97

### Criminals relinquish rights with action

In response to Mandy Cater's August 5 column:

We citizens of the United States and Texas have chosen to live free, with all the rights guaranteed to us by the Constitution of the United States and Texas. However, there are those among us who choose to go against the laws in place and commit crimes that put our families and ourselves in mortal danger. These crimes are terrifying, horrible and will not be tolerated by good citizens of our state.

Cater fails to recognize that these criminals are not United States citizens and are no longer a part of our society. Yet, she is very sympathetic to these criminals; she feels these murderers deserve the same rights as ourselves. The United States strips them of their rights when they were convicted of their crimes.

Cater fails to recognize that these criminals are not citizens nor are they Texans. They are criminals who no longer are a part of our society. Cater states "this is not an issue that a society has the right to make." If this is true then we, as citizens, have a choice as to who can be a part of our society.

I feel it is our moral duty to stop and deter crimes from occurring. I am proud that Texas leads the nation in executions. It is time for the citizens to speak up against crime and get tough.

I say these criminals don't deserve to be a part of our nation and state. I want the murderers and disgusting creep to die. They have caused such pain to their victims and families that neither I nor Ms. Cater can ever understand.

I say to Cater until you experience such pain do not judge anger and sadness. Perhaps we are not God, but under God we live and make laws as citizens.

Amy M. Bauer  
Class of '97

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