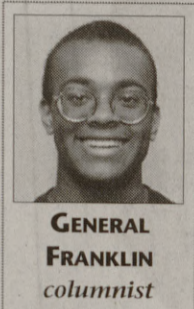


Friday • September 5, 1997

# Brutal law enforcement

## Police actions bring notion of 'protect and serve' to unethical standards



**GENERAL FRANKLIN**  
columnist

The police have the important task of maintaining public order and protecting society from criminals. This duty has been compromised by recent occurrences of police brutality, which makes it difficult to discern the criminals from the police.

The public, as well as most law enforcement officials, were appalled by the brutal assault on a Haitian immigrant and the subhuman treatment of inmates at the Brazoria County detention center.

These incidents reveal not only the cruelty of the officers involved, but also the arrogant notion that police are above the law.

In a brazen act of barbarity, private prison officers filmed the assault of several defenseless inmates on September 6, 1996. During the video, the guards relentlessly attack inmates with batons, whips and guard dogs.

Although prison officials must maintain strict order, they crossed the boundary between restraint and brutality. During the course of the now infamous "training" tape, there was no evidence of inmate provocation that would justify such a belligerent attack on men unable to protect themselves.

The Brazoria county sheriff's department claimed the video was made for training purposes. It is baffling how an incident so brutal could have any educational value. Clearly, the video indicates the extreme malice these officers had for the inmates.

The video also suggests the inmates are without human rights, as they endured violence and cruelty which would not be tolerated had it occurred to an animal.

How can society justify jailing offenders when the violence is perpetrated by those entrusted to guard society from it?

What occurred on the video and in the 70th Precinct of New York City represents a dark moment for humanity as the police demonstrated a capacity for wickedness that is unconscionable.

Disgust and contempt are the only suitable reactions to the sodomy and defilement experienced by Haitian immigrant Abner Louima on August 9. Following his questionable arrest outside a nightclub, Louima was subjected to hours of abuse, which reached a zenith when he was sodomized with a plunger handle.

Officers Justin Volpe, Charles Schwarz and Thomas Wiese have been charged with the assault which caused Louima to experience severe internal injuries, broken teeth and broken ribs.

Volpe and the other officers implicated in this act of depravity have dismissed the charges of sodomy by claiming that Louima's rectal injuries were due to homosexual activity prior to arrest.

Not only is this statement offensive for its homophobic overtones, it is also improbable, because evidence points to a different reason for the injury. No evidence of anal bleeding was found in the squad car which transported Louima to jail. This fact suggests the sodomy occurred after he was placed into police custody.

The sodomy is not of a sexual nature given the extreme damage to Louima's bladder. The extent of his injuries is not consistent with damage caused by penile penetration, rather they are consistent with the damage caused by the ramming of a hard, foreign object in the rectum.

Not surprisingly, Louima has hired Sanford Rubinstein to pursue litigation against the City of New York.

This action is justified because both the assailants and those officers present at the precinct bear culpability for this atrocity.

More frightening than the crime committed by these police officers was the sheer indifference displayed by those officers present in the station during the horrific torture of Louima.

It is inexplicable how a human could ignore and even conceal such degradation, in the name of loyalty to fellow officers.

Both incidents of brutality are transcendent of police abuse because they illustrate a perverse loyalty which allows people to overlook the bounds of morality and integrity to protect their own. This loyalty is manifested in the refusal of po-

lice officers to step forth and report the grave injustices which occur daily in America. These weak cowards are just as reprehensible as the thugs who commit the abuse. Their silence perpetuates future brutality by insuring that culprits are not brought to justice.

Until police understand that the bonds of decency and humanity are more important than the bonds within police units, Americans and minorities in particular will take their chances with the criminals before trusting the police.

This mistrust of law enforcement is unfortunate, because the overwhelming majority of police officers are dedicated men and women who risk their lives for the betterment of society.

However, the notorious "blue wall of silence" tarnishes these dedicated people as abuses become legitimized by those whose compassion is compromised by fear and inaction.

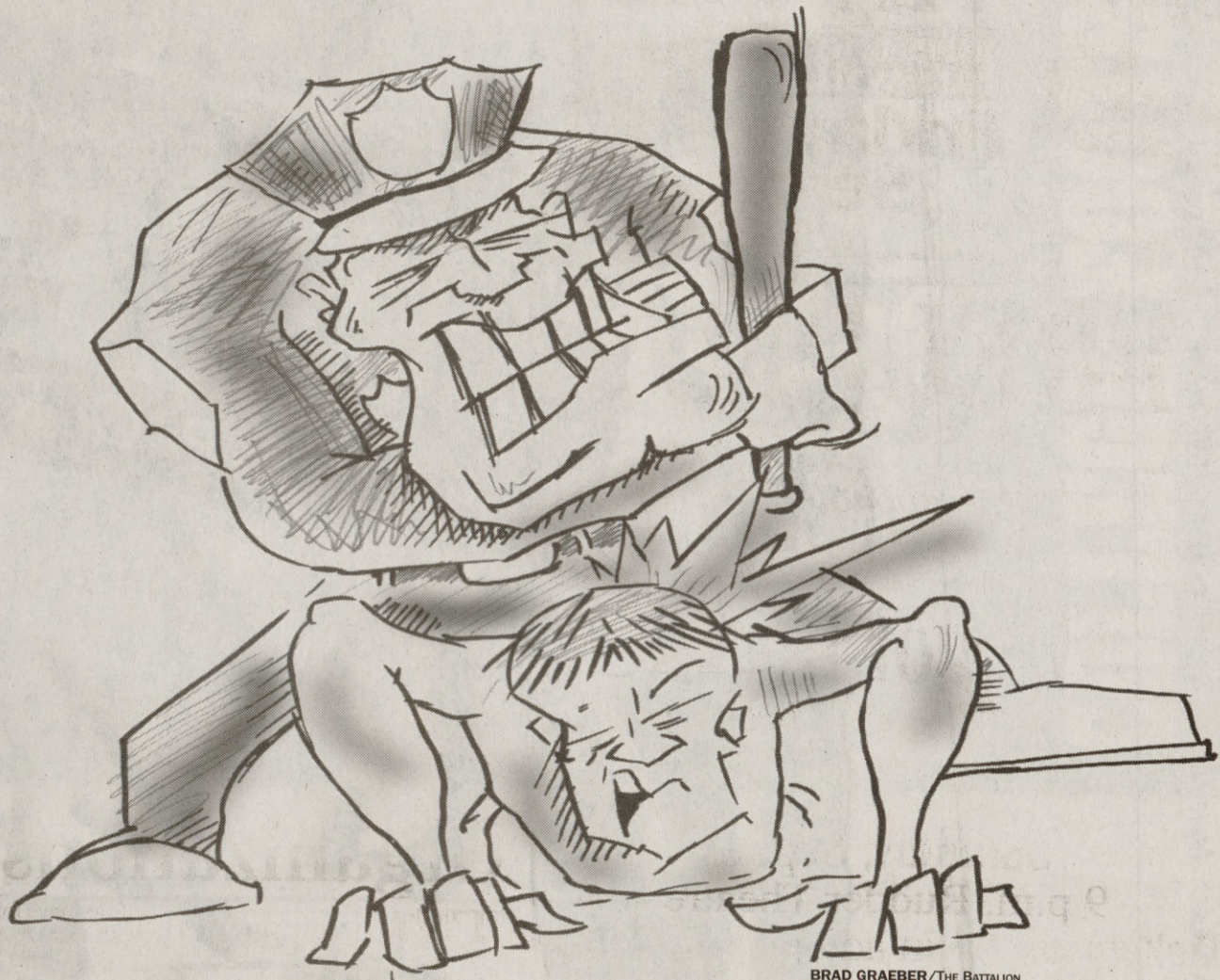
Also, the brutal treatment of criminals by correction officers leads to more hostile criminals who emerge from jail as even

more menacing predators on society.

The affect of this abuse weakens the authority of the law. It creates an undercurrent of hostility between the public and police which can erupt.

The tumultuous repercussions of the Rodney King case demonstrate the anarchy and terror that can result when public order is perceived by many as public tyranny.

General Franklin is a junior history major.



BRAD GRAEBER/THE BATTALION

# Instances of A&M stupidity mar community credibility

"I am so smart, I am so smart, s-m-r-t, I mean s-m-a-r-t."

Homer Simpson's ironic boast may soon become the motto of Texas A&M University after Aggies read one of Fortune magazine's recent installments. In its Aug. 18 edition, Fortune ranked Bryan-College Station as the fourth-smartest community in the country.



**JOHN LEMONS**  
columnist

This is not a misprint. Fortune really called the same community that is spending upmeen million dollars to make Northgate (that wretched hive of scum and villainy) look like a park, the fourth-smartest community in the entire United States. The magazine based cities' intelligence on the percentage of the population who hold a four-year college degree — a dubious criteria considering some of the Ph.D.'s on campus have difficulty tying their shoes, much less presenting a coherent lecture. A whopping 17.2 percent of Bryan-College Station residents hold at least a Bachelor's degree. This area's newly-discovered intelligence is a factor which many will attribute to A&M.

In an interview with the Bryan-College Station Eagle, Gary Basinger, the Bryan-College Station Chamber of Commerce's business development manager, said, "With Texas A&M here, we're naturally high on the list."

Ironically, however, while A&M may place Bryan-College Station on the list of intelligent cities, it is A&M itself which prevents the cities from being number one. A lot of dumb things happen at A&M, and these stupid occurrences always will relegate this community to second place or worse. If Bryan-College Station ever expects to be the smartest community in the nation, stupidity must be stamped out of A&M.

Contrary to what the brochures may say, A&M does not attract the brightest lot of students. As evidence, just note the number of young men walking around campus who have been duped into shaving letters into their head because it is red ass.

The silliness which permeates A&M is not limited to the freshman class — it is institutionalized. Consider the campus' sprinkler system. It serves the University well, keeping A&M lawns green. Texas Monthly went so far as to call A&M "Texas' prettiest campus from the ankle down."

The system, however, is terribly inefficient. While it does manage to quench the grass' thirst, it also drenches sidewalks. In fact, A&M seems obsessed with watering its sidewalks. Rarely does a day go by without this school's sidewalks receiving a bath.

While the sprinkler system does manage to keep

all of campus' concrete well watered, it does manage to avoid sprinkling the graves of Reveilles I-IV.

The move of the dead Reveilles to make room for the expansion of Kyle Field has been an issue of contention for many Aggies who wonder how the Reveilles will be able to see the field's scoreboard. One doubtful rumor which circulated around campus claimed the University was going to remedy the situation by building a mini-scoreboard by the dead Reveilles' graves so they could follow football game scores.

Hopefully, at this point, the reader has noticed the flawed logic of this situation — dead dogs do not see anything, much less scoreboards. Additionally, the dead Reveilles are buried under six feet of dirt, headstones and sprinkler systems, which should be an obstacle to even the sharpest-eyed collie.

A lot of stupidity seems to localize around Kyle Field. Observant Aggies might notice that the poorly-named eternal flame sometimes burns just outside of the stadium. The primary definition of eternal is forever — an adjective which does not describe the burning duration of the so-called eternal flame. Perhaps A&M would be better served if the eternal flame was re-named the sporadic flame.

Yet, the dumbest thing to hit A&M in recent years is the design of this year's campus parking tags. The phrase "Aggies Lead By Example" adorns the tags in large block letters. It is a slogan which probably took about ten minutes to create. This clever slogan barely beat out competing slogans like "Aggies don't lie, cheat, steal or create slush funds for their football players" and "Aggies don't park on the MSC grass."

What is worse, though, is the absurdity of the phrase. While most Aggies do lead by example, many prominent Aggies choose to do the opposite. Scandals surrounding Aggies like Ross Margraves, Warren Gilbert, Greg Hill and the Fish Drill Team have only brought shame to this university.

Until some of this ridiculous behavior is rectified, Bryan-College Station will have to be satisfied with signs proclaiming "We're number four!" at their borders. Ranking cities on their intelligence is a futile exercise. After all, residents cannot exactly include the tidbit on their resumes.

Perhaps cities should root their civic pride in more tangible qualities, like schools, churches and community service organizations. It is institutions like the Big Event, the Brazos Valley Food Pantry and Phoebe's Home, where residents give back to the community, that make Bryan-College Station admirable.

These are the areas that truly make a community number one.

John Lemons is an electrical engineering graduate student.



## MAIL CALL

### Honor Code graphic degrades the Corps

In response to Joshua Hill's Sept. 3 column:

I find it very disturbing that Hill's column on the Aggie Code of Honor was accompanied by an obvious caricature of a uniformed member of the Corps with a flaming piece of paper that read "Aggie Code of Honor." The only specific mention of the Corps in his article can only be found in a redundant introduction.

First of all, it is no secret that the Corps represents a minority of the student body with an approximate membership of 2,000 cadets. This in no way ties into the broad statistics reported in the column. Had he done more homework, Hill probably would have found the Corps residence halls to be among the safest on campus.

This is primarily because the Corps has its own honor board to investigate and punish honor violations in a system of "accountability to one another" which Hill seems to long for. Finally, freshman cadets are required to memorize, word for word, the Aggie Code of Honor along with five separate articles defining each principle in the code. As a junior, I can still recite them. It sounds like the unity sought by Hill could be found in the Corps as well.

I do not claim that the Corps is completely free of honor violations, no matter how much I would like to. I only ask that Hill choose his illustrations more cautiously to summarize his work.

Tase Bailey  
Class of '99

### Intelligence ranking lowered by actions

The recent ranking of the Bryan-College Station area as the fourth most educated community

is an indication of Aggie land greatness. One has to wonder, however, how the average intelligence quotient of the Brazos valley survived when averaging in the administration. For such a smart place, there sure are some dumb people running it.

Take PTTS. This group has experienced long lines of students picking up new permits at the beginning of every year.

In the group's combined intelligence, has it ever thought of setting up a few cashiers to take care of the lines? The MSC Bookstore sets up extra buyback stations and cashiers to alleviate heavy lines and waiting. Why can't PTTS do the same?

Instead of spending \$50,000 on a parking booth (which is half of what a nice three-bedroom brick house costs), hire some more cashiers for the first week.

Take the athletic department. People in this department know that they have thousands of students waiting to pick up sports passes every year.

So what is their solution? They set up a few card-readers and student workers to serve a couple thousand students — this is not smart.

More examples come from our local government. From the city that brings you signal lights, synchronized to turn green only when you are speeding, it also brings you the Texas Avenue construction.

Why did the city wait all summer long until the first week of school to close down two lanes of Texas Avenue? This is not smart.

What is the city going to do for bonfire or graduation weekend — tear up the intersection of Texas Avenue and University Drive? It's about the only thing the city could do to top its idiocy.

As Henry Ford once said, "Thinking is the hardest work there is, which is probably the reason why so few engage in it."

Stephen Moore  
Graduate Student

### Standards of A&M need to be upheld

There is nothing I hold more dear than Texas A&M University. I love it for the people, the attitude

and most of all, the traditions. When it first came out that Texas A&M was rated one of the best schools in the nation, I was overjoyed. Now I'm beginning to re-think the whole situation.

Since then, I've begun to notice tradition after tradition slowly being destroyed. We can all recognize the moving of the Reveille graves, which has angered many old Ags across the nation.

This act is symbolic of the end of A&M as we know it.

Certain people are looking at many of the traditions that we know and love (i.e., All U-Night, Aggie Bonfire and the Fish Drill Team) as institutions that are detrimental to our education.

It seems that they are forgetting the "other education" that our great school prides itself on. They are forgetting what made this school the best school in the nation, and they are forgetting what it means to be an Aggie.

If this trend continues, in less than 20 years A&M will be another PC school like every other University in Texas.

Students who no longer be Aggies who share a bond that no other school can understand.

Instead, they will just be A&M students.

The Corps will become like a high school ROTC class, Bonfire will be built by contractors and cheerleaders will replace the Yell Leaders who we love.

There is a reason why Aggie graduates across the world never forget the love for their school; I only wish we could.

Jeff Flinn  
Class of '00

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be 300 words or less and include the author's name, class, and phone number. The opinion editor reserves the right to edit letters for length, style, and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 013 Reed McDonald with a valid student ID. Letters may also be mailed to:

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For more details on letter policy, please call 845-3313 and direct your question to the opinion editor.

The linebacker said it was dumb... that's when I learned football was... contribute as one member of a...