

STATE OF THE UNION

**Nothing held sacred
in today's capitalistic
American society**

Nothing is sacred in America. Yep, nothing. Nothing is safe from evil corporate plots to make you spend money. Example: As we sink further into the re- of our couches, eating the squirt cheese it from the can and watching reruns of s," we notice something is amiss in our es, amiss.



MICHELLE VOSS
columnist

I watch something educational," we to ourselves (Hey, I'm not saying that s" is not intellectually stimulating — is one smart cop — oh, wait, oxymoron, rway, we're clickin' our way to the Dis- y Channel when we notice a commercial featuring Mr. Potato

a rush of nostalgia, we put down the squirt cheese to grab a tis- our eyes gush forth tears of joy at the sight of our dear compan- m lonely days after school — "Mista Patater Heaaaad!!" we wail. to our dismay, Potato is an obnoxious, dim-witted poster boy n other than Oprah's favorite munchie joint, Burger King. ms the burger gurus have put out a new french fry (that myste- y tastes like chicken), and Potato Head is the new spokesman. eed, Potato Head's new gig is a stellar example of the hapless ffair between mainstream American media and corporate mercialism.

lly, a happy-fun-time child's toy is now a talking vegetable, in- ly caught in the web of commercialism, capitalist ploys and the on of freedom for the masses.

y, a delusion of freedom. Mr. Potato Head is the new sensation ill lure us into consumerism, unknowingly, zombie-like.

all line up like good little consumers and patiently wait for our r and fries to defrost.

pick up our mass-produced meal and sit in our mass-pro- seat, just keeping the food chain moving.

wever, we fail to notice that we, too, are caught in the web of t.

Mr. Potato Head is just their sly way of saying, buy, buy, buy, Amer- ica are telling us that our purchasing power equals freedom, ve have a freedom to choose.

Unfortunately, this is only a delusion of freedom. The truth is, our lom of choice" is just another way of saying consumerism for asses, materialism and french fries for all.

short, we have all become slaves to our dollars, and deluded sense of freedom.

rget the social functions of the media for a second. Just remem- re days when Mr. and Mrs. Potato Head would dance on your en floor, they would trade arms, Mr. Potato Head could carry Potato Head's purse or wear her blue pumps.

Well, guess what? Rumor has it Mr. Potato Head has left the misses' n intern who was working for him, but he denies that he denied nials previously denied of wrong-doing, and so does the intern. h, Mr. Potato Head is corrupt. He no longer plays "dress up in rs." clothes" on the kitchen floor. No, he's the conniving, hy, little arch-nemesis to none other than good 'ol "Jack" of Jack Box.

me eager-beaver junior ad exec in Manhattan thinks they've giv- rger King a "new image." Think again, Paco. That little CLEO I just broke up a home and just might cost Jack his job.

Mr. Potato Head is just the puppet for a nasty scheme, a dirty little plan vats of artery-clogging, grease-pumped french fries to gullible ican consumers.

en, more doctors will perform more quadruple bypasses, so an buy more Saabs and purchase more villas off the south coast nee.

y, buy, buy, America.

Nothing is sacred, America, since dollar signs run our nation. If ng, not even a child's toy, is safe from the spoils of exploitative alist plots (and I'm an avid capitalist), we will never be free. (Sry, don't believe me? Think talking Chihuahuas and tacos.

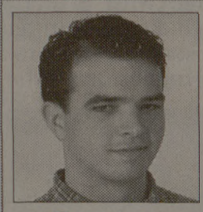
Michelle Voss is a sophomore English major.

PERSPECTIVES

METHOD & Madness

"Unabomber Manifesto" offers useful guidelines for practicing mayhem

Do you want to strike fear into the heart of every American? Do you want the mere mention of your name to send children diving under the covers to bury their heads in their pillows?



STEWART PATTON
columnist

Well read on, future madman, because until University Plus offers a course in Urban Terror- ism, you can learn much about your craft by studying those who have practiced before you.

The Unabomber's days of mayhem are over, and he will spend the rest of his life in a dank cell. By studying the Unabomber's mistakes, you can avoid his pitfalls in your quest for world domination.

The Unabomber's first mistake was lack of proper preparation. Changing the world is a big task — a madman should not leap right into it. The beginner could start by transforming the local Parent-Teacher As- sociation into the "Evil PTA from Hell."

Once he has seized power, the madman could start by mandating that only those chocolatey-oatmeal, no-bake cookies be sold at the annual bake sale, just for the heinous irony of it.

The madman-to-be could then turn to the local chapter of the Elks Club or the Girl Scouts of America before launching a world- wide campaign.

The Unabomber's next mistake you don't want to repeat was a complete lack of planning for accomplishing his goals. The "Un- abomber's Manifesto" states that instead of benefiting society, tech- nology and mechanization actually alienate people from each other, hurt the poor and dehumanize individuals. He argues that people should destroy technology and revert to living in "wild nature."

Quick note here: the actual content of your personal madman views on society you will develop don't actually matter as long as they are completely and totally ludicrous and any rational person would think you are sick in the head.

So, what does the Unabomber do to destroy technology and return society to nature? He sends a few mail bombs to judges and other pub- lic figures. This alone should have been enough to convince any jury that Kaczynski is insane and unfit to stand trial.

Even if the Unabomber was never caught and he was to continue his evil plan, mail bombs sent to prominent Americans are never go- ing to destroy all of society's technology.

He even shoots his own philosophy in the foot, for aren't bombs technological devices? Also, it's tough to find a larger modern system of mechanization than the U.S. Postal Service. The Unabomber should have stuck to his philosophy and personally delivered a huge rock and let "wild" gravity do its work.

A much better example of an effective mad plan is exhibited by Dr. No of James Bond fame. Dr. No wanted to be the richest and most powerful man in the world, so he stole several "super weapons" from the United States and blackmailed the world with the threat of their use.

Bravo. A mighty fine plan foiled only by 007's lucky escape from a man-eating shark.

The Unabomber's final mistake that you will want to avoid is living in a tiny shack in the woods. An effective madman must have a cool "mad pad" where he can concoct his evil schemes. As a rule of thumb, any dwelling that can be shipped cross-country on a semi-truck is completely out of the question.

Imagine the Unabomber's embarrassment as the jury laughs hysteri- cally when they see the dilapidated conditions from which he believed he could change the world.

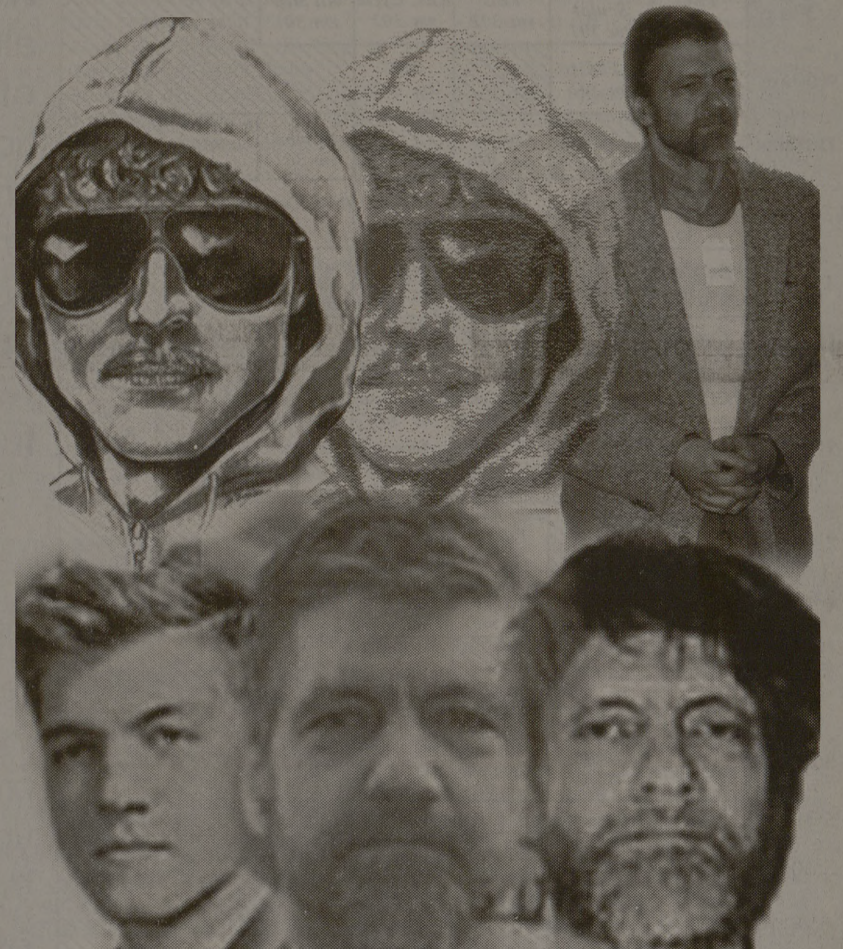
Even a normal house will work as a madman's refuge, as long as it contains ample underground tunnels, high-tech communication devices or is rigged to burn from the inside out a la Mel Gibson in *Conspiracy Theory*.

An award for one of the coolest madman hideout would have to go to The Penguin from *Batman Returns*. Complete with hordes of mind- controlled penguins and a giant rubber ducky for transportation, this mad fortress is located under the same city where millions of inno- cent people go to work each day.

Future madman, I wish you luck in executing your plan for world domination.

Learn from the past and do not repeat the mistakes of the Un- abomber, and you will be an effective madman long after the rats have divvied up Kaczynski's rotten corpse.

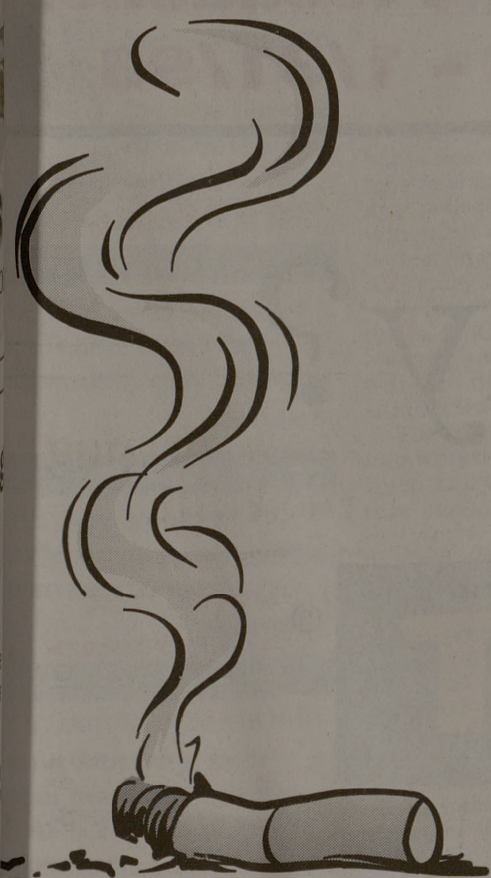
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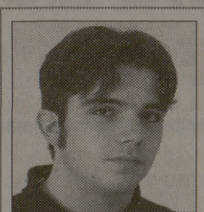
BRAD GRAEBER/THE BATTALION

ONE STAR LOWDOWN

Tobacco companies not responsible for the health of smokers



The state of Texas just got 15 billion dollars richer. Texas is one of several states to settle with the tobacco agency and has received the largest cash settlement to date. Minnesota is up next, with 40 other state law- suits being filed.



JOE SCHUMACHER
columnist

The first question that comes to mind is what does this money mean for Texas. Well, nobody knows yet. It is to be paid over a 25-year period to sick smokers on Medicare.

Texas Attorney General Dan Morales wants to reserve money for anti-smok- ing education and other things like that. However, the Texas Legislature does not think that the one man should be able to decide how \$15 billion should be spent. Basically, they feel that they are entitled to their piece of the pie.

The five lawyers are after their money, a "measly" 15 percent. That breaks down to about \$2.3 billion for them.

After all, they had the hard task of proving that the cigarette smoke is bad

for you and that cigarette ad campaigns target youths.

One of the primary arguments to them not getting their money is that the contract is unenforceable, because Morales did not receive approval from the legislature.

The companies were found liable on the grounds that they concealed how dangerous smoking really is. Nobody needs convincing that habitually light- ing something on fire and then inhal- ing the fumes is bad for you.

Anybody who smokes or has ever smoked, today or 30 years ago, does it because it is bad for them. That is the whole appeal of smoking. It shows that you are too cool to care about your health and you'd rather be fashionable.

Now those same people who were too busy being cool will soon be col- lecting aid from Medicare for the next 25 years.

Nobody has ever been forced to be a smoker. Now these people who, of their own free will, took up smoking, know- ing that smoking is a bad habit (and one cannot argue that smoking looks like a healthy habit), want money for not having the foresight to think that they'd live this long.

That is ridiculous. There are also talks of helping "fight" underage smoking. This is not

the place of the government to keep kids from smoking. Maybe that job should fall to someone a little more equipped for the job ... like their par- ents. Some places have instituted tick- ets for underage smoking.

That approach is not what Texas needs to do, especially given the fact Texas just won this lawsuit, and the last thing it needs to do is generate more revenue in the name of cigarette smoke.

Additionally, a national lawsuit pro- posed restrictions on nicotine levels and advertising. First, restricting the amount of nicotine is just going to in- crease cigarettes that people who are already addicted are going to buy. The restrictions in advertising are also moot points.

The restrictions are suggested to limit the influence of the tobacco in- dustry on younger, more impressio- nable viewers. There aren't too many ads for cigarettes that appeal to young kids. However the fact their music and movie idols appear on television and movies smoking is what gets their attention.

The national lawsuit also proposes that the tobacco industry would pay a total of \$368.5 billion. At first this sounds like a lot of money. Given the fact that people are still smoking, thus

buying cigarettes, it does not sound like the tobacco company will lose much money.

Also, the industry has never lost a court case that has gone to a jury deci- sion. The tobacco industry would probably not settle an out of court agreement that would bankrupt them.

What the tobacco industry is trying to achieve is immunity from future prosecution.

The national lawsuit has met with two stumbling blocks: first, there is blat- tant proof in the form of a memo the to- bacco industry is in fact targeting the youth ages fourteen to eighteen.

Second, five Texas lawyers are seeking their money, which is approx- imately half of what all the other states would be receiving in the na- tional settlement.

So what does this settlement mean? \$15 billion for the congressmen to fight over that the taxpayers will prob- ably never see.

There are five lawyers that were able to prove the dangers of smoking and receive an excessive amount of money for this, and the government has decided that it also their job to control our kids.

Joe Schumacher is a junior journalism major.